IOC Recognizes Racquetball For Future Olympic Games

In Just 12 Short Years Racquetball Has Grown Worldwide

By Luke St. Onge, Executive Director

The full realization and impact of this headline has yet to sink in. We can trace racquetball as a truly nationally organized sport from 1974. In just 12 short years, racquetball has spread worldwide to the point where the most prestigious international sports organization in the world has recognized it for inclusion in future Olympic and International Games conducted under its auspices. Racquetball’s involvement in the World University Games, Pan American Games, Mediterranean Games, Asian Games, South American Games, Caribbean Games, and virtually all world regional games will have a profound effect on the future development of our sport.

Racquetball is now organized competition in 44 countries. This recognition by the I.O.C. will allow each of the National Federations in each of these countries to receive support from their government and their National Olympic Committee. The remaining 120 plus member countries, including the Eastern bloc, will be introduced to racquetball. We can look for highly competitive teams to emerge from them.

What does this historic event mean to the United States and the AARA? Full implications are not yet known, but we do know that racquetball’s legitimacy not only in this country, but now worldwide, cannot be questioned. Virtually all of you as AARA members, club owners, manufacturers and players, have played a part in allowing racquetball to achieve such lofty heights in such a short amount of time.

Look at the record. We now have in place a strong Junior development program, Intercollegiate program, adult programs that range from 19 to 79 years of age, a bona fide U.S. National Team, and professional ranks for men and women. There is international and national competition in 44 countries on five continents. Now we can realistically expect to be included in the future programs of the Pan Am and Olympic Games. No sport can remain healthy and grow without all of these facets in place. Racquetball has accomplished in 12 short years what has taken some sports 50 to 100 years to achieve.

Will this be the next major expansion of our sport? A lot remains to be seen but one thing is for sure, we must not deter from the continuing objective of developing our sport in a systematic grass roots support organization. The visibility is there for us now to bring racquetball into the same light as soccer, basketball, gymnastics, and to bring home to the United States the first gold medals from the first racquetball competition in the Olympic Games.

American Amateur Racquetball Association
815 North Weber, Suite 203
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

COMITE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIQUE
CHATEAU DE VITRY / 1177 LUXEMBOURG

Mr. van der HELDEN
President
International Amateur Racquetball Federation
Laan van O.O. Indi 287
2593 BS THE HAGUE / The Netherlands

Lausanne, 14th January 1986
Ref. no.
1180/20

Re: IOC Recognition

Dear Mr. van der Helden,

It is my pleasure to inform you that at the recent meeting of the IOC Executive Board held on 13-14 December 1985 in Lausanne, and upon the recommendation of the IOC Commission for the Program, the International Olympic Committee decided to give official recognition to the International Amateur Racquetball Federation.

I take this opportunity to welcome your federation to the Olympic Movement.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]
TOURNAMENT SHIRT AWARDED TO ALL PLAYERS

Friday, April 11, 1986

HOSPITALITY BEGINS WITH LUNCH ON
8:00 am on Friday, April

PLAY BEGINS:

S 15.00 First Event; S 10.00 Second Event.

DEADLINE:

Begins March 25, 1986, NO EXCEPTIONS.

OFFICIAL BALL:

Penn Ultra Blue

TOURNAMENT SHIRT AWARDED TO ALL PLAYERS

HOSPITALITY BEGINS WITH LUNCH ON
Friday, April 11, 1986
The Psychology
Of Competition

Part Three: Cognitive Restructuring and and Mental Imaging

By Dr. Jerry May and
Drew Stoddard

Athletics is the process of programming the mind by feeding it with enough information about a particular skill so that it can direct the body to recreate that skill at a later time. If the programming is done well, the mind is capable of executing a given task with a degree of precision and timing that is almost beyond comprehension. Few of us have at some time marveled at the elegant passing shot of a tennis champion, or the perfect trajectory of a quarterback’s 50-yard pass as it flies to within inches of its intended target.

Given its awesome capacity, it is ironic that perhaps the most difficult skill for the human mind to acquire is the ability to control itself. For the athlete who aspires to excellence, teaching the mind to perform efficiently and predictably under the stress of competition is the greatest challenge of all.

Few areas in our lives are not affected in some way by stress. In this series of articles we have explored the affects of stress on athletic performance, and have identified three specific principles:

One
The mind’s ability to recreate a learned skill is altered, for better or worse, by the presence of stress. Executing a skill in the relaxed atmosphere of practice is quite different from executing the same skill under the stress of competition.

Two
When it is confronted with stress, the mind becomes aroused, and there is a direct relationship between the level of arousal and performance. The level of performance increases with arousal until it reaches a point of maximum efficiency. Beyond that point, any further increase in the aroused state will cause performance to deteriorate.

Three
Just as you can train your body to execute a particular skill, you can condition your mind to perform well under stress. Top competitors are not always the most physically gifted, but they excel because they have learned to control their own state of arousal.

There are two primary ways to train the mind to cope with stress. The first is by learning to “override” the mind’s natural responses to stress through a technique called relaxation training. This is a process of teaching the mind to relax on command, and it was detailed in The Psychology of Competition Part III.

Relaxation training has been used with great success by a number of world class competitors. It works because it gives the athlete a reliable method for controlling the symptoms of the brain’s built-in response to stress.

Whatever else you may ask it to do on a daily basis, your mind’s highest priority at all times is to keep you alive. If you don’t believe that, the next time you’re really hungry go stand in front of a speeding car and see how fast you forget about that Big Mac. Whenever the brain is confronted with what it perceives to be a serious threat, all other processes are shut down and the survival instinct takes complete control. We described this in Part II as the “fight-or-flight” response.

That defense mechanism is vital, but it is not always the most efficient way to handle stress. In fact, we tend to cause this response on a much deeper level, by effectively retraining the mind to more accurately interpret which circumstances are truly threatening, and which are not. This is done through a process called cognitive restructuring, which is just a fancy name to describe the restructuring of one’s own thought patterns.

To understand this, let’s go back for a moment and explore why the mind reacts as it does to stress. We often think of the brain as a kind of reservoir which is empty at birth, and which we then slowly fill with information as we go through life. This is partially true, but in fact our brains come from the factory with some information already built-in. Each of us deals with our own instincts every day: we eat, we breathe, we dress to keep ourselves warm, and we seek the companionship of others, all with very little conscious motivation.

“For the athlete who aspires to excellence, teaching the mind to perform efficiently and predictably under the stress of competition is the greatest challenge of all.”

The second method separates at a much deeper level, by effectively retraining the mind to more accurately interpret which circumstances are truly threatening, and which are not. This is done through a process called cognitive restructuring, which is just a fancy name to describe the restructuring of one’s own thought patterns.

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The AARA Officers and its Board of Directors want to offer the following slate of candidates for your consideration. The Candidates listed below will serve a three-year term on the Board of Directors, and are nominated in order of their birth year. Rather than emphasizing on their credentials and accomplishments, we have decided to let each write a letter or tell you how he or she feels that a positive vote from you, the membership at large, would result in a better and stronger Association. What follows are their own remarks and their own personal evaluations. We personally believe that a stronger state would be difficult to assemble, but then again, you be the judge. Read carefully what each has to say, place your vote on the ballot provided, and mail your ballot to AARA headquarters to arrive before May 1, 1986. Regardless of who you vote for, please vote! What the AARA does for you and where we go in the future, is in a large part, in the hands of those officers and directors who orchestrate our destiny.

Luke St. Onge, Executive Director

Marty Hogan: Power Racquetball

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Luke St. Onge, Executive Director

The Candidates

LEE BATEMAN

Pennsylvania

My involvement in the game began five years ago when I decided to play in tournaments the first year, the second year, I was playing in class A and open division now. From my experience in tournaments, I helped develop a Travel League consisting of 30 clubs in the Pennsylvania and Delaware regions. I also sponsor two junior class tournaments on my own each year.

Because of these experiences, I've had the pleasure of teaching students at all levels the rules, skills and strategies of the game. I am proud to be on the Board so that I may play an integral part in implementing the general public about racquetball and its merits. Everyone should have the opportunity to learn the game -- starting at the junior level -- to learn not only the mental and physical attributes but the leadership qualities you gain from the sport.

Being on the Board will give me the opportunity to pass on this knowledge on a larger scale, especially starting at the junior level.

GAYANN BLOOM

New Hampshire

I became very involved with the sport of racquetball five years ago when my husband and I took on the state directorship for New Hampshire. We put a lot of time into this organization to see that it was run properly and efficiently. Apart from being directors, we are also a competitive family.

My accomplishments include:

1979 Northeast Regional Champions 1st Women's 40+
1984 Placed in quite a few tournaments and received prizes and gift certificates
1984 Women's (85) Tournament and single Women's 40+
1985 Northeast Regional Champions 1st Women's 40+
1985 AARA Nationals (Houston)

The Candidates

Representing the New England Region on the Board is very rewarding. Being very supportive of New England in regard to the racquetball sport is very challenging, I would like to see more support for Women's Racquetball, Seniors, Juniors, and Family involvement. Racquetball is physical, stress relieving, competitive and above all fun for everyone.

JON DENLEY

New Jersey

Only a short five years ago the AARA was almost non-existent in the state of New Jersey. An association attempted to "profitize" by scheduling as many tournaments as the calendar would permit. Their theme was always "quantity".

Being an avid player and staunch supporter of the AARA, I was asked to consider accepting the position of state director. Upon acceptance I carefully selected a committee to assist me in this venture. Our common theme as a non-profit group was to promote racquetball through quality and excellence.

Today we have over 1,400 members and schedule over 20 open tournaments a year. We publish a bi-monthly state newsletter which includes state ranking system patterns after the national ranking system. We have enlisted players and club owners/managers through our state club affiliate member program. We solicited the sport of racquetball through a statewide Burger King/Club promotion.

We have developed an on-going relationship with the second largest newspaper in the state, which not only publicizes our tournament results, but headlines our events. ABC TV has announced our tournaments and interviewed some of our top players. Our Governor has proclaimed the week of May 10 as "Racquetball Week" for three consecutive years.

There are many goals yet to reach. The light at the end of the tunnel is far from being in sight. I want to contribute my experience, ideas and energy to help get just a little bit closer to that "light". Please cast your ballot -- regardless for whom you vote -- just so long as you vote!

JOHN FOUST

Colorado

It is my belief that in the history of racquetball, no one organization has done more to solidify our sport for the future than the AARA. I want to continue the work I have done on a state and regional level at a national level. I would never claim to be a genius or know all this is about racquetball, but I do think I have a good feel for the sport and the AARA, and I'm concerned about its future, especially for amateurs.

Another area of special concern for me is the involvement of disabled people in our sport. Racquetball lends itself exceptionally well to the disabled. As a disabled athlete I would like to spearhead the AARA disabled program with proper representation on the board.

My primary goal in becoming involved on a national level is to continue the work being done by the current board in achieving class A status with the U.S.O.C. I think it would be an accomplishment that could be shared by all if, one day, racquetball is part of the Olympics and amateurs are vying for a gold medal. I will work hard to help attain those goals.

GERALD GRAY

Michigan

I want to be involved in the decision making process of the AARA and help mould the future of racquetball because of my belief in racquetball as a multi-faceted, lifelong activity from juniors, intercollegiates, young adults, to seniors and masters.

As a person who has recovered from a heart attack while playing racquetball, I realize the tremendous support group the sport provides for people wanting to adhere to wellness programs.

As a member of the intercollegiate council, I want to help coordinate activities and developments with the Board of Directors.

CLINT KOBLE

Nevada

In my first term as a board member, I would like to accomplish three major goals:

[Continued on page 8]
Omega superiority explained.


Mad Raq™ is the only stringing arrangement in the world unique enough to have a patent. And only Omega has it.

Omega knows racquetball is played on the strings, not the frame. So we concentrated on a revolutionary breakthrough in stringing. We succeeded. The patented Mad Raq™ six-string pattern looks different than the conventional four-string pattern. But it's not just for looks. Tests conducted by an independent research lab prove it can help give players the edge they've never had.

Up to 23% greater ball bite. Up to 33% greater bite time.

Larger "holes" in the Mad Raq stringing pattern, six gripping edges rather than four, and a rougher surface pattern, give up to 23% greater surface ball bite and up to 33% greater bite time for greater control, finesse, top-spin and slice than conventional stringing.

Six-string pattern dampens vibration up to an extra 11%.

The Mad Raq stringing pattern deflects vibration in six directions instead of just four. This means up to 11% less shock to your wrist, arm and shoulder. And you work less hard, because the strings do more of the work.

Up to 16% larger "sweet spot." Up to 8% larger "power zone."

The Mad Raq stringing pattern gives you up to a 16% larger "sweet spot" than conventional stringing for more controlled hits. And a 8% larger "power zone" than conventional stringing for more power hits.

The Omega promise: Mad Raq stringing gives a player the 20% edge they've never had.

Instead of having string tension adjusted either for power playing or soft touch playing, as you would have to do with a conventionally-strung racquet, Mad Raq stringing gives the player the capability of playing both styles with one racquet.

Mad Raq. It looks different. It plays with a difference.

Write for easy stringing instructions. Omega Sports, 2020 Cody
Overland Park, KS 66214
The Candidates

1. Be instrumental and innovative in getting racquetball accepted into the Olympics and to change our current amateur eligibility rule at the same time by making it fair and simple to be an amateur or pro. We need to seriously consider the direction of "open eligibility" that other Olympic sports are heading in.
2. Propose that we seriously rewrite some of our rules on avoidables and other vague areas that are open to interpretation. Our sport will always be seriously hindered until we spell out more clearly what and when avoidables occur if we are even to avoid conflicts and to make the sport more appealing.
3. Help establish a Hall of Fame and a Sports Museum while our sport is young and while our legends can give us information and early equipment essential to our history.

GEORGE PETERS
Illinois

As an elected officer of the Illinois State Racquetball Association, I have had an opportunity to contribute to the rejuvenation of racquetball in Illinois during the past two seasons. I believe that much of this has to do with several specific actions that I have helped to spearhead. In particular we have:
1. Reaffirmed our commitment to the AARA on a State and Regional level.
2. Become heavily involved in the ARHS ranking system to efficiently rank players and eliminate sandbagging.
3. Developed a tournament sanctioning package which represents a significant value for the tournament director while ensuring a quality experience for the player, and
4. Published a complete newsletter including instructions, results, racquetball info, all statewide results, and a complete tournament calendar 7 times a year.

During this period, membership in the IRRA has more than tripled and we no longer hear the old complaint — what do I get for my money?

I think that I will be able to translate the energy and enthusiasm which I have displayed on the state level to the AARA National Board. We need a working board that is able to come up with new and exciting ways to promote the sport of racquetball at all levels. At the same time, the board must be pragmatic enough to recognize that implementation and translation of those ideas to the local level represents even greater challenge.

I've been successful on the local level, and would enjoy the opportunity to work with the other Board members to develop additional programs for the benefit of all ability levels nationwide.

JUDI SCHMIDT
Florida

During 17 years of participation in racquetball, I have contributed to its growth and development at local, state, and regional levels to the best of my ability both independently and as a representative of the AARA on a national level.

As a woman first, and athlete/coach secondly, I am convinced of the need for recreation and athletics in the formation of a well-rounded individual. Therefore, I have been a spokesperson in the southeast for female and junior involvement in racquetball. I would like to be more involved in the development of policies and programs which will attract women and children to the overall benefits to be derived from the racquetball experiences.

I will bring to the National Board the same dedication, hard work and energy that I have devoted to the growth of racquetball in Florida and the Southeast region since 1989.

ALLEN SEITLEMAN
New York

Why would I want to be on the board of directors? While this question could generate some very complex rationales, it is very simple for me to answer: I've played racquetball for over 16 years and I love the game.

I loved the sport so much that I gladly dedicated my efforts to help improve and promote it. I quickly found that the more time and effort I put into the sport, both as a player and as an administrator, the more I enjoyed and loved racquetball.

Racquetball has undoubtedly become a major facet in my life, therefore, the opportunity to serve as a member of the Board of Directors, National Vice President, and as the U.S. Olympic Committee delegate is a major concern of mine since there is still a great deal of work left to accomplish in order to make our Association even better.

If elected, I bring to the Board a combination of interest, abilities and experience that is ideally suited to helping our Association grow and develop. If you like the way the AARA has been developing over the past few years, a vote for me will help to ensure the continuation of this trend (based on my track record as an integral part of the administration of the Association for the past eight years).

In addition to my racquetball community background (Master’s degree in public administration), and my work as Director of Planning provide me with an excellent basis to serve as an officer of the AARA.

If elected, I pledge to continue to work hard, if not harder for the betterment of the AARA, to aid in the growth of the sport, and to work on having racquetball accepted as an Olympic sport.

OFFICIAL AARA BALLOT

Listed below is the slate of candidates. The slate consists of nine (9) candidates of whom only three (3) may be selected. The ballot should be filled out by checking three (3) selections only and then clipping and mailing the ballot to: AARA, 815 North Weber, Suite 203, Colorado Springs, CO 80903. Note: All ballots must be received by midnight, May 1, 1986 in order to be eligible. Those selected will serve a three (3) year term commencing in May.

Lee Balsman
Gayann Bloom
Jon Denley
John Foust
Gerald Gray

Clint Koble
Geoff Peters
Judi Schmidt
Allen Seitleman

Detach and mail to: AARA Headquarters, 815 North Weber, Suite 203, Colorado Springs, CO 80903 before May 1, 1986.

NAME:

ADDRESS:

CITY: STATE: ZIP:

To validate your vote, please attach front page label here.

FREE A Can of HEAD RACQUETBALLS

Racquetball: The Fun Sport of Fitness!

Save 25% Off Cover Price!

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City/State/Zip

First copy will arrive in 6-8 weeks. Canadian subscribers add $8.00 per year. Foreign, one year, $65.00 sent via air mail. Make checks or money orders (U.S. currency) payable to National Racquetball 400 Douglas Avenue Dunedin, FL 33782

Payment enclosed
Bill me later

Save 25% off regular price

New subscriber
Renewal

(please print)

(please print)

24 months for only $32.00
(Save 33% off regular price)

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(Receive 52% off regular price)

Expiration date
Expiration date

Please add $100 to the above rate.
Head introduces the power to change your game forever. It's the extra power delivered by Head's revolutionary new mid-size racquets.

Adding power by making the racquet bigger is easy. But only Head knew how to develop a bigger racquet with a flawless balance between added power and control.

With a slightly larger head, Head’s new mid-size racquets deliver a lot of extra power. And they do it without stripping your game of finesse or timing or control. So your shots just get faster, harder, and a whole lot tougher to return.

Ask top-ranked pro Jerry Hilecher. He’ll tell you mid-size is helping him hit backhands like never before. That’s why he’s playing with his new mid-size Radial on the Pro Tour.

Or ask the International Amateur Racquetball Federation. They've declared Head’s new mid-size the “official racquetball racquets” of the 1985 World Games in London.

Or better yet, ask yourself. Play-test a new Head mid-size racquet and you’ll find out just how much muscle mid-size can add to your game.

INTRODUCING THE NEW MID-SIZE RACQUETS FROM HEAD.

Jerry Hilecher, top-ranked pro.
Pinching the Ball
by Steve Strandemo

THE PINCH
The pinch is a prerequisite for good play. Pinching the ball low and accurate off of the side wall will be a shot that will force your opponent to respect the front part of the court. Without this shot in your repertoire, there is no reason for your opponent to consistently play forward in his coverage. You can also force him up by continually hitting accurate splat shots, but very few players have this ability.

The contact point on the side wall is the critical factor in executing this shot. From the position the hitter is located in the picture, he can carom the ball into the right side wall anywhere below one foot in the marked off area. This will give him the correct angle off of the front wall and will give the shot a good chance to take two bounces before the opposite side wall or in front of the service box. If the contact point is too high on the side wall, the ball will carry well into the center court area giving your opponent an obvious scoring opportunity.

Point on the side wall with some tape. Position yourself relative to where the hitter is located in the picture. Experiment with different contact angles and heights, so that you understand the consequences of mis-hitting your target area. Remember that the further you are from the side you are pinching into, the tighter the angle must be.

Once you’ve become familiar and competent with the pinch, expect it to become an invaluable part of your game.

DON’T OVERDO IT
The opposite is also true. The hitter must not overdo the pinch or he will find his defender hugging the back service line in anticipation of this shot. If you become predictable and find your opponent covering up in this area, you should start mixing in the down-the-line kill-pass and a wide angle cross-court pass.

To practice the pinch, first learn the proper angle of the shot. Go into a court by yourself and mark the correct contact point on the side wall with some tape. Position yourself relative to where the hitter is located in the picture. Experiment with different angles and heights, so that you understand the consequences of mis-hitting your target area. Remember that the further you are from the side you are pinching into, the tighter the angle must be.

Omega, Penn and DP Receive “Official” Status

The Executive Board of the International Amateur Racquetball Federation has awarded to Omega the “Official Racquet” status for the Third World Championships of Racquetball.

This is Omega’s first entry as a major sponsor into the international field.

The IARF also announced it has awarded the “Official Ball” of the 1986 World Championships of racquetball to Penn Athletic Products Company.

The World Championships are slated for Sani-sport Athletic Complex in Montreal, Canada from August 4 to August 10. Twenty-two countries are expected to compete in the Third World Championships of Racquetball.

In a separate announcement, AARA announced that Diversified Products will once again be a major sponsor as the “Official Racquet” of every major AARA event in 1986, including the U.S. National Singles, U.S. National Juniors, U.S. National Intercollégiate, Adult and Junior Regionals, and the U.S. National Doubles Championships.

Diversified Products has been a major sponsor of the American Amateur Racquetball Association since 1983.

Harvey Named “C” Card Athlete

Ross Harvey, current Men’s World Racquetball Champion, was named by Sport Canada Division of the Federal Government as a recipient of funding under the “Athlete Assistance Program” (AAP). AAP funding assists athletes with education, training and living expenses, in order to enable them to pursue excellence in their amateur sport careers at the international level.

“AAP” is usually reserved for Olympic, Pan Am or Commonwealth Games Sports, but a special case was made because Ross is reigning World Champion. There is also a possibility of carding of additional Canadian players, based on their performance at the World Championships in Montreal in August.

Harvey, a native of Montreal, is currently attending Veterinary School at Guelph University in Guelph, and he is looking forward to defending his crown in hometown Montreal.
SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

March 1986

New Directions

By Lyle St. Onge, Exec Director

On page 1 we cover the historic development of the US National Team, which has traveled to many countries over the past five years, has become the most visible element for our sport and has contributed significantly to this moment. The U.S. National Team has traveled to many countries many times, and now has become the most visible element for our sport. For many of these trips our athletes paid a major portion of their own expenses to develop racquetball worldwide.

Finally, a special thanks to Cal James and Greg Ewel of Diversified Products, and to Penn Athletic Products Company. Both have supported the AARA financially and morally through several years at a time when many industry leaders felt such lofty goals were unattainable.
Psychology: Part Three

(continued from page 3)

confission ourselves when we skew our priorities by attaching too much importance to a single performance. Every athlete wants to win. But when the desire to excel becomes an immediate obsession instead of a long range goal, we sometimes begin to view competition in a potentially destructive way.

There is a big difference between saying to yourself “I play racquetball well”, and “I am a good racquetball player.” Regardless of whether either is accurate, the first refers to something you do, the second to what you are. The distinction may be difficult to grasp, but it is a vital principle for every athlete to understand.

Each of us has in our own mind a certain image of who we are. Psychologically, we refer to this in various ways: self-worth, self-image, ego, etc. A mentally healthy individual is one who’s self-image is fundamentally strong enough to withstand the weight of periodic failure. But when we begin to confuse who we are with what we do, and depend too heavily on immediate success to bolster our sense of self-worth, we put our ego on the line every time we attempt to accomplish anything that involves the slightest amount of risk.

Remember this! To the mind, the destruction of one’s self-image is very nearly the psychological equivalent of physical death. When your ego is on the line, the possibility of failure becomes a real threat, and your mind mobilizes its defenses to protect you just as it would if you found yourself in the path of a speeding car.

This may sound like some vague psychological theory, but it is a principle that is easily observable among athletes. Some seem destined to forever ride a roller coaster of chance, gaining confidence with victory then losing it with defeat, never able to make any real progress. But champions are different. Their confidence comes from within and they continually improve despite periodic failure.

A classic example of this occurred on the final day of competition in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games, when diver Greg Louganis found himself in a situation of unimaginable stress. He was the final diver in the final event, and he knew that a near perfect dive would win a gold medal for his team, and give the United States the record for the most medals ever won in Olympic competition. Before 50 million television viewers, Louganis scaled the high platform and executed a perfect 10.

Following the dive, reporters asked him what was going through his mind as he clutched the tower. Some thought he was joking when he answered, “I was nervous but I told myself, whatever happens, your mother still loves you!” Those who chuckled missed a rare and profound insight into the mind of a great champion.

Why was Louganis thinking about his mother at such an important moment? Because he knew he couldn’t dive with the weight of the world on his shoulders. So he summoned an inner source of strength, and reminded himself of who he was: not a diver, not an athlete, but a human being who was worthy of another’s love. He separated himself from the act, knew he could survive a failure, and thereby freed his mind of its protective responsibility and allowed it to perform with relaxed perfection.

That is what is meant by cognitive restructuring — the willful alteration of thought patterns to free the mind to do as it has been programmed.

If you have difficulty playing up to your potential in tournament competition, it’s a sure sign that your mind is battling against stress. Trying harder won’t solve the problem. Practicing more won’t solve the problem. You must determine why you feel threatened and then alter the way you think so you cannot fool yourself. If the threat is there, your mind will mobilize itself to protect you. Everything else — including your performance — will become secondary.

Goals And Incentives

The Greg Louganis’ example demonstrates the use of cognitive restructuring at the moment of greatest stress in competition. But in fact this technique must be practiced on a daily basis to be used effectively. Many athletes get themselves into trouble because of thought patterns they develop during their months and years of training, patterns which then become impossible to alter when the stress is encountered.

Cognitive restructuring has to begin with an examination of goals. It is crucial to understand why we become involved in sports, because unrealistic goals can become self-defeating.

We often refer to three types of goals: long-term, intermediate, and short-term. For a racquetball player, a long-term goal might be as lofty as aspiring to become national champion. An intermediate goal might involve achieving a certain level of performance during a single season, or in an important tournament.

Short-term goals deal with specific physical and psychological training programs, such as daily practice of a particular skill or detached analysis of one’s ongoing progress. Athletic performance is improved by concentrating on fundamentals, and therefore short-term goals are where we should focus most of our attention. Again, there is a sound psychological reason for this.

It is not unusual, or undesirable, to aspire to great things. But long-term and intermediate goals serve the purpose of keeping thoughts in perspective. When we dwell on them at length, particularly if they are unattainable, we impede our own progress by constantly beating ourselves down.

In order to constantly grow and progress, the mind demands regular positive rewards. The satisfaction of achieving a short-range goal, or the feeling of a job well-done, reinforces the self-image and has the effect of motivating the mind to re-experience the positive sensation. That is the key to continual progress.

But if goals are set too high, or if we focus on long-range and intermediate goals at length, we constantly feel upset and negative. Reinforcing ourselves in a negative way is called punishment. And to the mind, punishment becomes stress; it is a threat.

It has long been known that punishment suppresses or reduces the frequency of a given behavioral pattern. For the athlete, too much negative reinforcement or punishment can have very serious effects: decreased self-esteem, increased self-doubt, and a decrease in emotional stability. Inner strength comes from a positive self-image; programming the mind in a negative way is a guaranteed formula for failure.

What is it that makes us work so hard and so long to become proficient in a sport? What are the incentives that cause the sacrifice worthwhile? Of course they vary with different people. And each of us must identify what are our own particular incentives are.

Again, long-range and intermediate goals are where we should focus our attention. For the athlete, too much negative reinforcement or punishment can have very serious effects: decreased self-esteem, increased self-doubt, and a decrease in emotional stability. Inner strength comes from a positive self-image; programming the mind in a negative way is a guaranteed formula for failure.

Most world-class athletes depend heavily on internal as well as external rewards. The Buckskin glove comes in more sizes than any other glove available today. Suggest it was made in 1915.

Viking Sports

Tel: 800-555-1234
P.O. Box 7777

What happens to a racquetball glove that isn’t washable? After just a few games it looks like a dehydrated vegetable.

The Buckskin glove on the other hand, won’t shrink or fade. It stays pleasingly tacky and tight. It’s machine washable, machine dryable and amazingly thin. Double stiched for durability, the full length polyurethane sleeve keeps your palms dry. Our strikes rock solid.

What more can you ask for? The Buckskin glove comes in more sizes than any other glove available today. Suggest it was made in 1915.

Viking Sports
external rewards. External incentives like recognition and financial success are important, but by themselves they are not good motivators. We must have internal incentives which provide more immediate rewards: self-satisfaction, enjoyment, companionship, fear of physical exertion, etc.

It is rare that top athletes go all out simply to “be number one,” or only to “win.” They tend to take a much shorter view. Today, I just want to try to do this or that. I may sound bizarre, but it’s true, the consistent achiever is one who understands himself, receives periodic satisfaction from within, and who has a strong self-image.

Balance
Most of us love to watch top athletes because we are awed by their physical skills. But if you ask 100 people what they admire in their favorite competitors, the most common answer is likely to be “confidence.” Great champions seem to draw rewards: self-satisfaction, enjoyment, companionship, the pleasure from a constructive reaction which provide more immediate success, because personal growth provides the resilience of a broad-based “support system,” and some believe that it is more important to “win” than “to try.”

Mental Imaging
It has long been known that the mind seems to be indifferent to the difference between real experiences and those that are imagined. Mental imaging is a technique of producing images in the mind which duplicate as nearly as possible the sensations that would be experienced during a perfect physical performance. Since the mind will record the image as though it actually took place, and since it is much easier to imagine a perfect effort than to actually experience one, this technique can be highly effective in athletic preparation.

Frequently video tape of a good role model or even tape of yourself performing can act as a good stimulus for producing positive mental images. Indeed, a number of commercial products have been marketed recently which use top athletes as models. While these can be useful, they are not necessary to successfully utilize the technique.

One of the advantages of mental imaging is that it can be used to reduce stress levels in competition. When this mental rehearsal is done in a relaxed atmosphere, or ideally in conjunction with the relaxation exercises described in Part II, the mind can learn to associate the relaxed state with the actual event.

In a widely publicized experiment a few years ago, the free throw percentage of a particular basketball team was improved over 20% through mental imaging. For a portion of each practice session over a period of months, the players were instructed to quietly visualize, as accurately as possible, standing at the free throw line shooting perfect shot after perfect shot.

This process is particularly well suited to sports such as racquetball which are individual by nature, and which tend to rely on a relative few specific skills.

For example, you might wish to utilize mental imaging to improve an ineffective backhand. To do this you would visualize yourself on the court, either alone or in a match, repeatedly executing flawless backhands - graceful, coordinated, powerful, accurate. You must attempt to “feel” the experience as much as possible, not just see it. Use as many of the senses as possible - sight, touch, hearing, and smell, if such conditions exist. The more real the visualization, the greater impact it will have on your mind.

An obvious advantage to this type of mental training is that you can change the playing conditions as you see fit. If you find tournaments or competition particularly difficult, try to imagine the exact conditions, etc.

Some people find that writing out the details of the activity to be rehearsed is helpful in the early stages of mental rehearsal. Some also find that initially it is easier to imagine themselves watching as a spectator. Ultimately, however, you want to be able to actually feel yourself going through the motions.

Stop-Thinking Technique
As much as effort you may put into keeping your thoughts constructive and positive, there will be times, both during training and prior to competition, when negative feelings seem impossible to control. There can be particularly troublesome when you are fatigued or awaiting an important event, and consequently can intercept sleep or concentration when they are needed most.

As we have discussed, persistent negative and worrisome thoughts can cause a serious deterioration in performance level. However, they often seem uncontrollable because they repeat in a vicious cycle: you think about something, you consciously put the thought out of your mind, which makes the thought resurface and you have to think about it again.

There is a very straightforward procedure for eliminating unwanted thoughts. This procedure can be very effective, but it should not be used to eliminate worry when an important problem needs to be solved. If a legitimate problem exists, it is usually preferable to work through rather than simply eliminate the concern it causes.

There are, however, specific times when problem solving is not appropriate, such as when trying to fall asleep or in the moments just prior to competition. At these times, it is best to use a “stop-thinking” technique. When the cycle of worry begins, follow these simple steps:

One: Say to yourself, or softly out loud, “Stop!”

Two: Immediately produce a very positive and calming image in your mind. An example would be to imagine yourself on a beach, feeling the warm sun, smelling the fresh air, experiencing a state of complete relaxation.

Three: Go do something else for just a few moments, if possible.

This technique may sound silly, but in fact it works quite efficiently. Worry actually requires strict concentration. And saying “stop!” has about the same effect on the concentration thought process as a ringing telephone has at a moment of great passion.

Concerning worry, however, so long as worry has been harnessed, the calming image acts as a positive reward, increasing the chance of repetition. The fear of failure must be practiced each time the negative thought pattern begins so that the pattern itself is conditioned out.

Part of what makes this technique effective is that it works on three levels: a thinking level, an emotional level, and a behavioral level. The first two steps are the most important. There will be times when turning your attention to something else is impossible because the situation will not allow it. But the first two steps, saying “stop!” and the positive image, can be done in the mind.

It is extremely important that the second step to follow the “stop!” immediately. Also, it is helpful to have four or five predefined positive, calming images. These should be practiced through visual imagery so that they can be recalled immediately when needed.

In his series of articles we have discussed many techniques for training the mind for the rigors of athletic competition. There are, of course, other principles and techniques that are effective as well.

It is easy to become so entrenched in the mind that the training the mind for the rigors of athletic competition. There are, of course, other principles and techniques that are effective as well.

The human mind is a source of immense power. And that power can be harnessed in either a positive or negative way. The challenge for the athlete is to learn to tap that power by training the mind as well as the body. In both areas, failing to train is truly falling short.
Racquetball Tournament Benefits Quadriplegic

Racquetball players are more than just competitors. They care about people. In October, the Supreme Court in Rochester held a benefit tournament for Peter Hoilman.

Peter is 19 years old. He was seriously injured in a golf course accident on May 31. As a result of the accident, Peter is a quadriplegic. Peter's father, Dennis, has been an active racquetball supporter for the past eight years. Although Peter was not a racquetball player, he was deeply moved by the benefit tournament and raffle which raised funds for him and his family. "My dad always told me racquetball players were special," Peter confessed at the tournament, "and now I understand what he meant."

Many racquetball players sold raffle tickets as part of the benefit for Peter. The money raised was used for medical expenses and to purchase a VCR. Peter was very pleased, since his primary entertainment is limited to music and television.

Peter continues to make good progress. He is able to control a special wheelchair and with the help of a wrist splint on his right arm, he is able to feed himself, talk on a phone, type on a computer and with great concentration he can use the toilet. He will continue his rehabilitation at St. Mary's Hospital for 6 months to 1 year. Then he will go to the Courage Center in the metro area.

Peter has always been an avid fan of Sylvester Stallone. His stepmother wrote him shortly after the accident. Stallone responded immediately with words of encouragement to the young man. "We were not a racquetball family...but we haven't been difficult than any the fictional Rocky ever faced. In addition, Stallone promised to bring Peter to a screening of Rocky IV if Peter were able.

This was a tremendous incentive to Peter, and he made the grade.

STATE Turning in Tournament RESULTS

| Number of States that have turned in Tournament Results | 34 |
| Number of States that have Not turned in Results | 14 |
| Total Number of States in 279 |

Sylvester Stallone kept his promise. He brought Peter and his family to Hollywood for the opening, including all the ceremonies. Peter got the "Red Carpet" treatment. He met many of the movie's celebrities and the sports world. This extraordinary experience will provide many wonderful memories to fill some lonely days and evenings for this special young man.

Anyone who would like to write or send a card, can send it to: Mr. Peter Hoilman, St. Mary's Hospital, Rehabilitation Unit, Rochester, MN 55901.

Egerman Signs With Head

Four-time national champion John Egerman stunned the racquetball world when, at the age of sixteen, the unknown youngster from Boise, Idaho won both the National Junior Championship and the National Men's Open Singles Championships, thus becoming the youngest player in history to hold both titles simultaneously.

Since that time he has firmly established himself as one of the best racquetball players in the world, being ranked as high as seventh during the 1981 pro season. His long list of tournament titles includes two prestigious professional victories in Portland and Anchorage.

In addition to his playing abilities, John Egerman is developing a reputation for being one of the game's best teachers. His well rounded personality, combined with his knowledge of racquetball and athletic training in general, make him one of the most sought after racquetball instructors in the country.

May Be Fitst Month

May once again will serve as the official month designated to celebrate physical fitness nationwide, George Allen, Chairman of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, has announced.

"National Physical Fitness and Sports Month is designed to encourage new fitness programs and services, acquaint people with fitness opportunities available in their own communities and to give recognition to effective leaders and outstanding programs."

"Now is the time for individuals, businesses and community leaders to start planning their fitness month activities," stressed Allen. "In 1985, we documented more than 2000 sponsored fitness programs and services attracting more than one million people. This year, we hope everyone will join in the campaign and improve their physical fitness."

Recreation and park departments, schools, YM-YWCA's, Boys and Girls Clubs, businesses and industry, government agencies and local service and leisure organizations are urged to submit entries for the national awards program and events during May.

A promotional poster and "how to" brochure will be mailed in January to 10,000 agency leaders to help them plan their events. The celebration will include sports and fitness clinics, creative and fun runs, fitness testing and health fair activities.

Additional information is available by contacting local recreation departments or Dr. Matthew Guidry, President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, 450 5th St., N.W., Suite 7103, Washington, D.C. 20001, (202) 224-3242.
### AARA/ARHS National Rankings

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### AARA/ARHS National Rankings

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Unlike any racquetball racquet before it, DP introduces the 357 Mag™ a state-of-the-art magnesium racquet unmatched by today's aluminum racquets. With a superior strength to weight ratio, the 357 Mag™ delivers exceptional power, playability and control. Utilizing sophisticated racquet technology and quality craftsmanship the 357 Mag™ is truly the racquet of tomorrow...made available today. Ahead of its time...far ahead of the competition, the DP 357 Mag™ is fit for your game.

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