

# OFF THE WALL

## OPENING SHOTS

By Enrico Dubach, URA President



Everybody's playing racquetball! At least it seems like that in January. Every year, the courts are a lot busier at the beginning of the year. We need to keep that enthusiasm and commitment going for the whole year. As of this writing, the Olympics are just starting and we have a break in tournaments. But I'll be ready to play again in March. The traveling league schedule gets pretty busy now and I hope the traffic won't be as bad as they say.

During January, Marcus Dunyon, Marianne Walsh and I attended the annual leadership conference in Colorado Springs. State Presidents and State Board Members from across the nation meet for three days and discuss programs and ideas to improve racquetball in our own particular state. I am proud to say that Utah has one of the most active racquetball associations in the nation. Very few states offer as complete of a tournament schedule with three state championships (Adult, Junior and Doubles), traveling league, juniors league, and high school league. We have one of the highest per capita membership rates and we have the third highest number of junior players. We are lucky to have so many committed people who help make racquetball so enjoyable here in Utah.

One thing we are trying to improve is the way we distribute this quarterly state newsletter. Over half of our annual budget goes to printing and mailing our newsletter. We could save a lot of money if the newsletter was distributed through e-mail. This would reduce our printing costs as well as our mailing costs. We know that not all players are on-line, so we don't expect to completely switch over at one time. We would like to get your opinion on receiving it via e-mail. We are experimenting doing it as a pdf file which is becoming an industry standard. This would enable you to print the newsletter exactly as it's published. Or you can read the newsletter directly from your monitor. Let us know what you think!

Are you ready for the State Singles Championships? The Sports Mall and your Board of Directors promise this year to be as fun

as ever. Following the singles finals on Saturday, we will be having our General 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. I have been on the Board for over ten years and have served as President for the last four. It has been a great experience and I appreciate the opportunity to serve the racquetball community. I think it's important to give back to a sport that has given so much to me. My term is up next year and I don't plan to run for another one. We need people who can step up with new ideas and new energy to propel racquetball forward in the coming years. I do not plan to quit helping with racquetball, but I do believe it's time for some new blood.

The URA Board is responsible for the promotion of racquetball in Utah. We have accomplished a lot the last few years. We have more clubs asking to hold sanctioned tournaments than we can accommodate. The Traveling League involves over 120 of the top players in the area. The Juniors Summer League attracted more than 100 kids last summer. The High School League continues to grow each year. This newsletter becomes more comprehensive and informative with each issue. We hope to publish a new Membership Directory, which is great for all our members.

We need your help! These programs need dedicated people to organize and run them. A few hours a month from a few people really goes a long way. It doesn't take a lot of time, you meet lots of people and you learn a lot about racquetball. Board meetings are held once a month. We are all volunteers who are trying to give a little back to the sport that has been so good to us. We try to improve tournaments and programs for all players. If you have writing skills, we could use some help with this newsletter! At the end of the year, we all get together to hold the State Singles Championships. Talk to us! 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.

Have a great spring and I'll see you on the courts.



Photo by Randy Martin (Matt Christensen)

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## Mark Your Calendar

- March 12-16  
**Luck of the Heights**  
 Cottonwood Heights  
 (801) 943-3190
- March 26-30  
**Sports Forum**  
 (801)298-3231
- April 9 - 13  
**State Singles Championships**  
 Sports Mall  
 (801) 261-3426
- October 16-19  
**Huntsman World Senior Games**  
 St. George  
 (800) 562-1268



## Off The Wall

March, 2002

### Editor

Randy Martin .....801-280-4222  
Advertising  
Enrico Dubach .....801-298-5066  
URA Board Members  
Enrico Dubach, Pres .....801-298-5066  
Marcus Dunyon, VP .....801-964-2138  
Marianne Walsh .....801-487-2338  
Val Shewfelt, Sec .....801-360-8247  
Gene Rolfe, Treasurer .....801-533-0808  
Dennis Fisher .....801-798-1089  
Pam Martin .....801-280-4222

Submit all "Letters to the Editor" or any other inquiries to:

Utah Racquetball Association  
P.O. Box 711684  
Salt Lake City, UT 84171-1684

Contributions may be e-mailed to the Editor at: [randymg@networld.com](mailto:randymg@networld.com).

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

May 2002 issue...April 20, 2001

URA board meetings are held the second Monday of most months at 7 p.m. at the Redwood 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 racquetball on the web at [www.utahracquetball.com](http://www.utahracquetball.com)

## LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



**By Marcus Dunyon**  
**URA Vice President**

I had the opportunity to attend the 2002 USRA Leadership Conference held in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Many times when you go to these meetings, the topics are pretty much the same. This year was an exception to the normal in that a new Executive Director was named to head the USRA. Jim Hiser was nominated and voted on to be the new leader of the USRA. He brings with him years of involvement in the sport and has worked very hard in directing the sport of racquetball. As we move forward into the future, we are in good hands. The conference is an opportunity to see how your state association stacks up against other states. Without trying to sound to self serving, Utah has a very pro-active association and a strong board. There are states where the board is a single individual or maybe a combination of a president and one or two other people helping. Utah has a board made up of nine individuals, each with a specific assignment and area in which they report back to the President. It is very important that the national office knows board members like Val and Rico. It is critical to maintain continuity from year to year within the URA Board so that the national leadership knows who it can contact to get information. This has helped Utah gain a certain amount of respect that was absent in the past. Looking at

other states, this lack of continuity has slowed their progress. Another area Utah has excelled in is the Junior programs. Although some people seem to feel too much emphasis is being placed in this area, it has been the area where the membership has made some of its largest gains. One of the areas that was of most interest to me at the conference was the effort being made to have racquetball become an Olympic sport. The USRA and the IRF are now sitting on Olympic boards that determine how sporting events are funded and how soon they might become a participating sport. There's no question we are closer than ever in achieving the Olympic dream. The importance of becoming an Olympic sport is that it will bring more people into the sport and that in itself will allow more funding for programs at all levels. The conference is also a time to see what it is that we are doing right and get ideas about making things better for the Utah membership. We came back with a number of ideas and will be discussing them with members at tournaments and at the annual membership meeting held at the state tournament. One thing you as a member should know, you are the strength of the URA, we as board members feel we have the greatest group of people anywhere in the nation. We are very proud to be able to represent such a fine and outstanding group of people.

Thank you again !!!!

**General Membership Meeting  
and Banquet**  
**Following the singles finals on Saturday April 13**



## KNOW THE RULES



By Gene Rolfe, URA Treasurer

I thought it was time to talk about avoidable hinders. I realize that some may think that avoidable hinders are one of the great mysteries of racquetball. I've even heard a referee say that there weren't going to be any avoidable hinders called while they were refereeing. I think that one of the reasons that it is so hard for people to call avoidable hinders is that an avoidable hinder is in the judgment of the referee. My interpretation of an avoidable hinder is when one player gets an unfair advantage over the other. It would be nice if the defensive player could magically disappear and then reappear after the offensive player could take their best shot.

This isn't possible and the reality is that racquetball is played with 2 or 4 people on the court. Sometimes players are going to get into each other's way. It is one of the parts of the game that makes racquetball so interesting. What is the best shot that will beat my opponent and not hurt anyone? I believe that avoidable hinders need to be called to improve the fairness of the game for both players. There is also a major safety issue and calling avoidable hinders can help improve the safety of the game. With that in mind, let's discuss what things the rulebook considers avoidable hinders.

The following is found under rule 3.15 along with my commentary and maybe even a few opinions.

**a) Failure to move.** A player does not move sufficiently to allow an opponent a shot straight to the front wall or a cross court shot which would rebound into the corner farthest from the player hitting the ball. This also includes a player moving in a direction that prevents the opponent from taking either of these shots. (This is the interpretation of the rule that is used the most. We need to be aware of the rest of the rule and apply it as well.)

**b) Stroke interference.** This occurs when a player moves, or fails to move, so that the opponent returning the ball does not have an

unimpeded swing. This includes unintentionally moving in a direction, which prevents the opponent from making an open, offensive shot. (You may remember from my last article that once the player hits the ball their follow through is probably not a hinder of any kind. Also, remember that avoidable hinders are not necessarily intentional.)

**c) Blocking.** A player moves into a position which blocks the opponent from getting to, or returning, the ball or in doubles, a player moves in front of the opponent as the player's partner is returning the ball. (I've seen players move into a shot and only a dead-ball hinder is called. This rule needs to be applied both for fairness and safety. Someone could get hurt as well as the problem of taking away someone's good shot just because you hit a bad shot.)

**d) Moving into the ball.** The player moves in the way and is struck by the ball just played by the opponent. (To me this indicates that a player does not have to hold up for an avoidable to be called. Especially if the player is moving into the path of the shot.)

**e) Pushing.** A player deliberately pushes or shoves an opponent during a rally. (My personal opinion is that this rule does not include incidental contact.)

**f) Intentional distractions.** A player deliberately shouts, stamps their feet, waves their racquet, or any other manner of disrupting their opponent. (I think that this may also include giving your opponent a wedgie.)

**g) View obstruction.** A player moves across an opponent's line of vision just before the opponent strikes the ball.

**h) Wetting the ball.** The players, especially the server, should ensure that the ball is dry prior to the serve. Any wet ball that is not corrected prior to the serve shall result in an avoidable hinder against the server.

**i) Apparel or equipment loss.** If a player loses any apparel, equipment, or other article, play shall immediately be stopped and that player will be called for an avoidable hinder, unless the player has just hit a shot that cannot be retrieved (e.g. a rollout or a perfectly placed passing shot). If the opponent causes the loss

of equipment then a dead-ball hinder should be called, unless the opponent's action is deemed to be avoidable, then an avoidable hinder should be called on the opponent.

The above items are what the rulebook considers avoidable hinders. We've all seen players jump in the air to avoid an avoidable hinder. There is no current written rule about jumping out of the way. I know that there was once a proposal of a rule that would have made it a dead-ball hinder if a player jumped and their feet were as high as their knees and they were hit by the shot. This has not been adopted as an official rule, but to me is a good rule of thumb. If someone runs in front of a player as they are making their shot and then jumps, it should be an avoidable hinder according to the rule mentioned in g above. Yes, I understand that a great deal of the enforcement of avoidable hinders is left up to the judgment of the referee. I've seen the call of an avoidable hinder, or non-call, add a little spice to a match. I feel that it is important for fair play and safety to make the call when you feel that an avoidable hinder should be called. If you can't remember all the rules above, just ask yourself if you think an unfair advantage was taken by one player, and the odds are in your favor that an avoidable hinder should be called.

If you have any questions or comments or if you have any suggestion for future articles, please feel free to contact me at [rgrolfe@hotmail.com](mailto:rgrolfe@hotmail.com) or call me at 533-0808.

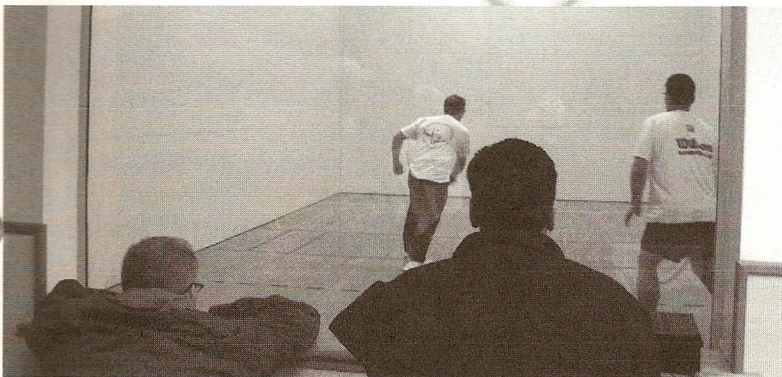


Photo by Randy Martin (2002 Massacre)

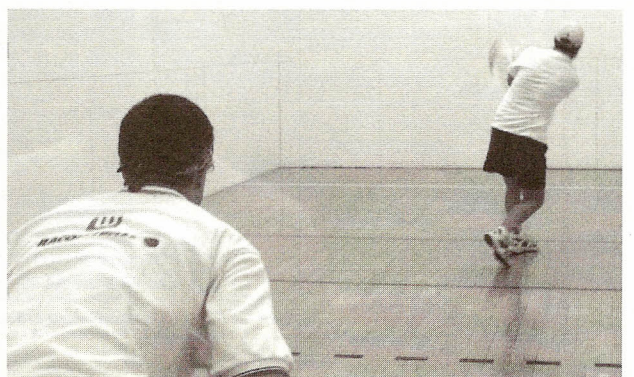


Photo by Randy Martin (2002 Massacre)



## ROCKY MOUNTAIN MASTERS DEC 13-15

### Redwood Multipurpose Center

	First	Second	Third
Men's 25+	Brad Brumbaugh		
Men's 30+	Brian Pointelin	Jerry Montanez	Glen Aitken
Men's 35+	Don Sanderson	Randy Martin	Ray Griffiths
Men's 40+	Don Sanderson	Jack Suenrain	Steven Clark
Men's 45+	Larry Moon	Doug Douville	Glen Aitken
Men's 50+	Doug Douville	Alan Jorgensen	Larry Hambleton
Men's 55+	Chris Segura	John Clift	Dan Rideout
Men's 60+	Chris Segura	Hal LaBelle	Brent North
Women's 30+	Heather Montanez	Pam Martin	
Women's 35+	Kris Wheeler		
Women's 40+	Robin Nielsen		
Women's 45+	Val Shewfelt		

## ALTA CANYON AVALANCHE JAN 8-12

### Alta Canyon

	First	Second	Third
Men's Open:	Brad Bona	Matt Christensen	T.J. Robinson
Men's A:	Andrew Gordon	Bill Yetman	Mike VanVolkenburg
Men's B:	Craig Gibson	Daniel Mullens	Steven Hayward
Men's C:	Daniel Mullens	Stephen Richer	Mike Sumner
Men's D:	Steven Brumbaugh	Brad Nelson	Jeremy King
Men's 30+:	Chris Clift	David Cise	Erik Fletcher
Men's 35+:	Carl Vizmeg		
Men's 40+:	Ray Griffiths	Rick Jackson	Steven Clark
Men's 45+:	Roger Bird	Bill Yetman	Roger Lopez
Men's 50+:	Bruce Smith	Jon Ubelhack	Scott Brewster
Men's 55+:	Ray Morris	Lloyd Laycock	Bruce Archibald
Men's 60+:	Jim Wilking	Chris Segura	
Boys 16-:	Nick Grundhauser		
Boys 14-:	Stephen Phillips	Jay Easton	Andrew Sorenson
Women's A:	Julie Taylor	Val Shewfelt	
Women's B:	Barbara Christensen	Janis Gibson	
Women's 45+:	Val Shewfelt		Tara Mleynek

## STATE HIGH SCHOOL CHAMPIONSHIPS JAN 24-26

### Sports Mall

	First	Second	Third	Cons
<b>GOLD DIVISION</b>	Quang Nguyen/Murray	Richard Terry/Jordan	Ben Peterson/Waterford	Nathan McCoy/Viewmont
<b>BLUE DIVISION</b>	Tony Skanchy/Alta	Kim Walsh/Skyline	Matt Jones/Bingham	Stan Rosen/Provo
<b>RED DIVISION</b>	Jeff Skanchy/Waterford	Mark Watkins/Waterford	Charlie Jacobsen/Murray	Alex Runolfson/Waterford
<b>WHITE DIVISION</b>	Taylor Hyde/Waterford	Alan Romney/Murray	Stephen Foxley/Waterford	David Reichart/Waterford
<b>TEAM STANDINGS</b>	Waterford	Murray	Skyline	Brighton

There were 53 players representing 10 schools



## 2002 MASSACRE JAN 29-FEB 2

### REDWOOD MULTIPURPOSE CENTER

	First	Second	Third	Cons.
<b>Men's Open:</b>	Matt Christensen	Paul Buchi	Ray Griffiths	
<b>Men's AA:</b>	Jack Suenram	Jon Meatoga	Chris Gale	
<b>Men's A:</b>	Steven Clark	Roger Bird	Marcus Dunyon	Scott Brewster
<b>Men's B:</b>	Richard Terry	Grant Stoddard	Rob Merrills	Daniel Mullins
<b>Men's C:</b>	Eric Bostrom	Steve Brumbaugh	Andrew Gale	Arian Pirayesh
<b>Men's D:</b>	Steve Brumbaugh	Tom Pace	Barbara Christensen	
<b>Women's A/B:</b>	Diane Burns	Barbara Christensen	Val Shewfelt	
<b>Men's 35-40:</b>	Jack Suenram	Paul Buchi	Chris Gale	Ray Griffiths
<b>Men's 45:</b>	Dennis O'Brien	Roger Bird	Bob Snellman	
<b>Men's 50-60:</b>	Dennis O'Brien	Scott Brewster	Chris Segura	
<b>Juniors 14-16:</b>	Andrew Gale	Kim Walsh	Arian Pirayesh	
<b>Juniors 12-:</b>	Kory Walsh	Derek Neth	Devan Van Valkenburg	

## CHALLENGE COURTS & LEAGUES

### Alta Canyon

Leagues: Tues, Thurs 9am-11am & Thurs 8pm-10pm

Cost: \$4

(801) 942-2582

9565 South Highland Drive  
Sandy, UT 84092

### Bountiful Recreation Center

League: Tues, Thurs 8pm-10pm

Cost: \$4

Challenge League: Tues, 6pm-8pm

Cost: \$6

(801) 298-6220

150 West 500 North  
Bountiful, UT 84010

### Marv Jenson Recreation Center

Challenge Courts: Mon-Fri 4:30-6:30pm

Leagues: Mon 7-9 pm Tues 5:30-7:30pm

Cost: \$4 chal, leag. \$20-25 for 6 weeks

(801) 253-4404

10300 South Redwood Road  
South Jordan, UT 84095

### Orem Fitness Center

Leagues: 8pm-10pm Thurs

Cost: \$15-\$18

(801) 229-7154

580 West 165 South  
Orem, UT 84058

### Redwood Recreation Center

League: Mon 6pm-8pm

Cost: \$30 for 6 weeks

League: Ladies 9am-11am

Cost: \$20 for 6 weeks

for other leagues call for availability  
(801) 974-6923

3060 South Lester Street  
West Valley City, UT 84119

### Sports Mall

Leagues: Tues 7-9 Thurs dbls 7-9

Cost: \$7.46 Student \$5.33

(801) 261-3426

5445 South 900 East  
Murray, UT 84117

### Jordan Valley Athletic Club

Leagues:

Cost:

(801) 969-9911

5350 W. 3600 W.  
Taylorsville

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Gymnastics  
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If you would like to list your challenge court and league time contact Randy Martin at (801) 280-4222 or e-mail at [randymg@networld.com](mailto:randymg@networld.com)



## LIFE ON THE INTERNATIONAL RACQUETBALL TOUR



By **Brian Pointelin**

Airplane rides across the country. A hotel room in a different city every other week. Cab rides with bad drivers. Being in an unfamiliar city for days. Eating three or four meals at restaurants per day. Time away from family. Time away from your job. Spending money. Ahhhhh, life on the International Racquetball Tour.

The most frequent exchange I have with people when talking about playing the tour is in regards to life on the road. What did you see while you were there? I saw the airport; I saw the highway to the hotel/club and saw the club. When Hank Marcus was the Commish, we would frequent Denny's after the late nights on Thursdays and Fridays. Saturday we would splurge and go to Chili's or a nicer restaurant close to the hotel or club after the semifinals were over. This year, with Dave Negrete (Negretz) at the helm, life is a little different. Negretz takes care of us too, the stringers and refs; we actually eat well on the road.

Pro racquetball, what is it really like? You fly into a city on Thursday, grab food and a nap then you wind up playing, you hope two matches on Thursday night. These aren't easy matches either, usually they are tough. If you have ever played a tough men's open match, that might be an easy first round match in the pros. Second rounds usually include names like Kane, Doyle, Robinson, Locker, Green, and Guidry. For me, after the second round match, it is off to work stringing Sudsy's racquets for Friday morning. Yes, this makes me some money, but sometimes, it is overwhelming, especially if you are winning. Friday we play two rounds, the round of 16's and the Quarters. Saturday includes player meetings and usually Open Singles matches. This would be the ideal day to get out and see the city you are in, but usually, stringers are busy. Sunday is a travel day if you aren't in the finals of your divisions; you are catching an early flight out so you can get home. Overall it is tough playing the tour, if you wind up in the top 20 right now, that is a great accomplishment, look at all the great names on that list. Yeah, it is fun to travel and go to other cities and play different people. It is the only true way to elevate your game and I respect those who are willing to travel to events. I truly believe that playing the tour and

working out with one of the most competitive and best training partners in the world, Kristen Walsh, is the reason I made the US National Team in October. I have to be honest and plug some people here too though. Without Pro Kennex Racquetball; The Racquetball-Catalog.com; my boss, Greg Brannigan; my airport shuttle, Chris Gillespie, none of this would be possible. I also have the support of my family and friends.

Do the players hang out in a group or individually? Hanging out is a weird phrase. Most guys have people that they are close to, don't get me wrong, we are all pretty close on tour, but some stick closer to others. My running mates on tour are Dan Llacera (my doubles partner and newest member of Team USA, Ogletope?); Kris Odegard from Canada; Erin Brannigan from Idaho; and Rocky Carson from California. Each player in this group provides some kind of support on tour, and it is wonderful to see these guys at events. When you see guys on Tour hugging each other, you know they are pretty close, it doesn't mean anything else. (HAHAHA). I guess what I am insinuating is that there are clicks on the tour.

Most of the players are very cordial to the public at events. Jason Mannino and Sudsy Monchik actually did a 45 minute Question and Answer session after a match last year in Minneapolis. They are friends, and even though Sudsy won in four, they both competed to see who could talk longer and crack the most jokes. Most of the guys on tour are very approachable, but after a loss, you have to be careful. Most guys want to get out of the club as fast as they can after they lose, but they will be back eventually and they will be willing to talk.

We have some very unique personalities on the tour. You just thought of Sudsy and Mannino didn't you? These two guys are very funny guys. Both being from New York, they are both flamboyant and sometimes brash, but they truly are great guys. Mannino is truly one of my favorite players. He has gotten a bad rap for so long, but notice how you don't read about how bad he is on the court or how obnoxious he is anymore? Maybe it is the fact that he is getting married and having a child. The kid will probably come out diving just like pops. Wherever we go, Ruben Gonzalez is always a favorite. That guy is so amazing to me; he is the definition of professional rac-

quetball in my mind. I don't think he could travel to one city and not be recognized or know someone, he has been everywhere.

As the tour stringer, life on tour is very hectic. There are many sleepless nights on tour stringing racquets. Yeah, stringing a racquet is easy. Try doing 12 racquets on a Thursday night, beginning at 1 am, and having them ready to go at 11 am the next morning. And most of those are for Sudsy. As picky as he is, I take care of his racquets better than I do my own. The guys is amazing, if you are off a pound either way, he can feel it and then he lets you know about it. Trust me, when Bruce Moore strung his racquet wrong two years ago, Sudsy ended that relationship. Preparation for the events begins a week in advance by ordering string. As the tournament nears, you just have to make sure the stringer has been sent to the club, stencils are packed and ink is ready to flow. After the Friday, stringing for the Pros gets easier. Money is made with the amateurs. It is funny how some tournament directors try to control us in their club by forbidding us to string amateur racquets. It never works and we always make good money when we string that way. The pros get a break on price, especially Sudsy, he re-strings after hitting a racquet, even if he hits four shots with it.

The competition is fast and furious and what you see on television, once a year, cannot give even begin to give you an idea of how amazing the guys on tour are when they play. The only way that you can truly appreciate what happens on tour: the diving, speed, power, and a love for the game, can only be seen live and up close. If you get the chance, come to an event, I promise you won't be disappointed. And don't forget I can string your racquet for you.

