

# OFF THE WALL

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

This is my first official correspondence with the URA membership, and I'd like to make a good first impression. I guess I should introduce myself first to those members who don't know who I am. I began playing tournament racquetball in 1984, at the ripe old age of 29. I finally made it to the open division where I've enjoyed moderate success since 1987. Unfortunately, father time caught up with my legs as he does with everybody's and I'm winning less, but enjoying it more. Does that make sense? So if you see a forty year old balding redhead, stocky build (some would say very stocky) with only one dry spot left on his shirt, struggling against a much younger and faster player, then it's probably me giving it the old college try and having a great time in the process. So, did I make a good first impression?

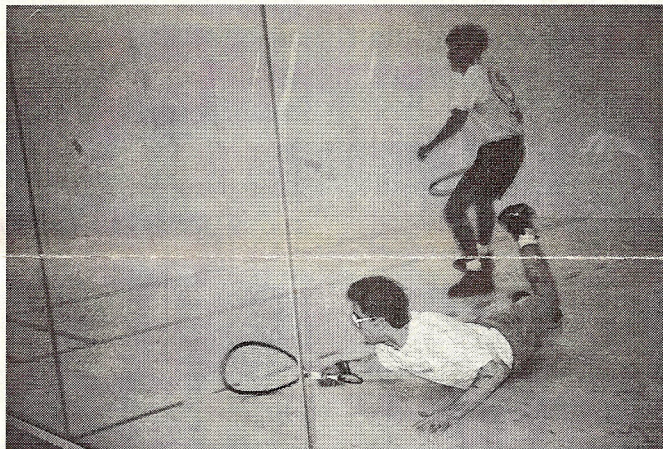
I have a vision for Utah racquetball in the next couple of years. I see two hundred tournament entrants for our regular season URA tournaments and four hundred entrants for our state championship. I see local clubs with waiting lists for their weekly league play.

I see a co-ed adult traveling league with each club from Ogden to Provo fully represented at their weekly grudge match with the rival club across town. I see hordes of juniors begging their parents to sign them up for the junior's only tournaments being held throughout the adult season climaxing in the Junior's State Championships held in August, every year. I guess what I see is renewed excitement for the sport I've spent a large part of

my adult life enjoying more than any other sport I've ever played. Don't get me wrong, though. I'm not going to just complain and ask all of you nice members to please participate and then not do anything. I'm going to outline below some of the changes that we're in the process of making. If those changes aren't successful then the board members and myself will keep trying until we find a combination of events and activities that puts racquetball and excitement together again.

The first idea that we're going to incorporate is the true weekend tournament. This is not a new development in racquetball. In fact, Utah has the proud history of being the only state that regularly schedules tournaments from Tuesday through Saturday. I've talked to many people about the

decreasing participation in local tournaments. Invariably, these people tell me that it takes too much time to play in tournaments that start on Tuesday night and run through Saturday afternoon. They complain that their match ran past 10:00 pm and then they had to referee. They finally got home around 11:30 and then they had to get up and go to work and do it all again the next evening. Does that scenario ring a bell? It does for me, and now that I have two children it makes it very difficult for me to play in as many tournaments as I would like. The solution the URA Board and myself have come up with is to schedule three or four Friday-through-Sunday tourneys where play begins on Friday afternoon and goes till the Sunday afternoon finals.



Jamie digging out a shot against Adam in the Men's Open Finals at the State Championships. Jamie went on to win his SIXTH Open Title.



We're only going to schedule three or four of these tournaments because in all honesty there are a lot of people saying that participation in these tournaments will be worse than the Tuesday through Saturday marathons. I disagree because I personally sponsored one of these weekend tournaments about four years ago and got an average sized tournament draw for what was an experiment in the first place. The tournament also attracted some very good players from Idaho and Colorado. I'm proud to say that people are still talking about that tournament and what a great time they had. These weekend tournaments will bring back the social aspects of adults playing a game. Let's be honest, a lot of us adults play games not so much for the competition and the athleticism but for the friendships and camaraderie that comes with the game. Many players that have moved to Utah from other states have expressed to me that this is what's missing in Utah racquetball. They say that there's no socializing after tournament matches because people have to get home and get the kids ready for bed or prepare for the next work day. Weekend tournaments eliminate these pressures for most of us and create a much more relaxed and unhurried atmosphere. Typically, weekend tournaments will have some form of social gathering on Saturday evening after the day's matches have been held. There's no rushing home immediately after your match on Saturday afternoon. The kids are with you or with the baby sitter and the only thing you're worried about is that semifinal match you've got at 9:00 am in the morning. Sounds like fun doesn't it? Please give at least one of our weekend tournaments a try and I think you'll have a whole new experience with tournaments and maybe some of that old excitement will come back to your game.

The URA Board is proud to announce the first official URA and local club sponsored traveling league to be held during the weeks when there are no URA sanctioned tournaments. At this writing the majority of support seems to be for a co-ed league consisting of twelve to fifteen players. One club will play another club on one evening during the week for a couple of hours. League results will be kept, climaxing in a league-only tournament to be held probably in April or May. Details will be finalized in our URA meeting on August 10. We hope to begin the league in September or October. It's my belief that this interclub competition will

create mountains of excitement and won't involve anything but a huge commitment to fun. Your friendly board member, Randy Krantz, is the traveling league coordinator and is being assisted by Laurie Egbert and Ruth McGovern. You can contact these beautiful people if you have any questions regarding the league.

There's usually no disagreement among people I've talked to about the importance of the junior racquetball programs that are being held throughout the area. Junior players are the future of racquetball everywhere. Presently, there's a junior traveling league competing in the area with over ten clubs participating. The league culminates in the Junior State Championships which are held in August, at the Redwood Multi-Purpose Center and is hosted by Ruth McGovern.

I would like to thank Jack Healy and Marianne Walsh for their many hours of assistance to the Junior's program. Your URA Vice President, Bryan Bennett, came up with what I think is an excellent idea. He proposed at the last meeting that there should be juniors only tournaments held throughout the year. We are in the planning stages at this point, but we hope to have four or five of these junior's tournaments during the season. They will be on Friday evening and most of the day Saturday. Not only will these tournaments continue to boost what is already a successful junior program, but it will also provide junior players with the much needed tournament points if they should decide to go to the regional and national events held every year. One last thing on the topic of juniors; I believe it is our responsibility as parents to encourage our children to participate in activities that promote lifelong participation and healthy lifestyles. In a nutshell, racquetball does that to a much greater degree than many of the more popular team sports kids are playing.

The new URA Membership Directory is being printed and mailed as we speak. We owe Rico Dubach many thanks for all the time he has put into this project. I didn't know that Rico had such a nose for attention to detail. If there are any typos don't call Rico at home. Thanks Rico.

I'll see everyone at the Fall Opener at The Sportsmall from Sept. 12 to Sept. 16. Get ready! An exciting new season is upon us.

Sincerely,  
Tom Shearman  
President URA



## SANCTIONED JUNIOR RACQUETBALL TOURNAMENTS

This season a push is being made to hold four or five Junior racquetball tournaments. The format will be the same as the tournament that Marianne Walsh and Jack Healy had that was sponsored by Tom Shearman. The only difference will be that these tournaments will be sanctioned, giving juniors their national AARA points.

The AARA points issue became apparent at the regional tournament in Denver. Utah's participation was impressive; but, because of the lack of earned points, the tournament seedings were not always correct.

Points are not the only reason for these tournaments. The participation at last year's tournament was outstanding, and by playing on

Friday night and Saturday, more juniors are able to play these tournaments than the regular ones. The URA attending board members voted unanimously to waive the \$100.00 sanctioning fee for these junior only tournaments. This should keep the entry fee down; again giving more juniors an opportunity to play.

If you are a tournament director or someone who would like to hold or sponsor one of these tournaments, please contact Bryan Bennett, Tom Shearman, Jack Healy or any other URA board member or office.

Bryan Bennett  
Vice President URA

## JUNIOR OLYMPICS

SIX Utah Juniors attended the U.S. Junior Olympics held this past June in Fountain Valley, California. This tournament was the largest yet for the Junior Olympics. Seventeen courts were kept in constant use for five days. Estimates for participation were around 330 juniors. Our Juniors played well and earned the following honors:

**Kristen Walsh**

1st Place Gold Division Singles  
1st Place Gold Division Girls Doubles  
2nd Place Gold Division Mixed-Doubles

**Kimberly Walsh**

4th Place Gold Division Multi-Bounce

**Melissa Boyd**

An invitation to tryout for the Junior Team USA hosted by the AARA and The United States Olympic Committee

**Adam Gentry**

Played in the quarter finals of the Boys Red Division

**Rick Corbridge**

Won his first round in Boys Gold; then lost to Mark Bloom (Member Junior Team USA) in his second match

**Terrance Holbrook**

An invitation to tryout for the Junior Team USA hosted by the AARA and The United States Olympic Committee

We are proud of Juniors, young men and young women, and their accomplishments.



## STATE OF UTAH USA JUNIOR OLYMPIC TEAM APPLICANTS

There were four applications for the USA Juniors Team turned in. They were Kristen Walsh, Melisa Boyd for the girls; and Adam Gentry and Terrance Holbrook for the boys.

The AARA accepts applications for one boy and one girl from each state. The selection is determined by the highest point total from the questions asked on the application. These questions are Academic, grade point average, are you on the honor roll? Academic and Athletic Extra curricular Activities, Special Academic or Community Awards or Honors. Tournament information, how you finished in the National, Regional and other AARA/State events. What your rankings are. Special State racquetball awards, Sportsmanship and Leadership awards, and have you certified as a referee? They are asked to write (at least 200 words) why they want to be a member of the Junior USA Team. They are asked to include two letters of reference. To be selected to the Junior USA Team would be quite an honor.

Those who are chosen are given the opportunity to spend the week at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado to be schooled by the very best racquetball players in the nation. This year one of the major criteria for making the team will be how well the person does in giving a ten minute presentation on an assigned subject. The reason for doing this is because the team members will be ambassadors for the US and the sport of racquetball. Those selected to this year's team will also earn a trip to the Netherlands to introduce the

basics of the game to young people who have probably never played, and they will be called upon to teach. The reason it is so important to encourage the sport of Racquetball throughout the world is it will help in efforts to bring about Racquetball as a Sport in the Olympic Games.

In my opinion all the Juniors who applied this year are GREAT ambassadors for the sport of racquetball. They love the game and always show good sportsmanship. They were always willing to help out at the tournaments, and to go the extra mile.

The girls selection for the state of Utah was very close. **Melisa Boyd** edged Kristen Walsh by 2.5 points. Melisa's local and national standings basically made the difference in the final total.

The boys selection was also very close with **Terrance Holbrook** making the selection over Adam Gentry. Overall it was the local standings that seemed to give Terrance the selection.

Melisa's and Terrance's applications were sent on to the AARA/Jim Heiser.

To those Juniors who are reading this, and the USA Junior Olympic Team sounds like something you would be interested in for the 1996 team, you have plenty of time to get ready. I don't need to receive your applications until April of 1996. Keep in mind that attitude equals altitude. For more information and an application please contact Jack Healy at 355-3087 or Marianne Walsh at 487-2338.

Jack Healy

# EKTELON

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## 1995 AARA Adult & Junior Regional



L to R Adam Tueller, Marianne Walsh, Jack Healy, Fred Nash, and Blaine Holbrook. Fred is presenting a check to the URA Juniors Program. Fred represents Interwest Consulting Engineers who conducted a fund raising campaign. The donations went to help with Juniors expenses at the Regional Tournament in Denver. Thanks Fred, we really appreciate your time and efforts on the Juniors behalf.

I am going to list as many of individuals as I can and how they finished, according to the information that I have. However, if I misspell some names, or forget to mention your name, or report incorrect information, please forgive me.

We had 19 Juniors and 11 Adults represent Utah.

**Cindy Jones** brought 7 Juniors as part of the Young People's Racquetball Program. I will list them by their first names. (Sorry I don't have your last names or how you finished. Cindy will be doing a separate article that will give more details.) Rita M.—John M.—Bob M.—Eva M.—Sam T.—Suzanne M. & Christine H.

The Juniors who played were: **Terrance Holbrook**, who finished 3rd in the Boys 18's and got to the quarters in the Boys 16's. **Rick Corbridge** finished 3rd in the Boys 16's. **Tommy Montanez** finished 4th in the Boys 16's. (I also believe that Rick and Tommy teamed up to play in the Boys Doubles, however in trying to get this information get this information in time for the news letter I was unable to get a hold of everyone to get all of the information I would like to have shared.) **Kristen Walsh** finished 2nd in the Girls 14's and 4th in the Girls 12's. **Kimberly Walsh** finished 1st in 8 yr. old multi-bounce. **Jeniffer Bennett** finished 4th in the Gold Division. **Paul Bennett** finished 2nd in the 8 yr. old multi-bounce. **Candace Tueller** finished 1st in the Girls 12's Blue Division. **Adam Tueller** finished 5th in the Boys 14's Gold Division and 2nd in the Boys 16's Red Division. The others who played were **Jensen Dobbs**, **Nathan Porter** and **Adam Gentry**.

The adults who played were: **Cheri Barth** who finished 2nd in Womens A's and 3rd in Womens 35+. **Lynn Corbridge** finished 2nd in Mens 45+ and I know that he played in mens 50+, but I'm not sure how he finished. **Tony Glavas** won 1st place in the Mens A's. (Note: When I got home and was talking about the tournament to others, one of the first things to come up was that they heard that Tony was sandbagging in the Mens A's. Let me assure you, the Mens A's Division at this regional was no cake walk, Tony earned every bit of this win. The final match could have gone either way. If I remember correctly, Tony won both games at 14 for his opponent. I know in the second game both players served for the game a couple of times. —Great win, Tony—) **Marianne Walsh** finished 1st in the Womens 35+. I earned a 3rd in Mens 45+. Others that were there that played were **Pete Abosida**, **Sandy Roach**, **Tracy Wentz**, **John Yorkey**, **Scott Randall**, and **Robert White**. Unfortunately I have no information as to how they finished.

At this time I would like to extend a special welcome to Tracy Wentz and Robert White.

Jack Healy



## The Adult AARA Nationals

The National Singles Championships were held in Houston, Texas, May 24-29. Luzell Wilde and I were the only two from the state of Utah to attend. Luzell played in the 70+ and 75+. I watched Luzell's first round match in the 75+ draw. Luzell had lost his first game and was down 14-7 in the second. He came back to win that game and went on to win the match in a tie breaker 11-6. Just goes to show you, it isn't over until it's over. Luzell went on to win a **GOLD MEDAL** in the 75+. I made the round of 16's and met the number one seed and lost at 11 and 8.

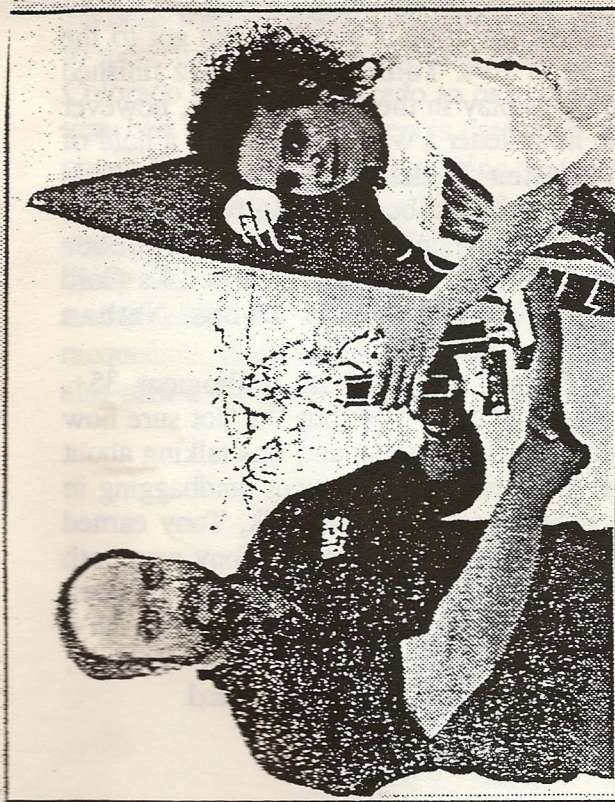
Houston is an interesting city. The tournament was held at YMCA and is located in downtown Houston. The thing that amazed me is that I was surrounded by all of these very, very, very tall skyscraper office buildings, and there were no

people or very few people on the streets during the daytime. come to find out, Houston has a tunnel system that connects all of the major buildings. They even have shops and some restaurants in these tunnels underneath the streets.

There were over 600 entrants in the tournament. It was interesting to see the top players in the country. I truly feel that we have some local players that could have matched up very well with some of those players.

Also very interesting was the support of the major manufacturers. The major player like Ektelon, Head, and Pro Kennex were there, along with Wilson, who seems to me to be really making a push to get back into the market. There was also a new company called Gemini.

Jack Healy



**RACQUETBALL CHAMPION:** Nick Mandis, regional tournament director, presents Melisa Boyd with trophies for winning the Girls 16 and Women's B first-place trophies in Casper, Wyo.

### Centerville's Melisa Boyd claims State Racquetball Title

Melisa Boyd, 16, of Centerville won the Utah State Singles Racquetball Championship in the Girls 16 Division recently at the Sports Mall in Salt Lake City.

The week-long tournament ended on a Saturday with Melisa defeating all competitors and claiming her third consecutive Girls 16 State Championship title.

Melisa also participated in the 1995 AARA Regional Championship March 10-12 at Casper, Wyo. Melisa won the Girls 16 championship and the Women's B championship. Competitors consisted of players from Wyoming, Nebraska, Montana, Colorado and Utah.

Melisa is currently ranked by the A.A.R.A. and Racquetball Magazine as number 2 in the nation for Girls 14, number 4 in Girls 16, and number 6 in Women's C Divisions. Melisa is the only player in the United States to currently hold three top 10 rankings by the American Amateur Racquetball Association.

Melisa was recently featured on FOX Television with a player profile on her outstanding achievements in this sport.

Melisa will be competing in her fourth National Junior Championship Tournament to be held this June in Fountain Valley, Calif.



## BYU RACQUETBALL TEAM WINS WORLD CUP DESPITE 9 FORFEITS

The BYU racquetball team went to Nashville looking for some respect. They earned that with a championship trophy.

At the 1995 World Collegiate Racquetball Tournament sponsored by AARA and ACRA, BYU's extra-mural team won the team title over competition which included 60 other colleges and universities from both North and South America. The tournament was held this past Wednesday through Sunday (Saturday for the Cougars) at the downtown YMCA in Nashville, Tenn.

The Cougars won a combined 47 of the 53 matches which they played. They ended up forfeiting an additional nine matches since they were scheduled on Sunday. All of those Sunday matches were for divisional championships.

In total, the Cougars brought home 22 medals and the World Cup Trophy, making history for the Cougars as every team member placed in their respective divisions.

The Cougar women took first place in their half of the tournament, with all of them winning their respective championship matches. Julie Taylor, playing in the top division, had to take second place because she was forced to forfeit her championship match on Sunday. But thanks to some tournament changes, the same fate did not befall the rest of the women.

Christine McAlpine, Chris Wardrup, Val Shewfelt, Lori Thompson and Nicole Passey all won their respective championships in matches that were played on Saturday. The doubles teams of Wardrup-Shewfelt and Thompson-Passey also

won their championship matches. In the top division, Taylor and McAlpine had to forfeit their Sunday match and take second place.

The men's team showed a lot of depth as it took third place behind Nicholes College (Mass.) and Memphis State. Joey Sacco took fourth in the top division, while teammate Steve Black took third in the second division. But BYU's strength showed as Nathan Passey, Danny Spenser, Chris Crawford and Jared Sorenson each took second place in his division. Each forfeited his chance at a championship because those matches fell on Sunday.

The doubles team of Spenser and Crawford also placed second in the third division with a Sunday forfeit. Passey and Sorenson took third in their division.

"The key was our team depth," said Passage when calling from Nashville. "The women dominated, and the men did especially well, especially the bottom four. We are all really excited about [the championship], and we can't wait to bring home the big trophy. Our hard work paid off."

The championship broke a four-year stranglehold in which Southwest Missouri State had dominated college racquetball. Memphis State, which was considered the main competition for the Cougars going into the tournament, took second place, followed by Florida and Missouri.

David King  
*The Daily Universe*  
April 3, 1995