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VOLUME 18
NUMBER 1
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2007
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**Mission Statement**

USA Racquetball (USAR) is the National Governing Body for the sport of racquetball, recognized by the U.S. Olympic Committee and is committed to excellence and service to our members. We provide opportunities for members and enthusiasts to actively participate in the sport, through sanctioning of events, administration of programs and development of competitive teams.

**Vision Statement**

To provide racquetball opportunities in the sport of racquetball for all levels of participation through:

**Objectives:**
- **Membership Support** - USAR values its members and will strive to provide the best possible member services at all levels.
- **Membership Recruitment** - USAR believes that racquetball is a lifetime endeavor and the benefits of health, recreation, and competition should be available to everyone. USAR will strive to expand its membership in order to share these benefits with as many players and supporters as possible.
- **Promotion of the Sport** - in order to sustain a strong player base USAR will promote the numerous benefits of participation through mass marketing efforts.
- **Competitive Success** - USAR strives to maintain America's position as the number one racquetball nation in the world. Success at the elite levels has a positive influence on every other facet of our sport.
- **Sponsors and Supporters** - USAR values its relationship with sponsors and will continue to maximize benefits and exposure.
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Let us hear your stories!

Ruben Gonzalez is truly a remarkable athlete. His story of success has finally surfaced outside of the racquetball arena and athletes throughout the sporting world will soon become aware of his accomplishments. An additional honor accompanying Ruben’s recognition is the additional publicity that will be given to racquetball.

The sporting world knows racquetball exists, that it’s a physically demanding sport and a great workout. Unfortunately, since the early 90’s racquetball has not been accepted as a “popular” or “in” sport. The tremendous competition for the athlete’s “free time” has moved racquetball to the middle tier of fitness regimes.

Perhaps, just perhaps, stories like Ruben’s can help racquetball regain some of the popularity it enjoyed in the 80’s. We have so many stories of success and angst and emotion and triumph – it’s a great place to be!

USA Racquetball wants to publish these stories. If you know of someone who has used racquetball to achieve success; has survived an illness and continued to play; or any other story you feel would be of interest to those both inside and outside the racquetball world, please send the details to USA Racquetball. Beginning in March/April, we’ll include at least one motivational/ emotional/success story in each issue.

Thank you, Ruben, for again putting racquetball in the headlines!

See page32 for more on Ruben Gonzalez.
The Future of Racquetball is Officially Under Development!

At November's US Open in Memphis the Board of Directors of USA Racquetball kicked off an ambitious program to ensure that racquetball thrives for future generations. At a Saturday morning breakfast, passionate members of the racquetball community were introduced to the concept of our new President's Advisory Council, provided an in-depth update of USA Racquetball's operations and finances, and heard some poignant stories about how racquetball has changed people's lives. The members of the Advisory Council will be solicited for their feedback by the USAR President and receive detailed status reports from the President and Executive Director on a regular basis.

"ALLOWING PASSIONATE PLAYERS TO GIVE BACK TO THEIR SPORT HAS ALLOWED SMALLER SPORTS LIKE HANDBALL AND SQUASH TO DEVELOP SIGNIFICANT ENDOWMENT FUNDS ... AND TARGETED FUNDING SUCH AS THAT FOR A HALL OF FAME, OR NATIONAL TEAMS."

These individuals will be characterized by their passion for racquetball, a commitment to multi-year financial support, and the desire to ensure that racquetball will prosper for future generations. If you have an interest in participating on the Advisory Council, please get in touch with our Vice President, Geoff Peters at petegeoff@hotmail.com. He'll be happy to provide additional information!

While the current Board has focused on ensuring a balanced budget and fiscal responsibility, we have also been planning for our future. Tom Curran and Jim Hiser are heading up our efforts to allow players to consider racquetball when developing long term Gift and Estate Planning strategies. Allowing passionate players to give back to their sport has allowed smaller sports like Handball and Squash to develop significant endowment funds (capital funds that utilize only their interest earnings for current expenses) and targeted funding such as that for a Hall of Fame, or National Teams. To learn more about how you can make a future bequest to USA Racquetball, please contact Tom at tom1947@aol.com or Jim at jhiser@usra.org.

Last, but certainly not least is our very successful ongoing program called "Players helping Players". This program into it's 4th year has been the driving force behind receiving donations from players wanting to promote our sport. This area will continue to function and will enable all players to give to help other players. Along with this program will be certain benefits the donors will receive which has been very successful. This campaign will be directed by the President, Randy Stafford.

As you can see, we have been hard at work developing, planning and introducing our new long term plans that will ensure the future of racquetball. We wish to thank everyone that has been a part of our donor programs and we look forward to continuing these relationships and delivering on our promises.

- Randy Stafford/President
## 2006 Campaign Summary

### Elite Level $1000 plus
- Anonymous
- Dennis Rosenberg
- Fred Bonomy
- Fritz Breedenbeck
- Gary Rasmussen
- Houston Racquetball Association
- MI Rhall
- Mike Neeer
- OR Rhall
- Randy Stafford
- Salvatore Perconti
- Cheryl Kirk

### A Level $500 Plus
- Annie Muniz
- CT Rhall
- Dave Ellis
- Deborah Apperson
- Denny Vincent
- Doug Smith
- Geoff Peters
- George Pappas
- James Kozal
- Jason Mannino
- Jim Hiser
- John Ellis
- KY Rhall
- Mary Fish
- Michael Lippitt
- NC Rhall
- Salvatore Perconti
- SC Rhall
- TX Rhall
- VA Rhall
- Women's Senior

### B Level - $250 Plus
- AL Rhall
- Christy Galway Cramer
- Chuck's Racquetball Equipment
- CO Rhall
- In Rhall
- James Scott
- Lance Gilliam
- MN Rhall
- National Masters
- NH Rhall
- OH Rhall
- OK Rhall
- Pedro Flores
- Ray Cornell
- WA Rhall

### C Level - $100 Plus
- Annette Deadlow
- Bill George
- Bob Anderson/Sandy Schauer
- CA Rhall
- Charles Rosenburg

### In the Game - Under $50
- Joseph Del Sordo
- Josphine Fletcher
- Kari Gardner
- Karl Reuther
- Keith Despain
- Keith Smith
- King Perry
- Kristine Cowan
- Larry Hicks
- LaVerne Gencarella Tee
- Leon Merian
- Leonard DeBlaker, Jr.
- Leslie Pawka
- Lewis Edwards
- Lon Schlussel
- Lori Roth
- Lynn Holubec
- Marcus Huang
- Marilyn Ross
- Marion Fisher
- Mark Healy
- Mark Lobo
- Mark Warren
- Matt Sturlaugson
- Matthew Fitzgerald
- Mia Quaglia-Oswald
- Mike Pawka
- Otto Dietrich
- Parris Geiser
- Patricia Baldrick
- Pete White
- Randy Trainor
- Ray Gabel
- Richard Bergstrom
- Richard Martin
- Rick Betts
- Ricky Henniger
- Riley Gilliam
- Robert Bailey
- Robert Farrigan
- Robert Smith
- Robert Sutherland
- Roberta Ferrara
- Roger Parker
- Roger Rydman
- Ron Cary
- Ronald Apperson
- Ryan Dixon
- Scott Rodi
- Shirley Gibson
- Sina Rassam-Haghhighi
- Spencer Gilliam
- Stephen Dalton
- Steven Finette
- Steven Markey
- Susan Patchikofsky
- Terry Does
- Tom Delle Donne
- Tom Doughty
- Tony Jarmal
- Tristan Manning
- William Greer
- Willie McCadden

### Total
$45,473.96

### Goal
$40,000.00

### To Go
$0.00

### Norman Wilensky Collegiate Scholarship
$1360.00

### In Memory of Barbara Beane
$1,200.00

### Jr. Team Donations
$14,045.00

### 2006 LIFETIME MEMBERS
- Ignacio Jaimes
- Steve Meng Yap
- Derek Izzo
- Helen Hicks
- Wil Rounsville
- Lynn Yeazell
- Gary Cowger
- Paul Lowe
- Mike Lippitt
- John Amatulli
- Pam Grace
- David Stark
- Davey Bledsoe
- Frank Taddionio
- Jim Lazor
- Joe Koestner
- Joe Star

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2006 USA RACQUETBALL
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 07
Penn revolutionizes racquetballs once again with the introduction of new Pro Penn High Definition (HD). Penn high-performance engineers joined forces with the top professional players in the world on the IRT to develop the ultimate racquetball. Better visibility, more speed, lighter weight and softer feel were the results of this collaborative effort. So go ahead, try the new Pro Penn HD and... See the ball!

Official ball of:

- IRT
- UNITED STATES OPEN RACQUETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Look for the new Pro Penn HD at every IRT event.

The Official Ball of USA Racquetball makes Pro Penn the most widely used ball in tournament play.

The ball that set the standard for which all other racquetballs are measured. The World’s #1 Selling Racquetball has just become the official ball of the Legends Tour.
St. Louis, Missouri is a city rich in racquetball history. Vetta Sports – Concord is the city’s largest racquetball club and the current leader in racquetball membership and program development in the Midwest. Vetta Sports has owned the facility for the last 10 years, however the racquetball club opened almost 30 years ago. The club has 10 racquetball courts with upstairs viewing. The main court, “Court 2”, has side and back wall glass for championship viewing. In addition to being a racquetball club, the facility also offers indoor soccer, volleyball, an indoor swimming pool, tennis courts, and a fitness center. Vetta Sports – Concord is a regular host for State, Regional, and National racquetball events and will host 16 weekend tournaments over the 2006/2007 season. There are several keys to the success of Vetta Sports – Concord:

**Racquetball Director**

Dan Whitley currently serves as the Racquetball Director for Vetta Sports – Concord and Vetta Sports – Hampshire (Concord’s sister club, located 10 minutes away). Dan wears several hats in the racquetball community. He is the National High School Racquetball Commissioner, Director of the Missouri High School Racquetball Association, and the State President of the Missouri Racquetball Association. “I am extremely lucky to have such a great job and enjoy working with so many different people. Where else can a person go to work and share the exact same hobby with everyone he interacts with?”

John Spanos, the owner of Vetta Sports – Concord (Vetta), says, “In the 5 years Dan has been with Vetta, we have seen tremendous growth. Having a full time racquetball director is essential to our success. Without Dan’s creative programming it’s just 10 courts.”

**High School Racquetball Program**

Perhaps the program most unique to Vetta is the Missouri High School Racquetball League. Now in its 29th year, the program is the biggest secret in the nation. In Missouri, racquetball is a winter sport just like basketball, wrestling, and swimming. More than 20 St. Louis area high schools enter teams into the league. Over 500 students participate in the program (all must also join USA Racquetball as members). Vetta is the home to this league (4 other local clubs also host matches) and has kids playing after-school matches every day in the winter. The great thing about the program is that, unlike other team sports, teams don’t need to cut their players and anyone who is interested can play. The high schools treat racquetball like any other varsity sport and need court time to practice as a team. As a result, a large number of the teams join Vetta as members and practice at off-peak court times (evenings after 8pm or weekends). “Dan’s role as the director of the Missouri High School Racquetball Association provides a natural synergy between the high school program and the private club,” said John Spanos. Several high schools in St. Louis also use Vetta during weekday mornings and afternoons for their physical education classes.
Tournaments
As mentioned earlier, Yetta hosts 16 racquetball tournaments every year. The tournaments all have different themes and are open to players of all ages. The club hosts some events to give back to the community. For example, every December the Holiday Classic Toy Drive helps collect over 400 toys for the needy. Creating relationships with corporate sponsors has helped grow key annual events. The Greensfelder St. Louis Open is held the first week of November each year as a kick-off to the High School Racquetball season. This is easily the most popular annual racquetball event in St. Louis. The Open allows high school kids to play in their first racquetball competition alongside adult participants and provides a great introduction to tournament play. The Pinchshot.com Midwest Intercollegiate Championships are held every February and feature a regular tournament in conjunction with a collegiate event. The Championships host an average of 15 college teams and 150 entrants every year. In addition, the Missouri State Classic, Regionals, and the Missouri High School State League Championships are held every year at Yetta. The club also hosts the High School National Championships every other March.

Summer Racquetball Camp
Vetta takes advantage of the down time on the courts during summer months and hosts a 9-week high school summer racquetball camp. Meeting twice a week, the camp is open to kids between the ages of 12 and 18. Every other summer the camp draws over 100 eager racquetball players. The camp combines league play, with weekly instruction, and social time that allows the kids to interact with peers from other schools.

Memberships
Vetta boasts more members than any other racquetball club in the Midwest. The private club has over 400 racquetball members. In addition to these “adult” members, the club also has 350 high school racquetball members. “I am proud of the balance of Youth and Adult Memberships our club has attained,” says Whitley. “Our long-range plans are based on maintaining a 3-step cycle: 1. Introduce the game to young players. 2. Keep them involved through high school and college. 3. Stay in touch with them and have them become members after they graduate. That’s the beauty of a life sport, we can market to all ages.”

Other Programs
Vetta offers singles and doubles leagues for their members, as well as private leagues for local corporations. The club runs a citywide challenge ladder on Saturday evenings for the top players in St. Louis and Wallyball leagues take place on Saturday evenings. Vetta also offers permanent court time for those members who don’t want to bother with the hassle of calling every week to reserve a court. The club also has a Pro Staff available to give lessons anytime. On average, over 50 private lessons are given each week.

The Future
Vetta is 100% committed to racquetball and continues to grow the sport. Programming will continue to introduce the game to new players and retain current competitors. Membership is on the rise and tournament draws are growing larger every year. The club’s loyal members continue to support the sport and help make Vetta Sports - Concord one of the best racquetball clubs in the nation.

New Mexico welcomes back the Pros

Huczek Continues to Win!

**The 2006 New Mexico Pro Am**
Albuquerque, New Mexico
October 26-29, 2006

The IRT returned to Albuquerque for the first time in seven years as a full event. Event Director Gary Mazaroff had worked very hard on bringing the IRT back to New Mexico and the players were happy to be there. High winds and cool temperatures greeted the players at the Midtown Sports and Wellness Club. The facility boasts six courts, three squash courts and a beautiful fitness center. Midtown is one of five clubs in the New Mexico Sports and Wellness chain of clubs; all have great racquetball activity.

The Pro-Am doubles event was a huge success with Jack Huczek and his partner Ken Goldstein taking the title over Jason Mannino and Bill Sanderson. A full house watched the top players battle it out with the major sponsors of the event.

Qualifying rounds began with local Ray Maust taking out Miguel Wiggins 2, 2, (1), 1; Ken Caushore over Andrew Clarke 8, 3, (7), 2 and Mark Branson defeating Robert Lee 4, (6), 10, 5. The next matches witnessed Jordan Walters over Marco Hidalgo 5, 7, 6 and Jorge Trevino ousting Matt Melster 4, (8), 5, 1. In the second round there were no upsets as the top eight seeds all advanced to the main draw.

Canada's national 18 & Under junior champion defeated local University of New Mexico player Evan Ussery in three games and the most competitive match of the evening featured former Top Four IRT professionals taking out one of Mexico's best, Javier Moreno, in a five-game battle (8), 11, 8, (8), 8 to move on to meet Rocky Carson.

**Round of Sixteen**

John Ellis took a while to get loose but never got loose enough as Rocky ended "Ellis" run 2, 4, 1. Jack Huczek took down Ryan Smith in three games 5, 1, 5. These 11:30 and 12:30 matches were completed before Andy Hawthorne upset Jason Thorner in a five-game battle lasting two hours. Andy played some great ball and came back from an 8-3 deficit in the third to win the match 1, (2), 8, (7), 9. This was Hawthorne's first quarterfinal of the season. Chris Crowther won the battle of "who could hit it harder", defeating Mitch Williams in a surprising three straight games. Shane Vanderson lost the first game to Ben Croft only to regroup and find his form and win the match (8), 5, 3, 2. The rematch from Kentucky had the same intensity as Sudsy Monchik looked to take out Alvaro Beltran again. Beltran came out on top this time, winning the five-game match 5, (8), 8, 7. Alejandro Herrera surprised Cliff Swain in the first two games with some great shots, but in the end Swain's serve took over with the help of the altitude and he prevailed 9, (7), 3, 3. Jason Mannino rounded out the last match of the afternoon, taking out Woody Clouse in three games 7, 5, 7.

**Quarterfinals**

The first match in front of a full house featured the new number two-ranked player in the world, Rocky Carson, and Andy Hawthorne. Rocky was the fan favorite here due to the fact that he has won this event the last few years when it was a satellite. Rocky wasted no time in this one, killing the ball from all over the court. Andy hung in with some great diving and his relentless attack on every ball. Rocky came out on top in this match 7, 5, 4 and moved on to the semifinal, awaiting the Beltran/Vanderson winner.

Match-up #2 was a rematch of a battle in Toronto, where Chris Crowther gave Jack Huczek all he could handle. This time Jack turned it up to another level and took out the hard hitting Crowther in three straight 1, 2, 4. Jack played extremely well and kept the pressure on Crowther the whole match. Jack also moved on to the semifinal and awaited the Swain/Mannino winner.

The next quarterfinal looked to be a great one between Alvaro Beltran and Shane Vanderson. Alvaro played very well, using the corners and hitting a great wallpaper lob serve to Shane's forehand. Shane had a tough time with this serve and Alvaro capitalized on it. Beltran advanced to the semi's, winning in four games 7, 5, (8), 7 to advance to meet Rocky Carson.

The last match of the evening would be what most would call "the classic match-up" between two veterans of the tour -- Cliff Swain playing his last year on tour against the entertaining Jason Mannino. This match got to it right away with both players letting each other know that they would not give an inch to the other. Although there would be some friendly chatter between these two, it would be all business in the end. Mannino came out the winner in this match 6, 10, 2 and went on to meet Jack Huczek in the Saturday semifinal.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Special thanks to Paula Sperling for her support of the event; especially opening and closing the club every day.

To the New Mexico Sports and Wellness Club-Midtown for hosting the event and treating the players like members. What a great staff and facility and we look forward to coming back next year.

Hats off to Gary Mazaroff for running a great event. Gary is a true ambassador of our sport and we are lucky to have him. Thanks to Gary and all the volunteers who made the event run smoothly.

Thanks to all the sponsors and there were many. We appreciate your support and look forward to coming back next year.

Special thanks to the Clarke and Fuller families for the rides and attention all weekend.

Also, thank you to Ken Goldstein for stringing all weekend and for all your additional assistance.
Semifinals

It was sunny and 70 degrees here in beautiful Albuquerque as the first semifinal began. Rocky Carson was appearing in his fourth straight semifinal and as the #2 seed would be ready to go as he met a familiar foe in Alvaro Beltran. The crowd packed into the bleachers at Midtown for this exciting match. It was a seesaw battle in this one as Rocky hit the backhand corner on a consistent basis, winning game one with a score of 7. Alvaro got his lob to the right side going and frustrated Rocky by not missing a shot and taking the second game, 7. The third was a bit sloppy, but Rocky would find a way to take the third and eventually go on and win the match 7, 6, moving Rocky into his first final of the year.

Jack Huczek took on Jason Mannino in the second match of the evening and the third meeting in a row for these two warriors (the last two meetings were in the finals with Huczek coming out on top). In the words of both players, this match was high quality with very few unforced errors. Jack came out on top once again in this match, winning in four hard-fought games 7, 6, (8), 5. Both players spent a lot of time wiping up the floor, as it did become a dive fest. Jason made a statement after the match, mentioning that he had watched game film from the last two matches and tweaked his game plan a little from the last two meetings, but just plain got beat today. Jack went on to meet his third different opponent in his fourth final on Sunday against Rocky Carson.

The final featured doubles partners Jack Huczek and Rocky Carson. The club was packed once again for this match and the players showed their appreciation by playing a very intense match. Jack controlled the first game with some great serves and holding center court 11-7. Rocky came back full throttle and took a 7-0 lead only to see Jack come back and tie it up at seven. Rocky came back and took Game 2 on a great forehand splay, 12-10. The third game mirrored the first with Jack back in control of center court and Rocky experiencing a few unforced errors: 11-8, Jack. The fourth would be all Huczek and he would go on to win his fourth straight event, 11-5.
Wachtel Is Back!
Eighth Seed Secures Sweet Victory at Long Island Open

Wachtel Is Back! Secures Sweet Victory at Long Island Open

It didn't take Kerri Wachtel long to regain her elite form and claim her first WPRO title of the 2006-2007 season. The fishbowl court at the Sportime – Syosset Club must have felt like home to Wachtel, who plowed through the draw at the WPRO’s third stop of the season, the Long Island Open in Syosset, NY (November 3-5). On her way to the championship, #8 seed Wachtel faced and disposed of #9 seed Doreen Fowler (Round of 16), #1 seed Rhonda Rajisich (Quarterfinals), and #5 seed Brenda Kyzer (Semifinals) without dropping a game before facing off against #3 seed Angela Grisar in Sunday's championship.

After making the finals at the first stop in Fayetteville, everyone knew that the 2001 US Open champion, who had twin daughters (Peyton and Quinn) last March, was back and would be a serious contender at every event this season. Wachtel's intense focus and patient yet deliberate game style pressures her opponents to play a near-perfect match to beat her.

Grisar’s road to the finals was impressive as well. She dropped only two games the entire tournament heading into Sunday, defeating #14 seed Candi Hostovich (Round of 16), #6 seed Diane Moore (Quarterfinals), and #2 seed Cheryl Gudinas Holmes (Semifinals) to vie for the Long Island Open title versus Wachtel.

It had been quite some time since the Chilean star fought through the semifinals to contend for a WPRO title. Grisar’s impressive run to get to the finals at the Great Balls of Fire Pro-Am in Miami last March was her only championship round appearance since 2004. Rajisich outlasted Grisar in that match but Grisar showed flashes of brilliance throughout the tournament that let her fans know that she means business.

This match-up was a racquetball clinician’s dream with two of the most strategic, fundamentally sound athletes engaging in a battle of the wills for the championship. Grisar jumped out quickly with drive serves to the backhand side and back court kill shots to claim game one (6-11). But it didn’t take Wachtel long to regroup and game two was point-counterpoint until Grisar made a few unforced errors allowing Wachtel to tie the match at a game apiece (11-8). Game three was more of the same, with both players battling for center court and Wachtel again staying cool under pressure while executing precise down the line passes and well-timed pinches (11-8). Game four was a runaway for Wachtel, who seemed to taste victory after game three and never looked back (11-5).

Following the match, Wachtel called her husband, Chris, who was watching Racquetball Online’s live video streaming with the kids back home and beam as she addressed the crowd which included her mother Gerri, her weekend coach.

The WPRO would like to thank the tournament staff: Tom and Sabieta Keogh, Christine Leddy, Brian Lesieur, and Rick Chong for their tireless efforts to connect the WPRO with the best amateur event on the East Coast – the Long Island Open, in its 30th year!

We would also like to express our deepest appreciation to following event sponsors for making this event possible: Queens Racquet Sports (Tom Keogh), Archway Press, Inc. (Tom Gaffney), Bonanno Homes (Russ Bonanno), Cactus Salon (Joe Secreti), Credit Suisse (David Stark), Gordon’s Glass Ltd. (Mel Gordon), John Griffin Roofing (John Griffin), Long Island Home & Living, MVI Mortgages (Sam Tolisano), Racquetworld (Pat Bernardo), Lorraine Galloway and Jack Zollo.

We would also like to recognize the tournament venues for their hospitality throughout the weekend: Sportime – Syosset Club and Amritraj Fitness & Racquet.


Complete WPRO results from the Long Island Open can be found at http://www.ladieswproacuettelball.com/draws/Long_Island_2006.pdf.

"THIS MATCH-UP WAS A RACQUETBALL CLINICIAN’S DREAM WITH TWO OF THE MOST STRATEGIC, FUNDAMENTALLY SOUND ATHLETES ENGAGING IN A BATTLE OF THE WILLS FOR THE CHAMPIONSHIP."
Last WPRO Title of 2006 in the Nation’s Capital

Arlington, VA – If there was any doubt that Kerri Wachtel is back, that doubt washed away as the Cincinnati-based mother of two and #5 ranked player on the WPRO stormed through the draw at the 15th annual Christmas Classic Pro-Am Racquetball Championships in Arlington, Virginia. The WPRO's final event of the year was held at Crystal Gateway Sport & Health Club from December 8-10. In a convincing win over #3 seed Angela Grisar in Sunday's championship, Wachtel's trademark poise and consistency were too much for Grisar to withstand as she rolled through her Chilean opponent in three straight games.

The pro draw at the Christmas Classic was packed with upsets throughout the weekend. With #1 seed Cheryl Gudinas Holmes and #2 seed Rhonda Rajsich falling in Saturday's quarterfinal round, the championship title was up for grabs and there was a buzz among fans about who would be crowned the queen. A stunned crowd looked on as Gudinas Holmes was defeated by hometown favorite #9 seed Doreen Fowler in three, and Rajsich lost her battle with the relentless Mexican star #10 Samantha Salas in four entertaining games that left Salas with bloodied, swollen knees from countless dives throughout the match. On her way to the finals, Wachtel ended Fowler's magical run in a routine three-game semifinal. Grisar took out #6 Brenda Kryzer in a five-game quarterfinal and endured another grueling five-game battle against Salas in the other semifinal.

The Christmas Classic's WPRO final was a déjà vu from a matchup between the two champions one month earlier in Syosset, New York, when they vied for the Long Island Open crown. Wachtel won that match against Grisar in three to claim her first title of the season. But Grisar's performance in Arlington proved to fans that she was ready to fight and was anxious to impose a different outcome in this final.

In game one, Wachtel came out firing with a clear plan to put pressure on Grisar from the outset. Precise serving and patient rally play were rewarded time and time again as Grisar seemed to force shots early. Wachtel captured game one 11-6. In game two, Grisar began to relax and wait for her opportunities. Her powerful backhand is one of the best on tour but many of her usually clean passing shots caught the side wall down the stretch and left easy set-ups for Wachtel to pounce upon. Grisar called a timeout in the middle of the game to regain her composure and obtain guidance from her coach and companion, Pablo Fajre, but when she returned, it was more of the same as Wachtel stayed focused and closed out game two 11-6.

The crowd in Arlington was hoping Grisar would show her usual flair after a slow start in this match, but it was not to be. Game three was a battle from the first rally, but Wachtel refused to crack the door for Grisar to push the match to a fourth game. Wachtel closed out the match 11-8. After the championship, Grisar, gracious in defeat, complimented her opponent on her consistency and intensity. Wachtel amused the crowd when she thanked Grisar’s earlier round opponents, Brenda Kryzer and Samantha Salas, for pushing Grisar to five games in both the quarterfinal and semifinal rounds on Saturday.


The WPRO would like to extend its sincere appreciation to Karen Denu for leading the efforts to bring the WPRO to Arlington. We would also like to recognize the incredible tournament planning committee and staff of this championship: Wayne Toyne, Jerry Cox, Bill Milbach, Russ Bruns, Denise Berto, Diane Stokes, Kyle Chandler, Janell Wheeler, and TJ Baumbach.

The WPRO thanks all of the generous event sponsors for bringing the WPRO to Arlington.

The WPRO would also like to thank its national tour sponsors, including Wilson Titanium Tour (official ball); Python (official grip); Advocate (official supplement provider); and Racquetball Online TV (official webcaster). The Tour would like to acknowledge its official partners: Carl & Marcia Wallace; Racquetworld (www.racquetworld.com); Racquetball Academy (www.racquetballacademy.com); Tischer Autopark of Silver Spring; and Chemtech Chemical Services, LLC.

Angela Grisar (left) and Kerri Wachtel after the match.
Rewriting Racquetball Record Books

The 2006 Choice Hotels US OPEN Racquetball Championships welcomed to Memphis many top men and women professionals from around the world as well as nearly 800 amateur players from over 15 countries. When it was all said and done, more than 70 new US OPEN Champions were crowned at the largest “Grand Slam” event in the history of the sport.
It is hard to believe that 2006 was the eleventh year of the Choice Hotels US OPEN! It seems like it was yesterday that the likes of Sudsy Monchik, Andy Roberts, Cliff Swain, Jason Mannino, Mike Ray and Ruben Gonzalez were thrilling racquetball fans with some great matches on the stadium court.

And the thrills continued in 2006 as the Choice Hotels US OPEN showcased some of the best racquetball that has been seen in years. Christie Van Hees insists she’s more about substance than style, and now she has a third Grand Slam title to prove it. Jason Mannino also showed why he is still a threat to win any major event as he added his name for a second time to the prestigious US OPEN Championship trophy.
IRT Qualifying Rounds

Thirty-seven players set out to try and capture one of coveted spots in the men's professional IRT draw. Three of the players just happened to share the same family genes, as the Landa brothers, Roman, Armando, and Alejandro all made the cut. The other male qualifiers had limited experience but included a strong showing from players Eddie Alberty, Michael Anderson, Jason Bledsoe, Oscar Gutierrez, Danny Lively, Ronald Mount, Kelly North, Micah Rich, Ryan Rodgers, Eddie Sada, Danny Smith, Juan Carlos Torres, and Pete Ulliman.

IRT Opening Round of 64

Wednesday is the day at the US OPEN where players get a chance to showcase their talents and the top professionals in the world are ready to get it started. Fans would enjoy top play from the world's best as No. 1 Jack Huczek defeated Danny Smith, 11-0, 11-7, 11-1. Then it was No. 2 Rocky Carson who made easy work of Pete Ulliman in three games, 11-2, 11-0, and 11-0. The best player in Mexico, No. 3 Alvaro Beltran would move past Armando Landa, 11-8, 11-7, 11-2. Rounded out the top four seeds, No. 4 Jason Mannino won against Micah Rich in an easy three game match, 11-1, 11-2, 11-6.

But, all the buzz was about two-time US OPEN champion Cliff Swain, who was saying good-bye after 23 years of professional racquetball in recent memory. Today his game—while not what it was 10 years ago—is still good enough to compete at the highest level. Last year, in his 10th US OPEN and at the age of 39, Swain put together a breathtaking run that evoked memories of a younger Swain back when he was dominating. Swain beat Jack Huczek in a thrilling semifinal match that ended in a fifth game tiebreaker. The two-time US OPEN champion reached the finals last year, losing there to Kane Waselenchuk. No. 5 Swain, who announced earlier this summer that he will retire after the 2006-2007 season, defeated Michael Anderson, 11-4, 11-6, 11-4.

There are a lot of elements that have contributed to the popularity and atmosphere of the Choice Hotels US OPEN since it began in 1996. But if you're looking for one explanation right up front, then consider what has transpired, since the beginning of the 2006-2007 IRT season, with the return of four-time US OPEN champion Sudsy Monchik. Entering this event, just four players have enjoyed the luxury of being called US OPEN Champion with Sudsy laying claim to four of those titles. Monchik not only raised the level of play during his reign, but also brought an edge-of-your-seat, stimulating kind of style to the court. There wasn't an empty seat in the stands as fans watched Sudsy Monchik begin his quest for a record fifth US OPEN title, taking out a young and fast Alejandro Landa in three games, 11-3, 11-8, and 11-2.

There were no major upsets in the round of 64, with the exception of Canadian Junior national champion, Ryan Smith being ousted by Shannon Kohl, 11-9, 8-11, 11-8, 11-7. Thursday would be the true test as players would have to play two matches for a spot in the quarter-finals.

IRT Round Of 32

Thursday morning began with a thrilling five-game match between No. 13 Woody Clouse and No. 20 Augustin Tristan. Tristan came out with some energy and caught Clouse sleeping; Tristan would win the first two games, 11-9, and 11-5. But it was all Clouse as he would pick up the pace and win the last three games, 11-6, 11-3, and 11-4.

No. 15 Hiroshi Shimizu played the second five-gamer of the tournament as he and No. 18 Juan Herrera were laying it all on the line. These players battled back and forth with Shimizu emerging as the winner, 5-11, 11-3, 2-11, 11-3, 11-8.

Event Director, Doug Ganim pushed No. 11 Ben Croft as Ganim won the first game, 11-2 and looked impressive, but Croft would win the next three games, 11-7, 12-10, 11-5 to advance to the round of 16.

There were no major upsets in the morning round of 32 matches, but the day would not be complete without the round of 16 and the next wave of matches.
IRT Round Of 16

Winners of the Thursday afternoon matches would be rewarded with a quarterfinal appearance and move one step closer to a page in the history books. The top seeds showed how they earned their positions in the round of 16 with just two matches exceeding the three game minimum.

No. 1 Jack Huczek, seeking his first US OPEN championship, would defeat the legendary and ageless wonder No. 16 Ruben Gonzalez in three games, 11-7, 11-5, 11-4. There was also a solid performance from No. 2 Rocky Carson who took out Hiroshi Shimizu in another three game match, 11-3, 11-6, 11-3.

Fans began to fill the stands for the match of the afternoon between No. 3 Alvaro Beltran and four-time US OPEN Champion Sudsy Monchik. This would be a true test for both players before moving on to the next round. Monchik came to Memphis this year looking to make history by becoming the only player in the history of the sport with an unprecedented five titles. However, before this highly anticipated match began, Monchik was forced to withdraw from the tournament due to a back injury caused by a bulging disc. “I felt something in my lower back after my match with Javier Moreno,” said Monchik. “I decided to go ahead and seek medical attention and I was told by doctors that I have a bulging disc in my lower back. This was causing some pain that led to some pinched nerves in the same area,” Monchik said following the announcement. “I had a hard time just standing up and bending at the waist.”

From the onset, No. 4 Jason Mannino was all business as he sent No. 13 Woody Clouse packing with another three game match winning 11-3, 11-8, 11-3. All of the top seeds advanced including No. 6 Shane Vanderson who defeated No. 11 Ben Croft in three games, 11-2, 11-6, 11-4. Two of the tour's most powerful hitters faced off as No. 8 Mitch Williams defeated No. 9 Chris Crowther 13-11, 11-8, 3-11, 11-6. The only upset of the round was No. 10 Andy Hawthorne over No. 7 Jason Thoerner, 11-8, 8-11, 5-11, 11-7, 11-9 in a high-flying dive-crazed match between two exciting retrievers.

IRT Quarterfinals

Friday would begin with a quarterfinal match that could easily be a finals match at any other tournament as No. 4 Jason Mannino would go up against No. 5 Cliff Swain. Mannino had faced Swain three times in Memphis and his only success came when he defeated Swain in the finals of the 1999 US OPEN. Mannino was looking to repeat that performance but he was battling a calf injury going into the match. Swain had not look sharp, and Mannino's precise passing shots were enough to keep Swain off balance and win 11-8, 13-11, 11-2.

The next quarterfinal match on the portable court was No. 3 Alvaro Beltran up against No. 6 Shane Vanderson. This would be a chance for Vanderson to make a repeat performance of his semifinal showing at the 2003 US OPEN. Beltran came out shooting and winning the first game 11-8, this momentum carried over into the second game as Beltran went up 3-0 before Vanderson took a timeout. Then the drive serves from Vanderson's racket were finding their place along with his backhand splat. Vanderson would go on to win the next three games, 11-7, 11-6, 11-1.

No. 2 Rocky Carson cruised past the high flying Andy Hawthorne in three games. Rocky was a heavy favorite against one of the newest players on the IRT. Hawthorne got his drive working in the second game and took a 6-3 lead, but Carson slowed the game pace down and won in three games, 11-2, 11-8, 11-6.

The last match of the night would feature No. 1 Jack Huczek against the hard hitting Mitch Williams. Game one was an absolute treat for the fans. Williams unleashed his power from both sides and blistering serves kept Jack off balance. Williams's serves caught fire and he stormed to take game one 11-7. Williams couldn't get it going in game two and Jack started dialing in his passes and forcing Williams to hit on the run. Huczek would win the next three games and the match, 11-4, 11-1, 11-4.

See US OPEN on page 20

BY THE NUMBERS

9,600

Dollars raised for St. Jude Children's Hospital in Tuesday's Pro-Am charity doubles event.

Shane Vanderson and Ben Croft
IRT Semifinals
The first semifinal winner would also be making his first finals appearance as No. 2 Rocky Carson and No. 6 Shane Vanderson took center stage on the portable court in front of a packed crowd.

The games were tied and close early on (3-3 in the first and third games and 7-7 in the second). With Carson able to mount leads early in the games, he was able to stay in the driver’s seat and force more pressure on Vanderson to play catch-up most of the match. “I am playing some of the best racquetball of my career this season,” said Carson. “I am peaking at just the right time and looking to make my mark here in Memphis.” Carson would win the match 11-5, 11-8, 11-3. Most notable is that Carson had not lost a game so far in five matches going into the finals.

Most players and fans who watched the Saturday night semifinal match between No. 1 Jack Huczek and No. 4 Jason Mannino may have witnessed one of the most grueling and toughest matches in the history of the US OPEN. Mannino came straight at Huczek with his trademark diving kills and won the first two games 11-5, 11-6. The play was tight in the third game as the score grew from 2-2 to 6-6 before Huczek rattled off a series of re-kills to win the third game 11-6. The dive count for Mannino was at 48 and growing as game four found both players all over the court. Jack would win game four on a backhand skip that Mannino was trying to push to the left front corner. The fifth and final game began with Mannino taking an early 2-0 lead. “I felt like the last few times I played Jack, I should have won,” Mannino said following the match. “So coming into Memphis I felt even stronger that this was my time.”

The score was tied at 7-7 when Huczek put away the next two rallies to take a 9-7 lead. Mannino tried to feed off the crowd and was searching for what he referred to as “my people” (his fans)

Mannino brought the crowd to its feet with spectacular dives (total match count-79 dives) and tied the score at 10-10. Mannino hit a forehand winner and then Huczek skipped the last ball as Mannino won the fifth game 12-10.

IRT Finals
Championship Sunday would be something for both players to remember. This was the first US OPEN finals appearance for Rocky Carson, playing in front of his father, who taught him the game as a child.

Standing in his way was 1999 US OPEN champion Jason Mannino, who was receiving treatment on a pulled muscle in his right calf. “After I won the match against Cliff, I started to feel the excitement and the pride,” said Mannino from his trainer's table. “I felt like Rocky hadn’t been pushed. I had already been through a war against Jack and felt that if I could cut-off his serve and put some pressure on him, my chances were good.”

Carson began the first game by relying on his backhand passing shots and took a 9-6 lead before Mannino answered with a five point run and taking the first game 11-9. “I feel really good going into this match,” Carson would say earlier.

The second game would start the same way with Carson taking an 8-3 lead and force Mannino to take a timeout and begin the pressure he talked about. That kept Carson in a defensive position throughout the match. Mannino would win the second game 11-8 and was one game away from winning his second US OPEN championship.

The third game was all Mannino as he kept the pressure on Carson and widened the lead throughout the match. Mannino would win the third and final game 11-5 and secure his place in history as one of only four players to win the US OPEN Racquetball Championships.

“This event is the most difficult to win, and I think I proved that,” Mannino said afterwards. “It felt good to do this in front of everyone, my friends, my family, my girlfriend, my sponsor and the fans. Without all of them, I wouldn’t be here.”

After 10 years of the US OPEN, only the names of four men are etched into the Championship Cup. There were plenty of challengers in 2006 to push that list to five, but Mannino wanted to keep the list where it was and he did it by adding his name a second time.
Canada’s Christie Van Hees is back and has made history as the first woman to capture three US Open titles – 2000, 2005, 2006! At the Choice Hotels US OPEN in Memphis, Tennessee November 15-19, Van Hees defended her US Open crown in convincing fashion, taking the field by storm and cruising to the championship round to face two-time US Open Champion and #2 Cheryl Gudinas Holmes (Naperville, IL). Following her Cinderella run at last year’s US Open, Van Hees decided to pursue a career in marketing and left the WPRO tour for almost a year. However, she showed no signs of rust as she barreled through the women’s pro draw, dropping only one game throughout the week.

Opening Rounds

After predictable early round results on Thursday, the WPRO was off to a furious start early Friday morning at the Choice Hotels US Open, with Round of 16 matches that pitted big names against each other—#5 Brenda Kyzer vs. #12 Susy Acosta, #3 Angela Grisar vs. #14 Adrienne Fisher, #11 Samantha Sales vs. #6 Kerri Wachtel, #10 Doreen Fowler vs. #26 Elaine Albrecht, #2 Cheryl Gudinas Holmes vs. #15 Paola Longoria, #8 Christie Van Hees vs. #7 Shattuck, #1 Rhonda Rajisch vs. #17 Candice Hotovich, and #4 Walsh vs. #13 Vivian Gomez. All but one of the higher seeds held in these matchups, with one exception: Albrecht defeated Fowler in four. The field of 45 whittled down to eight and the quarterfinals would tell a different story with all but one of the higher seeds faltering to a lower seed proving just how competitive the WPRO tour is this season.

Christie Van Hees’ Road to the Finals

On her way to the championship, Van Hees faced #25 Janel Tiseng (Simi Valley, CA) and #7 Jo Shattuck (Denver, CO) in early round play and lost only 14 points in those two matches. Van Hees’ absence on tour made her the #8 seed coming into this year’s US Open, which pitted her against #1 Rhonda Rajisch (Fountain Hills, AZ) in the quarterfinal round.

By late Friday evening, The Racquet Club was abuzz in anticipation of the rematch of last year’s US Open final between the two-time and defending champion and #1 player in the world, Rajisch who won the US Open in 2005. The first game was a flurry of point-counterpoint exchanges until both players hit a string of short serves. It was clear that these champions were anxious to get off to a good start with so much at stake, including pride and a legitimate claim to the best player on the WPRO. Van Hees finally aced Rajisch to secure game one, 12-10.

In game two, Van Hees refused to concede her ground, hitting passing shots and waiting for her opportunity to pounce. But Rajisch settled in and stepped it up a notch, serving Z’s into the forehand glass, forcing a weak return, and setting up an offensive shot. When Rhonda took game two (11-7), the crowd exploded and knew they were in for a great match!

In game three, Van Hees came out firing and kept Rajisch off balance with drive serves and passing shots that pinned her opponent to the back court. Great rallies often ended with Van Hees back in the service box continuing to put pressure on the tour’s most resilient player. The crowd was pumped and ready to see more gut wrenching action but it was Van Hees’ day as she cruised to victory in game three (11-3).

Game four was a clinic in drive serves to the backhand, many of which did not come off the back wall, as Van Hees made it impossible for Rajisch’s to find her return of serve rhythm. Rajisch seemed off her game and could not regroup in time for Van Hees to feel the heat. Final score: 12-10, 7-11, 11-3, 11-6.

It was her grit and determination that earned #5 Brenda Kyzer (Leesville, SC) the right to play on the stadium court against the seemingly unstoppable Van Hees on Saturday afternoon. Her mobility no longer an issue after losing more than 60 pounds in a single year, Kyzer appeared to be better prepared than ever to showcase her talents on the grand stage in the semifinals of the biggest tournament in the sport. This would be her third consecutive semifinal appearance at a WPRO event.

But Kyzer was just too anxious to unseat Van Hees on this day. Her usual poise and consistency were lacking and she left too many balls up for Van Hees to prey upon. The first two games were a textbook display of accuracy and patience by Van Hees as she quickly cruised to a comfortable lead. The third game seemed more of the same until Kyzer took a time out at 3-8. During her 45 second break, Kyzer must have determined that she would not go quietly. She steadily climbed back into the game with low drive serves to the backhand and cross court kills. Van Hees fought to get two more points then made several uncharacteristic unforced errors to give Kyzer a glimmer of hope. At 9-10 with Van Hees serving for the match, Kyzer flat rolled a monster backhand splat to get herself back in the box. The crowd erupted but their elation would be short-lived. Van Hees regained serve and quietly put the match in the books. Final score: 11-3, 11-3, 11-9.

Cheryl Gudinas Holmes’ Road to the Finals

Two-time US Open Champion (2002, 2004) and #2 player in the world Cheryl Gudinas Holmes disposed of unseeded Vallana Lundstrom (Brooklyn Park, MN) and Pan-Am Champion/Mexican phenom #15 Paola Longoria in three games. She then ended the outstanding run of #5 Elaine Albrecht in a four game quarterfinal after dropping the first game to the Ohio based mother of three (7-11, 11-8, 11-9, 11-5).

On Saturday, Gudinas Holmes faced 2001 US Open champion Kerri Wachtel in a thrilling semifinal that went the distance with the game match tied two games each. Gudinas Holmes exhibited the mental toughness that has enabled her to win every major championship in the sport. In game five, she hung with Wachtel rally for rally then executed four well-placed serves that forced weak returns and allowed her to put the match in the books. Final score: 12-10, 5-11, 12-10, 2-11, 11-9. Gudinas Holmes secured her place in the finals against Van Hees and both were looking to make history by claiming their third US Open title on Sunday.

Championship Round: Van Hees vs. Gudinas Holmes

The stage was set for a rematch between two of the WPRO’s all-time greatest champions. The stands around the stadium court were full and Van Hees and Gudinas Holmes bounced around behind the court like boxers getting ready for a heavyweight championship bout.

From the start, Van Hees came out swinging and didn’t seem to miss a serve or set up. With very few opportunities and a bout of nerves, Gudinas Holmes mustered only three points in game one. Van Hees played consistent, high percentage racquetball – hitting kill shots when she needed to and clean passes when a rollout was not required. Van Hees continued on cruise control, taking the second game 11-2. At 8-0 in the third, Gudinas Holmes asked herself out loud “Have you ever played before?” after missing an easy backhand front court set-up. Gudinas Holmes took a time out and scored two points, but Van Hees was just unstoppable. There was never a real chance for Gudinas Holmes to get into the match once the determined Van Hees went on a roll. Her trademark style of pace under pressure and pinpoint accuracy is well known among WPRO competitors and fans who have seen time and again how relentless and focused this great champion can be!
AMATEUR RESULTS

Men's Age 24
1st: Armando Landa - El Paso, Texas DEF. Micah Rich - Fairlawn, Calif. 10,14

Men's Age 24 A
1st: Jesse Nassar - Unknown, Mass. DEF. Cesar Castillo - Valencia, Carabobo

Men's Age 24 C
1st: Chase Stanley - Baton Rouge, La., DEF. Fredrick Giles - Chattanooga, Tenn. (11),10,3

Men's Age 25+ - Round Robin
1st: Jason Bledsoe - 2nd: Derrick Victor

Men's Age 25+ A

Men's Age 25+ C
1st: Tyler Scott - Bonita, Calif. DEF. Brad Anderson - Memphis, Tenn. 4,10

Men's Age 30+
1st: Andy Decker - 2nd: Kennernew, Ga. DEF. Brian Pointelin - Midvale, Utah. 1,7

Men's Age 35+
1st: Jimmy Lowe - Wahiawa, Hawaii DEF. Brad Mcuniff - Cedar Falls, Iowa 9,10,2

Men's Age 35+ A
1st: Rod Van Dyke - Ocala, Fla. DEF. Sunny Osagie - Bythevile, Ark. 13,4

Men's Age 35+ B
1st: James Campbell - 2nd: Trawny Howard - Grand Rapids, Mich. 5,11

Men's Age 35+ C
1st: Jacques Boisvert - Trois-rivieres DEF. Don Jordan - Dunwoody, Ga. 6,11

Men's Age 40+
1st: Jimmy Lowe - Wahiawa, Hawaii DEF. Brad Mcuniff - Cedar Falls, Iowa 10,12

Men's Age 45+
1st: Scott Cullins - Woodstock, Ga. DEF. Thomas Travers - Delray Beach, Fla. 2,13

Men's Age 45 A
1st: Edward Fink - Houston, Texas DEF. Rick Reynolds - Dunlap, Ill. 13,6,8

Men's Age 45+ B

Men's Age 45+ C
1st: Ed Garrison - Cordova, Tenn. DEF. David Roth - Cordova, Tenn.

Men's Age 50+
1st: Thomas Travers - Delray Beach, Fla. DEF. Mike Grisz - Dallas, Texas 12,14

Men's Age 55+
1st: Joe Lee - Miami, Fla. DEF. Russ Montague - Jenkintown, Pa. 14,13,1

Men's Age 55+ A
1st: Robert Steele - Hampton, Va. DEF. Fred Herco - Memphis, Tenn. 3,11,14

Men's Age 55+ B
1st: Darrell Crocker - Springfield, Mo. DEF. Zez Ozden - Grovetown, Ga. 14,7

Men's Age 55+ C
1st: Alfredo Raddo - Chihuahua DEF. Larry Knetzger - Kennewick, Wash. (6),9,6

Men's Age 60+
1st: Ed Remen - Apar, N.C. DEF. Mitch Miwuk - Nashua, N.H. 11,0

Men's Age 65+
1st: Patrick Taylor - Barrington Hills, Ill. DEF. Ed Sword - Louisville, Ky. -5,9,0

Men's Age 70+
1st: Dave Lund - Lansing, Mich. DEF. Michael Jackson - Shelton, Conn. 8,1

Men's Age 75+
1st: Fred Wiegand - 2nd: John O'donnell Jr.

Men's Age M24B/25B
1st: Aaron Lowinger - Atlanta, Ga. DEF. David Perez - Miami, Fla. 7,11

Men's Doubles 19+
1st: Jacques Boisvert - Trois-rivieres DEF. Sunny Osagie - Bythevile, Ark. 13,4

Men's Doubles 20+
1st: Andy Decker - 2nd: Kennernew, Ga. DEF. Brian Pointelin - Midvale, Utah. 1,7

Men's Doubles 25+
1st: Tony Lampkin - 2nd: Roger White

Men's Doubles 30+
1st: Scott Cullins - Woodstock, Ga. DEF. Thomas Travers - Delray Beach, Fla. 2,13

Men's Doubles 35+
1st: Edward Fink - Houston, Texas DEF. Rick Reynolds - Dunlap, Ill. 13,6,8

Men's Doubles 40+
1st: Robert Steele - Hampton, Va. DEF. Fred Herco - Memphis, Tenn. 3,11,14

Men's Doubles 45+
1st: Alfredo Raddo - Chihuahua DEF. Larry Knetzger - Kennewick, Wash. (6),9,6

Men's Doubles 50+
1st: Andy Decker - 2nd: Kennernew, Ga. DEF. Brian Pointelin - Midvale, Utah. 1,7

Men's Doubles 60+
1st: Ed Remen - Apar, N.C. DEF. Mitch Miwuk - Nashua, N.H. 11,0

Men's Doubles 70+
1st: Patrick Taylor - Barrington Hills, Ill. DEF. Ed Sword - Louisville, Ky. -5,9,0

Men's Doubles 80+
1st: Dave Lund - Lansing, Mich. DEF. Michael Jackson - Shelton, Conn. 8,1

Men's Doubles 90+
1st: Fred Wiegand - 2nd: John O'donnell Jr.

Men's Doubles 100+
1st: Tony Lampkin - 2nd: Roger White

Women's Age 24
1st: Chase Stanley - Baton Rouge, La. DEF. Fredrick Giles - Chattanooga, Tenn. (11),10,3

Women's Age 25+
1st: Jason Bledsoe - 2nd: Derrick Victor

Women's Age 30+
1st: Andy Decker - 2nd: Kennernew, Ga. DEF. Brian Pointelin - Midvale, Utah. 1,7

Women's Age 35+
1st: Rod Van Dyke - Ocala, Fla. DEF. Sunny Osagie - Bythevile, Ark. 13,4

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Women's Age 65+
1st: Patrick Taylor - Barrington Hills, Ill. DEF. Ed Sword - Louisville, Ky. -5,9,0

Women's Age 70+
1st: Dave Lund - Lansing, Mich. DEF. Michael Jackson - Shelton, Conn. 8,1

Women's Age 75+
1st: Fred Wiegand - 2nd: John O'donnell Jr.

Women's Age M24B/25B
1st: Aaron Lowinger - Atlanta, Ga. DEF. David Perez - Miami, Fla. 7,11

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1st: Jacques Boisvert - Trois-rivieres DEF. Sunny Osagie - Bythevile, Ark. 13,4

Women's Doubles 20+
1st: Andy Decker - 2nd: Kennernew, Ga. DEF. Brian Pointelin - Midvale, Utah. 1,7

Women's Doubles 25+
1st: Tony Lampkin - 2nd: Roger White

Women's Doubles 30+
1st: Scott Cullins - Woodstock, Ga. DEF. Thomas Travers - Delray Beach, Fla. 2,13

Women's Doubles 35+
1st: Edward Fink - Houston, Texas DEF. Rick Reynolds - Dunlap, Ill. 13,6,8

Women's Doubles 40+
1st: Robert Steele - Hampton, Va. DEF. Fred Herco - Memphis, Tenn. 3,11,14

Women's Doubles 50+
1st: Andy Decker - 2nd: Kennernew, Ga. DEF. Brian Pointelin - Midvale, Utah. 1,7

Women's Doubles 60+
1st: Ed Remen - Apar, N.C. DEF. Mitch Miwuk - Nashua, N.H. 11,0

Women's Doubles 70+
1st: Patrick Taylor - Barrington Hills, Ill. DEF. Ed Sword - Louisville, Ky. -5,9,0

Women's Doubles 80+
1st: Dave Lund - Lansing, Mich. DEF. Michael Jackson - Shelton, Conn. 8,1

Men's Doubles 90+
1st: Tony Lampkin - 2nd: Roger White

Women's Doubles 100+
1st: Andy Decker - 2nd: Kennernew, Ga. DEF. Brian Pointelin - Midvale, Utah. 1,7

Women's Doubles 110+
1st: Tony Lampkin - 2nd: Roger White

Women's Doubles 120+
1st: Tony Lampkin - 2nd: Roger White

Women's Doubles 130+
1st: Tony Lampkin - 2nd: Roger White
St. Jude Pro-Am Doubles

The St. Jude Pro-Am Charity Doubles event was sold out for the 11th year in a row raising $9,600 and bringing the total to nearly $140,000. On Tuesday evening 32 lucky players were treated to a once in lifetime racquetball experience while supporting the children of St. Jude’s. Each player was teamed with one of the superstars of the IRT and WPRO in a single elimination doubles tournament. The finals came down to Sal Perconti and Alvaro Beltran in the top half of the draw who would face Jimmy Floyd and Angela Grisar who came out of the bottom half. Perconti and Beltran took a commanding lead, and at 13-5 looked to close out the match before Grisar found her groove with a z-serve to Perconti that gave him some trouble. “What else can you ask for?” Perconti said after the match. “The pros are always so kind and fun to play with, plus all the money goes to St. Jude Children’s Hospital.” Perconti and Beltran would go on to win, 15-12.

Silent Auction and Play with a Pro for St. Jude

The St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital annual silent auction fundraiser helped push the US OPEN 11 year total over $140,000, all of which has been donated to the Memphis-based hospital.

A new event this year also helped raise money for St. Jude. For a $100 donation to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, amateur players were able to face off against a top pro for three rallies. The amateur had there picture taken while in the heat of the battle by an Official US OPEN Photographer and if they won a rally they received a special US OPEN prize.

Through the Silent Auction, Pro-Am Doubles, Play With a Pro & Bags of Popcorn, more than $10,000 was raised for St. Jude Children’s Research this year.

A big and special thanks goes out to the auction donors and contributors and the many friends of racquetball that have made donations to this annual fundraiser. Through this effort, a bigger step has been taken for the children at St. Jude Children’s Hospital and their families.

Message from the Event Director

On behalf of the Choice Hotels US OPEN Staff, I would like to sincerely thank everyone who joined us in Memphis for the 11th Anniversary of our sport’s original “grand slam” event.

The US OPEN represents everything that is great about racquetball and I am truly honored to play a small part in this event’s success. The incredible turnout of players and fans was inspiring and I can’t thank you enough for the energy and enthusiasm you all brought to Memphis. The pro players responded by putting on a show that left most of us with our mouths hanging open in awe.

I especially want to thank everyone who made a donation to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital during the US OPEN. We had a record year in fundraising for them and have now surpassed over $140,000 in donations.

Lastly, I want to thank all the sponsors and over 100 volunteer staffers that made the 2006 Choice Hotels US OPEN the greatest racquetball event ever held. It will be a tough event to top in 2007 but we will give it a shot.

I hope to see you all next year!

Doug Ganim
Event Director
US OPEN Racquetball Championships

US OPEN will be shown on the Tennis Channel!

Each show will start at 9:00 PM EST.

January 17, 2007 Men’s Quarter SWAIN v. MANNINO
January 24, 2007 Men’s Quarter BELTRÁN v. VANDERSON
February 7, 2007 Men’s Quarter CARSON v. HAWTHORNE
February 14, 2007 Men’s Quarter HUCZEK v. WILLIAMS
February 21, 2007 Men’s Semi - VANDERSON v. CARSON
March 7, 2007 Men’s Semi - HUCZEK v. MANNINO
March 14, 2007 Men’s Final - MANNINO v. CARSON
March 21, 2007 Women’s Final - GUDINAS v. VAN HEES

BY THE NUMBERS

23
Number of years Cliff Swain has played professional racquetball.
Most racquetball players are all too familiar with the difficulty of the mental aspect of racquetball competition. The power of the mind is apparent at every level, from Rocky Carson or Rhonda Rajsich at the US Open, to an eight-year-old in her first tournament who is apprehensive in using any of her full strokes. By Kerri Wachtel

Here are four simple techniques you can try right away:

1. **The best all-around mental tool is the simple phrase, "Only The Ball."**
   
   It cures, at least temporarily, most of the big mental mistakes players make. Whether you're upset, angry, nervous, or just distracted, repeat this phrase to block out negative thoughts and return your focus to where it belongs, the ball.

2. **Probably the hardest time to concentrate is when you're getting ready to return serve.**
   
   Your opponent has the ball, so your mind seems to sense that this is an opportunity for a little time off. While your opponent is preparing, try to focus on something non-distracting, like your strings. Strings get readjusted a lot more than needed because of this little trick.

3. **Learn versatility!**
   
   If you have only one playing style and it's not working, then you are out of options. A key factor is being able to choose different courses of action. If you have a Plan B, C, and D on the racquetball court, the failure of Plan A is unlikely to cause despair. Racquetball players often lose because at least a part of them secretly gives up. You won't give up while you have something else to try. Learn to play every part of the court and hit every kind of shot. You'll likely uncover a weakness in a seemingly unbeatable opponent.

4. **Look alert, energetic, confident, and happy.**
   
   Looking so will actually help you be so, and it will keep you from giving encouragement to your opponent. If your opponent is at all prone to choking, your look of ready confidence on the edge of defeat might keep just enough doubt in their mind to make them cave under the pressure of closing out the match.
Fran, as Jason Mannino’s coach can you tell us how he won the 2006 US Open Championship 7 years after winning the 1999 US Open Championship?

Answer: In my opinion Jason is the most mentally tough player on tour. Not only did he win the 2006 US Open, he won it with a pulled calf muscle that occurred in the 1st round, the round of 64’s. If you saw him that night you would have thought for sure Jason would have to forfeit as he was hobbling all over the court.

I think you have heard the term, “the mind of a champion”. Well in my opinion Jason has the ultimate “mind of a champion”. First off all let’s take a quick look at a few of his professional career titles as his record speaks for itself:

- #1 Pro Player in the World 2003
- Pro National Champion 2001
- Top 5 Pro Player in the World for the past 10 years

In order for Jason to have accomplished what he has in his pro career takes a very, very special mind…..“the mind of a champion”.

Let’s investigate what this means:

1 - Believing in Yourself

Jason believes in himself 100% percent and then some. He lost to Jack Huczek, #1 pro player, three times this season. The US Open was their 4th meeting. Jason and I watched video tapes of his previous matches with Jack and we knew when he met him again he’d have to execute his game plan better and tweak his serve….he did BOTH of these things.

He NEVER went into his matches with Jack doubting himself….he believed he could win each and every time.

2 - Not Allowing Bad Calls to Affect You

Once again Jason watched himself on video and saw he was allowing bad calls to adversely affect him in matches. He saw he would get so angry at times that he’d not only lose the point from the bad call, but he’d also lose several more points thereafter because he couldn’t let that bad call go. He realized he was taking the “bad calls personally” and he shouldn’t….they were NOT personal. Once he came to terms with this and began to work on it he has played calmer and more relaxed. The bad calls are not affecting him in a negative way much at all anymore.

3 - Don’t Beat Yourself

Jason didn’t want to beat himself especially since he was injured. The philosophy he lives by is he never wants to beat himself so he minimizes his own mistakes and maximizes on his opponents mistakes. He plays such high percentage racquetball and skips the ball minimally which puts so much pressure back on his opponents. He put so much pressure on Jack in that match that Jack tried to splat the ball from 38 feet back when the score was 11-10, Jason serving, and Jack skipped it for match point.

4 - Know Your Goals and Stay Focused

At this point in Jason’s career his goal in racquetball is to “build his legacy” and it is two fold:

a- Be known as one of the best players to ever play the game.

b- Be known for his character…play hard and let who he is as a person shine through on the court….and he is having fun doing just that.

5 - Get Crowd Involved

Jason is a crowd favorite for a reason….he gets the crowd involved and he is entertaining. In Memphis at the US Open he did just that….from the onset of the match he referred to audience as, “My People”, and they cheered wildly for him. I believe that in the first two games Jason brilliantly got the crowd involved and they were behind him 100%. This totally motivated and fired Jason up to play hard every point. In the next two games he really didn’t get the crowd involved because he was in pain and it showed. In the 4th game and the tie-breaker Sudsy came over to me and said, “Tell Jason to get the crowd going again.” When I talked to Jason I made a few suggestions on what adjustments needed to be made and I told him the words of Sudsy….“get the crowd involved”. Jason did just that and the crowd was electrifying. At 7/7 in the 5th game the audience was bouncing off the walls, dancing on the tables, chanting and you name it they did it. Jason told me the crowd totally got him through the 5th game tie-breaker because he was in so much pain, but the adrenaline kicked in and the pain seemed to subside.

6 - Never Quit

There is a saying I use a lot in my teaching/coaching, “Winners never quit, quitters never win”. Jason Mannino is a true blue winner in my book. I don’t think quitting is in his vocabulary. Jason defied all odds when he broke his back in 1993 in a car accident. He wasn’t supposed to live, let alone walk and now he has added the 2006 US Open title to his already impressive resume. And Jason did it with an injury….a pulled calf muscle. In his victory speech he profusely thanked the Campbell Clinic for patching him up, but Jason still had to step on the court day after day and perform at his ultimate best and he did. He told me he knew what was on the line at this event and he wasn’t going to give up. As the pressure got greater with each passing match and there was more on the line he felt less and less pain. In my estimation Jason’s will to win, the adrenaline, his never give up attitude and the light at the end of the tunnel carried Jason through to victory.

When he got up on Monday and finally let down Jason couldn’t even walk or even drive his car as he was in too much pain.

7 - Playing with Heart

Jason plays with heart and desire each and every time he walks on that court. If you were lucky enough to watch Jason at the 2006 US Open you would have seen that every match he played he left his heart on the court. His determination was crystal clear.

Jason Mannino is an amazing player and person…..a class act. He pours his heart and soul into everything he does on and off the court. He is the ultimate champion.

I hope this helps you see clearly Jason’s mind….“The Mind of a Champion”.

Hope to see you at one of our camps for live personal instruction or the next best thing: buy our video if you can’t make a camp at this time. Go to www.FranDavisRacquetball.com for details on both the video and camps.
Hi everybody...it's been GREAT to be back from retirement and I am psyched to share with you my magical “Power Backhand” that I used to capture the titles of the five time #1 Professional Player in the World and the four time US Open Champion. These are the same VERY SOUND fundamentals that I will be using this season to go for the #1 Professional Player in the World, (sixth time).

I CANNOT stress enough that there is no substitute for having very consistent, powerful and explosive strokes that you can rely on and have confidence in ...like mine. Last issue I shared with you my magical “Power Forehand” and today I am going to share with you my magical “Power Backhand” and help make you stronger from the backhand side of the court. Too often players run around their backhands to hit a forehand and it puts them out of position or they poke at their backhands setting their opponents up with an easy shot. I am going to use a visual aid, electric tape on the floor, that will make it easier for you to follow and understand so your backhand can be a force to be reckoned with...like MINE. Let's take a closer look:

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**Ready Position**
- Proper Backhand Grip – hand moves 1/8" towards back wall
- Square to side wall
- Shoulders level
- Knees bent, not waist
- Hitting arm up...elbow in line with the shoulder
- Non-hitting arm used for balance
- Feet lined up on the 2 back pieces of electric tape
- Eyes on ball
Step & Swing

- Front foot steps toward corner...toward front electric tape line (45 degree angle)
- Hips begin to open
- Drive off back leg
- Shoulder rotates and begins to open
- Hitting arm starts to drop leading with the elbow
- Non-hitting arm begins to move
- Eyes on ball

Contact Point

- Back foot pivots
- Back knee bent at a 90 degree angle
- Hips completely open
- Hitting arm fully extended and contact is made at that 4th piece of electric tape
- Non-hitting arm moves around body for balance
- Eyes on ball

Follow Through

- Chest and belly button facing the front wall
- Hitting arm all the way around
- Racquet pointing to back wall
- Non-hitting arm completely through
- Upper body erect
- Back foot pivots completely
- Back knee bent at a 90 degree angle

Now you have my magical "Power Backhand"... a picture is worth a thousand words... so study these pictures carefully. Remember, like the forehand, the backhand stroke is also a part of building that solid foundation. This now will make you a stronger player from both sides of the court, the forehand and backhand sides...like ME...a must in order to move up in level. By having both a consistent, powerful and explosive forehand and backhand you will be a player who will be tough to beat and your opponents will fear you. Your opponents will not be able to pick on you because you are weaker from one side of the court versus the other...that will frustrate them immensely.

Take the time necessary to work on your strokes as they are truly the foundation you need in order to get to that next level you've always dreamed of.

Hope to see you at one of our "Building Your Racquetball Dream House" Camps for live personal instruction or the next best thing buy our "Building Your Racquetball Dream House" Video if you can't make a camp at this time.

Go to www.FranDavisRacquetball.com for details on both.
Line Judges:
A Referee’s Relief Team

Let’s discuss line judges.

Any referee worth his/her salt will tell you that having line judges to help officiate a match can be a great relief. Having line judges means that the final decision and outcome of a particular situation will be shared by a three-person panel rather than resting on the referee alone. From the players’ viewpoint, it gives a player who feels wronged by the referee’s call some hope for overturning a perceived mistake.

The two (no more or less) line judges should be situated in viewing positions as different as possible from the referee and from each other. This helps to compensate for calls that one person alone might be blocked on. Yet, all three persons must generally be within viewing and hearing distance of one another to make handling appeals easier.

Line judge duties can be described as “silently reffing” the match, reacting only if the referee asks them to weigh in. For all practical purposes, anything the referee calls or doesn’t call is may be appealed. Should a line judge note a rules violation, s(he) should NOT react at all, but merely keep the occurrence in mind. When the rally is over, the referee may then ask the line judges if they thought the call on a particular play was correct. Then, and only then, should they reveal their opinion about the call made by the referee.

Line judges may give only one of three possible responses — indicating agreement with the referee’s call by displaying a “thumb up”; indicating disagreement by displaying a “thumb down”; or indicating that they have “no opinion” (they aren’t sure or didn’t see the play) by extending one hand in a “palm down” position.

Since line judges communicate in silence, it is essential that the referee clearly explain THE CALL. Some common errors I’ve noted in doing this are (1) announcing WHO made the appeal (this really makes no difference except to the referee) and (2) announcing what the person who appealed thought the call should have been (this confuses some line judges about whether giving a “thumb up” means they agree with the player or they agree with the referee). For example, a skilled referee will simply say, “My call is that the last shot skipped. There has been an appeal.” In contrast, an inexperienced referee might say, “I called Mr. Smith’s last shot a skip, but he is appealing that the shot was good.” Can you see how that second version might totally confuse a line judge about how to respond and, even worse, produce an invalid outcome?

Another point to be made is that if the play being appealed cannot be precisely identified (example: “when Joe raised his hand”), there can be no appeal since the three persons may not be reacting to the very same play. So, a player’s appeal: “I appeal that John’s last shot skipped” or a referee who then announce “I called the entire rally good — no skips” should never, ever be allowed since it is NOT specific enough to guarantee a valid outcome on appeal.

What about determining the result of the appeal? Here is a relatively simple way of remembering. The referee’s call stands in all possible combinations of line judge hand signals except two — “two thumbs down” means the referee’s call is reversed and “one thumb down and one palm down” calls for the rally to be replayed.

How many appeals are allowed? Well, each player/team gets only three per game, plus a freebie on a game-ending rally. However, on any appeal that either line judge displays a “thumb down,” it is not counted against the three-appeal limit even if the referee’s call stands. If there is no “thumb down,” then one of the three appeals has been used.

Always “Play by the Rules!” If you don’t have a copy, you can find and review them on-line at:
Do you have a rules/refereeing question? Be sure to email it to me at ODietrich@ussa.org and you might find it featured in an upcoming issue of Racquetball Magazine.
The training zone focused in this article is

**STRENGTH**

The American Heritage dictionary defines strength as, “The state, property, or quality of being strong. The power to resist strain or stress; durability.” It continues the explanation, stating: “STRENGTH, POWER and FORCE suggest capacity to do something. STRENGTH is inherent capacity to manifest energy, to endure, and to resist. POWER is capacity to do work and to act. FORCE is the exercise of power. For example, one has the power to do something. He exerts force when he does it. He has sufficient strength to complete it.”

I ran cross country when I was in high school and still enjoy it to this day. Some of my greatest results have come from the benefits of running. In high school, racing distance is 5 kilometers (or 3.1 miles). I was fortunate to have a great cross country coach in high school. He taught mathematics and defined our weekly training program to the exact mile that produced the best results. For any given week, we would run 20-70 miles, incorporate sprints and hill work, mental training, and STRENGTH training.

Each runner produces different results from day to day. There are many factors that cause runners to produce these varied results, e.g., training schedule, diet, mental stability, and social factors, just to name a few. The great runners can manage these different factors and produce consistent results over the long run. Coach’s philosophy was very simple: if your body fatigues, then you will not achieve your desired result. Mental, lung, and muscular (mainly leg) fatigue are the primary contributors to success (or the lack thereof) as a runner. If one of those factors fails during a race, there will be failing results. For the purpose of this article, muscular strength training is discussed; mental and lung strength training will be covered in future articles.

Unlike strength training for runners, primarily targeting legs, racquetball players need to develop strength in all muscle groups. Most racquetball players practice minimal strength training. Building strong muscles will prevent fatigue and, even more importantly, circumvent injury. A common injury in racquetball is one that pertains to the arm (e.g., shoulder, elbow, bicep). Knee injuries are another one of the many common injuries in racquetball. In some cases these injuries can’t be prevented, but in many others they can be avoided through proper strength training.

I take strength training very seriously and I wouldn’t be where I am without it. A racquetball match can last up to two hours or more. If your muscles are not capable of enduring strain for that length of time, at the minimum you’ll lose the match; worst case would be injury. I have not suffered a serious injury in racquetball and very rarely do I get sore after a tournament, which is due to my extensive time spent strength training. For every hour I spend drilling on the court, I spend four times that long on strength training, e.g., if I spend 2.5 hours per week practicing, I spend 10 hours strength training.

Given the time most people can spend working out, I alternatively suggest a 1:1 ratio. For example, if 3 hours per week are spent playing racquetball, then 3 hours should be spent strength training. Every muscle group needs to be addressed, but not on the same day. A successful program should be structured so that each muscle group is worked at least once per week and 10 repetitions should be completed per exercise. The amount of time devoted to strength training determines how many muscle groups are targeted per day. For example, if 3 hours are devoted to strength training per week, I recommend spending one hour on each of three different days. For example: Monday begins with chest, back, and abdominals; Wednesday continues with biceps, triceps, and forearms; Friday concludes with calves, quadriceps, hamstring, and shoulders.

Incorporate as many different exercises as possible. Don’t perform one exercise for an entire half hour. Adding variety to a routine will produce better results. Most gyms and clubs have personal trainers and there are dozens of good strength training books available at bookstores if questions arise when developing your winning strength training schedule. Remember to always use proper technique and to use a spotter as needed. Good luck!
What does winning the US Open for the second time mean to you? It means a lot, although each event is important when I look back winning the most prestigious event in our sport for the second time is important to my legacy, and my career. I didn't realize this before the event, but I do now.

Who is the toughest all-around competitor you ever played? I had the most difficult time with Cliff Swain. Cliff had many attributes—he was tough both mentally and physically and very difficult to come back on when he had a lead. The person with the most talent would be Sudsy but he never seemed to possess the same killer instinct that Cliff had.

If you could give one tip to an aspiring young player who wanted to play on the IRT tour, what would it be? Simply—study each player and pull out the positives from each. I mimicked at least 15-20 players trying to take their best attributes both mentally and physically. Many kids today are too arrogant and think they know everything, but usually you can learn something from every player on the tour.

How has your game changed as you've grown older? I am very different in my offensive mindset. I feel I am more offensive but also much smarter. I no longer go for one shot to the finish every rally, but use different, smarter shots. I feel stronger now than when I was in my twenties and feel I have a greater variety of offensive shots than a few years ago.

How do you think the game has changed since the Yellen/Brumfield eras? This is difficult to talk about since I may sound condescending but I really am not. The game overall is much faster and more powerful. I believe it simply is a result of the game evolving. The shot making ability of today's players are much more advanced and the players are more physical and stronger.

How important was Junior Racquetball to your career? It provided the foundation without the structure of junior racquetball I would not have known if I had the ability to play professional racquetball. It also gave me many of my friends I have today. Most of if not all of my best friends have come though racquetball.

One of your greatest accomplishments had to be coming back from a near death accident to winning the junior worlds. What did this win mean for your career? At the time I did not realize how significant my recovery and victory would be. I was an arrogant young kid who just expected to recover and to win. Now, I understand how important that event was to my career. That event made me realize I could play pro. Just two months before the event my doctor told me not to play. I simply ignored his recommendation, dusted of my racquet and played. After I won, Sports Illustrated did a special article on my victory. Today the accomplishment seems much more astonishing then it did at the time.

Anything else you would like to say? I feel I am blessed. I make a living playing a sport I love, I have tremendous support from my parents, have two great children, Jason and Jared and a great girlfriend Christina. I feel very lucky to have a tremendous sponsor and fan support and just thank everyone for being part of my racquetball career.
new MEXICO

New Mexico Racquetball Association
By Kevin Joyce

What are your most successful programs?
- We have been functioning as an organization since 1977
- We incorporated in 1983
- World Senior Racquetball Championships inaugurated in 1985
- Ongoing junior, senior, and special groups programs
- Justifying some difficult decisions and overcoming some obstacles

What would you say is the key to having a successful organization?
- We operate like a business
- Monthly board meetings have been held since inception
- Developed and sustained continuity which has lasted for 30 years
- Annual goals and 3-5 year goals
- Provide value to our constituency

Contribute to local, state, national, and international communities with funds and in-kind
Offer statewide Intercollegiate Scholarship program for worthy student-athletes
- Full range of events and programs for broad spectrum of the population

Gary Mazaroff
State President

What is the number one complaint you hear as president?
We have not received many complaints; instead, a few concerns over time. Perhaps the most widely aired concern is why participants must be members when participating in sanctioned events. Our response has been that, as a member, one receives a lot of value that would not be recognized without membership. In addition, it helps to keep the racquetball legacy alive!

CURRENT NMRA BOARD MEMBERS

Jane Bentley
Francis Borunda*
Brian Campbell
Devin Cannady
Jack Clarke
Peter Clarke
Ken Goldstein
Terry Lauritsen
Raymond Maestas
Gary Mazaroff*
Ken Payne*
Jake Skinner
Evan Ussery
Cindy Wittenbrink
Joe Wittenbrink*
* Officers of the Board

By the Numbers

1,928,384 State Population
409 Membership Strength
4 Lifetime Members

In 2006, Albuquerque celebrated its 300th birthday. The state bird is the roadrunner and if you catch a glimpse then you will be lucky. The highest point is Wheeler Peak at 13,161. The capital city of Santa Fe also is renowned for its rich history, galleries and arts. The 19 pueblos of New Mexico are the oldest tribal communities of the US and are less than an hour drive from Santa Fe or Albuquerque. There are 13 national parks and monuments throughout New Mexico that make it a top tourist destination. Carlsbad Caverns National Park is home to 300,000 Mexican free-tail bats and White Sands National Monument is part of the world’s largest gypsum dune field and stretches 275 square miles.

New Mexico Attractions: With over 20 sanctioned events held annually there is always a top notch racquetball to be played all months of the year. In late August, the World Senior Racquetball Championships officially kick off the season with over 250 participants from around the world. When you are not on the racquetball court, take part in great hiking, hot air balloononing, fly fishing, exploration of Southwest Ruins, pueblos and more.

The Larger Cities
Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Farmington, Las Cruces, Las Vegas and Roswell.
THIS OLD PRO RECEIVES GEEZERJOCK AWARD
Story By Jim Hiser

Jimmy Connors, Roger Clemens, Martina Navratilova, Gordie Howe, and Freddie Couples – all are athletes who excelled in their sport in their older years. Unfortunately until recently, perhaps the most outstanding senior performance by any athlete has gone unnoticed by most of the sports community. But thanks to GeezerJock magazine, Ruben Gonzalez will now be recognized for his outstanding accomplishments.

Racquetball has not received such recognition since Chris Coy received the Sports Illustrated Young Sportsman of the Year Award in 2000. Ruben’s accomplishments are legend in the racquetball community and soon will be recognized throughout the sports world. With over 7.2 million Americans aged 40 years and over competing in athletic events, this recognition of Ruben as the most outstanding athlete of this age group amplifies the importance of the award.

Ruben’s award is huge – the award places a racquetball athlete at an equal with all other athletes and recognizes both the extreme demands of the sport as well the difficulty of competing at such a high level. Ruben is without question an exceptional athlete, but even more impressive is that he is an outstanding person who exemplifies the best our sport has to offer.

Quotes from friends and colleagues:

“What a great honor for Ruben. He is a tremendous athlete and what he has accomplished in his career with the IRT is simply amazing. Ruben has and always will be inspirational for all who play the game, juniors and adults alike. Ruben definitely is a true legend of the sport and the IRT.”

Dave Negrete, IRT Commissioner

“I truly believe that Ruben Gonzalez is one of the most gifted athletes the world has ever known. I consider him on the level of Muhammad Ali. We are so blessed to have him in the sport of racquetball and to witness his extraordinary career. No athlete in any sport has played at such a high level for such a long period of time. He should be regarded as an American icon.”

Doug Ganim, Director, US Open Racquetball Championships

“It comes as no surprise to Ektelon that Ruben beat out athletes from every other sport to win this prestigious award. We consider Ruben the ‘true legend’ of racquetball and “the ambassador” of the sport. His ability to keep playing for so long at such a high level is amazing. He is the Superman of racquetball!”

Scott Winters

Ruben on his way to becoming #1 on the Pro Tour - 1988

Q&A with Ruben

Birth Date: 7/22/1952
Birth Place: New York
Nationality: American
Year Turned Pro: 1975
Plays: Right Handed
Height: 5’8”
Weight: 180
Marital Status: Married, 4 children, 4 grandchildren
Personal: I have a cat named Bear. Love Life!
Playing Tip: Practice as much as you can.
Player Quote: My racquet gives me great performance.
Juniors Tips: Enjoy the game, have fun.
Why I love racquetball: Because it keeps me in shape.
How I was introduced to racquetball: By a handball player.
What else do I do: When I’m not playing, I love to be home with my family.
My Training Schedule: Working out 3 times a week
Favorite Book: To Kill A Mockingbird
Favorite Band: El Gran Combo
Favorite Song: Vamanos Pal Monte
Favorite Food: Seafood
Favorite TV Show: Will & Grace
Favorite Video Game: PacMan
Favorite Car: 1965 Mustang Convertible
Favorite Color: Red
Favorite Movie: Scarface
Lucky Number: 13
Favorite Sport: Basketball
Favorite Actor/Actress: Bruce Lee and Al Pacino

Source: www.eketelon.com
MEXICO TOOK HOME MOST OF THE GOLD IN THE WORLD Cup competition at the 18th International Racquetball Federation (IRF) World Junior Championships in Tempe, Arizona. Of the twelve divisions comprising the World Cup competition involving National team players from the 16 countries attending, Mexico won seven divisions, the United States three, and Ecuador two. Thus, the World Cup team trophy went to Mexico.

In Boys 18 and under, David Ortega of Mexico defeated fellow Mexican Alejandro Landa in a final that featured many great shots and incredible diving gets. Landa looked to be in the driver's seat after he won game one and had a 7-3 lead in game two. But Ortega dug in and came back taking a 12-7 lead before winning 15-11.

In the tie-breaker, it was Ortega who had the lead at 4-1, and Landa who came back and gained the advantage at 7-6. However, that was as many points as he would get, as Ortega reversed the momentum and took the match, 9-15, 15-11, 11-7.

The win extends Ortega’s streak of Junior World Championships to six. His first was the Boys 12 and under in 2001, after which he came second in 14 and 16 and under. This was his first year playing 18 and under, so he can make it seven in a row next year.

Ortega also won gold in Boys 18 and under doubles as he and partner Ruben Estrada defeated the American team of Chris Coy and Zach Apperson, 15-13, 15-5.

In the girls’ competition, Michelle Key of the United States became the first American girl to win 18 and under since Adrienne Fisher’s victory in 2003. Key dropped the first game against Mexican Karen Torres, but then took game two and the tie-breaker to win 5-15, 15-9, 11-5.

An all American final ensured gold for the USA in Boys 16 and under as Ishmael Aldana and Jose Rojas faced off for the title. Rojas had the easier route to the final giving up an average of 4 points a game in the prior three rounds while Aldana won both his quarter final and semi matches in two close games. Perhaps those close games were to Aldana’s benefit, as he defeated Rojas in a close final, 10-15, 15-9, 11-10.

Alanda and Rojas were also in the Boys 16 and under doubles final against Mexicans Erick Sandoval and Jose Luis Martinez. Unfortunately for them, they lost to the Mexicans 15-14, 15-8 thereby denying Aldana a second gold medal.

Paola Longoria of Mexico won her fifth consecutive Junior Worlds title, by taking the Girls 16 and under final over American Sharon Jackson, 15-12, 15-2. It looked like Longoria would beat Jackson again in doubles to win a second gold medal, as Longoria and partner Luisa Alderete had an 8-1 lead in the tie-breaking third game of the Girls 16 and under doubles final.

However, Jackson wasn’t going to lose two finals to Longoria, and she and partner Holly Hettesheimer came back to take the tie-breaker and the match, 15-14, 7-15, 11-8.

18TH INTERNATIONAL RACQUETBALL FEDERATION (IRF) TEMPE, ARIZONA DECEMBER 15-21, 2006

In Boys 14 and under, Mexican Alejandro Cardona was a double gold medalist, as he defeated American Taylor Knox in the singles final, 15-2, 15-13, and teamed up with Pedro Gonzalez to defeat Knox and Jake Bredenbeck in the doubles final, 4-15, 15-14, 11-6.

There was also a double gold medalist in Girls 14 and under, but unlike the other divisions it wasn’t an American or a Mexican. The remarkable 13-year-old Veronica Sotomayor of Ecuador won both singles and doubles with Maria Paz Munoz. It wasn’t easy, however, as American Danielle Key pushed her to the limit in the singles final that had great shot making by both players, including very good pinch shots.

After dropping the first game, Key won the second game, and looked to be in control after she took a 5-0 lead in the tie-breaker. But Sotomayor came back and in the end it was Sotomayor coming through to win 15-5, 12-15, 11-9, and extend her consecutive Junior Worlds title streak to four.

In the other team competitions, Mexico also won the Esprit Cup for players in the 12 and under and younger divisions. The USA was second followed by Bolivia, Costa Rica and Ireland. Canada won the Friendship Cup for players in the 14, 16, and 18 under divisions who are not in the World Cup competition. Mexico was second, the USA
third followed by Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic.

Of special note, matches from Tempe were broadcast over the internet via the racquetballonline.tv website. Pablo Pejje from Chile was on hand to set everything up. The matches generated over 3,000 hits a day from over 40 countries. Also, Royster Productions taped two matches for broadcast on the Tennis Channel.

Luke St. Onge, Secretary General of the IRF, was happy with those developments. Also, he was excited to see that "play is better than before." St. Onge credits coaching improvements in the smaller countries with their increased performances at Junior Worlds.

Of the Arizona State University courts, St. Onge said "it's a beautiful facility for hosting the over 600 people who attend the event." He was also pleased to see more Korean players this year, and that Nicaragua sent their first players to Junior Worlds. It's getting to be a large event, and St. Onge indicated that format changes will be considered, so the event could be held in countries with smaller facilities.

The Junior World Championships were held in the United States every year from their inception in 1989 until 2004, when they were held in San Luis Potosi, Mexico. Last year, Junior Worlds was also in Mexico, in Juarez. The announcement of the 2007 Junior Worlds location will be made by March 1st, 2007.

**RESULTS SUMMARY**

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<td>BOYS SINGLES</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 &amp; Under - PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st: David Ortega - MEX DEF. Alejandro Landa - MEX (9),11,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 &amp; Under - PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st: Ismael Aldana - Colo, DEF. Jose Rojas - Stockton, Calif. - 10,9,10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 &amp; Under - PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st: Alejandro Cardona - MEX DEF. Taylor Knoth - Milwaukie, Ore. 2,13</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIRLS SINGLES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 &amp; Under - PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st: Michelle Key - Gilbert, Ariz. DEF. Karen Torres - MEX (5),9,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 &amp; Under - PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st: Paola Longoria - El Paso DEF. Sharon Jackson - Shelbyville, Ind. 12,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 &amp; Under - PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st: Veronica Sotomayor - ECU DEF. Aubrey O'brien - Auburn, Calif. 5,(12),9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIRLS DOUBLES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 &amp; Under - PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st: Erick Sandoval / Jose Luis Martinez - MEX DEF. Ismael Aldana / Jose Rojas - USA 14,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 &amp; Under - PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st: Erick Sandoval / Jose Luis Martinez - MEX DEF. Ismael Aldana / Jose Rojas - USA 14,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 &amp; Under - PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st: Alejandro Cardona / Pedro Gonzalez - MEX DEF. Jake Bredenbeck / Taylor Knoth - USA 10,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOYS DOUBLES</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 &amp; Under - PP</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st: David Ortega / Ruben Estrada - MEX DEF. Chris Coy / Zach Apperson - USA 13,5</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 &amp; Under - PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st: Erick Sandoval / Jose Luis Martinez - MEX DEF. Ismael Aldana / Jose Rojas - USA 14,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 &amp; Under - PP</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st: Alejandro Cardona / Pedro Gonzalez - MEX DEF. Jake Bredenbeck / Taylor Knoth - USA 14,6</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIRLS DOUBLES</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 &amp; Under - RR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st: Eleny Guzman / Marcela Moreno - MEX 2nd: Kara Mazur / Samantha Mcguffey - USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 &amp; Under - PP</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st: Holly Hettesheimer / Sharon Jackson - USA 2nd: Luisa Alderete / Paola Longoria - MEX</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIXED DOUBLES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 &amp; Under - RR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st: Karen Torres / Roman Landa - MEX 2nd: Andreanne Chartier / Mathieu Messier - CAN</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 &amp; Under - RR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st: Jenny Daza / Roland Keller - BOL 2nd: Jose Serrano / Teresa Diaz - USA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ESPRIT CUP**

**GIRLS SINGLES**

12 & Under Gold - OFF
1st: Maria Jose Vargas - BOL DEF. Devon Pimentelli - San Bruno, Calif. 6,8

12 & Under Blue - OFF
1st: Elizabeth Anne Brenner - Portland, Ore. DEF. Rocío Cuemcua - BOL 4,8

12 & Under Red - OFF
1st: Guadalupe Cruz - MEX DEF. Mercedes Arias - Ann Arbor, Mich. 14,10

10 & Under Gold - OFF
1st: Lucia Gonzalez - MEX DEF. Ximena Gonzalez - MEX 8,8

10 & Under Red - OFF
1st: Sabrina Viscuso - Auburn, Calif. DEF. Elizabeth Vargas - Aurora, Colo. 5,8

8 & Under - RR
1st: Diana Aguilar - 2nd: Vaneeza Gutierrez -

**BOYS SINGLES**

12 & Under Gold - OFF
1st: Marco Rojas - Stockton, Calif. DEF. Daniel De La Rosa - MEX 13,11

12 & Under Blue - OFF
1st: Luis Jurado - MEX DEF. Alex Guzman - Stockton, Calif. 9,7

12 & Under White - OFF
1st: Raul Quintanilla - MEX DEF. Conor Skehan - Tournanea 11,5

10 & Under Gold - OFF
1st: Javier Estrada - MEX DEF. Andreee Pamilla - MEX 3,10

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10 & Under Blue - OFF
1st: Nicolas Arguello - CRI DEF. Andres Aviles - CRI 6,11

10 & Under Red - OFF
1st: Javier Mar - MEX DEF. Bobby Sehrgosha - Pleasanton, Calif. 9,2

10 & Under White - OFF
1st: Martin Freire - Cuenca DEF. Jake Binzel - Bellingham, Wash. 0,14

8 & Under Gold - OFF
1st: Alex Almada - MEX DEF. Gil Duarte - MEX 3,7

8 & Under Blue - OFF
1st: Ryan Francis - Litchfield, N.H. DEF. Roberto Hernandez - CRI WBF - No Show

8 & Under Red - OFF
1st: Noe Rivera - BOL DEF. Daniel Rojas - Stockton, Calif. 4,5

8 & Under White - OFF
1st: Justus Benson - Sun Prairie, Wis. DEF. Magdriel Martinez - MEX WBF - Injury

GIRLS MULTIBOUNCE
8 and Under - RR
1st: Dariana Montiel - 2nd: Erika Manilla -

6 and Under - RR
1st: Dariana Montiel - 2nd: Victoria Leon -

BOYS MULTIBOUNCE
8 and Under Gold - OFF
1st: Roberto Hernandez - CRI DEF. Josue Perdomo - DOM 11-7,11-1

8 and Under Blue - OFF
1st: Daniel Rojas - Stockton, Calif. DEF. Justus Benson - Sun Prairie, Wis. 11-9,11-0

8 and Under Red - OFF
1st: Eduardo Portillo - MEX DEF. Daniel Alfaro - DOM 11-7,11-0

6 and Under - RR
1st: Eduardo Portillo - 2nd: Alejandro Sigala -

GIRLS DOUBLES
14 & Under - RR
1st: Veronica Sotomayor / Maria Paz Munoz - ECU 2nd: Jessica Parrilla / Maria Magdalena Chavez - MEX

12 & Under - RR
1st: Elizabeth Anne Brenner / Samantha Rosado - USA 2nd: Maria Jose Vargas / Rocio Cuenca - BOL

10 & Under - RR
1st: Lucia Gonzalez / Ximena Gonzalez - MEX 2nd: Abbey Lavely / Elizabeth Vargas - USA

BOYS DOUBLES
12 & Under Gold - OFF
1st: Jose Diaz / Marco Rojas - USA DEF. Rodrigo Garay / Ruben Rodelo - MEX 14-,8,4

12 & Under Blue - OFF
1st: Alejandro De Los Rios / Luis Jurado - DEF. Bryan Harrington / Ricardo Sanchez - 1,6

12 & Under Red - OFF
1st: Alejandro Montiel / Daniel De La Rosa - DEF. Aaron Marquez / Eduardo Olivas - 4,3

12 & Under White - OFF
1st: Carlos Cuadra / Daniel Chavneri - DEF. Leeray Downing / Trevor Deason - 2,(9),2

10 & Under Gold - OFF
1st: Javier Estrada / Andre Perez - DEF. Myles White / Cody Daniel - 11-7,11-3

10 & Under Blue - OFF
1st: Matt Schumacher / Chad Peterson - DEF. Steven Rowe / Ryan Jensen - 11-7,11-2

10 & Under Red - OFF
1st: Daniel Gonzalez / Jared Takash - DEF. Antonio Mendoza / Brandon Sandoval - 11-7,11-10

10 & Under White - OFF
1st: Alejandro Hidalgo / Mario Hidalgo - DEF. Esteban Diaz / Jeff Locke -

FRIENDSHIP CUP

BOYS SINGLES
18 Gold - OFF
1st: Roman Landa - El Paso DEF. Mauricio Zelada - Columbia, Md. 13,9

18 Blue - OFF
1st: Juan Pablo Aguilera - BOL DEF. Stafano Luconi - CRI (14),13,8

16 Gold - OFF
1st: Mathieu Messner - CAN DEF. Sebastien Boissonneault - CAN 6,8

16 Blue - OFF
1st: Ricardo Sanchez - CRI DEF. Christopher Good - USA 16- RR

16 Red - OFF
1st: Jose Diaz / Marco Rojas - USA DEF. Bobby Sehrgosha - Pleasanton, Calif. 9,2

14 Gold - OFF
1st: James Slavko / CRI DEF. Pedro Gonzalez - MEX 6,14

14 Blue - OFF
1st: Luis Gonzales - CRI DEF. Christopher Good - Aurora, Colo. 9,13

14 Red - OFF
1st: Pedro Castro - CAN DEF. Julio Heinsen - DOM 4,0

Team Bolivia

Opening Ceremonies

18 Red - OFF
1st: Carlos Oviedo - MEX DEF. Pietro Luconi - CRI 2,5

18 White - OFF
1st: Carlos Landin - MEX DEF. Dereck West - CAN 9,(4),6

16 Gold - OFF
1st: Mathieu Messner - CAN DEF. Sebastien Boissonneault - CAN 6,8

14 White - OFF
1st: Mathieu Grandmaitre - CAN DEF. Connor Huesefner - Franklin, Wis. WBF - No Show

GIRLS SINGLES
18 - RR
1st: Lysa Ann Landreville - 2nd: Analy Zuniga -

16 - RR
1st: Arantza Loredo - 2nd: Teresa Diaz -

14 - RR
1st: Maria Magdalena Chavez - 2nd: Jocelyn Loredo -

BOYS DOUBLES
18 - RR
1st: Carlos Oviedo / Felipe Munoz - MEX 2nd: Graham Richardson / Sebastien Boissonneault - CAN

16 - RR
1st: Drew Brannigan / Jonathan O'Sweeney - USA 2nd: Kevin Hernandez / Shayne Movay - USA

14 - RR
1st: Mathieu Grandmaitre / Pedro Castro - CAN 2nd: Christopher Good / Dylan Reid - USA

GIRLS DOUBLES
18 - SEF
1st: Lysa Ann Landreville / Marika Landreville - CAN DEF. Analy Zuniga / Arantza Loredo - MEX (4),7,4

16 - SEF
1st: Cruz Ortiz / Natalia Comprés - DOM DEF. Vanessa Galvez / NEEDS - BOL WBF - No Show

14 - SEF
1st: Jocelyn Loredo / Yesenia Malvaez - MEX DEF. Maria Mccnamon / Katie Kenny - IRL 8,10

PP - Pool Play
RR - Round Robin
SEF - Single Elimination Finals
OFF - Olympic Format Finals
New Tour to Feature Former Stars

CLASSIC PROFESSIONAL RACQUETBALL TOUR is the creation of a tour featuring 40+ age past champions of the sport competing again in conjunction with existing amateur events. Classic Professional Racquetball Tour and its players will represent the past while insuring the future of the game via fundraisers at each event supporting local junior and high school programs.

All players must be 40 years of age and not ranked in the IRT top 16 as of September of each year. At present time, we are excited to have commitments from the following:
- Ruben Gonzalez, Staten Island, New York
- Bret Harnett, Las Vegas, Nevada
- Mike Ray, Hilton Head, South Carolina
- Steve Lerner, Riverside, California
- Dan Obremski, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- Woody Clouse, Denver, Colorado

The current CPRT sponsors include:
- Desert Plumbing & Heating
- Beck’s Beer
- First Pacific Corp
- Sunburst Shutters
- Ahern
- Certain individuals who are supporting the tour anonymously

CHARITY EVENTS: A major focus for CPRT which will include a Doubles Challenge at each event in which local players can play against a CPRT team, for a donation that will be directed to local junior & high school programs.

INDUSTRY SPONSORS: The Classic Tour is also pleased to announce their partnerships with Head/Penn Racquet Sports and also Pro Kennex Racquetball for the 2006-07 season. Each company was given the opportunity to “draft” a player for the season. Head won the lottery during the US Open in Memphis and chose Bret Harnett as their player for the season. Pro-Kennex was second in the lottery and chose Steve Lerner. Players who already have a pre-existing contract were ineligible for the Draft.

Top Seed Athletics was also named “The Official Clothing Sponsor” of the CPRT. Top Seed has a line of moisture wicking material in their garments unparalleled by any other company on the market. The players all have their own individual colors to wear throughout the season with more exciting accessories on the way.

Ektelon Racquetball has been chosen as “The Official Ball” of the Classic Professional Racquetball Tour for the 2006-07 season. The new ball the CPRT will use is the old classic black ball with the gold CPRT logo on the ball. “We decided on the black and gold color scheme because black was one of the original ball colors back in the day”, says Commissioner Brian Pointelin. “The gold simply defines class and elegance”.

To inquire about CPRT events, or to host an event for the 2007-2008 season, please visit www.classicproracquetball.com or contact Brian Pointelin at bpointelin@yahoo.com.

CPRT RULES: CPRT will be using some new & unique rules this season to increase spectator interest & excitement;
- Best 2 out of 3 games to 11, all with Extended Play (win by 2)
- One time out per game, except when the game hits Extended Play, then each player gets an additional time out
- No Court Hinders
- No appeals or line judges
- One serve rule, the exception is the Bonus Ball one time per game a player may use a second serve by notifying the official immediately after a first serve fault.

"THE NEW BALL THE CPRT WILL USE IS THE OLD CLASSIC BLACK BALL WITH THE GOLD CPRT LOGO ON THE BALL."
NEW Super WideBody Frame for Fearless Power Without Limits!

Weight: 175 g

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Power Level: 3000

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The Sunset Club is a traditional racquetball club: 7 glass-back wall courts, indoor track, climbing wall, heated lap pool, heated exercise pool and large lounging area. Lunch and hospitality will be provided to players and guests here as well.

The Doubletree Hotel offers two restaurants, plus a fitness center, lounge and gift shop. For more serious shoppers, the three-level Lloyd Center Mall (out the front door and across the street) features over 200 stores including Nordstrom, 30 restaurants, 18 movie screens and an ice skating rink. And, there is no sales tax in Portland for purchases of gifts, meals, beverages, etc.! The MAX (mass transit system) runs to historic Old Town and other downtown attractions such as Pioneer Square, Waterfront Park, Saturday Market, and Chinatown. There is also free trolley transportation throughout the downtown area.

For more information:
Tournament entry form is located at www.nmra.info.

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Absorbs unwanted sweat on playing glove – keeping playing glove dryer and softer for a better grip
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The ECRC Comes to Albany, NY

The second ECRC event of the 2006-2007 season took place in Albany, NY at The Court Club, our favorite and most frequented venue. With 140 players representing 20 schools for another huge tournament, we were a little afraid of being overwhelmed without Shane Wood, who was stuck in Oklahoma due to an ice storm. Alumnus Rob "Smokey" Van Schalkwyk played tournament director, and got things started without a hitch, with the help of Shannon Noonan, and some of the ECRC team leaders. Shane Wood did manage to get to Albany by later in the afternoon on Friday, and though he missed most of the daytime action - we started before 9 in the morning - he was able to see more racquetball than he usually does, because Smokey was doing such a great job behind the desk and finished out the day there. This allowed Shane to relax (for once) and enjoy some quality ECRC matches.

Without losing any on-court intensity, ECRC players demonstrated their class. We ref our own matches, and things stay amazingly friendly for such tough competition. We think nothing of having a match between two rival schools be officiated by another player from one of the teams, and the only arguing between players and the ref is done with respect and a sense of humor. This may sound too good to be true, but we invite you to see it for yourself. As for after hours with the ECRC, we were nervously invited back to the Super 8, our luxurious home away from home, and are proud to report that the front desk never called due to excessive noise.... for once. Most of the socializing happens at the motel, with people hopping from room to room all night and catching up with old friends. The ECRC draws people in with racquetball, but they stay for the good times. Collegiate Racquetballers are a goofy bunch, but they grow on you.

On the men's side, Chris Brown (RPI) took home the Men's Ones gold, with his fifth win in the last six tournaments. He defeated Marc Moccia (UMass) in another close tiebreaker match. John Clay (Rutgers) took third place over Brandon Sleight (SUNY-Oswego), in Brandon's first semifinal appearance.

Noonan (Maryland), who has come on strong this season, and Michelle Turk (Clarkson), another first-time semifinalist.

The lower divisions were dominated by Penn State, with Brandon Layo (PSU) winning Men's Twos, Brian Sullivan (PSU) winning Men's Threes, and Chris Gladd (PSU) winning Men's Fours, and Jenn Collins (PSU) winning Women's Twos.

On the Women's side, Women's Ones saw Lauren "Gucci" LeGreci (Clarkson) defeat Jen Dolan (Bryant) in a repeat of the first ECRC tournament's outcome in Allentown, PA. The semifinalists were Shannon Collins (PSU) and Michelle Turk (Clarkson), another first-time semifinalist.

Congrats to everyone for another great tournament, Penn State will host the next event, February 2nd through the 4th.

2006-2007 Intercollegiate Nationals Set to go at ASU

The 2006-2007 United States Intercollegiate National Championships will once again be held at Arizona State University from March 28th-31st, 2007. This is sure to be one of the largest and most exciting events in College Racquetball. History, as Oregon State heads down as the reigning National Championships, set to defend their title against perennial powerhouses like the University of Alabama, Colorado State University-Pueblo, Brigham Young University, Penn State University, the University of New Mexico, as well as many others. Rumor has it that current Division II National Champion Baldwin Wallace has put together a strong team and is ready to make their run at the DI Title this year. Don't miss out on the most exciting and intense event that college racquetball has to offer. If you are interested in playing and are looking for more information, please contact Shane Wood, Chairman of the US Intercollegiate Racquetball Council at racquetballchamp@hotmail.com. The application for this event should be out soon on the USAR Website.

2007 35th USA Racquetball National Intercollegiate Championships

Presented by Head/Penn Racquet Sports

U.S. National Team Qualifier
Division #1 Gold singles winners will be appointed to the U.S. National Racquetball Team!

National Singles Regional Qualifier
Event entrants who compete in the Intercollegiate Nationals will qualify for the 2007 National Singles.

MARCH 28 - 31
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<td>Kachina Invitational</td>
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<td>Lynmar Racquet &amp; Health Club</td>
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**2007 USA RACQUETBALL NATIONAL EVENTS:**

- **March 1-4**: Wilson High School Nationals
  - St. Louis, MO
- **March 26-April 1**: Eckstein Intercollegiate Nationals
  - Tempe, AZ
- **April 12-15**: Regional Weekend
  - Nationwide
- **May 22-24**: Eckstein National Singles
  - Houston, TX
- **June 20-24**: Head Junior Olympics
  - Tempe, AZ
- **Sept. 26-30**: Eckstein National Doubles
  - Tempe, AZ
- **Nov. 14-18**: US OPEN Championships
  - Memphis, TN
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| Eforce         |                                   |
| Jud Stun 160 3 5/8    | $89                            |
| LP Bedlam 150/3 5/8  | $99                            |
| LP Jud 165        | $109                            |
| LP Jud 175        | $99                             |
| Bedlam X150 cc.  | $89                             |
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## Men’s Rankings

Eliminating Players that have not competed since Dec 3, 2005

### UNDER 10

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14 Haab Bobby Clinton
15 Cullins Scott Woodstock

OVER 45
1 Gonzalez Ruben Staten Island
2 Hansen Tim Greenacres
3 Haab Bobby Clinton
4 Mervin Leonard Orlando
5 Travers Thomas Delray Beach
6 Sanchez Ivan Las Vegas
7 Hassey Joseph Las Vegas
8 Bell Glenn Nederland
9 Baron Mark Herndon
10 Rowlands Ryan Fort Worth
11 Desimone Ruben Doral
12 Ledbetter Rex Cookeville
13 Hodges Gregory Troy
14 Anderson Michael Newaygo
15 Jennings Michael Arlington

OVER 50
1 Gonzalez Ruben Staten Island
2 Travers Thomas Delray Beach
3 Baron Mark Herndon
4 Sanchez Ivan Las Vegas
5 Travers Thomas Delray Beach
6 Hassey Joseph Las Vegas
7 Bell Glenn Nederland
8 Baron Mark Herndon
9 Rowlands Ryan Fort Worth
10 Desimone Ruben Doral
11 Hodges Gregory Troy
12 Anderson Michael Newaygo
13 Jennings Michael Arlington

OVER 55
1 Gonzalez Ruben Staten Island
2 Travers Thomas Delray Beach
3 Baron Mark Herndon
4 Sanchez Ivan Las Vegas
5 Travers Thomas Delray Beach
6 Hassey Joseph Las Vegas
7 Bell Glenn Nederland
8 Baron Mark Herndon
9 Rowlands Ryan Fort Worth
10 Desimone Ruben Doral
11 Hodges Gregory Troy
12 Anderson Michael Newaygo
13 Jennings Michael Arlington

OVER 60
1 Remen Ed Apex
2 Miller Horace Chicago
3 Mickie Thomas Garland
4 Wolfe Bill Staten Island
5 Bellah Mickey Laguna Hills
6 Gellman Joe Albuquerque
7 Jones Dan Atlanta
8 Allen Glenn Virginia Beach
9 Jackson Michael Shelton
10 Taylor Patrick Barrington Hills
11 Albright Terry Kansas City
12 Lawler Rex Terre Haute
13 Stanley Leon Hampton Cove
14 Blakeslee Peter Hot Springs
15 Milewski Mitch Nashua

OVER 65
1 Jackson Michael Shelton
2 Lawler Rex Terre Haute
3 Stanley Leon Hampton Cove
4 Lowell Richard Dover
5 Snyder Dave Austin
6 Snyder Dave Austin
7 Hughes Jim Prosper
8 Jackson Michael Shelton
9 Lawler Rex Terre Haute
10 Stanley Leon Hampton Cove
11 Lowell Richard Dover
12 Snyder Dave Austin
13 Hughes Jim Prosper
14 Snyder Dave Austin
15 Hughes Jim Prosper

OVER 70
1 Snyder Dave Austin
2 Hughes Jim Prosper
3 Jackson Michael Shelton
4 Baudry Bob Baton Rouge
5 Snyder Dave Austin
6 Hughes Jim Prosper
7 Jackson Michael Shelton
8 Baudry Bob Baton Rouge
9 Snyder Dave Austin
10 Hughes Jim Prosper
11 Jackson Michael Shelton
12 Baudry Bob Baton Rouge
13 Snyder Dave Austin
14 Hughes Jim Prosper
15 Snyder Dave Austin

OVER 75
1 Snyder Dave Austin
2 Hughes Jim Prosper
3 Jackson Michael Shelton
4 Baudry Bob Baton Rouge
5 Jackson Michael Shelton
6 Snyder Dave Austin
7 Hughes Jim Prosper
8 Jackson Michael Shelton
9 Baudry Bob Baton Rouge
10 Jackson Michael Shelton
11 Snyder Dave Austin
12 Hughes Jim Prosper
13 Jackson Michael Shelton
14 Baudry Bob Baton Rouge
15 Snyder Dave Austin

TOP MEN IN THEIR CATEGORY

Adam Manilla
Centennial (Under 10 & 12)

James Minkel
Katy (Under 14)

Ismael Aldana Jr
Stockton (Under 16)

Landa Alex
El Paso (Under 18)

Jack Huizrek
Rockester (Open)

Kyle Veenstra
Wausau (Over 25)

John Ellis
Stockton (Over 30)

Doug Ganim
Westerville (Over 35 & 40)

Ruben Gonzalez
Staten Island (Over 45 & 50)

Michael Jennings
Arlington (Over 55)

Ed Remen
Apex (Over 60)

Michael Jackson
Shelton (Over 65)

Dave Snyder
Austin (Over 70)

John O’donnell
Champaign (Over 75)

Mcadam Robert
Crowley (Over 80)

Owen Smith
Arlington

Lambert Joseph
Plano

Mcadam Robert
Crowley

Miller Robert
North Augusta

Harry Sam
Harrisburg

Sturdak J.w.
Austin

Snowberger Campbell
Myrtle Beach

Segal William
Atlanta

Matotan William
Albuquerque

Hall Wendell
Albuquerque

Doyle Christophe
Weymouth

Oren Conway
Jackson

OVER 80
1 Mcdadam Robert
2 Harry Sam
3 Studtak J.w.
4 Snowberger Campbell
5 Segal William
6 Matotan William
7 Marshall Ben

4 Smith G. Duane
5 Lambert Joseph
6 Mcdadam Robert
7 Miller Robert
8 Harry Sam
9 Studtak J.w.
10 Snowberger Campbell
11 Segal William
12 Matotan William
13 Hall Wendell
14 Doyle Christophe
15 Oren Conway

OVER 80
1 Mcdadam Robert
2 Harry Sam
3 Studtak J.w.
4 Snowberger Campbell
5 Segal William
6 Matotan William
7 Marshall Ben

4 Smith G. Duane
5 Lambert Joseph
6 Mcdadam Robert
7 Miller Robert
8 Harry Sam
9 Studtak J.w.
10 Snowberger Campbell
11 Segal William
12 Matotan William
13 Hall Wendell
14 Doyle Christophe
15 Oren Conway

OVER 80
1 Mcdadam Robert
2 Harry Sam
3 Studtak J.w.
4 Snowberger Campbell
5 Segal William
6 Matotan William
7 Marshall Ben

4 Smith G. Duane
5 Lambert Joseph
6 Mcdadam Robert
7 Miller Robert
8 Harry Sam
9 Studtak J.w.
10 Snowberger Campbell
11 Segal William
12 Matotan William
13 Hall Wendell
14 Doyle Christophe
15 Oren Conway

Women’s Rankings
Eliminating Players that have not competed since Dec 3, 2005

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Christie Van Hees
| OVER 70 | 9 Markus Lola | 10 Washington Genevieve | 15 Baltimore (Under 70) |
| OVER 65 | 1 Mosman Marjorie | 2 Molina Marquita | 15 Wasco (Open) |
| OVER 60 | 14 Brown Tammy | 13 Bryant Debra | 12 Moorhead Marie | 11 Kieffer Susan | 10 Molitor Liz | 9 Stoffregen Gerri | 8 Walsh Kristen | 7 Tisinger Debra | 6 Grand'mait Josee | 5 Tisinger Debra | 4 Walsh Kristen | 3 Grand'mait Josee | 2 Hallander Kersten | 1 Hallander Kersten |
| OVER 55 | 9 Rayanne Ann | 8 Kieffer Susan | 7 Walsh Kristen | 6 Tisinger Debra | 5 Walsh Kristen | 4 Walsh Kristen | 3 Walsh Kristen | 2 Walsh Kristen | 1 Walsh Kristen |
| OVER 50 | 9 Galloway Lorraine | 8 Walsh Kristen | 7 Walsh Kristen | 6 Walsh Kristen | 5 Walsh Kristen | 4 Walsh Kristen | 3 Walsh Kristen | 2 Walsh Kristen | 1 Walsh Kristen |
| OVER 45 | 9 Piscoran Gloria | 8 Piscoran Gloria | 7 Piscoran Gloria | 6 Piscoran Gloria | 5 Piscoran Gloria | 4 Piscoran Gloria | 3 Piscoran Gloria | 2 Piscoran Gloria | 1 Piscoran Gloria |
| OVER 40 | 9 Bailey Malia | 8 Bailey Malia | 7 Bailey Malia | 6 Bailey Malia | 5 Bailey Malia | 4 Bailey Malia | 3 Bailey Malia | 2 Bailey Malia | 1 Bailey Malia |
| OVER 35 | 9 Galloway Lorraine | 8 Walsh Kristen | 7 Walsh Kristen | 6 Walsh Kristen | 5 Walsh Kristen | 4 Walsh Kristen | 3 Walsh Kristen | 2 Walsh Kristen | 1 Walsh Kristen |
| OVER 30 | 9 Galloway Lorraine | 8 Walsh Kristen | 7 Walsh Kristen | 6 Walsh Kristen | 5 Walsh Kristen | 4 Walsh Kristen | 3 Walsh Kristen | 2 Walsh Kristen | 1 Walsh Kristen |
| OVER 25 | 9 Galloway Lorraine | 8 Walsh Kristen | 7 Walsh Kristen | 6 Walsh Kristen | 5 Walsh Kristen | 4 Walsh Kristen | 3 Walsh Kristen | 2 Walsh Kristen | 1 Walsh Kristen |
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**TOP WOMEN IN THEIR CATEGORY**

- **Christina Lively**
  - Cuyahoga Falls (Under 10)
- **Courtney Chisholm**
  - Marlborough (Under 12 & 14)
- **Emily Melgaard**
  - Coeur D'Alene (Under 16 & 18)
- **Christie Van Hees**
  - Calgary (Open)
- **Rachel Gellman**
  - El Mirage (Over 30)
- **Diane Moore**
  - Griffith (Over 35)
- **Brenda Kyzer**
  - Leesville (Over 40)
- **Malia Bailey**
  - Norfolk (Open)
- **Karen Key**
  - Gilbert (Over 50)
- **Gerri Stoffregen**
  - Cincinnati (Over 55 & 60)
- **Marquita Molina**
  - Wasco (Over 65)
- **Lola Markus**
  - Park Ridge (Over 70)
Racquetball Champion Rocky Carson Returns to Ektelon

“California Kid” to Play with Ektelon O3 Racquet

Bordentown, NJ, Dec. 14, 2006 – Racquetball champion Rocky Carson has re-signed a long-term endorsement deal after a six-year hiatus from Ektelon. The new deal with Ektelon will allow Carson to pick up an O3 racquet this year and play with the company’s entire line of racquetball products.

Carson, nicknamed the “California Kid” by his peers, entered the sport as one of the top juniors ever to play the game. Carson began his professional career with Ektelon at age 15. He is recognized as the top outdoor player in the world, dominating the outdoor circuit during the past three years and winning nearly every major tournament in the sport including the Ektelon/WOR Championships two of the past three years. Carson is the only male player in the sport to win the national indoor singles and doubles championship and the national outdoor singles championship in the same year.

“Right now, I am living my life-long dream,” said Carson. “My goal from the first time I stepped onto the court has been to become the best player in the sport, and I believe Ektelon’s great product line will take my game to the next level. I am very impressed by Ektelon’s innovative vision to grow the sport, and I plan to be involved with the company long after my pro career has ended.”

Only 27 years old, Carson began the 2006 season ranked No. 6 on the IRT Tour, but rose quickly to No. 3, attributing his success to playing outdoors. He went on to become the 2006 National Singles and Doubles Champion, which qualified him for the top spot on the U.S. National Team.

“Rocky’s success on indoor and outdoor courts ties perfectly to one of our key brand initiatives – to grow the sport through outdoor events,” said Ektelon General Manager Scott Winters. “Ektelon plans to develop more youth program initiatives around Rocky’s experience. We feel that Rocky is the most marketable player on the tour, and we have big plans for him, which will be announced later this year.”

“Rocky is the hottest player in the sport right now, and we can’t wait until he gets an Ektelon O3 racquet in his hands,” said Andy Roberts, Pro Player Director at Ektelon. “Rocky is the perfect fit for our pro team, which includes many of the top players who are all doing great things on and off the court. Our goal is to help Rocky achieve his goals and help to make him the most visible and influential racquetball player in the sport.”

Carson lives in Ladera Ranch, Calif. with his wife and two children.

USRSA Hires New Advertising and Membership Sales Person

Vista, CA: The United States Racquet Stringers Association recently hired Christina Kaus as their newest Advertising and Membership Salesperson.

Christina started her new position on October 15, 2006. Kaus joins the sales team that includes John Hanna, Advertising Sales Director, and Cynthia Sherman, Apparel Advertising Sales.

Kaus’ sales responsibilities will include advertising in the Stringers Digest and the Industry Resource Guide in Racquet Sports Industry (RSI) magazine. Kaus will also be responsible for selling USRSA memberships, Master Racquet Technician (MRT) & Certified Stringer (CS) certification, instructional tools, and all of the other publications and supplies that the USRSA produces.

Hanna will continue to focus on advertising sales in Racquet Sports Industry magazine and Sherman will continue to focus on apparel advertising sales in Racquet Sports Industry magazine.

“We’re excited to add Christina to our team. Her extensive experience in sales and customer service as well as her passion for the game of tennis make her a perfect fit for this new position,” said David Bone, Executive Director of the USRSA and Co-Publisher of Racquet Sports Industry magazine.

The United States Racquet Stringers Association is a worldwide organization of more than 7,000 racquet technicians, teaching professionals, racquet sports retailers, manufacturers and sales organizations, and tennis, racquetball, squash, and badminton enthusiasts.

U.S. Racquet Stringers Association
330 Main Street Vista, CA 92084
phone (760) 536-1177
fax (760) 536-1171
http://www.racquettech.com

League players Charlie Austin 77 years old and Ian Bellisario 9 years old. Ian won the match 11-10 in a tie-breaker.
Success in Minneapolis

By Mike Hiles

The Masters came to Minnesota this past July. The weather was great and the competition was even hotter. 240 competitors arrived and started playing on Wednesday. We used two clubs for this tournament and it went off very well thanks to Greg, Mike and the tournament staff. Play was done on time and the banquet was very good. The food at the banquet had a Minnesota flavor with wild rice and walleye on the menu. The NMRA gave out various free things from free nights at the host hotel to racquets. For the first time, we had at least three father and daughter or son combos at this tournament. One father-daughter team even played together in Mixed 50s. Maybe this should be a new event at the tournaments? Fun was had by all with lots to do and see. The only down note was the Northwest chain was sold on Thursday and the Hwy 100 club was to close in the next week. It will be a great loss for the Racquetball community here in Minnesota. The next time we meet for the summer tournament will be in Kansas City area at The Athletic Club, Overland Park, KS, July 25-28, 2007.

Hints to make sure your results are correctly recorded

1. You name on the draw sheet should match exactly as the way it appears on your membership card.
2. Put your membership number on your entry
3. Check your membership profile on line and make sure all information is correct
4. Make sure your membership is current and is valid through the duration of the event
5. Check to make sure your tournament director has sent in the results to USA Racquetball.

“A Racquetball Fantasy Camp”...the only one of it’s kind

Featuring World-Renowned Coach Fran Davis & US Open Champion Jason Mannino

In a festive, tropical paradise aptly named, Aruba, “The Happy Island” Fran Davis and Jason Mannino, the camp coaches, teamed up with assistants Russ Mannino, the fitness trainer, and Woody Clouse, the mental toughness trainer, to share their racquetball knowledge and experience to the benefit of 20 strong group of players who gathered from around the continental U.S. to learn more about the game and to enjoy the tropical ecosystem. The camp, an intensive 6-day event was held at the La Cabana Beach Resort & Casino in Aruba, November 30-December 7, 2006, the only racquetball facility on the Island.

The camp is intended to be a full body and mind experience; 40 hours of intensive training over 6 days enabled campers to move their individual games up a notch or two. Utilizing the K.I.S.S (Keep It Simple Smart!) method of instruction, Fran and Jason, Russ and Woody keep things exciting, covering the basics and advanced instructions on an individual basis. Using “visualiation” as an enhanced technique for training, Davis/Mannino record a personal DVD video for each attendee. As an added bonus after a week of instruction, each camper is given the opportunity to compete against each other in the final all-day tournament. Needless to say, all participants come out of the camp as "winners," with all competitors receiving a camp certificate "In recognition of outstanding accomplishment; skilled in all aspects of the game of racquetball.”

The healthy island environment and resort island attractions enhance the overall benefit of the camp. The 8 am to 1 pm daily schedule include varying degrees of instruction and practice each day in the areas of on-court racquetball time, fitness and mental toughness with the afternoons and evenings free. Extracurricular daily events are planned along with opening/closing night parties and a mid-week cruise aboard a local sailing ship that included a water swing and ample libations.

During the final day of camp, Fran announced next year's Aruba Fantasy Camp will be November 29-December 6, 2007 and a Kauai, Hawaii Fantasy Camp, May 3-10, 2007. Are you ready to participate in the racquetball experience of a lifetime...Act now!...reservations are now being taken at Fran's website, www.FranDavisRacquetball.com.

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<th>2007 CAMP SCHEDULE</th>
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My Take

Racquetball is an outstanding athletic test. The game combines speed, agility, vision, hand-eye coordination, will, intestinal fortitude and a beautiful mano-a-mano confrontation. We are heading into a new year and here is my viewpoint on some issues and players.

Cliff Swain can still compete at the top level of professional racquetball at 40 years old. However, he is having a difficult time digging in and fighting through tough matches. He seems more civilized. During his prime, he was not. He was surly and would rather chew his left arm off than lose a game, let alone a match. Civilized didn't work for Rocky Balboa and it is not for Swain in his sayonara year.

The IRT should consider going back to two serves. Two serves were eliminated in the first place because Swain, Tim Doyle, Egan Inoue and Andy Roberts were making return of serve impossible and matches boring. These four polished their serves and their games did not change a lot with one serve. Now, we have gone the other way. Two lob servers facing off turns into a yawner. Contrary to popular belief, I enjoy a good lob serve game, but only for contrast.

Is there any doubt that Christie Van Hees is the best women's player by a strong margin? A part time commitment and still the titles come. There was no doubt before the US Open and there is no doubt now.

The racquetball forums are sometimes interesting. Many people offering varied opinions for the supposed good of the game. However, nipping people that do not respond back is gutless, ridiculous and immature. Oh, and please consider yourself a tool if you have ripped me because I have never posted.

It would be nice to see the professional players not have to use a tether on their racquets. It makes them look like they need the tether so they don't lose their racquets-like young children have the strings out of their winter coats so they don't lose their gloves!

Jack Huczek is the clear #1 professional. His game continues to improve and he has officially entered his prime. He trains brutally hard and works at all aspects of his game. Playing squash has helped him improve his patience, court coverage, balance and touch. However, playing the other game exclusively will create some bad habits. It will be interesting to see how he bounces back from the US Open. Expect him to be the clear number 1 by season's end.

International racquetball tournaments have seen Huczek, Monchik, Waselenchuk, Greenfeld, Beltan, Gonzalez, Roberts, Doyle, Gudinas, Kathik, Istace, Carson, Gould, Van Hees, Rajich, Paraio, Stupp all compete. Does anybody really think any of the above fall into the amateur category? The World Championships and The Pan Am Games should be bigger events in our games infrastructure. These professionals deserve it. Please feel free to laugh out loud at the next person who calls these events amateur competitions.

I am saying a little prayer that LA Fitness comes to Canada. Our game still has a following but we desperately need some new venues north of the border. Running closed tournaments does not help expose their clubs to potential new members or improve the quality of the competition.

There is a ton of funding available to Racquetball Canada yet the game is struggling. It is time for new direction and a new plan -- or any plan! Network and sponsorship exposure are much easier to come by in Canada and this is an area requiring some serious examination by the powers that be.

Rocky Carson is the player who seems to be able to challenge Huczek physically. He has to improve his racquet skills and his serve to be able to crack Mr. Control.

It is great to see Sudsy Monchik back on tour. However, at this point, he is a mere shadow of his former self. His court coverage, shot selection and determination are all holding him back right now. He can compete at the top but making it to the pinnacle is out of reach.

The Waselenchuk saga has been one of the best. Ultimately the game is the one that is suffering. Take Tiger out of golf and see what the effect would be. We are experiencing the same thing right now. On the plus side, his exit has given other players a new lease on tour. For Kane, an exhibition tour centered around awareness seems like a public relations savior and dream. It is all a matter of spin. Of course, the principal must be willing. Look for him to return in a short season and a half and immediately renew the Waselenchuk/Huczek story.

Did I mention that racquetball is a great game? Jason Mannino pulled off a miracle at the Open. This was his first win in an eternity. Just shows what hanging in there can bring.

Ruben Gonzalez has always been a marvel. Incredible career, now do some exhibitions and try to stay out of the way of the dropping paint -- that's an inside one for Tuesday and 11!

We desperately need a new scoring system. More big points is an absolute must. Something as simple as using the tennis scoring system but counting by one's and win by two would be a massive improvement.

It is high time we shore up the Hall of Fame. There are many former professionals deserving entry and you don't have to look any further than Mike Ray, Drew Kathik, Brett Harnett, Heather Stupp, etc.

We need a 3rd Grand Slam. Ganim, Hiser, Negrete, you are the holy triumvirate and we all wish you luck in delivering the new portable court to the masses.

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