



September 2007

USA Racquetball Newsletter

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Major Event Schedule

September 13-16
Outback Blast It! ProAm (WPRO)
Fayetteville, NC

September 20-30
Kansas City Open (IRT)
Kansas City, MO

September 26-30
40th U.S. National Doubles Championships
Tempe, AZ

November 14-18
Choice Hotels US Open Racquetball Championships
Memphis, TN

Enter these tournaments online at

www.usaracquetballevts.com.

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A Dream Comes True

IRT Commissioner Dave Negrete's plans for an all-Lucite portable racquetball court have been in the works for three years, and on August 6th, construction of the court began at the Schaumburg Tennis Plus club in Illinois. The new court will be all Lucite, including the ceiling. Financial backing from Leo & Sue Klimaitis and Pat & Mary Taylor made construction of the court possible, and architect Devin Cannady is credited with the design. One of the major assets of the court is that it will be much easier and quicker to set up and tear down, making it easier for the IRT to bring the sport to the public via shopping malls,



smaller stadiums and other high-traffic areas like Navy Pier in Chicago, the beach in California and outdoor festivals.

Dave plans to debut this marvelous engineering feat at the 2008 Motorola IRT Pro Nationals grand slam event in Chicago in April. Visit www.irt-tour.com for more information.

Battle At The Beach Makes History

September 3 was a historic day for outdoor racquetball. Royster Productions was on the scene to film the Labor Day event in Venice Beach, California. This was the first step of filming for an ESPN television series on outdoor racquetball. Talk about a day at the beach! Make sure you visit www.worldoutdoorracquetball.com for more information about the event. (Photos by KayvonPhotos.com)



Portable Outdoor Court With A View



Doubles Champions Son Nguyen, Josh Tucker and Friends



Singles Champion Rocky Carson Vs. Son Nguyen



Enter USA Racquetball's National Doubles Championships Today

Time is running out to enter the **2007 US National Doubles Championships, September 26-30**, in sunny Tempe, Arizona.

The **US National Doubles Championships** is one of USA Racquetball's premiere events and we hope you'll be a part of it. The event takes place at Arizona State University's Student Recreation Center

which is loaded with glass-back courts and plenty of comfortable seating. This means you and your partner will have every opportunity to play racquetball in a beautiful venue and watch your favorite teams in action.

Please visit www.usaracquetballevents.com and click on the link to the US National Doubles Championships to enter. The deadline to enter is **Tuesday, September 18th at 11:50 p.m. MST**.

Men's Professional Racquetball

Grand Slams with big prize money and the best players in the sport abound for the International Racquetball Tour this season. The IRT kicked off the 2007-08 season in style with the newest grand slam jewel in their crown, the **Motorola World Racquetball Championship** in Colorado Springs on September 12-16, where **Rocky Carson** captured the title in an impressive four-game victory over **Alvaro Beltran**. You'll barely have time to let your body recover before heading to the **Choice Hotels US Open Racquetball Championships** in Memphis on November 14-18, followed by the **Motorola IRT-Pro Nationals** in Chicago in April.

IRT Commissioner Dave Negrete has been busy promoting our great sport and building that beautiful new court as seen on page 1 of this newsletter. Thanks, Dave for all you do!

For a complete schedule and more news about the men's professional tour, visit www.irt-tour.com.



Join USA Racquetball

Standard Memberships

include a subscription to **RACQUETBALL** magazine (six issues per year). A portion of all dues remains with each state affiliate organization for local programs.

International Memberships

Please email tmorse@usra.org or hizzett@usra.org or call 719-635-5396, ext. 123 for international membership rates.

Limited Event Memberships are valid for one weekend event *or* a one-day shootout. The cost is **\$15** and may be upgraded within 90 days from the date of signup for an additional payment of **\$20** (membership becomes retroactive). This special limited event membership includes one issue of **RACQUETBALL** magazine, ranking, and secondary accident insurance coverage. This new membership option was created for many reasons, but mainly to invite the recreational club player on the cusp of "competitive" play to join a weekend tournament.

Adult 1 Year Membership - **\$35**

Adult 3 Year Membership - **\$100**

Junior Membership (18 & Under) - **\$20**

Lifetime Membership - **\$1,000**

Sign up today at www.usaracquetball.com

WPRO KICKS OFF 2007-2008 SEASON AT OUTBACK STEAKHOUSE BLAST IT! IN FAYETTEVILLE

The Women's Professional Racquetball Organization (WPRO) will open its new season again at the Outback Steakhouse Blast It! Pro-Am Championships at The Sports Center in Fayetteville, NC from September 14-16. Top ranked pro's including defending champion Rhonda Rajsich (#1 - Phoenix, AZ), Kerri Wachtel (#2 - Cincinnati, OH), Cheryl Gudinas Holmes (#3 - Naperville, IL), and Angela Grisar (#4 - Santiago, Chile) are among the WPRO pros who will compete in these championships.

The Outback Steakhouse Blast It! Is a Tier 1 WPRO and USA Racquetball-sanctioned event that has been historically well attended by amateurs from around the country with prize money awarded in all Open divisions.

WPRO UNVEILS NEW WEBSITE

The WPRO is proud to unveil its new Web site at www.wpro-tour.com, showcasing the ladies of the WPRO! Find out who our sponsors and partners are, when the WPRO pros will be in your area, and other exciting news on tour!

With regular content updates and an edgy Flash intro using graphics from Double Donut Studios (www.doubledonut.com), you can now follow all the action by simply logging on to www.wpro-tour.com. Don't forget to sign up and take part in our monthly giveaways!

De-mystifying USA Racquetball's Skill-Based Ranking System

USA Racquetball's skill-based ranking system has many advantages. The most obvious benefit is that players will receive a national and state ranking based solely on their performance against other players.

Frequently Asked Questions:

- 1. Why isn't my name on the ranking list?** Your name is not on the list because your match results have not been reported to the USAR or to the ranking program directly. Once you participate in a sanctioned event AND the tournament director reports the results, you will be ranked. Please contact the tournament director to verify your results have been reported.
- 2. Will the USAR still use only matches from the quarters on?** No, every match of every event will be included in the new ranking system. Doubles are not ranked yet but will be in the near future.
- 3. What about forfeits?** Forfeits that occur during a match will count toward rankings. This will include an injury default during your match. If a match is never started, it will not be sent in for processing.
- 4. Do game points matter?** No, the ranking is compiled simply based on who wins and who loses.
- 5. If I play in 35's, how will my results be scored?** It makes no difference what division or age group you play. The skill level (ranking) of the player you are playing does matter. Everyone, from the #1 player to the #20,000 player will have a ranking. For example, Ruben Gonzalez usually plays in the Pro division. He also plays in an age group at some elite events such as National Singles. Ruben is over 50, so he shows up in the 50+ age group; however, since he is not 55, he does not show up in the 55+ age group. It should be noted that Ruben can also show up in the 45+ age group because he is eligible to play in any age group below his own, down to 20+ (as is just about everybody else!).
- 6. How were the initial baseline rankings formulated?** The 2003 Nationals, U.S. Open, and some state rankings were used as a guide and players were simply ranked #1 and down. This was a rough estimate of ability and there were discrepancies, but differences are working themselves out. We simply needed a starting point. The more matches we enter, the better the system will become.
- 7. How can I see my rankings?** The ranking system may be accessed on www.usaracquetball.com. Click the "Ranking" tab at the top of the home page. The next page provides the means to pull up your current ranking and see your present ranking, last ranking and positions moved. You can also display your age group and your state ranking list. Many other sorts and searches are also available.
- 8. How will the tournament directors ensure all players get ranked?** The tournament directors (in many cases, the state directors) are responsible for submitting all tournament results. Specific draw sheets, including all matches, are being sent to USAR for verification of membership and then submitted to our ranking director for tabulation of rankings. The ranking director processes the tournament result files and USAR web pages are automatically updated. A list of tournaments that have been processed are shown on the USAR web site. If the tournament you played in is not processed within a maximum of two weeks (time may be required to verify memberships that have to be delivered to national office by snail mail after the tournament is completed), contact the tournament director to verify that the results were sent in. If they were, then email the national office to continue your inquiry.
- 9. What if the tournament directors do not want the new ranking system?** All *sanctioned* events must report memberships and results within 14 days after completion of the event. Draw sheets will be posted to the ranking system and all players in the event will be ranked. If events are not sanctioned, players will not be ranked.
- 10. Will doubles teams be ranked?** Yes, doubles teams will be ranked, but not until 2008.
- 11. Why are pros and international players ranked?** All players who participate in sanctioned events and who are USAR members are ranked. This is a designated benefit available to all USAR members. Please note, all USAR national championships are open to US residents only.
- 12. How do I know where the A player ranking begins?** The USAR will arbitrarily determine the ranking position cut-off for A, B, C etc. divisions for events run by the national office. State associations will be able to print their state rankings from the national rankings and then determine their own point cut-off point for the different divisions. Individual states' setting of cut-off points for their local tournaments is beneficial in that a low to mid level "A" player in one state may only have the skill level of an upper level "B" player in a stronger state and would need to be seeded as such if they if they played in another state's tournament.
- 13. Will I be able to see how I rank against the players in my state?** Yes, a report is available that indicates rankings by state name. This report can also be sorted to include lists for male, female, junior male, junior female, and age group by gender.
- 14. How do I obtain an initial ranking?** Players enter the system the first time they play a sanctioned, registered match, whether they win or lose. (Continued on Page 4)

Rule Changes Approved by USAR'S Board of Directors

National Rules Commissioner Otto Dietrich announced USAR's Board of Directors approval of the following five rule changes. The changes became effective September 1, 2007.

A. New Policy Added: *"Once all players in a match have been informed what court they will be playing on, singles players are allowed up to 5 minutes of on-court warm-up time and these warm-up times run concurrently. For doubles, each team is allowed up to 5 minutes for on-court warm-up and while these times do not run concurrently, both team's warm-ups must be completed generally within a 10-minute period that starts when the first team begins its warm-up."*

B. Rule Clarification: Rule 3.15(c) was amended by adding the words "that comes into play" at the end of it so it reads: *"Moves into a position which blocks the opponent from getting to, or returning, the ball; or in doubles, the offensive player who is not returning the ball hinders or impedes either defensive player's ability to move into a position to cover the pending shot that comes into play."*

C. Rule Amendment: Rule 3.11(a) 1 was amended by adding this sentence at the end: *"For example: If the receiver steps on the dashed receiving line with either foot (with any part of the foot contacting the line), a point shall be called for the server."*

D. Rule Revision: Rule 2.4(e) was revised by adding these provisions: *"The penalty for playing with an otherwise legal racquet with a grip extending beyond the 22-inch limit if noted during the course of a game shall be a technical foul and a timeout to correct the problem. Subsequent violations will result in the loss of the game in process. If the challenged racquet is found to be within the 22-inch limit, then a timeout will be charged to the player who made the challenge."*

E. Rule Revision: Rule 3.9(j) was revised by adding this provision: *"In one serve play, if a serve is made while the receiver is not ready as described in Rule 3.5 (b), the server will be allowed one more opportunity to hit a legal serve."*

Don't forget to enter the
**2007 U.S. National
Doubles Championships**
by registering online at

www.usaracquetballevents.com.

Online entries must be received by
Tuesday, **September 18th at
11:50 p.m. MST**. We hope to see you
in Tempe, Arizona on September 26-30!

SKILL-BASED RANKING SYSTEM

(Continued from Page 3)

15. How do I move up in the rankings? Win a match against a better-ranked player in the system. Wins against players ranked lower than you do not help you move up the rankings. The program records and stores your best previous win and, if in a specified amount of time you beat a higher-ranked player or the same higher-ranked player, you will immediately move up in the rankings.

Example:

You are presently ranked 325; your previous best win is a player who is ranked 150

Scenario 1 - If you defeat the player at ranking 180, you will immediately be ranked 180 and player you defeated (180) moves to ranking 181.

Scenario 2 - Instead of defeating player 180, you defeat the player at ranking 120. You immediately move to 150 (your previous best win) and a new best win of 120 is stored

NOTE: If you do not defeat anyone ranked higher than you are, (i.e. your previous best win of 325) within a specified amount of time (normally 13 months), then this best win will be eliminated (considered a fluke) and your best win will be reset to your present rank, in this case 325.

A player can move many ranking positions instantly, but there is a check to stop movement if the player's previous best win is determined to be well above his/her consistent skill level.

16. How fast can I move up in the rankings? Based on your present ranking, your opponent's ranking, your last posted best win, the time since his/her last win, and the time restrictions placed on the system by the USAR Ranking Committee, you will move up the rankings. If you are within the time limit allowed, you may move 1, 15, 100 or even hundreds of positions at a time. Your present ranking and the player rankings of your previous recorded wins will dictate this movement. You are able to move up very quickly so that your ranking will accurately reflect your ability level.

17. What happens if lose to a more lesser-ranked player? Depending on that player's previous history, one of two things can happen. You may stay right where you are in the rankings or you will move down only one position. You will not fall below any other players on the rankings due to this loss.

18. Are there separate rankings for both men and women? Yes, matches played are not mixed together, therefore when two males or two females play, the matches are ranked in the appropriate lists. Mixed gender matches are not ranked.

To update your email address or to be removed from our mailing list, please contact Terri Morse at tmorse@usra.org.