

Off The Wall

The Newsletter of the Utah Racquetball Association

June 2004

OPENING SHOTS

Penn



By Randy Martin
URA President

Another season has gone and now it's time to make some big decisions, like how often should I water my lawn, do I mulch or bag, and is it best to weed and feed or spray the weed separately? With big decisions like these, it's nice to have the Junior Season starting just around the corner. We have a great junior program for kids 6 to 18 years old, that starts in June and goes until the end of August. It wraps up with the State Junior Tournament. Ruth McGovern is running the junior program that seems to get bigger every year.

Many of the kids don't have the means to get decent equipment to play with, so if you have any Racquetball Equipment that you are no longer using we have lots of kids who could put it to good use. If you would like to find out more about the Summer Junior Program or where to donate

equipment you can contact Ruth at the Redwood Multi Purpose Center at 801-974-6923.

The State Singles Championships were held at the Sports Mall, bringing in the best player from all over the state. The matches started on Wednesday, March 16 and finished up Saturday, March 20. Thanks to Ray Griffiths, his family and everyone else that made this tournament a great success. Congratulations to Brian Pointelin for winning his fourth consecutive State Singles Title.

The General Membership Meeting and Banquet followed the Open Finals of the State tournament. Val Shewfelt was re-elected to the board and Brian Pointelin



Photo by Randy Martin (General Membership Meeting & Banquet)

was elected to fill a vacant position on the board. During the meeting those who attended might have noticed the absence of Marcus Dunyon. Marcus has moved on to greener pastures, well maybe hotter pastures anyway (Texas). His energy and wisdom will be missed, at least until he gets tired of making all that money and moves back to Utah. I would also like to thank Midvale Mining for providing all the food for this year's banquet. This is the fourth year helping us with our banquet so when you stop in tell them thanks.

This year I had the honor of giving the President's Award to Val Shewfelt. Val has done a tremendous job of keeping us

on track through out the year with memberships, sanctioning tournaments, and scheduling. Her experience and commitment to the URA has been invaluable. The board selects the other year-end awards based on membership input. This year's winners are Brian Gill for Most Improved Male, Karen Carter for Most Improved Female, Andrew Gale for Most Improved Junior, Jon Sanderson for Sportsmanship, Joel Tuailava for Tournament Director.

On April 5th the board met to elect officers and directors for the 2004-2005 season. I was re-elected as President and Val Shewfelt was elected as Vice-President. Mike Van Valkenburg was re-elected as Treasurer as was Pam Martin re-elected Secretary. Directorships were assigned to all board members depending on interest and past performance. We are always looking for more help so if you have an interest in making Utah Racquetball great you can contact me or anyone else on the board. The annual Tournament Director's Meeting will be held on Saturday, June 26th, 9 a.m. at the Redwood Center. This is when we put together next year's tournament and traveling league schedule. We also discuss improvements and changes for the next year. All members are encouraged to attend. The tournament directors would love your input and ideas. Next year's schedule will be printed and distributed in August.

Thanks again to everyone for helping make this season a great one, have great summer and will see you on the courts next fall.

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Mark Your Calendar

June
Summer Junior Program

June 26, 10 a.m.
Tournament Directors Meeting
Redwood Multipurpose Center
(801)974-9623

June 26, 9 a.m.
Travel League Meeting
Redwood Multipurpose Center
(801)974-9623

Outdoor Tournaments
July 16-17
August TBA
Centerville
Contact Ray Hoey



The board selects the other year-end awards based on membership input. This year's winners are Brian Gill for Most Improved Male, Karen Carter for Most Improved Female, Andrew Gale for Most Improved Junior, Jon Sanderson for Sportsmanship, Joel Tuailava for Tournament Director.



**By Brian Pointelin
Editor**

I was wondering if you could make some suggestions as to how to improve my game this summer. It is usually so nice outside and it will be hard to get in the club to play. Normally there aren't a lot of players to play either because the weather is so nice, what do I do?

Off The Wall

JUNE, 2004

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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.

January 2005 issue...December 20, 2004

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

That is a great question, one I hear all the time from players who are trying to improve their games. It was something I was thinking about the other day as I was coming home after being on the road for three weeks. There are a lot of basic things you can do. We live in a city with great weather and a lot of ways to train for this great sport of racquetball during the summer.

OK, so I admit that I might be an exception to the rule, I am in my early (I stress early) 30's and I am single with minimal responsibilities, but you can adapt these ideas to your schedule and lifestyle.

First thing I would do is classify how serious you are about your game and what you want to accomplish. Do you have goals for next season; do you have things you want to accomplish for the summer with your game? If you do, then keep reading, if you don't, that is fine too.

OK, let's get started with some ideas. The first thing I would say is congratulations for having the desire to improve while everyone else has put the racquets away for the summer. Now, question is can you stay motivated? Cardio, weight lifting programs, drilling and playing, these are all things you will need to think about through the summer if you want to improve.

When people refer to Cardio, the thoughts always lead to boring things like a stationary bike, stairmaster, elliptical cross trainer or treadmill. These are great things to do steady cardio, and with the exception of the treadmill, they all can take pressure off the knees, ankles, back, and hips. If you get bored easy and it is hard to motivate yourself to go sit at the club for half an hour, I highly suggest the following outdoor activities:

1. Mountain Biking
2. Swimming
3. Hiking or climbing
4. Running
5. Walking

There are other things you can incorporate into your program, like plyometrics, and foot speed drills. These are a more advanced way of training but are very effective for the slower people in the sport, like me.

Weight lifting is a very important part of racquetball, whether you agree or not. Weight lifting can help your muscular endurance and also add strength to your shots if done right. A basic weight program over the summer will make a big difference in your game. If set up properly, lifting weights can be a huge amount of help in a minimal amount of time. I would recommend something as simple as doing one exercise per upper body part (chest, biceps, triceps, shoulders, back); and then the same for your quadriceps, hamstrings, calves, and then a total leg exercise like squats or leg presses. Here are

some pointers:

1. Do a warm-up set of light weight for 15 reps
2. Do 3 sets of 10 reps with moderate to heavy weight
3. Break up your routine so you alternate body parts and days
--An example, try to do upper body on Monday/Thursday; lower body on Tuesday/Friday
4. Make sure you stretch after your warm-up set and after you are done
5. Lift for 4-6 weeks and then take a week off, then start again

When it comes to drilling, there is no easy way to do drills. I have my own routine that works for me and you should try and come up with one too. Here are my suggestions for you to try and drill:

1. Buy a Walkman/CD player with headphones, it helps keep interest.
2. Stretch and loosen up before you start hitting.
-I will stretch and ride a bike for 5 minutes, then hit Ceiling Balls
-This loosens the shoulder joint and gets the blood flowing
3. When I get loose enough, like how I feel at the start of a match, then I know it is time to get going. --Practice as hard as you play in a tournament match
4. Hit all of your shots, down the line, cross court passes, wide angle passes, pinches, splats; backhand and forehand
6. Don't forget to work on all of your serves too, those are important

Don't drill too much, or should I say, too often. Your mind can only focus on a task for about an hour according to scientific studies of athletes. If you feel like hitting every day, do about a half an hour of drills after you lift then get out of the club and do what you want. I would suggest mixing every other day, just like the lifting, but switching cardio and drills.

So as I am sitting on the beach in Florida with my family (my brother is getting married here) while you are reading this, with my racquets in the closet collecting dust, and my tan getting darker, my last bit of advice is this, don't play too much this summer. Enjoy the break, enjoy time with your family, and go on a vacation. I truly believe that if you incorporate some of the ideas I have shared with you today, you can improve your game.

If you have further questions or want suggestions for a workout program, or you have other questions you want to address, feel free to contact me through e-mail at bpointelin@aol.com.

Have a great summer; see you in the Fall.



By Dave Timmons

Dear Fellow Racquetballers:

It's easy to be a good sportsman or sportswoman when you win.

What happens in a tight match or a loss? When you consider all the circumstances that might confront a person participating in a sport, specifically our sport of racquetball, it takes a person of exceptional character to fill the shoes of what most of us would consider being a good sportsman or sportswoman. Players, who try to win at any cost, though they might technically be within the rules, would not qualify under most people's definition of sportsmanship. To me, outstanding sportsmanship is when a person goes beyond the fundamental principle of sportsmanship.

Sportsmanship is an essential quality in any game, whether it is professional, college or just recreational. Sportsmanship applies to all athletes. A sportsman shakes the other player's hand before and after the games. They listen to the official's calls even though sometimes they don't agree. If a player on the other team makes a good play, he says, "Nice shot," or "Good pass." A sportsman also teaches other players to be sportsman-like. A sportsman teaches other players to be respectful of their opponents on and off the court. Teaching sportsmanship helps you because it, Makes you a better person, and it teaches you to have respect for other people.

It's not surprising that the rise in bad sportsmanship -- and outrageous behavior in upper level racquetball has resulted in a parallel increase of poor sportsmanship (e.g., trash talking, racket banging, swearing) in many divisions. Regardless of whether people idolize the pro or upper level players who behave badly or not, juniors and others will continue to be influenced by the behavior they see on the court. Such strong messages combined with a "winning is everything" philosophy embraced by increasing numbers of players - makes it harder than ever for others to play by the "it's not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game that's impor-

tant" philosophy.

How can we instill the importance of good sportsmanship and offset the "win at all costs" philosophy? On and off the court, you can start by focusing on these issues:

1. Be A Role Model. Offer praise and encouraging words for all players, including your opponents. Never openly berate or demean any other player, coach, or referee while attending a sporting event. When participating in tournaments or watching matches refrain from criticizing or condemning other players performances.

2. You Set the Rules. It's ultimately your responsibility to be a good sportsman, both as a participant and as a spectator. If you observe poor sportsmanship, you should discuss the misbehavior with a board member or tournament director. If a referee is ignoring or allowing poor sportsmanship, you should make your concerns known.

3. Learn and abide by the rules of the game. One aspect of good sportsmanship is knowing the rules of the game and playing by them. If an athlete decides to participate in a given sport, it is his responsibility to learn not only how to play but also how to play according to the rules that have been established.

4. Avoid arguments with referees and opponents. One of the most common abuses of sportsmanship is when players argue verbally with referees and opposing players. Not only does this make a player look silly and "out of control," but it also forces the player to lose his or her focus on the game. In fact, it is not uncommon to see a player get emotionally or physically upset, and then make an error in the very next rally. The key here is that when you experience anger or frustration during a game, you need to re-channel your energy and focus on playing your game.

5. Teach others to share in the responsibilities of sportsmanship. As we all know, a key to good sportsmanship is being a positive influence on others. This includes encouraging players who may be struggling in their performance to accepting defeat graciously. On the opposite end, not tolerating poor conduct from fellow players helps encourage other

players to maintain control. Remember, a player's behavior reflects on the sport in general.

6. Encourage and support all skill levels. If you are a gifted athlete, it is especially important to show others the value of providing extra encouragement and support to all skill levels. Since top-notch players often serve as the natural role models, they can often serve as vital instruments in boosting the esteem and performance levels of their fellow players.

7. Always play fair, with honesty and integrity. Honesty and integrity should be the two hallmarks of any athlete. Good sportsmanship means playing honestly and fairly at all times, and never indulging in any type of cheating. Serving a broken ball, taking advantage of a missed call by a referee, and not replaying rallies are examples of less than honest play.

8. Respect the other team's effort. In the field of competition, respect for your opponent is critical to good sportsmanship. Hence, applauding their efforts is a critical value that you can promote -- no matter whether they are on the winning or losing end. If an opponent outperforms you, learn to accept it, learn from it, and offer no excuses and move on. If you outperform another, enjoy the victory, but never boast, mock, or minimize the opponent's effort and skill.

9. Exhibit sportsmanship yourself, and be a great model athlete. One of the best ways to teach good sportsmanship is to just practice it yourself.

In the midst of all this, it seems doubly important that we recommit ourselves to being role models, reminding others what sportsmanship is all about, acknowledging others for demonstrating good sportsmanship, and showing, by our example, that sportsmanship is still alive and valued in racquetball today.

FEARLESS RACQUETBALL

By: Brian Gill

I claim no expertise, but I did win "Most Improved Male Player" for 2004. Thank you for your vote, I appreciate it. This fine looking plaque is a shrine to improvement. To be honest, I never thought that an Open player would receive this award. Quantum leaps—okay, maybe just noticeable improvements—in skill

OFF THE WALL

and performance are usually achieved by players who are still mastering the basics and climbing that ladder from "C" to "B" to "A"—and the hardest one of all—"A" to Open.

So, what made the difference for me this season? More practice? Nope. Didn't really practice. More play? Nope. Just played once a week, on average. Not exactly a recipe for racquetball—or any other kind of—success, is it?

So why did I improve so much this year?

I can only come to one conclusion: I improved my mental game. I believed in my game, trusted my shots, and allowed myself to enjoy the game for what it is—a game, a fun game. What does this mean? This means, "Hey Brian, you're a decent player. You can put away a

backhand splat when it's 0-0, so you can do it when you're down 10-9 returning serve in a tiebreaker, right?" Absolutely! Granted, I haven't figured out how to reconcile this attitude with the popular "go-for-the-percentages" mantra. But I don't care. I feel liberated from the shackles of performance-anxiety that once plagued me. I'd rather lose going for my shots than eke out a shy, timid victory that stinks of self-doubt, doubt over shots that I know I can hit. Holding back and playing it safe may, on occasion, earn us a "W" for the night but will ultimately stunt our racquetball growth. This, though it may seem, is not a "go-for-broke" attitude; rather, it is the process of allowing oneself to play at his or her highest level, uninhibited.

It feels good, trust me. Who cares about winning or ranking or who's watching you play? Well, we all do, right? But that can't dominate your thoughts. Such thoughts

cap potential. I did a pretty good job this year of convincing myself that I didn't care about any of that, and that I simply wanted to play the best racquetball that Brian Gill could play. I let it all go this season and played the best racquetball of my life. I just turned 29. Wow! That's cool.

As I watched those up-and-coming junior players compete this year at State, I thought, "Wow, these guys are awesome." Imagine how good they will be in just a few short years. Better yet, imagine how good they will be if they can tap into a healthy mental game early on. A mental game characterized by toughness, looseness, quiet confidence inside and competitive sportsmanship outside. From what I observed, Utah's juniors are well on their way. I can't wait to see how their physical—and mental—racquetball game develops.

Now, consider for a moment the blistering down-the-line kills you could unleash and those rally-ending, well-placed pinches that could be yours if only you didn't have unharnessed adrenaline running through your veins like a veritable poison. The same poison that seems to put a stranglehold on every muscle

in your body right before you're to hit the most important shot of the match. What if you could rid yourself of this toxin? You can. Instead of tensing up, use that adrenaline for energy, focus that energy into your shots, and stay relaxed. Forget about whom you're playing and what their ranking is. Enjoy the competition. After all, you're trying to put away the ball, not your opponent.

Here are some strategies for a healthy mental game:

Breathe deep to relax and get oxygen to your cells

Be decisive about what serve you are going to hit

Watch pro matches (in person or on tape)

Don't get caught up in winning or rankings

Focus on the ball

Trust your shots and ability to play well

Play fearless racquetball!

These adjustments to my mental game enabled me to have a lot of fun this season. And, as an added—and somewhat unexpected—bonus, my physical game improved, too. May they do the same for you.

STUDENT UPDATE

Denn



**By Brian Pointelin
Editor**

Two major events took place this spring for the younger generation of Utah racquetball players. The USRA High School Nationals, sponsored by E-Force, held in Portland, Oregon, and the Intercollegiate Nationals held in Fountain Valley, California, sponsored by Ektelon.

Ten players from the Salt Lake City area traveled to Portland and were quite successful at the High School Nationals the first week of March. None as much as Anthony Martin who brought home two medals, one for second place in the Boy's #1 Singles Red Division and first in the Boy's #1 Doubles Red Division with his partner Anthony Montanez. Cody Sylvester took fourth place in the Boy's #3 Singles Division. Nicole Henderson took second place in the Girl's #2 Red Division. Other players who went to Portland to participate included Heather Norris, Katherine Affeltranger, Andrew Gale, Kim Walsh, and Andrew Johnson.

Los Caballeros in Fountain Valley California was the host site for the National Intercollegiate tournament at the end of March. BYU, the University of Utah, Utah Valley State College, and Utah State University all had players competing for the National Championships. BYU went into the tournament as

the Overall and Women's Team defending Champions with much of the same roster from the previous year. The U of U was looking for their best showing with Kristen Walsh leading the charge as they sported a team that had a full men's squad and four out of six spots filled on the women's side. Utah Valley was looking to defend their Division II title, with a full squad of men and half a squad of women.

Kristen Walsh led the charge for the state of Utah as she needed a tiebreaker to beat Adrienne Fisher in the Women's #1 Singles Division. Kristen's victory placed her on the US Team for the third time in her four-year collegiate career. The winner of the #1 Singles Divisions are automatically placed on the Adult US National Team. But she wasn't finished with just a singles title. Kristen teamed with a "more mature" college student in the doubles division, her mom, Marianne Walsh to win the number one division against the University of Alabama team of Adrienne Fisher and Da'monique Davis. Mike King, of BYU, went through a tough draw in the Men's #6 Singles division, but fell in the Finals. King and partner Oliver ("Your hair will grow back") Miramontes wound up playing a tough match for third place in the Men's #3 Doubles against UVSC's Kenley Grover and Steven Strong. The match was headed to a breaker when the BYU tandem found themselves down 10-4 before they served out the match for the medal. Andrea Jones of the U added to the point total with her march through the draw in the Women's #3 singles where she defeated the top seed, Marci Mangelson (BYU), but then lost in the finals. The BYU tandem

of Kami Nicholas and Tami Barrows won the Women's #5 and 6 singles divisions and then teamed up to win the Women's #3 Doubles titles. Laura Hassler, also of BYU, had a great tournament as she finished third in the Women's #2 Singles division. In the Skill division, Brady Woodbury and Ryan Tanaka of BYU wound up playing each other in the finals where Brady won in a tie-breaker.

All in all, the teams from Utah had great team results. BYU finished third behind Alabama and Oregon State; the University of Utah finished sixth overall, and Utah Valley State College wound up 8th in the Division 1 category. BYU finished fifth in the Men's Team standings and third in the Women's Team Standings. Utah Valley State College finished in the top ten in the Men's Team division. Perhaps the most impressive finish to the tournament came from the University of Utah's women. With less than a full squad, they finished as the National Champions in the Women's Division.

Having seen the quality of play from these collegiate and high school standouts, the future looks pretty bright.

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STATE SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS: SPORTSMALL

Penn

	First Place	Second Place	Third Place	Fourth Place
Men's Open	Brian Pointelin	Adam Anderson	Brian Gill	Steve Black
Men's A	Scott Jenkins	Richard Bunker	Lorin Jensen	Robert Lopez
Men's B	John Sanderson	David Diaz	Kelly Cunningham	Kara Linn
Men's C	Chaz Washington	Anthony Montanez	Greg Arnson	Tim Whipple
Men's D	Jeff Larsen	Dan Christiansen	Devan Van Valkenberg	Max Stokes
Men's 25+	Sergio Rodriguez	Julian Gomez	Chris Johnson	Brad Brumbaugh
Men's 30+	Brian Pointelin	Steve Black		
Men's 35+	Scott Jenkins	Dave Timmons	Randy Martin	Ken Huey
Men's 40+	Oscar Fiero	Don Sanderson	Chris Gale	Lorin Jensen
Men's 45+	Don Sanderson	Lloyd Marsh	Tom Shearman	Eddie Connor
Men's 50+	Roger Bird	Rick Strout	Perry Allen	Scott Thompson
Men's 55+	Dennis OBrien	Kim Hancock	Pat Conway	
Men's 60+	Dennis OBrien	Chris Segura	Jim Wilking	Tom Nystrum
Men's 65+	Jim Wilking	Lewis Edwards		
Women's Open	Kara Linn			
Women's A	Sarah Campbell	Karen Carter	Kim Walsh	Barb Christensen
Women's B	Melanie Hansen	Susan Miller	Heather Montanez	Pam Martin
Women's C	Valla Laboa	Pam Martin	Heather Norris	Kayla McCloyn
Women's D	Heather Norris	Kayla McCloyn	Nicole Henderson	
Women's 25+	Sarah Campbell			
B. 8 & Under	Jesse Van Valkenberg			
B. 10 & Under	Jesse Van Valkenberg	Steven Ethington	Brady McCloyn	
B. 12 & Under	Skylar McCloyn	Nicholas Huey	Zeik Montanez	
B. 14 & Under	Anthony Montanez	Devan Van Valkenberg		
B. 16 & Under	Andrew Gale	Cody Sylvester	Anthony Martin	Anthony Montanez
B. 18 & Under	Pahool Miramontes	John Sanderson	Chaz Washington	Dan Christiansen



OFF THE WALL

Hello everyone!

The West Desert is just like the rest of the state, its bigggg, but beautiful. There is a lot more color out here than one might think. They have species of plants we never see in Utah and the mountains that surround the resort are rugged and beautiful. The first week I was here I was invited to attend a weekly ritual at an old West Texas saloon, were it was two hamburgers for the price of one. The burgers were about a foot around; most of the people ate one and a half or two each. When I ate only one, they said they could see how I kept my trim figure. I told them it was years of training on my part that allowed for my shape to be in its current state. Since I arrived here it has rained every weekend except one, a very strange thing for this part of the country. They think I brought the weather with me from Utah and I told them it was an original thought and that I had never heard anyone say something like that before. So I have had the opportunity to do a lot of thinking, something that most of us don't take the time to do outside of work. It is kind of like a bad headache that never goes away, I thought maybe I would write one more article (or Letter) to tell you what I was thinking, say thanks, and wish everyone well until we meet again.

As you might imagine, the choice to leave Utah was an unbelievably emotional one for me. My family, which is the most important thing in my life, is in Utah. My friends and the people I care most about are in Utah. I had a great job in Utah with a wonderful support group. So one might ask why the move? First of all, it is a rare opportunity to be able to work at a dream resort and be able to make a good living. Second, as some may know, my wife recently had an operation and the climate in West Texas will be good for her health. Not that Utah's climate is bad for her but there is no cold winter and she will never see an inversion. Believe it or not, I saw it as a challenge, and I really enjoy taking on something and pushing myself to see what I can make of the situation.

One of the hard parts of this decision was to leave the racquetball community in Utah. I hope

the players realize how good they have it in Utah, and with the URA. I checked on the Texas Racquetball web site and there are not many tournaments in the west part of Texas, I am going to have to travel like the guys in St. George do just to play in a tournament. Please make sure you make those guys feel welcome and appreciated when they come to a tournament in the future. In order to get to a court, I have to travel about the same distance as the



players from Logan do to get to Salt Lake. They make the trip a lot, so make sure you welcome them, it is a real commitment to travel and it shows the love of the game that we all love to play. Right now I have officially crowned myself the West Texas State champ since I am the only one who I know plays in my part of the state. (Someone will eventually take the title, but until then it's all mine.)

Enough rambling, the main reason I want-

ed to write this letter was to thank everyone for the years of friendship in and out of the racquetball group. I have mentioned it many times that one of the things that brought me to the game was the quality of the people. I can't begin to describe the influence you all have had on me personally and my outlook on life. I have learned more patience, keeping my temper in check, the importance of fair play. I have always felt that how a person acts under the pressure of a tight match tells mountains about their character.

To those of you that came to the get together at the Spaghetti Factory, thank you all, it was a very wonderful, fun and humbling experience. A man can feel very blessed to have that many people show to his last dinner (HA HA) and I do. Thank you to Rico, Hope and Steve for suggesting and organizing it and the URA for being such big part, and to each and everyone that showed up. As I said above, the people who play racquetball are a wonderful and rare breed of individuals. Everyone needs to give their support to this game we all love, so try and be patient with the tournament directors and with each other. Remember that good friends are hard to find, harder to leave and impossible to forget. Don't let the past hold you up, you're missing stuff. Years from now who knows were I might be, still in Texas (unless someone offers early retirement) or maybe something else will pop up. But regardless of where I might be living, the people I cherish most and the state of Utah will always be my home.

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