Promus U.S. Open Gould & Swain win!

See it on espn2
February 12
See page 5 for times...
The Power in the Game: Sudsy Monchik #1 & Cliff Swain #2.

Suds, they call him the Tiger Woods of racquetball. In his lifetime he has achieved every major goal in the game. After dominating junior racquetball, and winning every age group, he skipped amateur altogether. His first season in the pros he finished 3rd. In his second, he became World Champion and never looked back. But as powerful as he is, he also knows that if you can get more from your racquet it’s a little less time in the weight room. And that’s why he switched to The Catapult. More power when and where you need it. Yeah, like he needs it.

Cliff. They call it the Swain Era. Six years in which he completely dominated the game. It was rare that anyone took games from him much less matches. And remember those 180 MPH serves? Still ripin’ em. His play? Well, he’s the only guy who’s still schooling Suds from time to time. But this four time World Champion isn’t just a “take my trophy and go home” kind of player. His input and consultation have always been a great asset to Head and the game. Currently playing with a racquet he helped develop, The Pyramid 190 “G”. Fast, powerful and a true winner. Sounds a lot like Cliff.

Catapult Technology: Most racquets, when they hit a ball, flex and lose energy. With Catapult several factors work together to help harness this power. Catapult’s throat is designed with kick point action, like a golf club, to snap back to original state faster than other racquets. This creates a "touch like" action which accelerates the ball as it leaves your strings. Hit with it get once and you will feel the increase in power.

Pyramid "I" Design: Head created one of the most unique breakthroughs in racquet cross section design with our Pyramid shape. It creates a consistent flex that minimizes energy loss through the frame. And now we’ve improved it. The inner oval now continues to reflect the same shape as the outer wall. This gives the Catapult an additional nine square inches of string bed. The height is more surface area for lifting, more string power on each shot and more consistent response from the string bed.

For a dealer near you contact us at 1-800-HEAD USA.
Let's not beat around the bush. Power is everything. Ours isn't some racquet "lightweight". We've added unique new elements like rubberized knuckle pads to protect fingers and silicon grip patterns that improve the hold on your handle. And their looks — they're dynamic. But don't just take our word for it. See for yourself.

**POWER**

In racquetball, power is everything. Ours isn't some gentlemanly sport where the combatants sit around and complain about how powerful the racquets have become. On the contrary, if we could give you just a touch more juice so that you could knock off the guy just ahead of you on the ladder we've probably made a friend for life. We're about making many more lifelong friends.

Introducing the new Catapult Series featuring kick-point technology. At Head, our engineers have developed not just one, but three separate innovations that are incorporated into this new series of racquets. Often one design improvement will lead to others and that's precisely what happened with our new Catapult Series. Kick point technology, Pyramid "V" Construction and "XL" Design. Three new innovations that may soon have you wanting to make friends with one of these powerful new racquets.

**THE CATAPULT SERIES**


**GLOVES**

The hottest gloves in racquetball! And Head makes them. Well thought out designs benefiting from the finest leather and synthetic materials available. Like Pittards® Tackified leather and breathable Lycra®. We've also added unique new elements like rubberized knuckle pads to protect fingers and silicon grip patterns that improve the hold on your handle. And their looks — they're dynamic. But don't just take our word for it. See for yourself.

**SHOES**

If you like the look of our gloves, check out our shoes. The Head Anatom Sonic 500 Mid is hot. It's Anatom Fit System® allows your shoe to perform like the human foot. Flexing to allow your shoe to remain in contact with the floor at all times. It's integrated Anatom Midsole made with lightweight Phylon adds crucial support. It's mesh upper, synthetic toe cap and abrasion resistant gum rubber sole add up to one very attractive shoe.

**BAGS**

Where would we be without them. Most of us virtually live out of one. Kind of like small mobile homes without the wheels. And what makes a great bag? Space and lots of it. Here you go. Large central chambers with plenty of pockets so that dry can be kept separate from wet and vice versa. Holders for water bottles, reinforced floorboards and comfy padded shoulder straps for easy carrying. It's in the bag.

The ottest gloves in racquetball! And Head makes them. Well thought out designs benefiting from the finest leather and synthetic materials available. Like Pittards® Tackified leather and breathable Lycra®. We've also added unique new elements like rubberized knuckle pads to protect fingers and silicon grip patterns that improve the hold on your handle. And their looks — they're dynamic. But don't just take our word for it. See for yourself.
Happy Holidays! Seasons Greetings! No, wait – that was last month; you’re not reading this until well into January – but we’ve gone over that already. So, how are those resolutions going? I’ve decided that I’m going to cave on the free time thing – I just don’t have any, so I’m not going to pretend anymore. Here’s why ...

The Internet. It’s a form of torture. I’ll be practically out the door, but just as I get to the almost-blank, all-but-turned-off, final screen I’ll see that little icon for the modem and think to myself “I’ll just check my mail before I leave ...” Ha! That’s another hour right there, at least. Then to the newsgroup [alt.sport.racquetball] to see if I really need to address misconceptions in the cyber-field. Don’t get me wrong – I love the instantaneous communication thing, but there’s nothing like a little anonymity to bring out the best in people ... Finally, between print issues, it’s a race to get the websites updated, or I’ll really get an eye-ful!

U.S. OPEN. It’s become its own lifeform. Not that I’m frightened by 14-hour days – I can take it – but the mere thought that it’s going to grow ...! The television potential alone, (with your help in getting ESPN to notice racquetball) is staggering. If you’ll turn to page five for the details, you can become part of what we hope will become a massive letter-writing campaign to urge ESPN to produce and air more racquetball events. If it’s truly what you want, you have the chance to make your feelings known. Don’t worry about me – I’ve worked “in the truck” before (making sure names are spelled right, records are correct, hometowns are accurate and that the production crew knows what a “skip” is). A worthwhile project!

National Singles. It now includes the national skill level championships. That’s right – A,B,C & D level competition will be offered in Houston this year! The U.S. OPEN will no longer host a separate national skill level event, but it will offer invitational [Level 5] competition. For the staff, our annual Memorial Day assignment has just become a bit more interesting!

All year, it’s the association’s 30th anniversary. In April, the Pan American Games Qualifier will be held in Winnipeg. All year, the magazine will continue to develop and evolve. In July, the World Championships will be played in Bolivia. All year, the USRA will try to find new ways to make your racquetball better ... online, on-screen, on Donner and Blitzen! Have a wonderful season, and wonderful year – I’ll be the one trying to keep up with all of it, and all of you! And enjoying every sleepless minute of it!
Newly ranked #4 John Ellis at the Promus U.S. OPEN. Photo: Vicky Hughes.

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ON THE COVER
U.S. OPEN champions Michelle Gould and Cliff Swain
pose with the championship trophy – her second, his
first. Photo: Mike Boatman.
ZEN RACQUETBALL

I had a friend a few years back named Bruce. I met him way back in my college days while I was practicing my backhand at the Indiana University racquetball courts. He didn’t have a partner either, so we agreed to play a couple of games. The first game, he killed me, twenty-one to two. Second game, same thing, maybe twenty-one to one. I do not remember much else about the first time that I met Bruce, other than the fact that we played six games, and I lost all of them, scoring maybe ten points total, to his 126 tally. Not having been deterred, I agreed to meet the next day, with results similar to the first, although now my muscles were absolutely killing me. So we played the next day. And the next. In fact, we played five or six games every day for two months, and I still had not beaten him. I did, however, lose twelve pounds and I must say my calf muscles were feeling downright frisky.

My ego, however, was starting to take a beating from the constant losing. You must understand – I had been playing racquetball for eight years before meeting him. I considered myself a decent player. Yet I was not even scoring ten points against him in any of the games we were playing. So during a break after one game, I asked him how he played so well. He looked at me, flexed his eyeballs and said, "Zen Racquetball."

Now, up to this point, I would have characterized my approach to racquetball as well, reckless abandon. Hit the ball as hard as you can as low as you can, and grunt real loud like you’re pulling a muscle. The fact that he had a name for his strategy, even if it really had nothing to do with Zen was impressive. I was all ears.

The secret to Zen Racquetball, he said, was to expend as little energy as possible while at the same time forcing your opponent to expend every ounce of energy he has ever produced in his life until his lungs explode. This is done by remaining in the center of the court as much as possible, and casually hitting the ball to the opposite side of the court that your opponent is in. Alternate shots continuously, making sure your opponent has to reach high and bend low constantly. Control your shot and conserve your energy. Above all, conserve energy.

This made sense, and I determined immediately to try a similar approach. He had let slip earlier about an accident he had been involved in, something involving a large rope, an anchor, a trawler off the Gulf Coast and his knee being shattered. I decided to hit every ball high, forcing him to jump up during every volley until his knee popped. Hey, I was tired of losing. Now, this strategy paid off to the degree that I started scoring in double figures, but his knee never did give out and I never did win. As far as I can remember, we played for over five years and I still never beat that son-of-a-gun. I did, however, manage to blow out my knee. It still hurts, and I haven’t played racquetball since ninety-one.

Bruce and I drifted apart eventually. I got caught up in dating, marriage, and two children and just never had the time to play. But I learned three valuable things from him, and I remember them to this day.

One, of course, was humility. Lose consistently for five years straight to the same guy, and you are bound to learn that. Two, approach life like he plays racquetball. Keep your balance, keep your opponents off balance, and never let them control the game. And three, don’t mess with Zen anything. If a robber says, "This is Zen Robbery," hand over your wallet. You haven’t got a chance. If the cafe­teria serves a Zen Taco, buy two. And if your racquetball partner plays Zen Racquetball, tell Bruce — after you lose — that Tom Rice, the Zen Parent says hello.

Tom Rice
Gosport, Indiana

BUT WE WON …

I’m not sure if I’m asking in the right place, but this year at national doubles my partner, Gail Schafer, and I won the gold in Women’s 55+. We defeated Jo Kenyon and Lola Marcus, but in the magazine it said we were unchallenged. If we would have lost that match we would have only gotten a silver, so I’m sure it’s a mistake. Can this be corrected? It was quite an achievement and I hate to have it taken away. Thank you.

Joy Desantis
North Hollywood, California

A tricky question, with an equally complicated answer. Even though the USRA recently upped its "limit" for the number of divisions allowed at National Doubles to three – Jo Kenyon, technically, ended up in four (4) divisions for the purposes of your one match. She was placed in: 1) Mixed 55+ w/Ken Moore (3rd); 2) Mixed 60+ w/Jay Krevsky (1st); 3) Women’s 60+ w/Lola Marcus (unchallenged); 4) Women’s 55+ w/Lola Marcus (2nd).

By entering the W60+ – and being the ONLY entrants – Jo and Lola were automatically entitled to that division win, unchallenged. For the purposes of providing the four of you with some competition, the "drop-down" into 55+ was allowed. BUT – Jo Kenyon could NOT medal in four (4) divisions, and she chose to accept the W60+ unchallenged gold medal instead of the W55+ silver.

So, since you and Gail were, originally, the sole entrants into the WS5+ division, the only way to stay "within the rules" of division limits was to cite your win as unchallenged in the official top-eight results, thereby listing Jo Kenyon in only three divisions of play. In the higher age divisions, it’s possible to make accommodations to enable play, but when all is said and done, those actions still have to fit the structured limits that apply to everyone.

THANKS DOC

It was with great sadness that I read the last issue. As I thumbed through it I recognized a familiar face, and as I read further I was deeply saddened to find out that Pat Deighan had passed away. You see I am proudly one of "Doc’s" disciples.

I can remember many a day that he hauled the neighborhood gang down to...
the "Y" for a day of racquetball. And when we couldn't get on the courts we would simply head down to the Barrington Ridge Court Club (otherwise known as the basement at Dr. Deighan's house) and hit it around down there. We would play with ping pong paddles, cut off tennis racquets and anything else we could get our hands on. Us kids battled it out all through our school years and into early adulthood.

Unfortunately I left Northern Ohio for South Florida in 1979 and although The Deighans and I have kept in touch I really never had an opportunity to truly express my gratitude to "Doc" for giving me the opportunity to learn and to play a game that ultimately has become my livelihood as a court club owner. In this day and age of failed sports role models the world is truly going to be a little less enriched with the passing of this man. For he was not only a great player and promoter of the sport that I dearly love, but more importantly he was a kind, gentle, patient man and the type of father that I only hope I can be.

I want his family to know that I share in their loss and will always cherish the fond memories of the days spent with and around their father, grandfather & husband. Whether it was playing racquetball, swimming in their pool or just admiring his beautiful "bonsai" landscapes, the memories will last a lifetime. Thanks for those memories and thanks for sharing such a great man with the rest of us.

Please accept the enclosed check in the amount of $100.00 as a donation to the portable court in the name of: Friends of Patrick "Doc" Deighan.

Geoff Hunter
Naples, Florida

TOURNEY TURNOFF

I don't play in many racquetball tournaments. Right now I'm trying to convince my old doubles partner to play -- but at the same time I'm trying to also talk myself into it. So I'm wondering what is it that turns people off from tournaments. I've seen rule changes through the years but none that have made tournaments any easier to tolerate.

One thing that drives me crazy is all the time outs. They slow the tournament down and are open doors for the whiners. I've always felt if someone is having a hot streak, my shot-making and competition should stop their momentum, not a time out.

Secondly is officiating. Referees should only be necessary for the semis and finals -- all other matches should be self-officiated. If there is doubt on a ball or a play, play it over. Most of the time cheaters get their way with refs anyway. I hate to ref and I feel sorry for the tournament director who has to constantly beg for refs.

Next, it's the idea of paying $40 for one event and losing first round. If you've traveled 100 miles, paid for a hotel and are out by Friday, gee that just makes you want to hurry up and play next week -- not ! For example, there are many "in-between" players who are too good for the A level but not good enough for the Open. So you're made to play in the Open, get your first round loss, and lose the desire to play in a tournament again.

I suggest double elimination play. Your first loss drops you down into the loser bracket and you have the chance to work your way through that. Then the winner of the loser's bracket plays the winner of the original bracket. With two losses, you're out. You could put your Open/A players in one division this way and put your B/C players the same way, and so on.

Lastly make tournaments less expensive. Do away with the food and possibly the drinks. Have the sponsors give money or have them give dinners for prizes instead of trophies. I think we all have enough of those. My husband never minds me playing in a tournament if I bring home a couple of free dinners somewhere. What can you do with a trophy?

Not only am I thinking of myself here but I'm thinking of the younger player. They need to learn sportsmanship which self-officiating can help. They may get discouraged if they lose the first round time and time again. Do the parents have $40 for themselves to enter and, say, another $30 for their kids? I know I don't. Racquetball is a great game and I love to compete but if tournaments stay as they are I'll probably continue to play in them once a year and four times a week at the club like most people.

Sandy Reep
Jacksonville Beach, Florida

Want more Racquetball on TV?
Here's your chance!

Tune in to ESPN2 for the 1997 Promus Hotels U.S. OPEN on Thursday, February 12, at:
9:30 pm (Pacific)
10:30 pm (Mountain)
11:30 pm (Central)
12:30 am (Eastern, the 13th)

This broadcast will be Nielsen rated, so we need as many households tuned in as possible! Then, if you like what you see -- and want more -- write, fax or email your letter to:

ESPN
Attn: Steve Risser/Mike Ryan
ESPN Plaza
935 Middle Street
Bristol, CT 06010
Fax: 860-585-2418
Form: http://ESPN.SportsZone.com/editors/studios/espn-let.html
Email: ESPNET1@espn.com

This is a great opportunity for you to have a direct impact on the future of televised racquetball, so make a difference! Tune in for the production, then write ESPN asking for more!
THE GAME OF RACQUETBALL
By Marshall Friedman

I play racquetball for exercise and fun
And it’s not that important who lost or won
Good hard competition and honesty is the game
An exciting sport that helps keep you sane

Some players bend the rules & get uptight
And argue & hassle and that’s not right
We all have problems we don’t care to report
And aren’t looking for more when we get on the court

So your serve was an ace & he called it short
And you think he’s a cheater & lousy sport
You made a fabulous get extending every ounce
But he told you for sure it was a double bounce

He goes the wrong way and your pass shot is really keen
But he crashes into you on purpose & calls it a screen
Now you’re angry and there’s a churning in your gut
Oh how you would love to give him a doughnut

Don’t use short serves, hinders & double bounces & cheat
If your shots are high and you can’t make a kill
It’s not your opponents fault, it’s your lack of skill

Learn the real rules & enjoy the game more
That’s more important than any score
An opponent’s good shot or get deserves your praise
Instead of pouting with animated craze

Practice your weakness & learn from each mistake
And give all of your opponents a fair shake
Shake hands after a loss as well as victory
Good sports are winners always; that’s history!

On page 10 of the Nov/Dec. issue, the wrong photo accompanied the story by Christina Lewendahl. The young lady pictured was Megan Bals (above), not Ms. Lewendahl (right). Sorry for the mix-up ladies!

Also on the team, but not pictured, is Vanessa Tulao who had to return home from the camp early and missed the team photo session.
No racquet company, except Pro Kennex, can offer you power, control, shock reduction and vibration dampening combined into one racquet without sacrificing one benefit for another. So how do we do it? KINETIC System Technology.

We add a second energy source to the frame of the racquet that increases power, enlarges the sweet spot, balances the weight of the racquet, reduces shock and almost eliminates vibration.

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Other manufactures claim to be the best with design features. Pro Kennex proves it through technology*. And who's gonna argue with science?

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* Pro Kennex now gives you two longer reasons to experience kinetics. The Kinetic Diamond 15g (22") and the Kinetic Diamond 5g (21.5").
In its second year, the Promus Hotel Corporation U.S. OPEN, presented by American Express, offered even more than its debut delivered in '96. More excitement, more rivalry, more action and more upsets. While Michelle Gould breezed through the WIRT draw to successfully reclaim her U.S. OPEN crown, Boston native Cliff Swain re-established himself as the IRT's top player simply by reaching the men's finals against defending champion Sudsy Monchik.

Swain entered the tour's fifth pro stop trailing two-time defending IRT Player of the Year Sudsy Monchik by a mere 25 points in the overall standings. A semifinalist last year, Swain stood to take over the lead by finishing either first or second. The IRT standings are based on a 364-day window of competition and, since Monchik had captured last year's U.S. OPEN crown, he could not significantly increase his point total. But, Swain had lots of room for improvement – Monchik earned 457 points for his 1996 victory, while the Bostonian had only tallied 277 with his semifinal loss. With the math on his side, Swain was guaranteed the coveted #1 ranking if he made it to the final in Memphis this year — win or lose.

January — February 1998
For Starters

The round of 64 kicked-off on the portable glass court with a premier match-up: two-time pro champion Sudsy Monchik vs. seven-time pro champion Marty Hogan. A capacity crowd of over 1,100 fans were delighted with one amazing shot after another by two of the best-ever players. Monchik prevailed in three straight (11-6, 11-4, 11-6), leaving the crowd begging for more.

Ohio's David Hamilton provided one of the biggest upsets of the first round with his 2-11, 11-3, 11-3, 17-15 victory over 10th-seeded Tony Jelso. Also in the first round, qualifier and Canadian National Team member Jacques Demers started his run to the round of 16 with a tough 12-10, 12-10, 11-2 win over 15th seed James Mulcock. But by far, qualifier Eric Muller's 14-12, 11-6, 11-2 victory over former pro tour titleist and seventh seed Mike Ray was the first real shocker of the event.

Muller's second-round opponent was another National Team member from the Great White North (Canada), Mike Ceresia. A veteran in many ways, Ceresia started strong but couldn't hold on for the victory and fell 8-11, 11-3, 11-5, 1-11, 12-10.

Facing Derek Robinson in the round of 16, the Harvard law student again pulled-off the upset, 9-11, 11-5, 11-3,
6-11, 11-7, to earn his first-ever quarterfinal appearance. Meanwhile, top four seeds Monchik, Swain, Andy Roberts and John Ellis, respectively, each advanced into the quarterfinals along with 11th seed Adam Karp, fifth seed Jason Mannino and ninth seed Woody Clouse.

**The Eight Count**

Ellis and Mannino opened the quarterfinal round with a thriller. The two had just exchanged the fourth and fifth spots in the IRT standings due to Ellis’ strong play in the first four events of the season, and the crowd was well aware of the intense showing they were about to witness.

The 5-foot-6 “Ellie” took games one and two by the scores of 11-9, 11-8, but was hampered by a pulled left gluteus muscle suffered early in the first game.

“I did it in the first five points of the match,” Ellis said of his injury. “After that, anytime I lunged with my forehand, or any movement with my left leg going forward, I was feeling the pain every time – my drive serve was gone.”

Mannino, trash-talking to the crowd and his opponent, took advantage of the situation and won the next two games, 11-2, 11-8 to knot the match at 2-2. In game five, Mannino took a 6-0 lead only to see the lightning-quick Ellie tie it up at 7-7. Then, down 9-8 to Ellis and the crowd firmly against him, the Staten Island, N.Y., native pushed out to a 10-9 advantage. But the injured yet calm Ellis closed out the match with three straight points to win 12-10.

When asked how much the injury effected the match, Ellis responded, “It wasn’t as bad as it would be against some other players. I was lucky that I was playing against an opponent where the style that I play him was close to the style I was forced to play due to the injury. If you try to play Jason and rip everything, he’ll kill you. He’ll beat you three straight because he’s the best re-killer in the game.”

Ellis wasn’t bothered by Mannino’s mind games, either. “He likes to talk a lot and that’s just his style and that gets him going,” Ellis said of his rival. “He likes to have the odds against him.”

Following the match, Mannino told the crowd, “Whether you’re rooting for me or against me, I don’t care. We’re here for all of you guys either way. Thanks for coming out.” The crowd roared.

Next up was Memphis’ own Andy Roberts versus the U.S. National Team’s Adam Karp. From the start, Roberts (aka. The King) controlled the match and eventually won, 11-1, 11-8, 11-9. “Andy played a great match,” Karp said to the crowd following the match. “He was a little bit too much for me. I didn’t quite have it today.”

When Roberts took the microphone, he gave credit to someone else for his victory.

“I’d like to thank my five-year old daughter, Lauren,” he said of his pint-sized, sideline inspiration. “I heard her rooting for me in here.”
Even in defeat, Karp's play was dazzling. "He's so quick and gets to so many balls that my game plan was just to make him dive in the deep part of the court," Roberts said of Karp. "I didn't want him diving in the front. I thought I was spinning him pretty good - hitting a lot of wide-angle cross court shots."

While a satisfied hometown crowd enjoyed its part in Roberts' victory, Swain and Muller entered center court.

Tabbed "Mr. Cinderella" by RACQUETBALL tour writer Todd O'Neil*, Muller was outmatched from the start and was pounded 11-5, 11-7, 11-2. Following the match, and despite an impressive string of wins at the Open to his credit, Mr. Cinderella jokingly admitted that Swain's gameplan had been, at least, straightforward. "He didn't come here to lose to me!"

Crowd favorite Sudsy Monchik headlined the evening's finale as he dismantled last year's dark horse semi-finalist Woody Clouse, 11-6, 11-7, 11-6.

The Top Four

Longtime rivals Swain and Roberts met in a rematch of last year's semi-finals, in which the Memphis native had been victorious. But this was a more determined Swain than a year ago.

The first game went Roberts way 11-8, before Swain got hot and cruised through the final three, 11-5, 11-9, 11-5.

"I really don't have a lot to say about the match," Roberts told the crowd. "I've got to go back to the drawing board. I was very discouraged. I thought Cliff served very well today, but I was very disappointed in my play. Next year is my last year ... and I promise you that I'll play better next year than I did today." (see pg. 19 sidebar)

Swain told the crowd, "Even though he (Roberts) has played better, I think you guys saw that there was no way he was going to quit on you today - I was kind of disappointed in that. I was hoping he'd fold for me, but no such luck. I'm hoping to play a little better tomorrow and I guarantee that I will. Tomorrow is going to be a great day."

By making it to the finals, Swain had taken over the tour's top ranking, regardless of Monchik's results.

"I really didn't think I played any better than last year," Swain explained, "the difference was that I wanted it this year. Last year, I was too distracted. This year, the only thing on my mind is winning."

The other semifinal featured a somewhat injured Ellis against a determined Monchik. Although closely contested, the match went to Monchik, despite the fact that Ellis jump-started each game with a significant advantage. Final score: Monchik, 11-7, 11-7, 11-9.

"I got off to early leads in every game, just didn't finish them for whatever reason," Ellis said following his fourth semifinal appearance in the last five

*For more from one of the most colorful characters on the tour, read Todd O'Neil's "sideline commentary" on the U.S. OPEN — online at www.racqmag.com
Everyone knows that greater racquet length increases power. But it's greater length plus greater mass that maximizes power. So instead of merely lengthening the handle, Wilson engineers developed Stretch Technology, which completely redesigns the entire racquet to increase both length and mass.

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Virtually eliminates torsional bending at impact to stabilize the frame and improve accuracy.
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LONGER RACQUETS
NOT CREATED EQUAL.

107-SQUARE INCH HITTING AREA
The expanded hitting area and longer overall length dramatically increase a Stretch racquet's power.

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Engineered into the frame to absorb string vibration on contact. No threat of arm fatigue.

V-FAN STRING PATTERN
Exclusive V-Fan pattern elongates the mainstrings and broadens them in the upper third of the racquet for explosive power.

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events. "I'll take some time tonight and think about it. He proved that he can come from behind and win and he did that today."

Monchik remedied the early deficits. "I guess I just kicked myself ... and said, 'You've got to play some ball here.' In the third game, he had me 8-0. With a little luck and a couple of good serves, the game came around. In the first two (games), we were both kind of slowed down by the pace of everything – the cheerleaders, Elvis and all the hype. It made us play sloppy."

For Ellie, one of the tour’s most respected players, his tournament was over, except for the socializing. He quipped, "I guess I'm partying tonight (at the Party with the Pros)."

**Familiar Territory**

So, as fate would have it, Swain and Monchik met in the finals for the fifth consecutive time this season. Swain held a 13-9 edge in their overall pro match-ups, 10-7 in finals.

Sudsy went up 2-0 in the first game before a 7-2 run by the Boston lefty switched the lead to 7-4, Swain. Monchik cut the lead to 7-6 and then the wheels fell off. Swain destroyed Monchik, hobbled from a leg injury, from that point forward — literally outscoring Staten Island’s pride and joy 26-5 to close out the match, 11-6, 11-2, 11-3.

A disgusted Monchik stated to the capacity crowd, "I think he (Swain) knows it and I know it – that was the easiest win he'll ever get against me in his entire life. That will never happen again."

A fan yelled back, "You're still the best Sudsy!" He might still be the best, but he was no longer No. 1.

When asked about his injury, Monchik answered, "It happens, it's sports. I was alright, got a little injured at the end of the first game and then kind of lost everything - lost movement, lost confidence."

"The injury really takes away a lot mentally and obviously physically. I didn't know how to handle it. I tried to take an injury timeout but by then it was too late. Cliff played great. He felt it, he tasted it. You can't bring a knife to a gunfight and that's kind of what I felt I was doing today."

Almost speechless, Swain told the fans, "I'm back. It's been a long time since I've played as well as I'm capable of, and boy does it feel good."

"I just tried to go out there and have a blast," Swain told the media. "Life's short. I became very used to dominating and I got very spoiled by it. I took it for granted and it sent me sliding. It took me slipping to No. 2 to make me realize how much I love being No. 1 more than anything other than my family and health."
An underlying factor all week had been Swain’s contract negotiations with his current sponsor, Head Racquet Sports, and others. One of the “others” was rumored to be Ektelon.

“There’s all kinds of contract stuff going on,” the happy Bostonian said following his title-winning performance. “I have quite a few offers. My contract (with Head) is up December 31, 1997.”

Swain finished with a “no comment” on who he was in negotiations with and a big fat smile.

About his $10,000 winnings, “I’m going to go spend it all on Beale Street tonight, so come on down.”

**Ladies Lineup**

Well, Michelle Gould won another pro stop. Surprised? Neither was anyone else.

Even though the final had been touted by observers as the one that might have upset potential, Gould downed a spirited Jackie Paraiso in three straight games of 12-10, 11-5, 11-4 to earn her second Promus Hotels U.S. OPEN crown. The Boise, Idaho resident never lost a game in the course of her five matches, doled out five doughnuts and won each game by an average score of 11-4.

Early on, the round of 32 had been absent of any true upsets. Qualifiers Chris Evon and Caryn McKinney advanced past sixth seed Molly O’Brien (13-15, 11-6, 11-6, 11-1) and seventh seed Kersten Hallander (9-11, 11-2, 11-2, 11-3), respectively. Evon and McKinney, a semifinalist at last year’s OPEN, are far too talented and experienced to be considered underdogs. Oh, and Gould defeated Canadian junior champion Karina Odegard, 11-0, 11-2, 11-0 (see pg. 46).

**The Sweeps**

Only one of the round of 16 match-ups deviated from a standard, three-game sweep – second-seeded Cheryl Gudinas vs. 15th seeded Christie Van Hees. The 1997 Canadian National Singles Champion stole game one from Gudinas 11-9 and appeared to be as agile and accurate as ever.

But Gudinas, the tour’s second-ranked player, rebounded with some good returns and dished out some large helpings of pinches into both corners to take the final three games 11-5, 11-5, 11-3.

“She tried a lob serve to the forehand and it was coming off of the back wall and brought back bad memories of the (U.S. National) Doubles,” Gudinas said of Van Hees’ serves. “But I’ve been working on that, they were setups and I was able to take advantage of that.”

**Promus Renews Sponsorship**

At the event “Party with the Pros,” Promus Hotel Corporation CEO Ray Schultz made a surprise presentation to event promoter Doug Ganim — announcing that Promus Hotels had renewed its sponsorship support of the U.S. Open through the year 2001!

At left, Schultz is thanked for his support by Michelle Gould and Laura Fento. Photo: Vicky Hughes.
On this day, it was Gudinas’ serves that provided the difference. “The hard-Z to her forehand was working great,” she said. “I’ve always had success playing her forehand more than her backhand. That was my plan. Even though it looked like I kept hitting that hard-Z to her forehand, I mixed in a variety of other serves just to keep her off.”

Gudinas left the court with an even higher amount of respect for the champion from British Columbia. “I told her afterward, ‘If it makes you feel any better, I lost a lot of sleep over you last night.’ She short hops the ball, she’s aggressive but just a little inconsistent.”

McKinney, the 1989 women’s pro tour champion, continued her trek through the lower half of the bracket by sweeping 10th-ranked Lydia Hammock 11-3, 11-8, 11-2. The win setup a rematch of last year’s semifinals between the crafty veteran and Gudinas.

“Oh, I want to play her (McKinney),” Gudinas said. “I’ve been looking forward to playing her. She proved that she can come onto our tour at any time and beat the players that are (ranked) eighth, ninth and tenth. I want to show that she’s not going to come in here and beat me.”

Meanwhile, Gould drummed out Kim Machiran 11-0, 11-2, 11-0.

Four Move Ahead

In the quarterfinals, third-seeded Jackie Paraiso, who easily handled Mindy Hartstein 11-1, 11-1, 11-2 in the 16’s, advanced by putting away Chris Evon 11-4, 11-8, 11-3. Earlier Evon had smashed through Lorraine Galloway in the 16’s, 11-0, 11-3, 11-1.

Fifth seed Laura Fenton was upended by 13th seed Marci Drexler 5-11, 11-7, 11-5, 8-11, 11-7. Drexler, one of a few women to have defeated the great Gould, appeared exceptionally well conditioned and mentally tough. She had made her mark on this year’s OPEN, but could she beat the most successful women’s player ever?

Almost forgot ... Gould was victorious over last season’s Rookie of the Year Randi Friedman 11-6, 11-0, 11-7 to move into the semifinals.

The last quarterfinal, between Gudinas and McKinney, almost played out as an exact replica of last year’s match between the two.

Gudinas took the first two games (11-6, 11-9) before McKinney came back to win the third 11-9. Would the Atlanta attorney push the match to a decisive fifth game, just as she had at the Inaugural U.S. OPEN?

As it turned out, no. Gudinas stayed mentally on her game and closed out the match with an 11-5 fourth-game win.
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**Top Three and a Lefty**
The first semifinal contest featured the tour's Nos. 2 and 3 players, respectively, Gudinas and Paraiso. "It's always tough playing Cheryl," Paraiso said. "I always have to be on guard and play my best."

After splitting the first two games, with Gudinas losing the first 11-7 and winning the second 11-6, Paraiso changed to a high lob serve to the backhand.

"That was a great change," Paraiso, current world and national doubles champion with her twin sister Joy MacKenzie, said "I just decided that I would change something and see if it worked. It's always nice to go to a lob and I know it worked before against her."

The move clearly worked as Gudinas displayed obvious frustration. "She didn't use them early," Gudinas said of the well-placed serves. "It's hard because you're thinking about whether they are going to go out (of the court) and you're focused so much on that you can't really step up and short hop them like you normally would."

Paraiso took game three by the score of 11-4, later, Gudinas' shot bounced out of the backside corner in the fourth game for match point at 11-5.

The remaining semifinal opened like all of Gould's previous matches, with a quick lead. But Drexler pulled to 8-8 in the first game and brought the majority of the crowd support with her. Unfortunately for the Maryland native, Gould pulled away with a tough drive-Z serve to the lefty's forehand, for an 11-8 first-game win.

Second game, same result. Drexler even seemed to control Gould at times but couldn't move beyond another 8-8 tie and the "Boise Boomer" went up two games to zero with another 11-8 win.

Drexler, unafraid and energized, continued to come at Gould with everything in her arsenal. The lefty never stopped until Gould rolled the final points and won the last game 11-4. A dejected warrior, Drexler told the crowd, "Well, obviously, I'm pretty disappointed. I had my opportunities and I pretty much dumped them into the ground."

"Yea, I beat her a couple of times," Drexler said following her match. "But I just didn't come up with the shots when I needed them. I think I got too far behind then I'd come back and play really good and then just couldn't hold on."

"I've played her a lot of times in the past and one of the things she does a lot of is momentum change," Gould said of her athletic opponent. "She can go from extreme highs to extreme lows in a matter of points. As a player, I've learned that the best thing I can do is just hang in there and wait for those high's and low's. I have to stick with what I do best and not add to the emotional overload on the court and try to remain calm."
"She's been giving everybody fits and that's Marci. She's a great addition to the tour and I'm sure she's just going to keep getting better as her confidence grows."

About the drive-Z serves that seemed so effective, Gould responded, "If I left it off of the back wall, it gave her a huge setup. But I think it was jamming her pretty effectively."

**No Upset in the Wind**

Now it was time for Gould's usual three-game thrashing in the finals ... maybe?

Paraiso, who defeating Gould at last season's pro stop in Arlington, Va., didn't seem to care about the 6-footer's tour dominance over the past several years as she jumped out to a 5-0 lead.

Gould scored a couple and then a Paraiso pinch resulted in a side-out. Two skipped return-of-serves and the Californian was up 7-2. Then 8-2. The crowd loved every pass and pinch by the underdog. It was the best women's racquetball of the tournament! The mighty Gould was actually trailing someone! But not for long.

Down 8-4, Gould got hot and took over the lead at 9-8. Paraiso scored two more on a backhand pinch and a Gould skip for a 10-9 lead. On the next serve, Gould's follow through on a powerful backhand pinch-kill solidly cracked into Paraiso's nose! Following an injury timeout to try and stop the bleeding, a dazed Paraiso re-entered the glass court.

With Gould serving, it was all Paraiso could do to see the ball and not think about the pain. The result was three straight points to close out the first game, 12-10.

The next two games were vintage Gould – quick and painless. At least less painful that taking an elbow in the nose. She won by the scores of 11-5, 11-4, respectively.

"It definitely would have been a different match if I would have got that first one (game) under my belt," Paraiso said to the media after the match. "She started to get some serves in and that sort of took my momentum away a little bit."

Gould agreed that the match might have turned out a little different had Paraiso won the first game. "I started out kind of colder than cold. I kept telling myself to remain calm. You're going to get this out of your system and you're going to start fighting back. You're going to be fine. She plays better as her confidence level progresses. Letting her get out to an 8-2 lead on me was extremely dangerous. I got it together at the right time and I think I kind of took the air out of her by winning the first game."

According to Gould, winning the U.S. OPEN means "The whole entire world. It means everything to me and to be able to win it twice is something that you only dream about -- it's the biggest event there is."
INTERNATIONAL FLAVOR  
This year’s U.S. OPEN attracted athletes from across the globe, with large contingents from five countries in addition to representatives of 46 states.

Canada: Mike Ceresia; Jacques Demers (against Cliff Swain, below/foreground); Jeff Desilpe; Jose Grand’Maitre; Mike Green; Francis Guillemette; Brian Istate; Amanda MacDonald; Adam MacKinnon; Cindy McTaggart; Tom O’Brien; Corey Osborne; Lori Jane Powell; Simon Roy; Jennifer Saunders; Chantal Turgeon; Christie Van Hees; Debbie Ward.

Mexico: Diana Almeida; Oviedo Baca; Pablo Baca; Javier Moreno.

Japan: Sayaka Amida; Naoko Kato; Matthew Lands; Itsuko Matono; Hirotada Nagase; Kazushige Oikawa; Kenji Onoki.

Venezuela: Fabian Balmon; Roberto Buschini; Carlos Falkenhagen; Pedro Hernandez; Juan Lopez; Juan Silva.

HOGAN BOWS OUT  
Keeping his motives to himself throughout his Men’s Open quarterfinal, Marty Hogan offered his opponent a surprise advance at 10-6 in their tiebreaker. Hogan defeated Luis Bustillos 15-13 in the first game, then lost the second 11-15 to go into a tiebreaker. Then, serving for the match, Hogan took a time out, smiled at the crowd and informed the referee that he intended to forfeit.

Scheduled to attend a fundraiser back in his hometown of St. Louis, Missouri, Hogan opted to step aside gracefully and allow Bustillos to continue, rather than take the chance of winning the match and later logging a “no-show” forfeit.

U.S. OPEN Amatuer Invitational [Level 5]

MO
Aaron Embry (San Diego, Calif.) def. Ryan Stater (Dodge City, Kan.) 15-9, 15-8

M25+: Kevin Graham (Fargo, N.D.) def. Mike Locker (St. Paul, Minn.) forfeit

M30+: Dan Llera (Nevada, Del.) def. Brad McCunniff (Cedar Falls, Iowa) 15-9, 15-6

M35+: Mitch Smith (Camp Hill, Pa.) def. Bobby Haab (Madison, Conn.) 15-12, 7-15, 11-8

M40+: Terry Runhart (Oklahoma City, Okla.) def. Mitch Smith (Camp Hill, Pa.) 4-15, 15-6, 11-8

M45+: Matt Layton (Jacksonville, Fla.) def. Dave Kowanda (Orangeburg, NY) 15-3, 15-11

M50+: Rick Fueri (Clearwater, Fla.) def. Greg Hasty (Phoenix, Ariz.) 6-15, 15-9, 11-9

M55+: Glenn Allen (Virginia Beach, Va.) def. Ed Sword (Louisville, Ky.) 15-10, 15-12

M60+: Jerry Stoltniann (Mecquio, Wis.) def. Jerry Holley (Northridge, Calif.) 15-7, 15-2

M65+: John O’Donnell (Champlian, Ill.) def. Dan Maxey (Chesterfield, Mo.) 15-9, 15-14

M70+: Joe Lamber (Dallas, Texas) def. Earl Acuff (Asheville, N.C.) 15-6, 15-6

M75+: Earl Acuff (Asheville, N.C.) def. Steve Shear (Venice, Fla.) 15-3, 15-4

M80+: Lori Jane Powell (Asheville, N.C.) def. Lisa Hejman (Citrus Heights, Calif.) 15-11, 15-9

W25+: Michelle Wirag (Lerone, Md.) def. Rosy Torres (Mexico) 15-6, 9-15, 11-6

W30+: Debbie Tsinger (Canoga Park, Calif.) def. Holly Remen (Alex, N.C.) 15-5, 15-10

W35+: Debbie Tsinger (Canoga Park, Calif.) def. Denise McKinley (Phoenix, Ariz.) 15-5, 15-9


W45+: Shelley Ogden (Cincinnati, Ohio) def. Judy Sands (Cedar Grove, N.J.) 15-1, 15-11

W50+: Margaret Hoff (Park Ridge, Ill.) def. Gwen Benham (Little Rock, Ark.) 15-6, 15-3

W55+: Jo Kenyon (Tallahassee, Fla.) def. Mildred Swain (Memphis, Miss.) 15-14, 15-12

W60+: Jo Kenyon (Tallahassee, Fla.) unchallenged winner

W65+: Lola Markus (Park Ridge, Ill.) unchallenged winner

W70+: Mary Lou Acuff (Asheville, N.C.) unchallenged winner

Amateur Age/Skill


M25: C/D Jesus Manuel Inigo (Hialeah, Fla.) def. Roland Labelle (Saco, Maine) 15-4, 15-5, 11-3


M35: A/C Peter Kochis (Olathe, Okla.) def. Rob Jamison (Cordova, Tenn.) 15-11, 15-12


M45: A/B Peter Kochis (Olathe, Okla.) def. Ray Maly (Glendale Heights, Ill.) 15-12, 15-9

M55: A/B George Tashie (Cordova, Tenn.) def. Don Davis (Peoria, Ill.) 15-2, 15-7

M55: C/D Norm Copeland (Selma, Ala.) def. Kenneth Davis (Memphis, Tenn.) 15-10, 15-7


W25: A/B Ann Doucette (Beverly, Mass.) def. Gina Fulner (Fort Worth, Texas) 15-3, 15-2


W35: A/B Lori Edmonds (Lincoln, Neb.) def. Debbie Mearin (Great Falls, Va.) 15-5, 15-9


W45: A/B Kay McCarty (Memphis, Tenn.) def. Margaret Hoff (Park Ridge, Ill.) 15-11, 15-9

W45: C/D Martine Sommer (Coxen, N.C.) def. Margaret Hoff (Park Ridge, Ill.) 15-4, 15-5

W55: A/B Pauline Kelly (Park Ridge, Ill.) def. B.J. Calloway (Buffalo, Ga.) 9-15, 15-6, 11-1
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The most-talked-about story of the Ektelon 30th U.S. National Doubles Championships, presented by Penn Racquet Sports, centered as much around those who didn’t win as those who did.

Defending champions Todd O’Neil and Derek Robinson didn’t win the men’s open, and lost their spots on the U.S. national team in the process.

The nearly-unbeatable, two-time defending champions – Michelle Gould and Cheryl Gudinas – didn’t even win a match in the women’s open team qualifier.

The men’s and women’s open division runners-up all earned appointments to the U.S. Team, but didn’t win their final matches.

Still, believe it or not, there were some winners. It had been three years since their last national doubles win, so identical twins Joy MacKenzie and Jackie Paraiso were ready to defeat unseeded Yesenia Delbusto and Kersten Hallander 15-4, 15-12. After a two-year hiatus for Adam Karp and Bill Sell, the pair was able to reclaim their title by narrowly holding off the shy-and-retiring Florida team of Tim Hansen and James Lorello, 15-4, 11-15, 11-9.

In the First Round?

Yes, it’s true. Top seeds Gould and Gudinas suffered a huge upset in their first-round match. Although the WIRT’s #1 and #2 singles players, respectively, won the first game 15-11 against challengers Yesenia Delbusto and Kersten Hallander, a surprise was in store. The unseeded tandem turned it around to capture the second game 15-13, combining Hallander’s precise shooting and quickness with Delbusto’s strength and power.

But the champs would bounce back and take the tiebreaker, right? Not this time. Goliath fell 11-8.

“I’ve never been hugged so much in my life,” Hallander said following the monumental upset. “(Yesenia) was in there the whole way and I really think that carried me.”

Delbusto, the 1996 B-level skill national champion, admitted that she felt the pressure of playing the defending champs in the beginning, “But after that, I got into the game and I knew we could do it. We were playing smart and killing the ball.”

Hallander, unsure of a partner until a few weeks before the event, stated that, “I picked up Yesenia at the last minute. I’ve been keeping tabs on her down in Florida through some friends. When people were asking me who I was playing with, I’d tell them that I’ve got a ringer.”
But even a ringer wasn't going to dethrone the "Queens of Racquetball" without a little help. Well aware that Gould would kill just about any less-than-perfect serves, Hallander decided to send a high lob to Gudinas along the right-side glass wall.

"It really just occurred to me about an hour before the match started," the San Diego resident said of serving to Gudinas.

After several key points went to the underdogs due to poor (or no) returns by Gudinas, Gould switched to the right side. "That was my idea," Gudinas said of the switch. "I felt very ineffective. I was having a hard time seeing the ball." But the serves continued to head the Gudinas' way and, eventually, the champs were ousted.

According to Gould, "One of the things that comes with the territory [being the national champions] is that everybody is always gunning for you. Sometimes people show up and rise to the occasion, other times they don't. Today, that team did."

But, as with all great champions, the sport's most dominant player guaranteed that "We'll be back next year and nobody's going to want to be our first-round opponents." No doubt...

Meanwhile, almost overshadowed by the magnitude of Hallander and Delbusto's upset, #2 seeded Joy MacKenzie and Jackie Paraiso were marching steadily through the lower-half of the bracket.

After downing three-time national doubles champion Malia Bailey and hometown favorite Holly Gray 15-7, 15-6 in the quarterfinals, the twins easily handled Robin Levine and Kim Russell 15-7, 15-7 to advance into the finals and earn re-appointments to the national team.

The other semifinal featured tournament Cinderellas Delbusto and Hallander against #4 seeds Lisa Hjelm and Karl McDonough of Citrus Heights, Calif. In an extremely heated and emotional match, Hallander and Delbusto stayed on course 3-15, 15-5, 11-1 to earn their first-ever appointments to the U.S. National Team and move into the finals against the reigning world doubles champions.

In the finals, MacKenzie and Paraiso cruised through the first game 15-4, before their opponents put up a fight. After digging themselves into an 8-2 hole in game two, Delbusto and Hallander charged back to cut the lead to 8-6. Moments later it was only a 10-9 deficit, then tied at 10-10 and 11-11, before a streak by the twins ended the match, 15-12, on a hinder call.

"It didn't turn our way for the final match," said Hallander, who is ranked seventh on the WIRT, following the finale, "but we felt like we were there. We had our chances."

"I never thought we were going to make it this far – it's an incredible accomplishment," Delbusto said of their magnificent week.

The twins, who - according to Hallander - "have been playing together since they were in the womb," never swayed from their game plan.

"I felt pretty confident and I know Joy did too," Paraiso said. "We trained to play against Kersten but we didn't know anything about Yesenia." That's OK, neither did anyone else.

When asked about the pressure of the finals, Jackie said, "It was probably easier for Yesenia than anybody else on the court, she had nothing to lose."

If there were ever a final match without losers, it was this one.
**DOUBLES NOTEBOOK**

**Ch - Ch - Ch - Changes**

In response to growing numbers of die-hard requests for a third division in national doubles, the USRA Board of Directors approved a change which will become effective next year. In 1998, players will be able to enter a third division as long as it is a mixed doubles event. But, in order to control court demands (and keep scheduling as unaffected as possible), players in three divisions will only be able to compete in one consolation round. In this way there are essentially no changes in the number of matches guaranteed to each entrant (with two divisions, you have four guaranteed matches: your original entries and their corresponding consolation rounds; with three divisions, you still have four guaranteed matches: your original 3 entries, plus 1 consolation).

**Missing In Action ... for Good Reason!**

In 1985, he was the Boy's 18 and under champion. In 1994, he won the Men's 25+ division doubles title with none other than Marty Hogan. In 1997, he had every intention of being in Phoenix for National Doubles ... but got a little side-tracked at the last minute. Jeff Conine, Marlins first baseman, came to find out that the doubles weekend was solidly booked — by the World Series! A giant card of congratulations and good wishes was signed by participants at Doubles, and sent along to Jeff in time for the first game of the series and, as you know, the Marlins went on to win the championship!

**The Twin Thing**

It used to be that Joy MacKenzie and Jackie Paraiso were the only twins to pair up at national doubles, but no more. Three more sets were on hand in Phoenix: Cover models Michael Marie Hill and sister Johnnie Hill-Hudgins in Women's 50+; Wisconsin's Kelly and Kim Whalen (one from Madison, the other from Milwaukee) confused opponents in the Women's Open and 35+; and local Mesa pair Mark and Andy Warner played together in the Men's Skill division.

**By the Numbers ...**

The oldest player to enter the national doubles was Earl Acuff — at 79 — and the youngest was Zack Miller — at 14 — who played in the Men's Skill and Age divisions. Representatives from 36 states and the District of Columbia were on hand.

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**Drawing a Crowd**

The men's draw didn't offer as many surprises, but there were really no clear-cut favorites either. In the top half of the draw, top seeds O'Neil and Robinson overcame a tough Doug Eagle/Eric Muller pairing, 7-15, 15-12, 11-7 to move into the semifinals, while Hansen and Lorello, tabbed "the madmen of racquetball" by Arizona Republic sportswriter Jeff Metcalf, blasted past Bret Harnett and Bobby Rodriguez 15-9, 15-0.

In the bottom bracket, third-seeded current World Champions Karp and Sell held off Michael Bronfeld and Kelly Gelhaus 15-3, 15-7 to advance — where most expected their next opponents to be doubles legends Doug Ganim and Dan Obremski. But no one informed 18-and-under World Champion Rocky Carson and his partner James Mulcock that they were not favored to win.

The youngsters outplayed the vets 15-12, 15-14 in the last quarterfinal match-up. "We didn't come here just to compete," Carson said of the upset. "We came here to win."

"To get a partner like James (Mulcock), I feel like I've been blessed so I'll try to take advantage of it. The biggest thing was that we hit our shots at the end when it counted." Even with the confidence that Mulcock and Carson had acquired through their run to the semis, Sell and Karp had another agenda.

Last year, the world champions had been defeated by Ganim and Obremski while trying to defend their '95 title. They weren't going to be stopped until they were crowned again.

Carson and Mulcock were swept 15-2, 15-13, earning Sell and Karp their trip to the finals and a shot at redemption.

The other semifinal match turned into one of the week's finest. Facing defending champs O'Neil and Robinson, the "madmen" were out to avenge the past two years' losses to the team that had become their nemesis.

"Two years in a row, we've lost to those guys," Hansen said of his opponents. "We've been wanting this for a whole year."

The chest-bumping, trash-talking, linebacker-sized Floridians took it right to their rivals and won a 15-12, 15-9 decision to take their spots on the national team and in the men's open finals.

"We didn't force things," Lorello said of his team's key to victory.

"Usually when we play these guys, we try to force things. We were a little more patient and let them make the mistakes. The pressure was on them after they lost the first game."

The finals stage was set and the fans were split. On one side, there were those who enjoyed the shot-making, intense concentration and diving gets of Karp and Sell. On the other, there were those who were energized and amused by The Madmen's antics.

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January — February 1998
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No competitor comes close to the E-Force combination of 22-inch racquet and 22-inch mainstrings. Longer mainstrings mean more power, and only E-Force has patent pending LongString Technology which extends the center mains through the entire handle. The combined length of the ten center mains is at least 56 inches longer than those in all competitor racquets. A tremendous power advantage!
It was the World Wrestling Federation (WWF) versus the PBA, as a poised Sell and Karp surged ahead and captured game one 15-4.

In game two, it was Hansen and Loretto who jumped to the early lead, 8-2. But four Sell kills and several skips by The Madmen turned the tide to a 10-8 deficit with an 8-0 run.

However, Hansen and Loretto finished the game with a 7-1 stretch, winning 15-11. The tiebreaker was tight with neither team going up by more than four points.

Tied 9-9 with Karp serving, Loretto hit a forehand pinch kill into the right corner for an apparent side-out. But referee Rich Clay said, "Skip."

The Madmen appealed and the call stood. Point to Karp and Sell, 10-9.

"I thought that was a bad call to be honest with you," Loretto said. "That's the match because that's side-out and it's 9-9 and our serve. That was a good shot all day. It wasn't a skip."

Karp saw things a little differently. "It was a definite skip but I was worried that the line judges didn't see it," Karp said. "I was scared because it looked like they might have been screened out."

After the mayhem settled, Loretto skipped a down the line backhand to give Karp and Sell the title.

"I was really nervous," Sell admitted. "I didn't feel like I matched up well with them. Fortunately, my partner felt that he matched up perfectly against them. It turns out that I did match up well with them and hit some beautiful shots."

Loretto gave kudos to the visitors, saying, "We lost to a good team out there today, that's all. I've got to give them a lot of credit, they threw me off a little bit on my side. Usually, I do a lot of the shooting on our team and they forced me to take some shots that I didn't want to."

"Adam was all over the court," Hansen said after the wrenching loss. "We didn't play our shots because we were too worried about Adam up front. They're a tough team and I'm looking forward to getting them again next year."

If you were one of the fans rooting against The Madmen, don't look for their outrageous style to fade away. "We really have fun playing and that's all that counts," Loretto said. "People take it the wrong way sometimes when we get all fired-up in there. We're just having fun."

Karp realizes that Loretto and Hansen are extremely talented players that just happen to be showmen, to boot. "There's a lot of mixed opinions," Karp said of his opponents' style. "I love it and love watching them play, it's entertaining."

Sell explained that "people need to realize that they're really not serious, it's just a show."

And wow, what a show.
The Wright Way to Double-Gold!
By Gael Filgate

The year is 1977. It is the I.R.A. (International Racquetball Association). National Doubles Championship in Los Alamitos, California. Stan Wright and Steve Trent are playing in the finals of the Open Doubles. Bob Kraut and Gene Gibb, the defending champions, are their opponents. Stan is 26 years old, Steve is 20. This is their first National Doubles finals and they can taste the gold. The crowd is antsy, the players are ready. In less than an hour, Stan Wright and Steve Trent have captured the title — without losing a game. Their first, but not their last.

The year now, is 1991, twenty years later. It is the U.S.R.A. National Doubles Championship in Phoenix, Arizona. Stan Wright, once again, is in the finals — of not one, but two divisions. This time, with Dave Azuma in the 40+ and Gene Pare in the 45+. The crowd again is antsy, the players, once again ready. The 45s are first. Stan Wright and Gene Pare have swept through a field of 27 teams to reach the finals. Their opponents are the unseeded Mike Robinson and Howard Walker of Texas. Wright and Pare win the title for the second consecutive year, without losing a game. Their final scores 15-7 and 15-3.

Same year, second division, the 40s, with the two top seeds set to battle. The #1 seeds, Jerry Hilecher and Dave Peck — like Azuma and Wright — have not lost a game. The intensity is thick. Hilecher and Peck play a flawless first game to beat Azuma and Wright 15-4. The second game finds Azuma and Wright constantly trailing 3-5 points. It looked like a Hilecher/Peck title, but Azuma and Wright had other ideas. Taking a badly-needed timeout at 12-8, they planned a new strategy of attack ... switching sides. Not a bad idea, but unusual, considering that Stan is a lefty and Dave a righty. But it seemed to work, denying Peck and Hilecher two match points and closing the gap to 14-12. Side-out. Facing two more match point opportunities, Azuma and Wright were determined to get the serve back. They played tough, dug in and held off the crucial last point. Back in the service box, they knew this was their last hope to even the match. With some great gets, crucial shots, and a little luck, they won the second game 15-14, and held on to their chance for the gold.

By then the crowd had grown in size, watching one of the best comebacks in the tournament. In anticipation of the tiebreaker, the adrenaline of the players and crowd was overwhelming, the excitement intense. Azuma and Wright stayed with their "off-sides" game plan, which seemed to take its toll on Peck and Hilecher's game. Azuma and Wright took a 6-1 lead before Hilecher got hot and tied it at 7-7. Two more sideouts and Azuma and Wright recaptured the lead 9-7. With Peck and Hilecher in the server's box, they had a chance to score, but they failed to tally a point and paved the way for Azuma and Wright to win their first 40+ gold medal. With Wright killing a backhand down the right side for point 10, and luckily for Azuma and Wright, Hilecher skipped his previously hot forehand giving up match point to end it 11-7.

Stan Wright had obtained his ultimate goal — and dream for 20 years of doubles competition — two gold medals in one national event!

It took 20 years, Stan, but you never gave up. You've dedicated yourself to racquetball and promoting your beloved sport. You've earned these medals, not only for winning the matches, but for earning the respect and admiration anyone with your tenacity, loyalty and dedication could warrant.

Your Biggest Fans,
Your Wife and Children

RACQUETBALL Magazine
Sound familiar? "I just don't have enough time."

Whether it's racquetball, working out or finishing that project in the garage, there never seems to be enough hours in the day to get it all done.

Here's another one: "I'm too old for that kind of thing."

Think about both of those statements as we introduce you to two of the most energetic, powerfully-positive individuals ever to step onto a racquetball court - identical twin sisters Johnnie Hill-Hudgins and Michael Hill.

Their business card reads: "Singers - Models - Actresses - Karate."

In direct opposition to the canine ratio of aging seven years for every one human year, the Hill's seem to have inverted that formula by aging one year for every seven.

Amazing is easily an understatement when discussing their lifelong accomplishments.

At 13-years of age, the twins, along with Louise Stephenson-Shaw, Charen Cotton and Voncille White, were known around the world as the professional singing group, the DeVonnes. Recording for a Motown subsidiary called Colpix Records, the DeVonnes traveled around the U.S. singing some of their hits such as "Freddy" and "Wonderful." Their musical accomplishments with the DeVonnes have been recorded in the book Rock and Roll Archives, placed just four pages ahead of their older brother Billy's group - Essex, which knocked The Beatles out of the No. 1 spot during the mid-60's.

"My sister and I are international singers and have sung in 22 countries," Michael said of their treks through Europe, Asia, Canada and the Caribbean. The two, who just got back from a singing engagement in Japan, can sing in Japanese, Spanish, French and English.

Certified health aides for over 25 years, both have been named Ms. Princeton and competed in the Ms. New Jersey International pageant.

In high school, "Johnnie introduced me to a book by Althea Gibson, Always Wanted To Be Somebody," Michael said during some spare time at the '97 National Doubles in Phoenix. "She was the only black woman, in 1956, to win at Wimbledon. She lived in poverty and throughout it all, was able to overcome the adversity and become a world champion at Wimbledon. That's when the sparks flew and we (Michael and Johnnie) really wanted to be around people that were positive. We try to be very positive ourselves."

They've even modeled for several top magazines, including Glamour and Jet.

The Princeton, N.J., residents have worked as actresses in several movies, along with teammate and travel companion Julie Wiedis.

The twins were stunt doubles for Whitney Houston in "The Preacher's Wife" and Grace Jones in "Boomerang." They also appeared as extras in "The Good-Bye Girl," "Betrayal" and Spike Lee's "Do the Right Thing." Wiedis, also from Princeton, recently worked on "12 Monkeys," featuring Bruce Willis and "City Hall."

At 13-years of age, the twins, along with Louise Stephenson-Shaw, Charen Cotton and Voncille White, were known around the world as the professional singing group, the DeVonnes. Recording for a Motown subsidiary called Colpix Records, the DeVonnes traveled around the U.S. singing some of their hits such as "Freddy" and "Wonderful." Their musical accomplishments with the DeVonnes have been recorded in the book Rock and Roll Archives, placed just four pages ahead of their older brother Billy's group - Essex, which knocked The Beatles out of the No. 1 spot during the mid-60's.

"We've always played some type of sport," Michael said. Both her and sister Johnnie played semi-pro baseball and basketball during their younger years. Now, they concentrate on track & field and racquetball.

The two had just came back from training for the "American Gladiators" (in 1990), in which Johnnie was a contender, when they were introduced to the USA National Masters Track & Field association and several of its coaches.

According to Johnnie, "I was asking questions like, 'How do you become... cover girls ... singers ... models ... actresses ... karate?'"
In some sports you just protect yourself.

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Now you can protect yourself in style with impact resistant fashion eyeguards from Leader. Our Vegas and Newport designs feature anti-fog, anti-scratch, shatterproof protection. And they give you unobstructed peripheral vision so you won’t miss a beat on the court.

Don’t just protect yourself… do it in style with Leader.
a masters champion? They said that all you have to do is register, pay your membership fee, enter whatever events you want to participate in and that’s it.”

The coaches were asking, “Have you ever done this before?” Although they’d run track before, Michael and Johnnie hadn’t competed in any of the field events that they were entered in.

This was on a Wednesday.

“Two days later, we went to Philadelphia for the U.S. Indoor Track & Field Championships,” Michael said. “I entered in four events – the 55-meter dash, long jump, high jump and 60-meter hurdles – and ended up with three golds and a silver. People were asking, ‘What age group are you really in?’

Johnnie won three golds, one in shot put.

Their friend, Julie Wiedis, 38, also competed.

“I figured that I didn’t really know track & field but I knew I could run and I could jump so I entered the 55-meter dash and the long jump,” Wiedis said. “I came home with two golds. Needless to say, the coaches who were laughing before weren’t laughing so much anymore.”

When asked why they would take up such a strenuous sport in their later years, Johnnie replied, “We want to show people out there that we can start at this age, why can’t they.”

In 1995, the Hill twins won a $1,500 grant from the Women’s Sports Foundation for track & field.

“That’s when we went off to Australia (for a track & field championship meet) and that gave us money to train,” Johnnie said. “We were the first masters to ever receive that award.”

This past March 21-23, the threesome traveled to the Reggie Lewis Track & Athletic Center to compete in the 1997 USA National Masters Indoor Track & Field Championships (see sidebar at right).

Sponsored by the Princeton YMCA and The Club at Woodbridge, Michael and Johnnie have been able to compete at the IRF World Seniors Championships in Albuquerque, N.M., and the 1997 Ektelon U.S. National Doubles Championships, where they took home the silver medal in the women’s 50-and-over division.

Oh, that’s right ... they’re 50-years old.

“We love racquetball,” Michael said. “It’s a wonderful sport that’s inexpensive and can keep us in shape.”

“You can do it, no matter what your age is – and let me tell you, 50 is nifty.”

In 1980, the Hill sisters decided to go to college and conquer yet another obstacle in life.

“People always say to us, ‘Don’t you want to be known?’, ” Michael said of her behind-the-scenes Hollywood status. “It’s nice to be known, but we’ve done everything but sing on a ship.”

So, is that the only thing left ... to sing on a ship?

Not hardly.

“We have two movies in our heads and some inventions,” Michael stated.

All they have to do is make the time ... It’s incredible. It’s inspirational. It’s the Hill twins.
TEAMS EXTREME

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Mike Ray

Todd O'Neil

Marcy Lynch

Woody Clouse

Laura Fenton

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Ektelon is an official sponsor of the United States Racquetball Association, U.S. Racquetball Team and the American Professional Racquetball Organization.
The Evolution of the Forehand

By Mike Guidry

Like almost every other sport in the world, racquetball has gone through its share of changes in the past twenty years. Racquetball has evolved from the game styles of the Charlie Brumfields and Davey Bledsoes of the seventies to the Cliff Swains and Sudsy Monchiks of the nineties. With technological advances in equipment, as well as faster balls and better training techniques for the athletes, game strategies have also developed from "control" in the seventies to "controlled power" in the eighties to the power game now.

Most of today's players use pure power. To better adjust and make the most of those improvements, players have also made changes in their stroke mechanics. The first installment of Ektelon's 1998 Performance Series focuses on the forehand, which has evolved from the ultimate control weapon in the seventies to hitting 180 mile per hour missiles in the nineties. I will demonstrate the changes from the seventies to now.

A warning for club players ... Don't try to make radical changes in order to copy the pros, but instead incorporate some of the principles to give you a better, more powerful forehand.
Today's pros use more of a Western grip, with the palm of the hand slightly more on the side of the handles rather than the top. The Western grip gives the player more power than the traditional grip.

Performance Tip: If you have a traditional grip, try adjusting your grip slightly towards a Western grip. This will help you hit the ball flatter and lower while giving you a power boost.
control >>

The racquet was high and behind the head. The elbow was dropped, therefore, limiting the amount of racquet head speed that could be generated. This preparation makes it very difficult to extend properly to hit the ball away from your body and keep your racquet head level.

<< power

Today's players have their elbow up and the racquet head relatively flat. By having the elbow up, this allows the racquet head to generate more speed, which in turn generates more power. The feet are parallel to the side wall.

Performance Tip: Work on keeping your racquet head out in front of you a little bit and keeping the head parallel to the floor. Doing this will automatically bring your elbow up and reduce the chances of shoulder problems. Check to make sure that when you are set up for the shot, your feet are parallel to the side wall and not facing the front wall.
The elbow comes much farther away from the body, which allows the swing to become flat and generate the racquet speed due to more leverage. The extension of the elbow due to the natural swing plane will reduce the risk of arm problems.

**Performance Tip:** From the "racquet prep" position, focus on keeping your elbow away from your body and swinging flat. You want to feel like you are reaching out to get full extension of your elbow.
control >>

In the days of slow balls and small racquets, the contact point was very close to the body with the racquet head dropped towards the floor. This swing is much more difficult to generate power with because the racquet head doesn't come through fast enough. Also, with the speed of today's balls, it is very difficult to time the shot consistently. Any mistiming with this stroke, and the ball goes either straight into the floor or sky high.

<< power

The contact point is now much further away from the body. Notice how the elbow is completely extended. This generates the greatest power because it gives the racquet maximum leverage. The fact that your racquet head is coming through level will minimize variations in the height of your shots. You will be much more consistent, and will hit a much more solid shot.

Performance Tip: When swinging, concentrate on getting the ball out away from you and keeping your racquet head level. Don't drop your racquet head. Try to visualize hitting the ball off of a table. Reach out for the ball, but remain balanced and avoid bending at the waist.
power >>

Since today's contact point is farther away from the body, the follow-through is much flatter and lower. With the power of today's game, this helps keep the ball lower while having the benefit of the increased power.

Performance Tip:
Concentrate on hitting the ball flat and keeping your racquet head parallel to the floor for as long as possible through the swing. Your feet should be square to the front wall and your shoulders should be somewhat facing the front wall. The racquet should end up about shoulder level away from your body.

<< control

The follow through used to be a very high, short follow through. The control game required a shorter, slower swing, therefore, the follow through came up high near the head.
Ralph's Grocery Pro-Am

**MONCHIK & SWAIN GO THE DISTANCE IN RIVERSIDE**

The IRT's annual stop in Riverside for the Ralph's Grocery Pro-Am always draws huge, knowledgeable crowds who've seen all the greats compete over the years. This year the Tournament House was the third to host the ongoing battle for #1 as Sudsy Monchik and Cliff Swain continued their cross-country rivalry. These two have met in every final this season, but as the tournament got under way it appeared that none of the top seeds would be left standing on Sunday.

**Semi-Finals**

Before Monchik & Swain could go at it again, there was a little semi-final business to attend to. Swain would have to defeat Ellis, who had finally broken through last season in Rochester for his first career win over Swain. With father & coach Dave Ellis travelling to every event, John is enjoying a solid season, playing his best, and seems to have turned the corner against Swain in terms of confidence. He knows what he needs to do to win and feels he can! The first three games were a show of great intensity and ability, with Ellis holding a 2-1 game advantage. But in the fourth, Swain showed the mental domination that made him unbeatable for years. It starts with his serve and spreads to the rest of his game, and when he's right, he doesn't just win; he destroys. Swain easily won the last two games and waited for his rival to join him in the finals.

In the other semi, Monchik had to contend with Vogel, one of the hardest hitters on the tour who, after training this summer, is in the best shape of his career. Vogel jumped out to a quick lead in the first game by killing the ball and controlling the rallies. But a slow start means nothing to Monchik, who picked up the intensity to win a close first game then finish the match in straight games, 11-9, 11-6, 11-5.

**Finals**

Here they were again ... a broken record in the battle for #1. Every stop this season has been a final between them, but all of them had been easy, lopsided wins for each. But Riverside proved to be the site where the fans got everything they wanted and more! Their rivalry carries into the crowd as the Monchik and Swain camps root for their favorites.

A strong Monchik came out looking to avenge his loss in Stockton just three weeks prior. Both played well as Sudsy took the first two close games and seemed positioned for another in a string of straight game wins this season. But Swain was not done. Hitting great forehands from deep in the court, combined with unbelievable court coverage, Swain hit the big shoes to save game three 14-12.

Swain was rolling in the fourth, where the two played closer and closer in front court, giving no ground and putting the pressure on official David Sable on each call. Swain captured the game with a diving forehand kill and Monchik showed his frustration by smashing the ball into the floor and out of the court. Sable called a technical, resulting in a -1 deficit against Monchik going into game five.

Both players had given everything they had so far, but Monchik had a trick left. He went away from his drive and Z serves and lobbed to Swain's backhand. It worked! Swain made a mistake after mistake in trying to kill the ball, all of which Monchik pounced on. Swain made a valiant run in the end but it was Monchik who pulled out the three-hour war, 10-12, 8-11, 11-8, 11-6, 12-10.

**Riverside: Early Round Highlights**

Qualifiers: Ruben Gonzalez, Tim Doyle, Steve Lerner, Rocky Carson, Vince Kelley.

Round of 32 Upset: Qualifier Rocky Carson d. #4 Jason Mannino, 11-2, 1-11, 4-11, 11-2, 11-3.

Round of 16: • #11 Tony Jelso pushed #6 John Ellis to a tiebreaker before Ellis took the win, 11-7, 8-11, 7-11, 11-9, 13-11. • In a diving showcase #7 Mike Guidry came from two games down to defeat #10 Adam Karp in five. This was another tough loss for Karp who shows all the talent of the top players but just needs to get over the hump. • Against #14 Michael Mannino, Andy Roberts won the first but between games was sidelined by vertebrae pain. With medical assistance Roberts was able to begin the second game but was later unable to continue. • It looked as though Carson had left it all on the court earlier in the day against Mannino, as the giant-killer lost to #13 James Mulcock in three.

Quarterfinals: • Mulcock won his first game by forcing mistakes from #12 Louis Vogel. But Vogel turned up his famous serve and controlled front court to win the next three and move into his first semi of the season. • The only tiebreaker of the round was Monchik d. Clouse, 4-11, 11-2, 11-9, 11-1, 12-10. • Ellis d. Bronfeld 11-3, 11-8, 11-2 • Swain d. Guidry 11-7, 11-3, 11-6.
Halloween Pro Am
SWAIN WINS IN CHICAGO
The irresistible force met the immovable object as Cliff Swain and Sudsy Monchik faced off in their fourth final of the season at the Halloween Pro-Am. Halloween week at Woodfield always means fun, parties, and great racquetball as the two top guns continued to distance themselves from the rest of the tour, while adding another classic final to what is becoming one of the greatest rivalries in the history of the sport.

Semifinals
Swain vs. Roberts brings to mind some of the best battles on the tour, with contrasts in style matched by both players' intensity and concentration. Robert's legendary sportsmanship (illustrated by an overturned skip call at the end of a three-hour match at the Pro Nationals) earned him crowd support, along with that of many family members in attendance, but he still never got going. Swain used a variety of serves to keep him off balance and looked crisp in a surprisingly easy three game win.

The other semi featured young guns Monchik and Ellis, in a completely different show of diving, power kills, and amazing court coverage. But smiles and joking between these two friends often interrupts the intensity of the match. When Ellis took a 2-1 game lead, no one in Chicago was surprised, since it was here that Ellis had logged his only tour victory. But Monchik turned it up a notch to win the last two games and move toward what seems like destiny; another final against Swain.

Chicago: Early Round Highlights
Round of 32: • Canadian rookie Brian Istace used his power game to upset one of the tour's best player this season, #9 Tony Jelso. • A second Canadian, IRT veteran Mike Ceresia took an even larger win by defeating #8 Jason Mannino in four games. Ceresia's outstanding control game won him all the big rallies as Mannino lost in the 32's for the second event in a row.

Round of 16: Later, in a Canadian National Team battle, Ceresia battled Istace for a spot in the quarters. Istace prevailed in a two-and-a-half-hour crowd pleaser where every point was hotly contested. Istace moved on with his second great win of the day and his first quarterfinal appearance of his short IRT career.
Quarterfinals: The only challenger to take a game from one of the top seeds in the round was Maryland's Dan Fowler. Fowler has always had top-eight ability but has been putting it all together this season and is quickly becoming a consistent quarterfinalist. He won game two of his match against Swain, who advanced in four.

Final
Monchik and Swain took to the famous Mike Irwin Court at Woodfield for their fourth meeting this season. Chicago fans were treated to another epic struggle as Monchik took almost an hour to win the first two games. But Swain is never out of a match and he proved it by fighting back with strong serves to even the game count 2-2.

The tiebreaking fifth was everything that the fans had wanted and more, as Monchik & Swain fought point by point to 10-10. Unlike Riverside, this time it was Swain who hit all the big shots at the end and came away with a 12-10 win to even the match record for this season 2-2. With Swain and Monchik dominating the tour, all fans will get a chance to see their next match up — at the Promus Hotels U.S. Open, with broadcast coverage on ESPN2 – Thursday, February 12th!
Riverside Notes: The IRT debuted its new sound system at Ralph's Pro-Am, which includes an on-court microphone that is a big hit with the spectators. Not only could you get a real feel for how hard the ball was being hit, you could hear the players talking to themselves and each other. The event also took on an international flavor with a number of Japanese and Mexican players competing. The Ralph's Pro-Am is always great fun for everyone involved thanks to tournament directors Robin Dixon and Vance Lerner.

MBNA Announces IRT Visa Cards: Visa and MBNA have released a new IRT Visa credit card, available with or without an airline mileage program. The special Visa will feature the IRT logo and will qualify the cardholder for free travel, and discounts on all IRT Properties products. For additional information on the IRT Visa credit card, call toll free 888-772-5346.

Discount Program: Courtesy Sports offers anyone using the new IRT Visa 10% off the catalog price of any IRT official products, or a 5% discount on any other racquetball products. Get the new IRT Visa and start saving right away, with 10% off all IRT official products, including: Babolat IRT strings, Ektelon shoes, Head bags, Leader eyeguards, ProPenn balls & gloves, Spalding racquets and Tadd Mac IRT grips. See Courtesy Sports display ad on page 54 to order!

IRT & USRA Announce Las Vegas Pro Nationals as Regional Qualifier: The IRT & WIRT Pro Nationals in Las Vegas, Nevada April 22-26 will once again be a qualifying event for the Ektelon USRA 31st National Singles Championships. The top stars of the men's and women's tours will vie for the Pro National Championship title, while over 600 amateurs will battle for cash, prizes, and awards in over 35 divisions. The event will be a USRA Regional Qualifier in all amateur events at the beautiful Las Vegas Sporting House. Plan a week of great racquetball, fun, and good weather in Las Vegas. For information or entry forms call 702/733-8999, or the USRA at 719/635-5396.

WIRT ADMITS MALE MEMBER!
The Women's International Racquetball Tour (WIRT) may have adopted its first male member — his name is Fuzzy. OK, so he's a bear ... and maybe his forehand isn't the greatest. But Fuzzy has already made quite an impact on the WIRT.

Fuzzy, who belongs to an elementary student named Maura Steward, was on hand for the National Doubles action in Phoenix this past October. At that time, his companion was none other than newly named U.S. Team member Kersten Hallander. However, by tournament's end, Fuzzy found a new friend -- Cheryl Gudinas (shown consoling the tour's No. 2 player after her quarterfinal upset).

No, Fuzzy's not a play-bear. He's on a journey.

"Maura's whole class sent these bears out across the country," Hallander said before the official Fuzzy-turnover to Gudinas. "She (Maura's mother Mary Ann) thought it would be a good idea if they went with women racquetball players because she knew she could trust us to really follow through."

Gudinas exclaimed, "As opposed to the men."

Each of the bears includes a personalized note. Fuzzy's reads: "Hello, my name is Fuzzy. I belong to Maura Steward at Sarah Starweather Elementary School in West Chester, Pa. Please treat me kindly and let my owner know that I am OK by sending a postcard back to West Chester to let her know where I am and what I've been doing. In order for me to continue my journey, please pass me on to another traveler who will take me to an interesting destination. If I am with you on May 5, 1998, please return me to Maura at this address! I hope to meet as many nice people and to see as many places as possible. I have many brother and sister bears traveling at the same time. I hope we all have safe and happy journeys."

When sending Maura updates, "you write the postcards in first person as if you are Fuzzy," Hallander explained.

Fuzzy's new buddy was almost at a loss for words. "I am thrilled," Gudinas said. "I can't tell you how much."
IRT RESULTS

**TICKER ...**

- **Las Vegas:** Aug. 1-3
  - Foxwoods IRT Pro-Am Doubles — Todd O'Neil & Derek Robinson def. Steve Lerner & Tony Jelso 3-11, 11-6, 11-6, 5-11, 11-7.
- **New Orleans:** Aug. 6-10
- **Stockton:** Aug. 28
  - IRT RESULTS
- **Riverside:** Sept. 24-28
- **Memphis:** Nov. 12-16
  - IRT SCHEDULE

WIRT RESULTS

**TICKER ...**

- **Annapolis, Md.:** Sept. 5-7
- **Memphis:** Nov. 12-16

**WIRT SCHEDULE**

- **January 9 - 11**
  - 1999 Grand Slam Pro-Am
  - Highpoint Athletic Club
  - Chalfont, Pennsylvania

- **February 27 - March 1**
  - Future Cellular*SBBS
  - Pro-Am @ Continental Ath. Club — Columbus, Ohio

**WIRT RANKINGS**

- As of December 15, 1997

**Women's International Racquetball Tour 1997-98 SEASON RANKINGS**

- As of November 17, 1997

**RACQUETBALL Magazine**

Follow the IRT & WIRT on the Web: Check out the pros on the web at irt-tour.com anytime. Want the updated rankings, results from the last tour stop, entry forms for upcoming pro stops, which player accumulated the most fines at the last event? Everything you want to know about the IRT, WIRT, or your favorite pro players is available 24 hours a day 365 days a year at irt-tour.com. Check out the action!
Only three short years ago the entire industry met during the “Atlanta Super Show” to discuss the future development and expansion of racquetball. There, over 40 industry leaders outlined a course for racquetball through the year 2000.

The first priority became an initiative with club owners, with special emphasis on changing the attitude of IHRSA toward racquetball. The result: a club profit video and comprehensive programming workbook was developed and distributed throughout the U.S. and Canada.

The second project was to create a premier, televised event in which the entire industry could take part and support fully. The result: the U.S. Open debuted in 1996 with the portable court and ESPN coverage.

Until recently, the final unification effort – a working relationship between the National Governing Body (USRA) and the professional wing of the sport (IRT/WIRT) – had not been realized. At this time I am happy to report that negotiations between the USRA and the IRT/WIRT over the past year have resulted in a working agreement that will be mutually beneficial to both organizations, and to the sport overall.

The agreement addresses issues of sanctioning, insurance, joint competitions, communications, tournament activity, media efforts, Hall of Fame, and virtually every aspect of racquetball. Wherever joint efforts between the two organizations stand to benefit the sport as a whole, the USRA and IRT/WIRT have pledged to work together for that common good. Like USA Basketball and the NBA, or USA Hockey and the NHL, the USRA and IRT/WIRT have become partners in a shared vision for the sport. Full details of the agreement will be released later in the year.

Special recognition goes to all those who all had the vision and the dedication to make this important “third stage” happen, notably IRT/WIRT Commissioner Hank Marcus, the USRA Board of Directors and Eric Muller. Who knows what we can accomplish when we all work together?
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Part 3 Backhand: principles & confident execution of 11 different shots. Practice drills. (45 mins.)

TAPE 2: 1 HOUR 23 MINUTES
Part 4 Serve & Service Return: mechanics & strategies of a variety of winning serves & service returns. Practice drills. (33 mins.)
Part 5 Preparation & Strategy: warm-up, game plan, shot selection, offensive and defensive pressure, anticipation. (50 mins.)

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With almost twelve feet between them, Michelle Gould and Karina Odegard measure up in Memphis.

Photo: Sharon Odegard.

"UP" & Coming
Karina Odegard took to the glass stadium court at the U.S. OPEN with all the nervous jitters of a long-awaited first date. But this date was with greatness, which in the world of racquetball comes in the form of Michelle Gould.

"It brought back a lot of memories for me," Gould said of her opponent - a five-time world junior champion - "because the first time I made the U.S. Team, I was 14 and here I am today playing this 15-year old world champion from Canada."

Sure the youngster had five world junior titles and numerous Canadian junior crowns, but now she was facing the best female player in the game ... world champion for the past six years, U.S. national singles champion eight of the last nine and pro tour champion six of the past seven.

How would she compete against such a fantastic player? With poise - even in an 11-0, 11-2, 11-0 defeat.

Her play throughout the tournament impressed one of the sport's finest teachers, Jim Hiser of the USRA. "She's going to be very good," the displaced Canadian said of young Odegard.

Gould agreed, saying, "Her game is coming along really well. I was speaking with her mother after the match and she's struggling a little bit with the fact that - when you grow by leaps in bounds when you're young - your body has to catch up. She's starting to fill out and get a little more muscle mass, get a little bit stronger. I think she's definitely going to be somebody to look out for."

"It was great. I played the first person that was taller than me on the tour - ever. I was thrilled."

At 5'11", Odegard could develop into one of the premier players on the women's tour within the next decade.

"The first time she ever played," said mom Sharon, "she was six years old and it was in Miami (World Junior Orange Bowl). That was when Michelle was in her last 18-and-under year. In fact, Karina saw her play Lori (Jane Powell of Canada) and that was the first we'd ever heard of Michelle."

"It's a real opportunity to play her," Sharon said of her daughter's match versus Gould, "especially on the glass court. She said, 'I don't mind playing her, but on that glass court?' That's kind of scary."

After receiving the sacrificial donut in game one, Odegard got her first point mid-way through the second, much to the delight of the Canadian contingent.

"It was kind of lucky, but that's alright," Karina said.

She already has the potential and talent, if she gets some more luck ... her opponents had better watch out.

'97 USRA Scholarship Winners
TRICIA BOOTS: A former Pennsylvania state doubles champion, Tricia Boots captured the 1996 mixed title with her father, John Boots. Originally from Pittsburgh, Pa., Boots is a 1997 graduate of the Duquesne University School of Health Sciences and is working towards a degree as a Physician Assistant. Former president of her school's Dean's Advisory Board (1995-96), Boots is a repeat winner of the USRA Scholarship (1995) and also garnered two DU
scholarships - the 1995 Presidential Scholarship and the ‘96 Unrestricted Gift Scholarship.

"I am currently the racquetball director at the City Club, an athletic facility in downtown Pittsburgh," Boots said in her application. "I also give beginning lessons there."

SADIE GROSS: A two-time member of the U.S. Junior National Team, Sadie Gross is a senior (one semester ahead of schedule) at the University of Memphis. Gross finished second in women's No.1 singles, at the 1997 Intercollegiate Championships in Boise, Idaho. An established basketball player for Yankton (S.D.) High School, the two-time (1995 and ’96) girl's 18-and-under national champion chose to play racquetball for UM coaching legend Larry Liles and the Tigers. At Memphis, Gross is a member of the Dean's List while majoring in accounting in the School of Business.

"I had scholarship offers to play basketball at several well-distinguished universities," Gross said, "but I decided to attend the University of Memphis because I wanted to continue to play racquetball."

KORI GRASHA: A native of Amherst, N.Y., Kori Grasha is a junior at Canisius College in Buffalo. An elementary education major, Grasha will receive her certification in Latin and a minor and dual certification in classics. Grasha helped the U.S. Junior National Team to the 1996 Junior World team title in her second consecutive appointment to the squad. The current New York women's open champ, Grasha tutors college and high school students in Latin while maintaining a stellar 3.55 GPA.

"Having the opportunity to be a member of the Junior USA Racquetball Team has been an incredible experience," Grasha stated. "I have always had a goal to represent my country in some way. It has been a dream come true - being a part of a great team while promoting the sport I love."

TOMMY HELFRICH: Helfrich founded the Indiana University racquetball club & team while working 40 hours a week and maintaining a 3.8 GPA. A junior, majoring in marketing at IU's renowned School of Business, Helfrich has helped lead the Hoosiers to consecutive third-place men's team finishes (1996 and ’97) at the U.S. National Intercollegiates. A graduate of Parkway West High School in Chesterfield, Mo., Helfrich also works as a marketing and promotions assistant for the Indiana Athletic Department.

"My focus has temporarily shifted from racquetball to career goals," Helfrich said. "I am a computer information systems and marketing major with an overall GPA of 3.8. I hope to begin my own web development company and play some professional racquetball after I graduate."

RYAN KESSLER: Teammate of Helfrich, Ryan Kessler is a sophomore in IU's School of Business, while majoring in sports marketing. Kessler also attended Parkway West (Mo.) High School and is a member of the Hoosier racquetball team. Kessler was a 1996 recipient of the USRA Scholarship, the 1994 Missouri state high school racquetball champion and member of the 1996 Missouri State 4A H.S. baseball champion.

"Racquetball has always been the activity that kept me in good physical condition and fulfilled that drive to compete one-on-one," Kessler said.
National Masters International Tournament
Las Vegas, Nevada
July 16-19, 1997

Almost 200 masters players from around the world joined together for four days of racquetball competition in sunny Las Vegas. Over 2000 round-robin matches were contested in singles, doubles and mixed doubles before winners finally emerged. This major tournament was held at the Las Vegas Sporting House and the Las Vegas Athletic Club during the heat of a Las Vegas summer. While the temperatures outside the club soared to 112 degrees, the matches held inside the air-conditioned facilities frequently generated a high level of heat and intense competition. Some winners were those with familiar names, but a number of age brackets resulted in new names entering into the winner’s circle.

In men’s 45+, Jerry Dye (TX) finished first with 304 total points. This was followed closely by the second place score of Jim Luzar (W1) at 299, third place at 296 and fourth place at 293. An even closer finish was in the men’s 50+ singles. John Aldape (ID) and Ray Huss (OH) both finished with 328 points but Aldape was declared the winner based on head-to-head competition. In Men’s 55+, Ron Combs (CA) defeated Glenn Allen (VA) in a championship playoff between flight winners. Paul Banales (AZ) defeated Joe Jackman (PA), Jerry Stoltmann (WI) and Jerry Holly (CA) to win the world title in men’s 60+ singles. In men’s 70+, new Hall of Fame Inductee, Vic Sacco (NY) finished in front of Joe Lambert (TX), 216 to 202 points, Earl Acuff (NC) won 75+ singles by a 30 point margin over Nick Sans (CA).

In women’s competition, Debra Tisinger (CA) took first in 35+ singles. Linda Moore (WI) out scored four competitors to win the 40+ bracket. The closest finish in women's events took place in 45+ singles, where Carol Palombino (CA) defeated Andee Glansberg (NY) by a total point score of 184 to 183. Nidia Funes (CA) 50+, Margarita Moline (CA) 55+, Jo Kenyon (FL) 60+, and Lola Markus (IL) 65+ were our winners.

In men’s doubles, Rex Lawler (IN) and Ray Huss (OH) defeated the second place team of Walker/Rosenberg by a score of 164 to 156. Lee Graff (OR) and Tom Penick (CA) won 55+ doubles while Paul Banales (AZ) and Ron Pudduck (MI) won 60+ doubles. Other doubles winners were Gene Grapes (PA)/Al Schattner (PA) in 65+, Ivan Bruner (WI)/Vic Sacco (NY) in 70+, and Don Goddard (MT)/Nick Sans (CA) in 75+. It still gives one an exciting rush when you see teams of players 75+ competing at such a high level.

In mixed doubles, Linda Moore (WI) and Craig Olsen (NE) won the combined 35-50 age bracket. And perennial champion Jo Kenyon (FL) teamed with Ken Moore (CA) and the transcontinental twosome finished first in 55+.

If you are interested in competing in any of the three NMRA round robin national or international tournaments for masters players (men 45+, women 35+), join the National Masters Racquetball Association. Contact Paul Banales, 602-849-6298, for membership information and details.

MEN’S SINGLES — 45+: Jerry Dye; 50+: John Aldape (ID); 55+: Ron Combs (CA); 60+: Paul Banales (AZ); 65+: Jim Railey (KY); 70+: Vic Sacco (NY); 75+: Earl Acuff (NC); 80+: George Spear Sr. (FL). WOMEN’S SINGLES — 35+: Debra Tisinger (CA); 40+: Linda Moore (WI); 45+: Carol Palombino (CA); 50+: Nidia Funes (CA); 55+: Margarita Moline (CA); 60+: Jo Kenyon (FL); 65+: Lola Markus (IL). MEN’S DOUBLES — 45+: Kirkpatrick/Gary Mazzeo (NM); 50+: Rex Lawler (IN)/Ray Huss (OH); 55+: Lee Graff (OR)/Tom Penick (CA); 60+: Ron Pudduck (MI)/Paul Banales (AZ); 65+: Gene Grapes (PA)/Al Schattner (PA); 70+: Ivan Bruner (WI)/Vic Sacco (NY); 75+: Don Goddard (MT)/Nick Sans (CA). MIXED DOUBLES — 35-50: Linda Moore (WI)/Craig Olsen (NE); 55+: Jo Kenyon (FL)/Ken Moore (CA).
the lovely, the talented ...
Left: Now who could this little cutie belong to? Readers got a clue in the last issue, when tour writer Todd O’Neil detailed his trip to the Orient. Introducing Sara Hope O’Neil at four weeks of age ...

u.s. open gallery
•Below Center: It was a “full court press” for spectators at the Promus Hotels U.S. OPEN, who filled the 1,200 capacity seating surrounding the stadium court - then shifted into “standing room only” for the finals. Photo: Mike Boatman.
•Bottom left: Jennifer Dering worked long and hard at the registration desk in Memphis, but was relieved long enough to attend the Ektelon party and get “tattooed.” Photo: Vicky Hughes. •Bottom right: Following last year’s event, Florida’s Sal Perconti decided that his next vantage point would be front-and-center. Perconti Data Systems became a sponsor of the event, entitling Sal and friends to prime seating and VIP treatment all week long. Photo: Vicky Hughes.
•Far right: Lynn Adams shared her secret wish at the “Party for the Pros” by admitting her desire to belt one out in front of a forgiving crowd. She “opened” for headliner Jason D. Williams with a first class rendition of “Walking in Memphis.” Photo: Mike Boatman.
USRA RULES: USRA Official Rules will govern both competitions, including the mandatory use of lensed eyewear tested to ASTM F803 or CSA impact standards.

OFFICIATING: Losers will be required to referee, and $5.00 of each entry fee will be paid back to you for every match you referee in a gold division. If any entries are accepted after the deadline, an additional $15.00 late fee will be assessed (payment made at tournament check-in will be processed as a late entry and surcharged). ALL ENTRIES ARE FINAL. Absolutely no refunds after entry deadline.

TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS: Margo Daniels, National Tournament Director @ 408/372-7224
Jim Hiser, USRA Associate Executive Director @ 719/635-5396, ext. 30.

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WILSON USRA 11TH NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL CHAMPIONSHIPS
A USRA Event, presented by Penn Racquet Sports [Played with the Pro Penn green ball ...]

MARCH 6-8
Concord Sports Club • St. Louis, Missouri
314/842-3111

ENTRY FEE: $45.00 First event (includes referee fee), $20.00 second event, $15.00 third event. DIVISIONS: Singles, doubles and mixed doubles are offered. In doubles, both players must be from the same school, except in the non-championship mixed doubles event.

ENTRY DEADLINE: Received no later than FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, (post-marked by 02/18). STARTING TIMES: Starting times will be available after 5:00 pm on WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4. Do not call the national office for starting times ... call the site club @ 314/842-3111. PLAY BEGINS: Matches may be scheduled to begin as early as 3:00 pm on FRIDAY, MARCH 6. Local players may begin play on Thursday evening. CHECK IN: Registration will be held at the club beginning on FRIDAY, MARCH 6 and also during the tournament.

GROUND TRANSPORTATION: Black & White Cab offers one-way service to the hotel for $26.00 (you must make your own arrangements on arrival). A separate shuttle service between the hotel and club will be available from 3:00 pm on Friday through the end of the event on Sunday.

LODGING: Holiday Inn, South County Center, 6921 South Lindbergh Blvd. Rate: $62.00 per night for up to four persons per room. For reservations call: 800/264-6616 or 314/892-3600 and mention the High School Championship to receive your special rate.

To request an official team entry to these national events, call 719/635-5395, ext. 55.
E-FORCE USRA 26TH NATIONAL INTERCOLLEGIATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
A USRA Event, presented by Penn Racquet Sports
[Played with the Pro Penn green ball ...]

MARCH 25-29
City Square Sports Club • Phoenix, Arizona
602/285-2929

ENTRY FEES: $55.00 first event per person (includes referee fee), $20.00 second event. DIVISIONS: Mens Team—Singles #1,#2,#3,#4,#5,#6 and Doubles #1,#2,#3. Womens Team—Singles #1,#2,#3,#4,#5,#6 and Doubles #1,#2,#3. Only one mens team and one womens team will be permitted per school.

DRUG TESTING: Random drug testing will be performed. Important Note: The entire team will be disqualified if any member fails the test. For more information about specific medications, call the USOC Drug Hotline at 1-800-233-0393.

ENTRY DEADLINE: Entry must be received by WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11 (post-marked by 03/09). STARTING TIMES: Starting times will be available after 6:00 pm on MONDAY, MARCH 23. Do not call the national office for starting times ... call the site club @ 602/285-2929. PLAY BEGINS: 8:00 am WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25. No exceptions. CHECK-IN: Registration will be held at the club beginning at 6:00 pm on TUESDAY, MARCH 24.

GROUND TRANSPORTATION: The airport is 20 miles from the club/hotel and transportation must be arranged prior to arrival. Call Super Shuttle @ 602/244-9000 and request the special $9.00 USRA rate. LODGING: The Lexington Hotel (in the same building as the club) @ $80.00 per night for up to four persons to a room – 602/279-9811. The Quality Hotel (2 blocks from club) @ $89.00 - 602/248-0222. When making reservations be sure to mention the National Intercollegiate Championships.

The following state events have been recognized as 1998 Collegiate Qualifiers

<table>
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<tr>
<th>State</th>
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<tr>
<td>CALIFORNIA</td>
<td>Jan.30 - Feb. 1</td>
<td>Stuck in Lodi Open</td>
<td>Lodi, CA</td>
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<td>CONNECTICT</td>
<td>March 6-8</td>
<td>Connecticnt State Singles</td>
<td>New Haven, CT</td>
<td>Juliet Campbell @ 203/248-1869</td>
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<td>FLORIDA</td>
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<td>Florida State Singles</td>
<td>Sarasota, Fl</td>
<td>Mary Lyons @ 904/270-2224</td>
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<td>ILLINOIS</td>
<td>Feb. 27-March 1</td>
<td>Illinois State Singles</td>
<td>Evergreen Park, IL</td>
<td>Winston Cole @ 708/425-7200</td>
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<tr>
<td>MINNESOTA</td>
<td>February 20-22</td>
<td>Univ. of Minn. Pro Am</td>
<td>Minneapolis, MN</td>
<td>Matt Hiber @ 612/626-7836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISSOURI</td>
<td>February 20-22</td>
<td>Missouri State Singles</td>
<td>St. Louis, MO</td>
<td>Jen Yokota @ 314/921-7933</td>
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<tr>
<td>TENNESSEE</td>
<td>March 6-8</td>
<td>Tennessee State Singles</td>
<td>Club - TBA</td>
<td>Sheila Collins @ 615/331-1923</td>
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<tr>
<td>UTAH</td>
<td>January 20-24</td>
<td>Logan Recreation Center</td>
<td>Logan, UT</td>
<td>Val Shewfelt @ 801/375-8348</td>
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Colleges/universities that wish to receive confirmation of this policy change and/or entry forms to qualifiers and the national championship, must make that request via the national office [719/635-5396]. Since racquetball coordinators change frequently, schools should update the USRA office with the names and addresses of new personnel each year.

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U.S. TEAM QUALIFYING

in order to earn an appointment to the U.S. National Team, benchmark performances must be reached at selected national championship qualifiers. In 1998, the team will be made up of Intercollegiate National champions (1 each, male & female = 2); semi-finalists from the U.S. National Singles Championships (4 each, male & female = 4); and finalists from the U.S. National Doubles Championships (4 teams, 2 each, male & female = 8). By reaching these benchmarks, individuals are appointed to the U.S. Team for a term of one year, and are then added to a pool of athletes to compete internationally and conduct goodwill tours abroad.

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Don't forget that women age 45 and over, and men age 55 and over (as of May 20, 1998) are NOT required to pre-qualify for competition at a regional championship in order to compete at national singles. You probably still want to, however, since you can earn valuable ranking points and seeding consideration! The same goes for junior and intercollegiate regional participants ... if you have already played in a junior or intercollegiate regional to qualify for associated events, you don't have to re-qualify for national singles at an adult regional championship.

Classifieds

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MAR 20-22,98 SAN FRANCISCO, CA.
APRIL 17-19,98 LAS VEGAS, NV.
MAY 29-31,98 PORTLAND, OR.
JUNE TBA,98 BOSTON, MA.
JUNE-JULY TBA,98 NY-NEW JERSEY.

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Level II Coach’s Certification Clinic
*When: January 29 - February 1  *Where: Olympic Training Center, Colorado Springs, Colorado.  *Course material: team dynamics, videotaping principles, error detection and solution, practice schedules and drills, periodization-schedules including nutrition, mental training, and physiology. Class limit: 20. Prerequisite: attendees must be certified as Level I coaches. For more information, contact Jim Hiser at 719-635-5396 x 30.
### Men's Open
- Dan Oremski, PA
- Jimmy Lowe, AK
- Mike Locker, MN
- Rob Day, WA
- Dan Fowler, GA
- Eric Fitchie, OH
- Lou Lapenn, PA
- Scott Libbers, MI
- Mark Soderstrom, OK
- Jesse Wells, TX
- WM Allen Ayers, AR

### Men's All Age
- Scott Gunin, MA
- Ryan Homa, WI
- Rob DeJesus, NM
- Willie Tilton, CO
- Mike Dennison, OH
- Brian Pointelin, CO
- Anthony Defusto, NY
- David Smith, MA
- Travis Aldinger, PA
- John Cantrell, KS

### Men's 25+
- Mike Locker, MN
- Kevin Graham, ND
- Matthew Anderson, GA
- Rich Barbi, NY
- James Lovell, FL
- Brian Pointelin, CO
- Anthony Defusto, NY
- David Smith, MA
- Travis Aldinger, PA
- John Cantrell, KS

### Men's 30+
- Brad McCuninff, IA
- Dan Lacera, DE
- Gregg Peak, TX
- Jimmy Lowe, AR
- John Barrett, PA
- Lee Beckwith, CO
- Loren Holcomb, GA
- John Negrete, NJ
- Alan Sheppard, NC
- Pat Bernardo, NY

### Men's 35+
- Mitch Smith, PA
- Dave Woma, OK
- Tim Hansen, FL
- Not a Member, CT
- Martin McDermott, PA
- Roger Miller, VA
- Dave Eagle, OH
- John Scargle, FL
- Joe Hassey, AZ
- Gil Rodriguez, VA

### Men's 40+
- Terry Fatherty, FL
- Mitt Laytan, FL
- Ruben Gonzalez, NY
- Mitch Smith, PA
- Gil Rodriguez, VA
- Dave Schwent, MO
- Dave Peck, WI
- Tom Rall, CO

### Men's 45+
- Matt Layton, FL
- Jim Luzar, WI
- Gary Mazarran, NM
- Jerry Dye, TX
- Bruce Shaper, TX
- Mike Robinson, OK
- Rick Fusari, FL
- Bob Knuth, WI
- Daryl Warren, CA
- Dan Davis, TX

### Men's 50+
- John Aldea, ID
- Ray Huss, OH
- Ed Remen, NC
- Tom McKie, TX
- Stan Lemon, MO
- Barry Hendricks, AZ
- Dennis O'Brien, ID
- Scott Rudor, CA
- Ken Vanzandt, TX

### Men's 55+
- Glenn Allen, VA
- Roger Wehrle, CA
- Les Barchbell, NJ
- Warren Reuther, LA
- Bobby Sanders, OH
- Ron Hatcher, IN
- Tom Rearden, IL
- Luis Guerra, CA
- Lee Rients, MN
- Rex Lawlor, IN

### Men's 60+
- Jerry Solomine, WI
- Jerry Holly, OH
- Paul Banales, AZ
- Michael Jackson, CT
- Ron Maggard, MO
- Grant Moll, MI
- David Joraan, NJ
- Ken Manz, CA
- Joe Jackman, PA
- Joe Lambert, TX

### Men's 70+
- Don All, FL
- John Reid, WA
- Joe Lambert, TX
- Ken Karrman, AR
- John O'Donnell, IL
- Skip Kiphart, TX
- Otis Chapman, OH
- Vance Lerner, CA
- Charles Kaiser, MI
- Jack Bogasky, WI

### Men's 80+
- Joe Lambert, TX
- Victor Sacco, NY
- Hank Richard, GA
- Earl Alford, NC
- Windell Hildebrandt, AZ
- Marvin Rosenberg, NJ
- Duane Russell, MI
- Not a Member, PA

### Women's Open
- Kersten Hallenberg, CA
- Denise Macks, TX
- Michelle Goald, ID
- Cheryl Gudino, CO
- Lisa Hjelm, CA
- Carol Krieger, MN
- Lorraine Feeny, MA
- Lydia Harrmack, CA
- Jen Yokota, CO
- Rosemary Anderson, CO

### Women's A
- Yesenia Deliusito, FL
- Debbie Fordiino, NY
- Megan Bals, NE
- Karen Schmidt, CO
- Dianne Weisbach, MA
- Victoria Carpenter, NC
- Jeanette Couyer, TX
- Deborah Muste, WA
- Thelma Ruhlen, VA
- Shari Viscout, DC

### Women's B
- Kristen Kovar, NE
- Bonnie McCell, TX
- Kassie Herr, FL
- Beielma Dettman, FL
- Kelly Goddard, VA
- Grace Jworsky, KS
- Deryl Lee, GA
- Bonnie Morrell, PA

### Women's C
- Nathaniel Stewart, GA
- Terry Truvillio, MI
- Shley Steiler, CO
- Judith Justice, SC
- Laura Gordon, CT
- Shery Kennan, AR
- Cheryl Bird, TX
- Brittney Mears, PA
- B.J. Calloway, GA
- Karen Davis, CT

### Women's D
- Alicia Martin, CA
- Rhonda Linnemann, OK
- Kathleen Neel, CA
- Erica Seabury, CO
- Gail Gobrysh, TX
- Tammy Pacinelli, MN
- Dianne Elmore, AR
- Terry Hrch, IL
- Cheryl Stamps, AR
- Jennifer Quan, CO

### Women's All Age
- Shannon Feaster, DC
- Sadie Gross, SD
- Tammy Brockbank, ID
- Kerri Stoffregen, ID
- Vanessa Tulow, CO
- Erika Juhi, DE
- Aimee Roehier, PA
- Kim Miller, CO
- Lori Perino, MT
- Nicole Schultz, OR

### Women's 25+
- Michelle Wirgad, MD
- Yesenia Deliusito, FL
- Elaine Moradas, CA
- Tina Treadwell, CO
- Thelma Ruhlen, VA
- Shari Viscout, DC

### Women's 30+
- Lorraine Galloway, PA
- Debbie Tisinger, CA
- B.J. Ehrhart, CT
Women's 35+
1. Debbie Tisinger, CA
2. Denise Mock, TX
3. Lorraine Galloway, NY
4. Mary Beke, AZ
5. Mary Pickley, PA
6. Carol Bastien, IL
7. Roz Petronelli, UT
8. Lisa Papp, CA
9. Janet Tyler, FL

Women's 40+
1. Linda Moore, ME
2. Janice Chayt, VA
3. Karen Bouchard, AZ
4. Susan Pfluger, FL
5. Marcia Richards, CO
6. Mary Pickley, PA
7. Susan Hendricken, AZ
8. Val Shevihov, UT
9. Jere Luttner, TX
10. Jean Trimble, FL

Women's 45+
1. July Sanders, NJ
2. Shelley Ogden, OH
3. Janet Myers, NC
4. Eileen Tuckman, FL
5. Renee Fish, FL
6T. Debbie Chaney, IN
6T. Andee Glansberg, NY
6T. Nancy Kronenfeld, IL
9. Carol Palamino, CA
10. Terry Ann Rogers, CA

Women's 50+
1. Agatha Falso, FL
2. Gerri Stoffregen, OH
3. Menjean Kelley, CA
4. Margaret Holt, IL
5. Nidia Funes, CA
6. Pattie Schof, IA
7. Donna Johnson, ID
8. Gwen Barber, AR
9T. May Barber, VA
9T. Sharon Chandler, WA

Women's 55+
1. Sharon Hastings-Welty, OR
2. Gail Schaefer, MD
3. Rose Stettmann, CA
4. Jo Kenyon, FL
5. Marquita Molina, CA
6. Mildred Gwinn, NC
7. Pauline Kelly, IL
8. Annabelle Koval, NE
9. Nidia Funes, CA
10. Nancy Butts, WI

Women's 60+
1. Jo Kenyon, FL
2. Susan Emery, CA
3. Mary-Low Acuff, NC
4. Helen Dunsmoor, ID
5. Jane Graham, GA
6. Norma Carlisle, UT
7. Lola Markus, IL
8. Kathy Mueller, MN
9. Naomi Eads, MO
10. Ellis Sanchez, NJ

Women's 65+
1. Lola Markus, IL
2. Mary-Low Acuff, NC
3. Reta Harring, WI
4. Not a Member, KY
5. Louise Kiss, NM
6. Paula McNeish, NM

Women's 70+
1. Mary-Low Acuff, NC
2. Dorothy Veitkurs, TN
3. Not a Member, TN
4. Mary Lou Kockert, NM
5. Roberta Schoenfield, NM
6. Beth Keene, TX

Women's 75+
1. Mary-Low Acuff, NC
2. Eleanor Quackenbush, OR
3. Christine Stephens, TX

Women's 80+
1. Zelda Friedland, NM

BOYS

Boys' 6 & under
1. Alex Sutherland, WI
2. Michael Kaupila, WI

Boys' 7
1. Erik Podwill, OR
2. Jake Bredenbekken, OH
3. Ryan Noble, NC
4. John Sanderson, UT
5. Mike Clark, OR
6. Sean Wichers, NM
7. Andrew Nunez, NM
8. Devin Rosas, OR
9. Diego Castaneda, NM
10. Colin Stock, OR

Boys' 8 & Under
1. Nick Arturo, AK
2. jamin Godwin, FL
3. Mark Beaudry, CO
4. Alan Crockett, AL
5. Conner Reynolds, GA
6T. Jansen Allen, TX
6T. Matt Keddie, NH
6T. Brad Starken, WI
7T. Kenneth Green, Jr., GA
8. Marcus Hughes, GA
9. Fred Tantalo III, NY
10. Brad Jantzi, WI

Boy's 10-
1. Charlie Pratt, OR
2. Joey Lokowski, OR
3. Eddie Mazur, CT
4T. Clay Burris, FL
5. Matthew Hammond, TX
6T. Andrew Grissom, CA
7. Matt Johnson, NM
8. Drew Tadle, AR
9. Matthew Emmel, NY

Boy's 12-
1. Clay Burris, FL
2. Brandon Shoemaker, OH
3. Steven Klaftzen, TX
4. Patrick Deboer, NE
5. Seth Parker, PA
6. Adrian Anulwicz, CT
7. Brad Scoum, FL
8. Chris Meyer, OR
9. EJ. Basta, MO
10. Omri Buzi, TX

Boy's 14-
1. Jack Huczek, MI
2. Bart Crawford, OR
3. Matthew Mcllhinney, FL
4. Trevor Crowe, CO
5. Bobby Tantalo, NY
6. Thomas Lawrence, AL
7. Joe Roth, PA
8. Chad Walters, NC
9. Joel Worthington, KS
10. Matthew Emel, NY

Boy's 16-
1. Jeffrey Garner, AL
2. Ryan Stetson, KS
3. Josh Hillyer, MO
4. Mike Harmon, FL
5. Brent Walters, NC

Girl's 6 & under
1. Jane Kelly, WI
2. Brandi Strickland, WI
3. Kelly Keddie, WI
4. Mandy Callahan, WI
5. Kristie Kenyon, MN
6. Mary Sara, WI
7. Annabelle Koval, NE
8. Nidia Funes, CA
9. Nancy Butts, WI
10. Not a Member, WI

Girl's 7
1. Zoe Keddie, WI
2. Janie Keddie, WI
3. Mary Sara, WI
4. Mary Sara, WI
5. Not a Member, WI

Girl's 8 & Under
1. Brittany Legget, OR
2. Rebekah Kopf, NY
3. Shannon Englesby, OR
4. Jenny Epstein, NY
5. Ashley Willhite, OR
6. Brandi Alexander, LA
7. Kara Mazur, CT
8. Sarah Moyle, OR
9. Nicola Koval, OR
10. Brianna Elder, MD

Girl's 10-
1. Nicole Robinson, OR
2. Bedford Ashley, OR
3. Jordan Carnes, OR
4. Kastle Arturo, AK
5. Natalie Starks, WI
6. Nikki Winfrey, OH
7. Kelley Fisher, OH
8T. Jessie Ballard, UT
8T. Katie Lyons, FL
10. Kastle Arturo, AK

Girl's 12-
1T. Melanie Mueller, CO
1T. Kristen Walsh, UT
3. Krystal Cusk, IL
4. Juliana Mayor, NY
5. Kristen Koval, NE
6. Crystal Winfrey, OH
7T. Adria Busi, TX
7T. John Ertz, WI
9. Amy Jo Hollingsworth, OR
10. Jeni Fuller, NM

Girl's 16-
1. Brooke Crawford, OR
2. Megan Bals, NE
3. Sara Borden, IA
4. Maggie Stoffregen, NE
5. Meghan Guardiana, MA
6. Jennifer Swallow, PA
7. Jessica Wood, NY
8. Kristal Cusk, IL
9T. Naomi Elmore, AR
10. Michelle Gonzalez, OR

Girl's 18-
1. Rhonda Rajich, AZ
2. Liana Kervord, OR
3. Katie Gould, MO
4. Brooke Crawford, OR
5. Christina Lewendal, OR
6. Melissa Harmon, FL
7. Sara Borden, IA
8. Jeri Lake, OR
9. Erin Frost, OR
10. Vanessa Tulas, AL

These rankings are based on results processed by the national office as of NOVEMBER 19, 1997

GIRLS

G6-Multi-Bounce
1. Nicola Robinson, OR
2. Rebekah Kopf, NY
3. Shannon Englesby, OR
4. Jenny Epstein, NY
5. Ashley Willhite, OR
6. Brandi Alexander, LA
7. Kara Mazur, CT
8. Sarah Moyle, OR
9. Nicola Koval, OR
10. Brianna Elder, MD

G8-Multi-Bounce
1. Brittany Legget, OR
2. Kastle Arturo, AK
3. Shannon Englesby, OR
4. Brooke Schulten, OR
5. Melissa Garcia, NM
6. Nicola Robinson, OR
7. Jenny Epstein, NY
8T. Rebekah Kopf, NY
8T. Sarah Moyle, OR
10. Sharon Jackson, MN

G10-Multi-Bounce
1. Ashley Legget, OR
2. Brandi Henson, OR
3. Jenny Hough, MD
4. Ashley Willhite, OR

Event Level & Description
1. Closed State Tournament
2. Open Tournament
3. State Championship
4. Regional Championship
5. National Invitational
6. National Championship

Finish & Point Awards
1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th
30 20 15 10 5 4 3 2 1 0

*In draws of 48 or more at a national championship, the 9-16th place finishers receive 50 points.
### January

**January 20**
Northern Utah Winter Classic @ Logan Recreation Center, Logan, UT
801-750-9877

**January 21**
The Alaska Open
The Alaska Club East
Anchorage, AK
907-337-9530

**January 23**
Classy 100/Georges Restaurant @ Nautilus Fitness Ctr – Erie, PA
814-868-0072

Ektelon Metroplex
Maverick Athletic Club
Arlington, TX
817-275-3348

Future Cellular SBBS Pro-Am @ Continental AC – Washington, OH
614-847-0884

Minnesota Hall of Fame
Central Courts
Columbia Heights, MN
612-572-0330

Winter Warmup
Club at Woodbridge
Woodbridge, NJ
201-742-8806

16th Summit City Court
Club Open
St. Wayne, IN
219-485-1671

28th Peter Cornell
Richard YMCA
Rickman, IN
804-644-9622

9th Bell Socialization
Yorktown Racquet Club
York, PA
717-848-5767

**January 24**
For Women Only
Valley Athletic Club
Tumwater, WA
253-848-9493

Racquetball One - Southfield @ Jewish Community Center
West Bloomfield, MI
616-975-9080

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### February

**February 5**
Aurora City Open
Colorado Athletic Club
Aurora, CO
303-750-3210

**February 6**
Berglund/Roanoke A.C.
Pro-Am @ Roanoke Ath Club
Roanoke, VA
703-989-5758

Chapman, Harmon & Reynolds Memorial
Orlando Fitness & Racquet – Orlando, FL
407-645-3550

5th Rochester Pro Am
Rochester Athletic Club
Rochester, MN
507-282-6000

HCl Open @ Campbell County Dept. Parks Rec.
Gillette, WY
307-682-7406

Longhorn Open
University of Texas
Austin, TX
512-471-3116

Miami Racquet and Fitness Open
Miami, FL
305-225-2582

The Icicle Open
Hilltown Rball Club
Hilltown, PA
610-821-1300

Radical R-ball Series
Aquarius Athletic Club
Worthington, OH
419-436-6886

Valentine Open
Down town Health & Racquet Club
New Haven, CT
203-248-1869

Winter Coors
Life/Dominos Open
Royal Court
Kearny, NE
308-236-5110

**February 7**
4th Annual Total Sports Challenge
Total Sports
Harrison Twp, MI

**February 10**
Valentine's Day
Massacre @ Redwood Multipurpose Center
West Valley City, UT
801-974-6923

**February 11**
Valentine's Doubles
Alaska Club – Midtown Anchorage, AK
907-337-9530

**February 12**
IRT Pro Stop & Harbor Square AC Pro-Am
Edmonds, WA
425-778-3546

**February 13**
Decathlon Pro-Am
Decathlon Athletic Club
Bloomington, IN
612-834-7171

Marcotte Open
Cedar Dale AC
Haverhill, MA
508-373-1396

St. Val's Day Massacre
YMCA – Idaho Falls, ID
208-523-0600

Sweetheart Doubles
Sawmill Athletic Club
Columbus, OH
614-889-7698

Upstate Regional
Doubles @ Gold's Gym
Dewitt, NY
315-446-0378

Valentine International
Windham, ME
207-892-3231

17th St. Valentines
Canoga North Valley AC – Chico, CA
916-891-4700

**February 18**
NMRA U.S. Masters Singles Invitational
Sari Francisco, CA

**February 19**
Alaska State High School Champ.
The Alaska Club East
Anchorage, AK
907-337-9530

**February 20**
All Sport Open
Rawlins Recreation Center – Rawlins, WY
307-328-4573

Ektelon Players & Appreciation
Center City Plus
Hudson, OH
216-653-2377

Fitness Barn Open
The Fitness Barn
Valparaiso, IN
219-762-3191

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- Penn (official)
- ProKenneX

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January — February 1998
**1998 USRA NATIONAL EVENTS**

**Jan. 30 - Feb. 1**
End of Winter Inspirational @ White Bear Racquet Club & Swim
White Bear Lake, MN
612-426-1308

**February 18-21**
Women's Senior/Master National Championships: Canoga Park, CA
NMRA U.S. Masters Singles invitational: San Francisco, CA
Wilson USRA 11th National High Schools: St. Louis, MO

**March 6-9**
Omni 41/Make a Wish Tournament @ Omni 41 Sports & Fitness Ctr
Schererville, IN
219-865-6969

**March 06-08**
Future Cellular SBBS Pro-Am @ Continental AC – Worthington, OH
614-847-0884

**March 06-08**
Wall Walla Open
Ace of Clubs
Walla Walla, WA
509-522-0330

**March 25-29**
16th Adirondack Open
Glens Falls YMCA
Glens Falls, NY
518-793-3878

**March 25-29**
Massachusetts State Singles @ Cedardale Athletic Club
Haverhill, MA
508-385-9367

**April 02-04**
20th Indy Open
Noblesville Athletic Club
Noblesville, IN
317-862-1279

**April 02-04**
Omni 41/Make a Wish Tournament @ Omni 41 Sports & Fitness Ctr
Schererville, IN
219-865-6969

**April 02-04**
Wall Walla Open
Ace of Clubs
Walla Walla, WA
509-522-0330

**April 16-19**
6th Adirondack Open
Glens Falls YMCA
Glens Falls, NY
518-793-3878

**April 22-25**
Connecticut State Collegiate Singles & Collegiate Singles
Downtown Health & Racquet Club
New Haven, CT
203-248-1869

**April 22-25**
March 7
Madison Athletic Club
Championship St. Louis, MO
719-635-5396

**April 22-25**
pro Kennex Super 6 Tour Stop 5 Southview Ath. Club
West St. Paul, MN
612-572-0330

**April 22-25**
Wilson Doubles Central Courts Columbia Heights, MN
612-572-0330

**May 06-08**
Connecticut State Collegiate Singles & Collegiate Singles
Downtown Health & Racquet Club
New Haven, CT
203-248-1869

**May 10**
March 13
Madison Athletic Club
Challenge
Madison Heights, MI
248-589-0990

**June 20-25**
March 13
Madison Athletic Club
Challenge
Madison Heights, MI
248-589-0990

**July 01**
March 13
Central Penn F/C Ann. Charity
Harrisburg, PA
717-564-4171

**July 10-18**
March 13
Central Penn F/C Ann. Charity
Harrisburg, PA
717-564-4171

**July 10-18**
Ohio State Singles Hall of Fame Fit Ctr
Westerville, OH
614-890-6073

**July 22-25**
Ohio State Singles Hall of Fame Fit Ctr
Westerville, OH
614-890-6073

**July 22-25**
Pennsylvania State Singles @ Penn State State College, PA
610-892-6997

**July 22-25**
Tennessee State Singles Down Town YMCA
Nashville, TN
615-254-0631

**July 22-25**
Wilson USRA 11th National High School Championships
St. Louis, MO
719-635-5396

**August 06-09**
Wilson USRA 11th National High School Championships
St. Louis, MO
719-635-5396

**October 01-05**
Wyoming State Juniors Green River Recreation
Green River, WY
307-872-0511

**October 14-18**
March 14
St. Paddy's Day Open
Riverview Racquet Club
Eastlake, OH
216-942-5613

**November 11-15**
Maine State Juniors Championships @ Racquetball International
Windham, ME
207-892-3231

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**BOLDED listings are Level 3 or higher.**

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**End of Winter Inspirational @ White Bear Racquet Club & Swim White Bear Lake, MN 612-426-1308**

**Future Cellular SBBS Pro-Am @ Continental AC – Worthington, OH 614-847-0884**

**Wall Walla Open Ace of Clubs Walla Walla, WA 509-522-0330**

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**Massachusetts State Singles @ Cedardale Athletic Club Haverhill, MA 508-385-9367**

**20th Indy Open Noblesville Ath. Club Noblesville, IN 317-862-1279**

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**March 6**
**Eastern Nebraska Championships Cottonwood Club Lincoln, NE 402-454-2765**

**March 9**
**Clio/MDA Benefit Thornton Family YMCA Tulsa, OK 918-250-4151**

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**March 7**
**West Virginia Racquetball Champs Marshall University Huntington, WV 304-696-2942**

**March 14**
**St. Paddy's Day Open Riverview Racquet Club Eastlake, OH 216-942-5613**

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**March Madness Shelby County AC Shelbyville, IN 317-897-5481**

**Northwest Open Bellingham Ath Club Bellingham, WA 360-676-1800**

**Winter Blast Classic Pennbriar Ath Club Erie, PA 814-825-8111**

**15th Annual UCP Suburban RB & Swim St. Cloud, MN 320-251-3965**

---

**New Jersey State Singles @ 46 Fitness & Racquetball Fairfield, NJ 201-742-6806**

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1997 • Promus Hotels 2nd U.S. OPEN: Selected quarterfinal & semifinal IRT rounds plus final - Cliff Swain vs. Sudsy Monchik. Video will be available after the original broadcast has been aired on ESPN2. See Page 5 for airtimes!

FROM LAST SEASON ...
1996 • Promus Hotels U.S. OPEN: Selected quarterfinal & semifinal IRT rounds plus final - Sudsy Monchik vs. Andy Roberts • Ektelon IRT World Championships: World Cup Team Championship playoffs - Ruben Gonzalez vs. Sherman Greenfeld & Michelle Gould vs. Josee Grand'Maitre

FROM THE ARCHIVES ...


1988 • National Singles • National Doubles

To order with MasterCard or Visa, call 719/635-5396, or print an order form from the website at http://www.usra.org
**BEFORE ... Early Qualifiers at Two Sites**

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**NATIONWIDE ... On ONE Weekend!**

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<td>Sacramento</td>
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<td>Barb Tibbns</td>
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<td>Ft. Lauderdale</td>
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<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>Southern Athletic Club</td>
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<td>April 16-19</td>
<td>OHIO</td>
<td>Canton</td>
<td>Hall of Fame Fitness Center</td>
<td>Doug Ganim</td>
<td>614/890-6073</td>
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<td>April 16-19</td>
<td>PACIFIC NW</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<td>April 16-19</td>
<td>MARYLAND</td>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>Merritt Athletic Club - Security</td>
<td>Molly O'Brien</td>
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<td>April 16-19</td>
<td>MASSACHUSETTS</td>
<td>Haverhill</td>
<td>Cedarvale Athletic Club</td>
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<td>MINNESOTA</td>
<td>St. Cloud</td>
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<td>Greg Hayenga</td>
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<td>April 16-19</td>
<td>MISSISSIPPI</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>The Court House</td>
<td>Chris Baker</td>
<td>601/992-3900</td>
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<td>MISSOURI</td>
<td>St. Louis</td>
<td>Missouri Athletic Club West</td>
<td>Jen Yokota</td>
<td>314/731-2668</td>
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<td>Billings</td>
<td>Billings Athletic Club</td>
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**AFTER ... Last Chance to Qualify at the PRO NATIONALS!**

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<td>NEVADA</td>
<td>Las Vegas</td>
<td>Las Vegas Sporting House</td>
<td>Mike Coulter</td>
<td>702/733-8999</td>
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**JUNIOR QUALIFIERS ... [Region]**

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<td>CALIFORNIA</td>
<td>[14]</td>
<td>Fountain Valley</td>
<td>Earl Miller</td>
<td>909/987-3904</td>
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</table>

**QUALIFYING COMPETITION IS REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE IN:**


**HOWEVER ...** women age 45 and over, and men age 55 and over (as of May 20, 1998) are NOT required to pre-qualify for competition at a regional championship in order to compete at national singles. You probably still want to, however, since it’s the only way to accumulate ranking points and receive seeding consideration! **AND** ... Juniors/Intercollegiate athletes who have already played in a junior or intercollegiate regional to qualify for their associated championship events, don’t have to re-qualify for national singles at an adult regional championship.