

President's Message May, 2026

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We recently returned from Guatemala City, where 15 countries participated in the Pan American Racquetball Championships. The inaugural 'Pan Ams' was held in 1987 at the Lynmar Club in Colorado Springs, and was called the *Torneo de las Americas*. The top tier in international racquetball at that time consisted of the USA and Canada. Their competitive edge began to close beginning in year 2000, once the Mexican Racquetball Federation, under Presidents Enrique Villagran and Fito Baca, campaigned to grow the sport. The growth would be sparked by construction of more courts in developing areas and the training of instructors to enhance opportunities for youth. Those strategies paid *dividends*. Mexico consistently places in the top two positions in international competitions. Bolivia as well, followed suit. Governing bodies facilitated the construction of multi-court facilities, inviting public access and encouraging youth development. From regions at sea level like Santa Cruz de la Sierra to Titicaca above 12,000 feet, racquetball is ranked in the top three of sporting disciplines in this country of about 12 million inhabitants.

As the athletic club industry changed in North America, racquetball and other indoor court sports began to experience court transitions, court removals, and shifts in priorities from hierarchy. Multi-discipline clubs with emphases on 'dollars per square foot' slowly replaced court clubs and their loyal members who spent their well-earned dollars for athletic and social benefits. New Mexico fell into the same trap. The City of Albuquerque had over ninety indoor, four-wall courts in the early 1990's; today there sit twenty-one. With the dearth of courts and youth access hindered, the USA and Canada no longer dominate the international competitive racquetball field.

Upcoming International Events:

July	Juegos Centroamericanos y del Caribe	Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
September	41 st Frank Hotels IRF World Senior Racquetball	Las Vegas, NM USA
	South American Games	Santa Fe, Argentina
	International Paddleball Championships	Albuquerque, NM USA
October	IRF World Championships	Temuco, Chile
December	IRF Junior World Championships	Site tbd

For more on the schedule, review the 2026 Events Calendar

Quote of the month

"The mind is like a garden; you can plant trees & flowers, or you can plant weeds' BL