

## daily schedule of saturday events

8:00am - 8:30pm  
Registration for all players

8:00am - 10:00am  
Continental Breakfast in  
The Players Village

10:00am  
E-Force Team Player Meeting  
(Hyatt, Imperial Suite-30th)

10:00am - 11:30am  
Ektelon Team Player Meeting  
(Hyatt, Regency Room)

12:00pm  
Racquetball Specific  
Exercises Clinic  
Eugene Coyle

12:00pm  
Lunch Served by  
Carrabba's Italian Grill  
The Players Village

1:00pm - 2:00pm  
Ektelon Hard Hitting Contest  
YMCA, Court #5  
(John Ellis, Shawn Royster)

1:00pm  
President's Advisory Council  
Hyatt, Presidential Suite  
(Invitation Only)

7:00pm  
Racquetball Night To Remember  
(Hyatt-Grand Ballroom)

## Competition Skills vs Racquetball Skills

By Jo Shattuck  
www.racquetballacademy.com

Just like you can practice and improve your racquetball skills, like ceiling balls and lob serves, there are many 'competition skills' you can practice and improve too. Here are four different 'internal' competition skills, their definitions and how you can practice them everyday. There are also external skills, (how to manipulate your competition environment). In this newsletter, we'll cover one or two skills each day, then on the fourth day, you'll see how they all work together.

The first skill is Focus:  
Focus: the ability to become and remain attentive to the present task. The next time you are at a red traffic light, make a conscious decision to "Engage your focus" on the license plate in front of you, or on a tree nearby, or even your own breathing. Stay focused until the light changes. When it does, make a conscious decision to "Release your focus". Try to become aware of how you Engage and Release. This will be important later on. Turn to page 2 for self-assessment.

Editor

Leo R. Vasquez

## The Next Step

If there's one word that exemplifies **Liz Alvarado** (Mico, TX) it's excellence, and Friday it all paid off for the local favorite here at the **Ektelon 40th USA Racquetball National Singles Championships**.



Liz Alvarado

The day began with Alvarado becoming the newest member of the Women's US National Racquetball Team with a dominating performance over current U.S. Team member, **Kristen Walsh** (Salt Lake City, UT), 15-3, 15-2.

Sweet revenge considering Walsh narrowly escaped defeat last year by defeating Alvarado, 14-15, 15-2, 11-4 in the quarter-finals.

"I have been training specifically for this event," said Alvarado. "I put more effort into my workouts and training program this year than last year."

Alvarado kept pressure on her opponent the entire match with drive serves and deep court passes that never let Walsh find her groove.

**Kerri Wachtel** (Cincinnati, OH) continued her winning ways as she defeated **Brenda Kyzer** (Leesville, SC) 15-11, 15-3. "Kerri played really well today," said Kyzer.

More action was to follow as **Cheryl Gudinas-Holmes** (Naperville, IL) played her first match of the event due to a first round bye. Gudinas sent **Adrienne Fisher** (Tuscaloosa, AL) packing with a solid defeat, 15-4, 15-10.

The defending champion, **Rhonda Rajsich** (Fountain Hills, AZ) also played her first match as well, and went up against **Jo Shattuck** (Denver, CO) in the final women's match of the day. "Jo is such a skilled technician and can give anyone problems if you let her in a match," said Rajsich. "I wanted to get in there and not let that happen today." Rajsich would defeat Shattuck in two games, 15-3, 15-11. Check page 2 for today's semi-final times.



Rhonda Rajsich and Jo Shattuck

## Close Call

The men's US Team qualifying matches were mostly decided by a few points either way and that brought excitement to some and frustration to others.

First up was the battle between friends as **Mitch Williams** (Pueblo, CO) faced off against **Jason Thoerner** (Pekin, IL)

In a re-match from the 2006 US National Singles, last year Thoerner limped away with a 15-14, 14-15, 11-7 win. This year would prove to be different as Mitch came out with a 7-0 lead in the first game before Jason warmed up his engine and tied the score at 13-13. Mitch finished the first game with a blistering forehand to take game one, 15-13. The second started the same way as Mitch built a 13-4 lead and never let off the gas winning game two, 15-9.



Ben Croft

Next up, **Rocky Carson** (Ladera Ranch, CA) would face the new kid on the block, **Ben Croft** (Lake Bluff, IL). The first game started off with both players standing their ground as Carson built a comfortable lead and won the first game, 15-8. Croft would kick it into 4th gear and ran away with a 8-0 lead in the second game. Carson would grind back but Croft held him off and won the second game, 15-7. The tie-breaker went back and forth but Carson never trailed and won the match with a final score of 11-9.

The action continued as **Shane Vanderson** (Fort Myers, FL) and **Chris Crowther** (Riverside, CA) took to the main court. Shane built a nice 12-6 lead in the first game and then Chris started to bring the heat. Crowther would get close but not before Vanderson won the first game 15-14. The second game was nearly the same result, but Vanderson would have none of that and closed out the match with a 15-12 victory.

The final match found **Jack Huczek** (Rochester, MI) in unfamiliar territory against **John Ellis** (Stockton, CA). Jack came out hot and won the first game 15-5, looking flawless. The second game looked nothing like the first as Huczek was skipping the ball and Ellis stayed aggressive winning 15-4. Elliestyle began the tie-breaker with a commanding 6-0 lead over Huczek in front of a packed house. Jack began serving to the left side glass and Ellie had trouble returning those serves with success. Jack would come back to win 11-9 in the tie-breaker and face Shane Vanderson today in the semi-finals.

# In Play Today....

## Women's US Team

12:00pm

**Cheryl Gudinas vs  
Liz Alvarado**

1:00pm

**Rhonda Rajsich vs  
Kerri Wachtel**

## Men's US Team

3:00pm

**Jack Huczek vs  
Shane Vanderson**

4:00pm

**Rocky Carson vs  
Mitch Williams**

### Competition Skills vs Racquetball Skills

By Jo Shattuck  
www.racquetballacademy.com

We all work on our racquetball skills, (ceiling balls, drive serves etc.), but do you practice your competition skills?. Competition skills are tools to help you while you are competing. Yesterday we examined the skill "Focus". Today we'll look at Self assessment.

Self-assessment: the ability to accurately determine your present mental, physical and emotional state. Relaxed, amped up, and nervous are examples of these states. If you know ahead of time what you feel like when you perform your best (your optimal state), then compare your current state to your optimal state, you can make the proper decisions during competition to get your self back to the state where you perform your best. Do a 'self scan". Start with the strongest feeling in yourself you can identify... eagerness, happy nervous, worried nervous, bored, confused, whatever. Pay attention to your breathing, and pulse too. Then find your state of relaxedness or hyperness (also called amped-ness). Give it a number from 1 to 10. (1 being the most relaxed you can be, and 10 being the most hyper). Scan' yourself several times day to get good at it. Then scan your self during competition, see how the numbers vary. I have students who perform best at 7 or 8, while others do best at 6. During competition, you'll want to find your optimal state and stay there, but first you have to be able to accurately assess your self.

# Thursday was Ladies' Night Out!

by Cheryl Kirk

An outpouring of support, friendship and generosity emanated from Ducks in the Hyatt Regency on Thursday evening. The USAR Women's Committee hosted the Second Annual Ladies' Night Out...with about 60 women (and a few righteous brothers) attending!

Comments to the attendees came from Jim Hiser (USAR Executive Director), Brenda Kyzer (WPRO athlete), Terry Rogers (WS/MRA Board member), Tom Curran (NMRA President), and Randy Stafford (USAR Board President).

One of the big highlights was the introduction of a fundraiser raffle for Racquet for the Cure, a painting created specially by Ruben Gonzalez, entitled Spirit of the Journey. It was unveiled by Ruben at the reception; raffle tickets will continue on sale through late Saturday afternoon: \$5 each or 5 for \$20. The drawing will take place on Saturday evening at the banquet and the winner does not need



to be present. Proceeds go to Susan G. Komen for The Cure. Tickets can be purchased from Women's Committee members Malia Bailey, Lorraine Galloway, or Cheryl Kirk. They can also be procured at the Ektelon booth and from Ruben himself. A total of \$350 was raised at the gathering and there are high hopes for raising much, much more! The dedication reads, "In honor and memory of those who have dealt with the challenges of breast cancer in their lives."

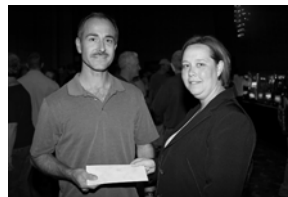
Additionally, a Racquet for the Cure raffle of an Ektelon O3 Pink racquet and a made happy winners out of Laura Brandt and Marcia



Wilson, and USA Racquetball, no one left empty handed – rackets, grips, posters, T-shirts – and a good measure of racquetball knowledge. We ensured that everyone left even smarter than when they arrived. Question: who has won the most Women's Open national titles in USA history? Answer – Michelle Gould!

The USA Women's Committee thanks Heather Fender for her assistance in planning the reception, as well as special thanks both to those women who have traveled to Houston many years in a row as well as to those who have made this their very first trip to National Singles. Good luck to all!

## VIVA LAS VEGAS



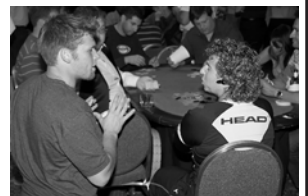
**Roland Grassl**

**Winner of 2 Free Nights at the Hyatt**

**\$200 to spend at the Spindletop**



photos: geoff thomsen



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