

Off The Wall

The Newsletter of the Utah Racquetball Association

March 2005

OPENING SHOTS

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By Randy Martin
URA President

Here it is again, your newsletter!!!! I know last year we decided not to do the newsletter anymore. The decision was made to save the money and put it to other uses. We would be communicating with you, the membership with emails and our website. After trying this out for a season, your board decided the newsletter is still the best way to keep in touch with you. So until the website (www.utahracquetball.org), e-mail or some other method can reach all our members you will be receiving about 2 newsletter a year. One to start the year off and this one before State Singles. We are planning on doing at least one more that won't be mailed but will be made available at the tournaments and on the website. As for the emails some of you have received reminders about upcoming tournaments, and other information that relates to Utah Racquetball. The problem we are having is we do not have everyone's current e-mail address, so if you are unsure if we have your current e-mail address or

you have changed it recently, please send your name and current e-mail address to Val Shewfelt at (valerie_shewfelt@byu.edu) and she will update your information.

For all of you that couldn't attend the recent Sports Mall Challenge, you not only missed playing racquetball in a great tournament, you also missed seeing some of the greatest players to ever play the game. With players like Cliff Swain, Woodie Clouse, Greg Peck, Dave Peck and many others the racquetball was incredible. Thanks to Sports Mall, Ray Griffith and Brian Pointelin for bringing such a great event to Utah. For all of you that don't know, Brian Pointelin is the new Legends Tour Commissioner, which I'm sure had nothing to do with having these amazing

athletes here in Utah. I would also like to thank Christie Van Hees the world number one woman's player for the clinics she held at a few of the local clubs. Those who attended enjoyed the benefits of her expertise, plus seeing her kick some butt.

On a sadder note we recently lost two great Utah emissaries to the game. Colonel Eugene V. Pletcher, who has been running the Senior Games for many years and Luzell Wilde who is a member of our Utah Hall of Fame and the USAR Hall of Fame.

We have just a couple tournaments left to finish off the season, Spring Smash at Marv Jenson and State Singles at the Orem Rec Center. Spring Smash will be a great tune up for what's bound to be a great State Singles Championships. This year State Singles is

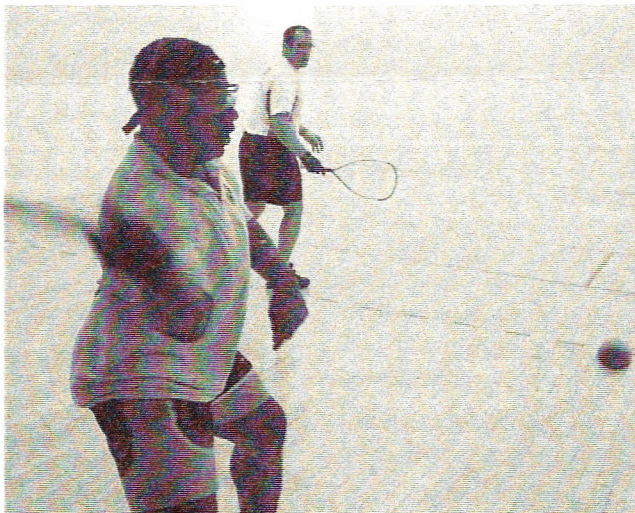


Photo by Randy Martin (Jim Derrickson & Dan Obremski)

being held at the Orem Rec, they have held two tournaments already this season, and have done a great job. They have one show court and eleven other courts with viewing from above. All in all it should be a great event, and hope to see all of you there, and maybe a couple of you could be nice and let me win a game or two.

Immediately following the Open Singles Final is our Annual Membership Meeting and banquet. This is when we will be giving our annual awards and hold elections for the Board. There are nine Board Members with three being elected each year for a three-year term. The Board then elects the officers for the following year at the next Board meeting. The only requirement is to attend monthly Board Meetings and have a desire to improve racquetball in Utah.

The URA Board is responsible for the promotion of racquetball in Utah. We have accomplished a lot the last few years, but we still need your help. Please notify me or any other Board Member if you or someone you know would like to give a little back to the greatest game in the world.

We also need nominations for our annual year-end awards. These awards will be given to players and tournament directors for their accomplishments in the following areas:

Most Improved Male Player, Most Improved Female Player, Most Improved Junior Player, Best Referee, Best Sportsmanship, Best Tournament Director

The URA Board will make the final decision for these awards, but we would like your input. If you have any nominations, contact a Board Member.

Mark Your Calendar

Spring Smash
Marv Jenson Fitness
March 15-19
801-253-4404

State Singles Championships
Orem Fitness Center
April 5-9
801-229-7154

General Membership Meeting and Banquet
Orem Fitness Center
April 9, after Men's Open Final
about 2 p.m.

State Juniors League
June
watch for flyers



**By Brian Pointelin
Editor**

1. How and when did you get started in Racquetball? I started playing racquetball my junior year in high school...some friends had been playing after school in the outdoor courts at ENMU in Portales, NM. They invited me one afternoon and I had a great time. I purchased a Spalding racquet from a local discount store and soon I had improved beyond everyone else's level. I've been playing off and on ever since.

2. Who has been your biggest influence(s) of the game and why? I have had a lot of influence in my game in the past and present. When I first started playing we always talked about Ruben Gonzalez and Marty Hogan and their great accomplishments and on the local level there was always Louis Vogel from Albuquerque, NM. It was always exciting to hear about the players who put racquetball on the map. It's funny how things work out and now I associate with those guys at the Legends stops. In the recent past, Brian Pointelin

has had an influence in my overall game mechanics and strategy. Of course, it's become more difficult to find time to put those lessons to any real use. That's unfortunate.

3. Do you have any racquetball goals you want to accomplish? I've always wanted to be more competitive and place better than third at a National event. Last year I started working with Brian Pointelin on my game and it seemed to come together a bit more but then things got busy and my focus changed. I hope to become more focused in the future and jump back on the racquetball wagon soon.

4. You work at the University of Utah, what is your title and job up there? I am the Intramural Sports Coordinator.

5. How did that all come about for you? It's funny but it all comes back to racquetball. When I first attended the "U" the racquetball club was inactive. After some hesitation, I decided to help activate it again. Being the club president put me in a position to help out with club sports in general. I became the Club Sports Coordinator part-time for about a year and then later on helped with the Intramural Sports program. The position came open when our coordinator moved away and I was fortunate enough to be offered the position.

6. You are part-owner of a company too, tell me about that. I am part owner of what has become kind of a transitional company at the moment. The other owners are David Byrnes and Ray Hoey. We started Top Seed Athletics for the purpose of providing some sportswear to the racquetball crowd. We found out we could screen print the gear so then we became screen printers as well. Of course, screen printing goes right along with promotional marketing so we started doing that as well. You have probably seen a lot of our Top Seed shirts around the courts. We were having a separate company manufacture those but we realized we could go right to the source manufacture the gear ourselves overseas. We have much more control over sizes, colors and patterns that way. Right now we are actually splitting into two entities...TS1 Sports which will handle our new overseas garment manufacturing (you will see brand new product by the third week in April) and INKEFX which will house our screen printing, embroidery, and promotional marketing products. It's funny because all of this also started because of racquetball. But that's another story for another day.

7. You guys are also affiliated with the Legends Tour too, how has that been for you? It's been a fun ride so far. Some of us have had a chance to travel and play in some

stops. Meet a lot of new racquetball players. Of course, we have had the opportunity to provide the Legends Tour with all of their gear. We have received a lot of exposure due to our association with the Legends Tour. We hope to review our agreement with them in the next few weeks and plan for a better year next season.

8. Any major business plans for the future that we can look forward to soon? The plan is to grow the business and compete more on a national level.

9. What has been your biggest accomplishment with racquetball so far? I won 3rd Place in the 25+A/B division at the 2003 National Singles. These days, my major accomplishment is getting on the court once a week...hahahha

10. As a URA Board Member, what changes would you implement to grow the sport? I would like to see things changed around a bit. We started doing more of that this year with new tournaments at Jordan Valley, etc. I think when people get to play new places it's always more interesting. Some fun clinics for juniors and adults would be great. Not just show up and learn racquetball but make it more social, maybe challenge everyone that plays racquetball to bring a new person to one event have a clinic. The Legends stop was a great idea. I think everyone will have a lot of fun if they come back next year. I wasn't here to see it but I've been to enough to know that people get excited and like to come out and watch. I also think everyone should use INKEFX for their tournament shirts...hahahha.

11. What changes would you like to see made with racquetball here in Utah? We should set up tournaments in St. George, maybe some more up north and encourage people to travel a bit. I know have a great time when I travel to play racquetball. St. George when it cold here would be great! There are other things I suppose but people have to make racquetball a priority for them to change the game much and that's hard to do with everything that everyone has to do these days.

12. Any parting shots you want to add here??? I think everyone should experience Nationals and the U.S. Open at least once. I had a great time at both events. For me, it's almost like motivational conference for racquetball. You get back and want to train so you can go back and do better...the trick is to stick with it past the second week...but in any case...they are a lot of fun and the caliber of racquetball at those tournaments is amazing.

Off The Wall

MARCH, 2005

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Deadlines for submission of all display advertising, stories and letters are listed below. All advertising must be prepaid. Call for rates and ad specifications.

August 2005 issue...July 20, 2005

URA board meetings are held the second Monday of most months at 7 p.m. at the Marv Jensen Recreation Center and are open to anyone interested in attending. Call if you would like something placed on the agenda.

Check out what's new with Utah Racquetball on the web at www.utahracquetball.org

THE LEGENDS IN UTAH

**By Brian Pointelin
Editor**

The Legends Tour came to town during President's Day weekend and put on a show unlike any other. Despite the holiday weekend, it was a full weekend of action as the greatest pros in the history of the sport came to the Sports Mall for the Top Seed Athletics Legends Classic. The weekend started off with a Sponsor Doubles event, pairing the local sponsors with some of the greatest names ever in the sport.

Saturday kicked off some great action as the local players squared off against the Legends. Up first was a battle from the past as Rick Strout took on Dave Peck. Dave used to play in Denver and Salt Lake City back in the day and the results were about the same as back then. Dave used his stellar shot making ability to keep Rick off balance and on the go to win the match in two games (7,5). Dan Obremski took on a primed and ready Jim Derrickson, but this game ended after the first game as

Dan's quickness and relentless pressure was too much for Jim (6,1). The next matches pitted 6-time World Champion Cliff Swain and Eddy Connor. Flashes of brilliance from Eddy versus the all-around game from Cliff proved to be too much as Cliff won in two games (4,13). Rick Jackson was the beneficiary of Fred Calabrese's flu bug. Freddy tried to play game one and obviously wasn't well as he lost 15-5, and then was so sick he had to get an IV treatment from Jim Degeering, an on-duty firefighter who happened to be down watching the tournament. Playing Gregg Peck was a "tall" order of business for Paul Ethington and the shot making of the former Rookie of the Year on the IRT proved to be too much as Gregg won 4,8. Brian Pointelin was the beneficiary of a forfeit and a nice spot in the draw as Marty Hogan unfortunately separated his shoulder in Honolulu the weekend before. Marty couldn't attend because he had to have his shoulder put back into place and wasn't allowed to travel. The last matches of the

Round of 16's pitted Denver resident Woody Clouse against The 3-Wall Terror, Oscar Fierro. Woody looked in control and smooth for the first time all season and cruised to a win 7,6. Corey Brysman, hating the cold weather since he is from Miami, took on Sports Mall member Roger Bird and made quick work of him as Roger walked off one court and on to another. Scores for the match were 3, 7.

The Quarters took place on Saturday night with Dan Obremski and Dave Peck squaring off. This was a great match to watch as Dan won game one in a blowout (3). Game two was exciting, Dave was serving for the game at 14-6 before Dan made his comeback bid. Dan got all the way back to 14 before Dave closed out the game to win 15-14. In the breaker, Dan seemed to be in control, but Dave, in true Texan fashion, fought all the way to the end, but lost 11-8. Quarter number two had Cliff Swain and Rick Jackson squaring off. Despite the huge fan base that Rick brought with him, Cliff ran him all over the court, winning in two quick games 4, 8. Quarterfinal number three featured Brian Pointelin, Tour Commissioner, and Gregg Peck, a former Rookie of the Year. Peck controlled most of game one but Brian fought back to win the game 15-13. Game two was all Gregg as he kept Brian off-balance and won 15-9. In the breaker, Brian went up and controlled most of the game, but Gregg fought back to get to 8 before Brian closed out the match. Quarter number four was over before it started for Corey Brysman. Woody Clouse put on a serving clinic that could only be rivaled by one Cliff Swain. Pounding drive serves and rolling all the returns, Woody rolled over Corey in two quick games winning 6,2.

On Sunday, the Semifinals were merely a formality. Woody continued his on-slaughter of serves and classic shot selection, keeping Brian totally off balance. It was over before it started for the Commish as Woody wins 3,7. Semifinal number two had Cliff versus Dan Obremski. Back in the day, this would be a great match of speed/retrievability versus power and serves. Since Dan has only been playing since Christmas, this match looked

like a quick blowout as Cliff won game one 15-3. Game two was a lot closer as Dan fought for every point and got settled a little bit, matching Cliff shot for shot. Despite the toughness of the game, Cliff's Drive serves proved to be too much for Dan as he won the game 15-13.

So the finals were set, two leftys against each other on the left side wall glass at the Sports Mall. It was classic racquetball, a lot of great serves, a lot of amazing gets that left the crowd ohhh-ing and ahhh-ing. Both games were close in the finals and both players played a very high level of racquetball, but in the end, Cliff's serves proved to be too much for Woody as Cliff came out on top, winning both games 15-13, 15-13.

All in all, the praise and thanks for bringing the Legends to Salt Lake City are still coming. I just want to touch on a few things real quickly. As the Tour Commissioner, it is my pleasure to bring my guys to my home club. Everything we do with our tour is centered around two things, giving back to the racquetball community and giving back to charities. It was my pleasure and an honor to be able to help David Worthen with some of the proceeds of the tournament and the Auction for his trip to the Special Olympics in Japan. I want to thank all of you who helped with this aspect and those who bid on the items. As far as giving back to the racquetball community, I have been doing more and more of that lately and not concentrating so much on my game.

In terms of our sponsors, I want to thank the following people: Craig Kunkel and Wayne Burningham, Eddy Connor and Mountain West Paint, Top Seed Athletics, Mike King and All-Purpose Windows, Bob Campbell and All About Coins, Serta Mattress, Rhino Booth at Coors Distributing, Dave Jenson with Note in a Bottle, Racquetball Warehouse, Python Racquetball, Doug Ganim and Ben Simons with Head Sports, Wilson Racquetball, Robert Lopez of Capital Construction, Randy Krantz

of EF Funding, Jack Mitchell of Arco Packaging, Kissmakis Fruits and Produce, and Vic Quinonez of El Chihuahua Restaurant.

Outside of our sponsors, I also want to thank Rick Strout and Brent Cook at the Sports Mall for allowing me to run with the idea and vision of this event. Without their support, it would not have been possible for me to bring these guys to Salt Lake City. I want to thank Marty Hogan and Scott Hirsch for allowing me to do what I love and give back to the sport. This is a great game and as a whole, we need to give more back to the sport, all of us.

I could not have done any of this without the Griffiths family. Teri has always been very supportive and helpful for the events that Ray and I run, and Ashley has always been willing to help out whenever it fits into her schedule (hahaha). As far as Ray is concerned, he is the most giving person in the state as far as his time and his efforts. Not only does he run the racquetball programs at the Sports Mall, but he is always giving back to the game, the kids, the high school programs and anyone who ever wants a game at the club. It is because of him and Marcus Dunyon, who I miss very dearly, that all of the things I do are possible. Without them, I would not be able to do what I do to promote the game of racquetball or continue down a positive track in the game of life. Thank you both for that.

Look for a bigger and better event again next year, I know you won't want to miss it.

TRUE CHAMPIONS

Penn



By PAM MARTIN
USA SECRETARY

Wow, what an extraordinary year the kids on the high school league have had.

In case some of you don't know let me fill you in on what has been happening on the junior circuit. Rico Dubach left his presidency of the Utah Racquetball Association two years ago to form a council and thus become President of the Utah High School Racquetball Association. As for me I could not let Rico have all the fun and jumped on board with him, as well as Mike VanValkenburg, Eric Affeltranger, Tim Dolbin, Heather Woichik, Chris Gale and Heather Norris. Rico has done a fabulous job at getting the High School League organized.

This past week the High School State Championships were held. Marv Jenson hosted the tournament with Ruth McGovern as the Director, and the High School Council Members helping out where they could. It was a very exciting tournament; Kevin Day has been working very hard these last two years and has improved his game in leaps and bounds in hopes of giving the tough competition a run for title. Anthony Martin was our State Champ last year, and

returned for his last year in High School hoping to defend his championship. Andrew Gale a strong contender has a different idea about who should be holding the state title. Not to be left behind comes John Sanderson who has been waiting patiently for his chance to play in this championship and show off his incredible Racquetball skills. Cody Sylvester and Anthony Montanez also jumped into the league of our incredible High School Racquetball Players. Also new this year was the presents of the girls division, we had ten fantastic girls sign up which more than doubled our numbers of girl players from last year. After all the intense matches, a few of them involving some injuries and blood, I am proud to announce Anthony Martin as our two-time High School State Champion. Anthony ended up beating out John Sanderson for the title. In the Intermediate division Devan VanValkenburg took out Chance Erickson, and in the Beginners division Mike Christiansen won out over Christian Newman.

As you might expect I was very interested in the Girls finals. I was like a nervous mother watching my girls. In the end Katherine Affeltranger became our Girls State Champion over Heather

Norris in a very hard fought match. Anthony Montanez and Anthony Martin won the upper division doubles for the second year in a row. The lower division doubles was taken by Chance Erickson and Kyle Smart.

Next week National High School Racquetball Championships will be held in St. Louis Missouri. Thanks to all the hard work of our high school kids and your support of our numerous fundraisers 20 kids will be traveling east representing their respective schools. I would like to give all of the kids going a huge applause; together they raised over \$10,000.00 to get themselves to St. Louis. A special thank you should also be given to Heather and Jerry Montanez for all of their help with the fund raising we could not have done this without them. Be sure to check out the USA Racquetball website to find out how our kids do nationally, and thanks again for your support.