

OFF THE WALL

Opening Shots



By Enrico Dubach, URA President

Are you ready to rumble? The upcoming racquetball season looks to be as good as ever. I haven't been playing much this summer, but that's going to change real soon. We have even more tournaments scheduled than last year and I didn't think that was going to be possible.

This year, several tournaments are going to feature a new round robin format. Each division will play one weeknight in a round robin format, with the winners moving on to the playoffs on Saturday. The entry form will show which night each division will play so you can plan your week a lot easier. But be prepared! The round robin will last approximately two hours where you play several players to determine who will compete on Saturday.

Saturday's playoffs will be in a standard two-out-of-three format. These tournaments will be indicated on the tournament schedule as a round robin. Give it a try and let us know how you like it. We don't want to replace the standard format, but many players who can't block out a whole week can give these a shot.

The Board has chosen Sports Mall as the host club for the 2001 State Championships. Tournament Director Brian Pointelin has had a lot of experience running large tournaments and we expect this to be a great time. Marv Jensen was chosen for the State Doubles Championships this fall. Hollis Robison will be directing this fun tournament.

I would like to take this opportunity to bid farewell to John Kitchens. He will be leaving Utah in September because of a transfer from Hill Air Force Base. Although he has only been on the Board for one year, John's enthusiasm has been contagious and he has proven to be a real asset to Utah Racquetball.

We have been trying to convince John that racquetball is more important than his career, but he just hasn't got his priorities right. His cheerful smile and fair play on the court will be missed by all of us. Good Luck, John!

I have also learned that Kristen Walsh will be leaving us. She has received a racquetball scholarship and will be going to college in Ohio. She was just elected to the Board last April, but she has already contributed a lot to racquetball in Utah. We will miss her at the meetings and on the court. Good Luck, Kristen and come visit us often.

We will have three positions open on the Board of Directors now. If you would like to help shape racquetball in Utah, please notify me or another Board Member. This is a lot of fun and doesn't take a lot of time.

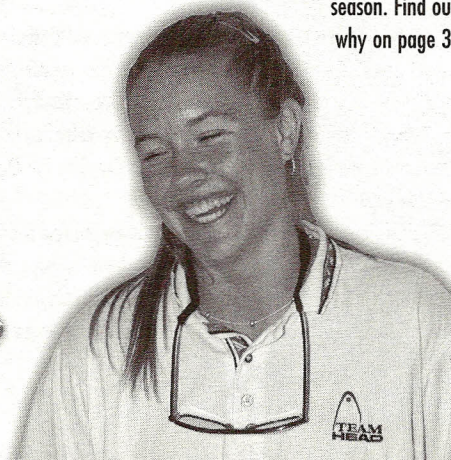
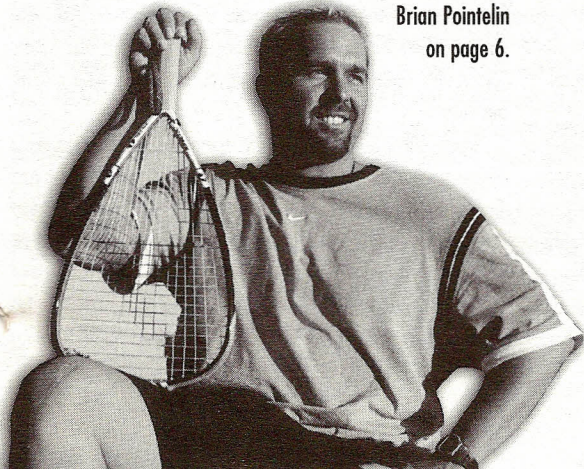
The Junior Summer League is wrapping up with the State Junior's Championships in August. Ruth McGovern has done a great job organizing this fun league for the kids. She is also putting together the Adult Traveling League which is starting in September. Contact your club manager or Ruth if you would like to participate in this great league. There are brackets for men and women as well as different skill divisions.

The High School League will start in October. Contact Marianne Walsh for more information on this great league for the High School kids. Again, there are brackets for all playing abilities. The State High School Championships will be held in February of 2001.

This season's tournament schedule is a pull-out insert in this issue. Just pull it out and use it all year. It looks like another great season for racquetball in Utah. So practice up and I'll see you on the courts.

There's a new kid on the block. Catch our player profile on Brian Pointelin on page 6.

The Women's Open division is completely up for grabs this season. Find out why on page 3.



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Mark Your Calendar:

- September 14-17
Links Cellular/Paging IRT Satellite Tournament
 Sports Mall
 (801) 261-3426
- September 26-30
State Doubles Championships
 Marv Jensen
 (801)253-4404
- October 10-14
Fall Blast
 Sports Forum
 (801)298-3231
- October 18-21
Huntsman World Senior Games
 Desert Palms (St. George)
 (435)628-4627
- October 24-28
Swing Into Fall
 Redwood Multipurpose Center
 (801)974-6923
- November 1-4
Bountiful Bash
 Bountiful Recreation Center
 (801) 298-6220
- November 7-11
St. George Turkey Shoot
 St. George Rec. Center
 (435) 634-5860
- November 14-18
Mullett Hoover Open
 Orem Fitness Center
 (801) 229-7154

Off The Wall

May, 2000

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There are currently three open spots on the URA Board. Please contact a board member if you would like to get involved at this level!

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

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Contributions may be e-mailed to the Editor at: scoray@corayphoto.com.

Please save files without formatting (no tabs, centering, bolding, etc.) in 'text only' format. Call Steve Coray if you need help doing that.

Deadlines for submission of all display advertising, stories and letters are listed below. All advertising must be prepaid. Call for rates and ad specifications.
Dec 2000 issue November 6, 2000
March 2001 issue February 12, 2001

URA board meetings are held the second Monday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Redwood Recreation Center and are open to anyone with interest in attending. Please contact Enrico Dubach in advance if you have a presentation you would like added to the agenda.



News and Notes

Several Utah players represented our state at the Adult Nationals 2000 in Houston this May. **Sylvia Sawyer** played five matches in less than 24 hours due to a scheduling mix-up but still managed to place well. She took first place in Women's 55+ A and second place in Women's 60+ Open.

Brian Pointelin played Men's 25+ and lost in the quarterfinals to Mike Dennison of Ohio (who ended up winning the division). **Jim Wilking** earned second place in Men's 60+, losing in a tough finals 11-9 tiebreak game. Spectators report he played a great game and gave it his all, diving all over the court.

Kristen Walsh went into Women's Open division with a number six seed. She competed well but ended up losing to Jackie Paraiso (currently the top women's pro player) in the quarterfinals. The winners of the quarterfinals qualified to be on the adult national team.

At the International Masters, held at Air Force Academy in July, **Jim Wilking** won the Men's 60+ division and **Doug Douville** took third place in the Men's 50+ division. **Gene Pletcher** paired with Ron Adams of California to take third place in the Men's 50+ Doubles.

Quarterly issues of Off The Wall are just one of the benefits of membership in the URA/USRA. If you are a member and are not receiving your newsletter, please contact **Val Shewfelt** with your address corrections at 801-375-8348 or just shoot her an e-mail at: val_shewfelt@stlife.byu.edu.

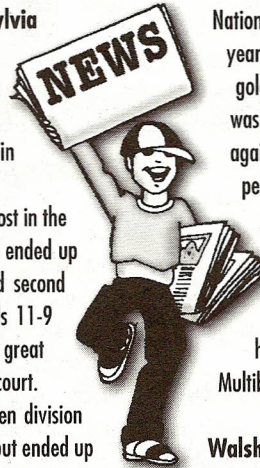
The High School Racquetball program is set to get the new season underway. Teams will be forming in October - watch for more information in clubs and at the schools. If you are in grades 9-12 and want to play in the High School League, call **Marianne Walsh** at 487-2338. Volunteers to coach or help run the league are needed.

The High School Program will be hosting a yard sale this Oct. (see ad). The program introduces countless young people to our sport and feeds lots of new members into the URA. Please support this program however you can.

Utah is losing two more excellent players and avid supporters of racquetball. Little **Kristen Walsh** has grown up and headed off to college at Baldwin Wallace in Cleveland, Ohio.

John Kitchens and his wife had a healthy baby boy in June. He is in the Air Force and has been transferred to the Dayton, Ohio, area, but may end up in Texas.

As much as these two have contributed on the courts in playing ability, effort and sportsmanship, they have perhaps offered even more off the court in enthusiasm and active support for the game. We'll miss these two fine athletes. Read more about Kristen on page 3.

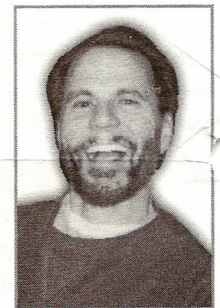


In June, four Utah youngsters went to the Junior Nationals in Minneapolis and competed very well. In his first year in Boy's 10-, **John Sanderson** took third place in the gold division. Going into the tournament unseeded, John was the only player in the tournament to win a game against the national champion, Jose Rojas. John also competed well in Boys 12 - Singles.

Korey Walsh had his best finish in a national tournament taking fourth place in the blue division of the Boy's 10- Singles. **Kyle Walsh** had a great time in his first major tournament, bringing home a fourth place in the red division of the Boy's 6- Multibounce category.

However, and here's a big surprise, it was **Kristen Walsh** who had the most success, returning from the tournament as a triple gold medal winner. Kristen won the gold division of Girl's 18- Singles, Girl's 18- Doubles (with Crystal Czuk), and Girl's 18- Mixed Doubles (with Stephen Lewis). In the singles event, Kristen beat her doubles partner, Crystal Czuk, to qualify for the Junior National team for the fourth year in a row.

AmPRO will be conducting another certification clinic. This time, AmPRO director **Gary Mazaroff** will conduct classes at the Orem Recreation Center, September 20-21, 2000. The cost is \$178 and you can contact **Joel Tualeva** for more info at 225-8349. Space in the clinic will be limited to the first 10 people who turn in their money.



At the March clinic at the Sports Mall, the following players passed the instructor certification test: **Dave Beasley, Enrico Dubach, Dennis Fisher, Ray Hoey, John Kitchens, Jeanette Olsen, Brian Pointelin, Gene Rolfe, Val Shewfelt, Joel Tualeva, Kristen Walsh and Marianne Walsh.** **Dennis Fisher** was also certified as an AmPRO coach. Previously, **Tony Glavas** was the only certified AmPRO instructor in Utah.

The Traveling League's deadline for rosters and sign-ups is September 1. Teams from last year included Sports Mall, Alta Canyon, Marv Jenson, Redwood Rec., Bountiful Rec. and Sports Forum. The Cottonwood Heights players may also field a team this year.

Teams play approximately twice a month, on the weeks there are no sanctioned tournaments. The format includes singles and doubles events for men and women of all ability levels. Contact your local club join in. If your club doesn't have a team yet, become an organizer!

Call **Ruth McGovern** at the Redwood Recreation Center with any questions.

Growing up in Racquetball



By Kristen Walsh, URA Board member

I couldn't have asked for a better place to grow up than in the racquetball community. When I was a baby I would sit outside the court in a baby chair and watch my mother play racquetball. When I was old enough to walk, I had a racquet (which was bigger than me) in my hand and tried unsuccessfully to hit the ball. When I turned a big, whopping 5 years old I played in my first tournament. I lost and cried after every single match.

Since that time I have played in, what seems like, a million tournaments. I've lost a few and won a few here and there. That's not what has made being around racquetball so great. Of course that is definitely a fun and large part of why a lot of people play the sport.

It's the experiences that I've had through racquetball that are so special to me. Some have been bad and some have been good, but they have all helped me to be who I am.

I have learned a lot of things from the people at the club. I learned that I can't win every match (it's okay to lose once in a while!!) and that you shouldn't tease a grown man about his bright pink hat because he'll never wear it again.

I've learned that it's ok to beat your mom. (but you're going to have to find a ride home and a place to sleep for the next

week) and that racquetball should ALWAYS be fun. The minute it's not, you should get off the court.

The most rewarding thing that I've found in racquetball is teaching others. It is so much fun to teach someone and help them to learn a sport that has given so much to you. Yes, it does take time and patience, but it is time and patience well spent. Tournaments have also been great learning tools through the years. It's so much fun to win them, but I always learn more when I lose. When I lose a tournament it usually motivates me to get better and to want to practice and train.

The last few years I have started traveling to a lot of tournaments out of state. It has been great to travel and meet many new people. I have definitely missed playing in all of the Utah tournaments and hanging out with everyone that plays them.

A few months ago I made the decision to go to Ohio for school. I'm going to a small, private school called Baldwin Wallace College. There I will be studying physical therapy/sports medicine and I will have the opportunity to play racquetball at the college level in a different environment.

I'm sure it will be fun, but I'm going to miss everyone that I've grown up with around here. My mom said the reason she's shipping me half way across the country is so that she will have a chance at winning a tournament again. But....I'LL BE BACK.

Juniors Program News

By Ruth McGovern

This summer's program had four participating teams and a lot of new, young players. New also were several racquetball dads who got involved with their kids and found out how much fun the juniors program is.

The Redwood team was coached by **Kris Wheeler** and **Rob McGovern**. **Sandi Gunn** and **Traci McCoy** led the Bountiful team and **Brian Pointelin** and **Marianne Walsh** coached the Sports Mall group. Marv Jensen, in their first year of junior competition, was led by **Jerry Montanez** and **Randy Martin**.

Following are a few comments the kids made about Kristen at the Juniors' clinic.

Kristi Ethington

"I was impressed that she has been playing since she was five."

Anthony Martin

"I was impressed that she is on the Junior Olympic team."

Korey Walsh

"It's cool she goes to tournaments all over the country."

Cody Pace

"It's cool that she gets to travel all around the world."

Devin VanValkenburg

"It's great that she has gone so far in racquetball."

Kim Walsh

"I'm amazed she can do so well in school while competing at such a high level in racquetball."

Spencer Smith

"I was impressed that she plays a lot of sports."

Zac Smith

"I think it is neat she is sponsored by Head."

Spencer McCoy

"She's really good at racquetball!"

Matt Harris

"She's a cool person, really nice."

Anthony Montanez

"It's cool she travels everywhere."

Grant Yates

"She hits the ball really hard!"

Stephen Olsen

"She's really athletic!"

On July 13, the league had a Player Appearance and Clinic Night. **Kristen Walsh** spoke to the players about her experiences in racquetball and gave them a clinic. The kids each got a chance to try out their skills in a short game with her. They also were able to practice other skills with fun drills set up on several courts. Those that did really well were awarded with prizes.

The league winds up each summer with a tournament, pool party and awards barbeque at the end of August. Watch for results in the next issue.

DONATIONS NEEDED!

For the High School Program's

ANNUAL YARD SALE

FUNDRAISER

Sat. Sept 16
9am-2pm

At the SPORTS MALL parking lot during the Links Cellular/Paging IRT Satellite Tournament.

Please call Marianne Walsh at 487-2338 if you have any household items to donate.



Player Profile: Brian Pointelin



By Marcus Dunyon, URA V.P.

This article is on a new face in the Utah racquetball community that some of you may already know and one who will more than likely be a real force both on and off the court. That player is Brian Pointelin.

Brian moved to Utah from Denver this summer to become the Racquetball Program Director at the Sports Mall. He's a busy guy. Brian also represents Pro Kennex as Player Development Manager for Utah and Colorado, supervising player contracts and active retail accounts. He has been playing on the IRT professional racquetball tour for over a year and, as the Official IRT Racquet Stringer, strings racquets for many of the sport's top pro players.

Besides conducting lessons and leagues, Brian will be hosting some exciting tournaments this year. You can find more information about his first upcoming event on the next page.

Photo by Steve Coray



Q Brian, I met you when you first came over to play in the Precision Sports Open. How long has it been?

A It has been five years. It seems like just yesterday, you missing those line calls when you were a line judge.

Q It's amazing how time flies when you're having fun. I heard you started to play racquetball six years ago.

A Actually I played a lot when I was a kid. My mother worked a couple different clubs and it was either stay home and do nothing or ride my bike to the club and beat the ball around the court. It was cool! When the club closed at night, we would throw the bike in the back of the car and go home, then do it again the next day.

Q Where did you grow up and how old were you when you started to play?

A I grew up in Springfield, Missouri, in the southwestern part of the state. I was around twelve when I started playing. My parents had a rule that I couldn't play a tournament until I was 13. So for a year I played mostly men's league. The first four tournaments I played, I won, moving up from Novice to B class. The bad part was I had to play my dad in the finals, and I spanked him pretty good.

Q Tell me about your family, were they active players?

A My father was a very active player and my mother was more an employee of the club. So I played until I was a freshman in high school and decided to quit. At that time, baseball became more of a priority. I quit from the time I was 14 until I turned 22.

Q How was your baseball career?

A In college, I was an All-American for Benedictin College in Kansas. As a pitcher, I had the opportunity to play professional ball at the minor league level and then some semi-pro baseball, too. I played with a lot of great players. It was truly an unbelievable experience.

Q Do you feel that having played at the level you did in baseball had an influence on your drive to play at the highest level in racquetball?

A I think so. The thing that really was the cross over to racquetball was the fact I was a pitcher. All the action around baseball was dictated by where I threw the ball and how I threw. Playing singles in racquetball is the same; you can control the action based on your serve and how you hit it.

Q After baseball, you moved back to Springfield to go to college and you taught racquetball. You also had the opportunity to play with some players at Southwest Missouri State. Tell me about that.

A The college was about five minutes from where I went to school. The guys who were playing there were Derek Robinson, Tim Sweeney, and others. They were some of the best players in the nation. Their college team won the combined national championship four years in a row. I was very fortunate because Tim Sweeney helped me a lot, and Derek Robinson, who is still one of my best friends as far as racquetball is concerned, took me under his wings and taught me how to train and how to prepare for a tournament. It was a little more difficult getting back into the game because the game had changed.

Player Profile (continued)

Q In what ways?

A The speed of the ball was much faster and the athletes that were playing were in better condition. The sport had become more of a serious sport and the players were taking things more personal. The level of the top players had gone up and the people playing were better athletes.

Q What else do you enjoy doing besides racquetball?

A I enjoy playing softball with the boys when I can. That stems from my love of playing baseball. In addition, I love playing golf. I ran golf leagues at the Denver Athletic Club and my handicap went from a 13 to a two. I'm not playing that well right now.

Q How do you feel about your move to Salt Lake City?

A Moving to Salt Lake has been the greatest thing for me as far as racquetball is concerned. I feel that I have been really blessed, the people I have surrounded myself with as far as creating a team atmosphere of people who help me. Like **Rhino Booth**, who set up my workout program and then motivates me

to do it. Eric Jones on nutrition, **Tom Shearman** and his group to make sure I'm ready to play every tournament.

Q What do you feel is your biggest change?

A Really, my biggest change has been in my attitude. It's funny but I never really thought anything could change something like attitude, the way a person acts or reacts on and off the court. I used to be a real jerk on the court, but now my friendship with **Kristen Walsh** has really been a blessing. Working with her on and off the court and learning from her things like mental focus and having a positive attitude on the court.

Brian and I talked for a long time about the current players in Utah and how they stack up throughout the nation and about his influences in sports in general. He expressed a lot of respect for reigning state champion **Adam Anderson** and of Adam's desire to win every game. I suggest that you introduce yourself to Brian and take some time to get to know more about him yourself.

This September, Brian Pointelin is bringing professional racquetball to Utah! He is hosting the **Links Cellular/Paging IRT Satellite Tournament** at the Sports Mall from September 14 to 17. Satellite events on the IRT pro tour allow all players to earn professional ranking points as long as enough pros play in the event. That won't be a problem because, by press time in mid August, Brian had already lined up an impressive array of talent. Top pros in the event are likely to include: **Jason Manino**, ranked fourth and the current U.S. Open champ; **Rocky Carson**, current U.S. National champion; and **Mike Locker**, ranked eleventh on the tour. All of the tough Colorado players that have been coming over each fall to dominate the Precision Open tournaments will also be here.

All brackets will be offered, with a slight twist to the Open Category. Rather than sign up for Open, players will sign up for the Pro Division. Then, first round losers of the Pro Division will move down to make up the Open bracket. It's your chance to play against the big boys and still play some more matches!

There will be plenty of excitement, with cash prizes in all Pro and Open divisions. Brian will offer drawings and raffles, with merchandise supplied by ProKennex and the IRT. Also, **John Yorkey** will be conducting a refereeing clinic. Watch for entry forms, but if you have questions, call Brian at **(801) 261-3426**.

Know the Rules: Take Control

By John Yorkey

When it's time to referee a match, one very important step that is most often overlooked is the pre-game interview. I see many refs walk up to the court, yell to one player, "Pick a number, 1 or 2 (or odd/even or blue/green)" and then start the match.

This is a setup for **disaster**. Here are some basic steps to a more productive referee session:

1. Before the match, take time to check the court for any obstructions. Clean up any wet spots, sweep the court if necessary and check to see if the door closes completely.

2. Have some supplies on hand: an extra pencil or pen, a coin to flip for heads or tails, an extra racquetball, a towel for wet spots after late game dives.

3. Introduce yourself to the players. You need to be able to remember who is who, so make notes on the score card that will help remind you, like "Rick-tight, pink shorts".

4. Review some important rules with the players. Verbally list all court hindrances (lights, door, windows, etc.) and how you will call the encroachment line. Let them know that you will call the

screen serves and that they should raise their hand, but keep playing until you make the call. Remind them about avoidables and that you will call them. Finally, ask them if they have any questions for you.

5. Flip a coin or have a player pick a number to see who serves first and wish them luck and suggest they remember to have some fun.

6. Try to be upbeat when conversing with the players. You don't want to come across as a dictator, but as someone they can turn to for the correct call.

7. Nobody is perfect. Make the best calls you can. No one likes a "wishy-washy" ref. If the ball is short, then call it short. Not, "I think it was short, let's play it over." Players like someone who is direct in their calls, right or wrong! When you start second-guessing your own calls, the players will lose confidence in your ability to call a game.

Remember, racquetball is supposed to be fun. Effective refereeing can help prevent ugly situations that detract from the fun of a clean, competitive match.

WANTED

Volunteer interested in learning about graphic design, writing, and/or photography to assist with the production of the newsletter.

Contact
Steve Coray at
801-278-8131.