



January 2014 Newsletter

Welcome, Racquetball Players!

Our goal is to keep members and all interested in Kansas racquetball informed on what's happening in and around the state, and ways to participate.

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As we continue distribution of this newsletter, please spread the word and [forward](#) to anyone that might be interested in seeing it. It is with your help that we will be able to grow racquetball across Kansas.

6th Annual Wichita YMCA Open

The 6th Annual Wichita YMCA Open is coming up quickly, and will be held at the new downtown YMCA. We will also use some courts at WSU if necessary. We will again hold a dinner Saturday night, this time at the YMCA. We will have a nice plated dinner with a cash bar available. Come join us for a great weekend of racquetball!

[Click here to enter early and don't miss out.](#) R2 Tournament link is active here. Deadline to enter is Wednesday, February 5th at 5:00.



9th Annual Winter Classic Brings Back the LPRT

This year's Winter Classic will again bring back the LPRT and the best professional women's racquetball players in the world. The tournament will be hosted by The Athletic Club and is presented by NextPage. Enter here:

(<http://www.r2sports.com/tourney/home.asp?>



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Here is an overview of the LPRT season up to now:

If the first half of the 2013-2014 LPRT season is any indication of what's in store for the second half, then keep an eye out for upsets, 5-game matches, dives, drive serves, and some match ups for the record books.

The Tour kicked off in Stockton, CA with a memorable event hosted by veteran tournament director (and retired IRT pro) John Ellis. Although a few of the top seeds were out due to injury or other reasons, the draw did not disappoint. Sofia Rason made it to her first pro semi-final while Veronica Sotomayor made her first pro final facing off against (still undefeated) Paola Longoria.

For the first time, the LPRT adopted a ranking point system for outdoor racquetball and the 3 Wall Ball World Championships event in Las Vegas was added to the schedule. LPRT Scholarship winner Michelle Key made it to the singles final and won the women's pro doubles event with partner Keely Franks Kennedy, while Janel Tsinger won the singles division. Look for additional outdoor events to be added to the LPRT calendar.

Another first for LPRT history were three Grand Slam events in just one season: a return to Minneapolis, MN for the US Open and 2 events in Mexico. The US Open LPRT draw included 42 lady pros representing 11 different countries. Although there were some upsets in the early rounds, the final resulted in two of the usual suspects as Paola Longoria defeated Rhonda Rajsich in 3 games.

Fortunately for the LPRT, Paola Longoria's (and racquetball's) popularity in Mexico continues to be on an upswing. The Tour stopped in Toluca for the first of two Mexican Grand Slam events. The Semis included Longoria, who would continue on to win the final without dropping a game in the tournament, and appearances by "ones to watch" Frederique Lambert, Maria Jose Vargas, and Cristina Amaya. Amaya made her first pro final at this event.

Monterrey was the location of the second Grand Slam event in Mexico: The Paola Longoria Invitational. Longoria won her namesake event continuing her winning streak going undefeated since May 2011. Scholarship winners Aubrey Kirch and Sharon Jackson were victorious over two of the top seeds to make appearances in the quarter finals. Unique to this event was the addition of an LPRT doubles division which was successful in participation as well as fan

support. The nail biter final went to a tie breaker with the team of Rhonda Rajsich and Maria Jose Vargas overcoming top seeded team Longoria and Samantha Salis Solis.

Our fall review would not be complete without mentioning one of the players' favorite tournaments located in Arlington, VA, just outside the Nation's Capital. Karen Denu and her team successfully hosted the 22nd Annual Christmas Classic. Wine tasting and all, the event was a festive way to kick off the holiday season.



8th Annual Carl Myers Memorial Tournament

Right after the Winter Classic and on the weekend of February 27 - March 2, the 8th Annual Carl Myers Memorial Tournament returns to the Garden City with \$10,000 in prize money. This is always a great tournament and if you've never been to one you are missing out on a great weekend of fun. This is an IRT Satellite tournament and a number of pros will be playing in this one. [There is an early entry discount, enter here and don't miss out.](#)

Three Steps to Walking All Over Your Opponent

By Bo Keeley

To hang my credential on your court door: I have spent hundreds and hundreds of hours teaching private and group racquetball lessons, ran many instructional camps that lasted a month and have written a 288 page best selling book to help players improve their racquetball play. That is past, and today I can condense over forty years of play, instruction and observation into three easy steps to walk all over your opponents.

1. Spend twenty minutes every time before you play practicing your serve. The serve is the major common denominator that gave the dominant players in modern racquetball the edge over all others. Marty Hogan, Cliff Swain, Sudsy Monchik and Kane Waselenchuk all control the game with the big serve and you can too. When you think about it, the serve is the one time in the game when you are in total control of the action. You decide how low to drop it, how hard to hit it and what serve to hit. It's your chance to take control of the point as soon as it starts.

Practice your drive serve from the left side of the court, the right side of the court, and center court. It's important to be able to hit at least three serves from each position with nearly identical motions. From each location on the court practice your drive serve to the left and to the right as well as the Z and jam serves until you find at least three serves you are really comfortable hitting from each spot. In total you should have at least ten power serves in your rotation. Just like a top pitcher in the majors, top players have a variety of serves to keep the opposition off balance.

In addition to variety, work on keeping your serves as low as possible. Practice dropping the ball lower and contacting it lower in the bounce. Ideally you'd like the served ball to bounce twice before hitting the back. But if you can keep a variety of serves low enough that your opponent fears might bounce twice you've done your job and will often solicit weak returns. Drop it low and contact it low, it's that simple.

It is also important when serving a down-the-line or cross-court drive to avoid hitting the side wall. Years ago, champs like Charlie Brumfield made a living by hitting crack drive serves into the sidewall. You too might catch some cracks when hitting a low jam serve, but as fast as today's game is you don't want to give your opponent more time to set up by catching the side wall on your straight drives. Save the sidewall for your jams and Z serves. If you find your drives are hitting the sidewall, adjust your point of contact in the motion. In other words, if your cross-court drive is going into the sidewall, drop the ball a little less in front of you until you find the contact point that takes it straight into the rear corner. If your down-the-line drive is catching the sidewall, drop it a little more in front of you until you find that perfect contact spot.

You may not see immediate results until you improve and eventually perfect your new serves,

but stick to them and keep a variety of serves coming low from multiple angles and the free points are sure to come your way.

2 - Work on your swing preparation. Practice during drills, warmups and matches getting your racquet up as early as possible and ready for the next shot. You may have to exaggerate swing preparation at first, running from shot to shot with your racquet high in the air. That's OK, Swain did it for years. When the ball is traveling 130 to 170 MPH, you have little time to think and even less to prepare. The entire game including focus, gets easier when you prepare to swing earlier. By getting your racquet up early ready to swing, you'll be able to contact more shots with maximum power while saving the step of having to bring your racquet up when you arrive at the ball. Early swing prep also gives you an extra split second to see what your opponent is doing before you strike the ball. That in itself is a big advantage. In a game decided by inches and milliseconds when two players with similar skills vie, the player with early swing preparation wins almost every time. Get your racquet up early and give yourself the winning edge.

3 - Find the Court's Sweet Spot. Everyone knows racquets have a sweet spot but you might not have known until now that the court has a sweet spot, too. Step three is the simplest and easiest to engineer into your game. After you hit a shot, immediately return to the dotted, five-foot line. Let the five-foot line be your magnet that pulls you to return after each ball is struck. With today's big racquets and fast game playing in front of the five foot line limits your ability to react to balls hit in excess of 130 MPH and leaves you in position to be passed easily. You don't want to be back too far either, so plant yourself just behind the five foot line. You are close enough to get anything but a perfect kill that you wouldn't have reached anyway, but deep enough to handle the pace and avoid getting passed. It's the ideal spot to combat the power game, so always return to your sweet spot after each stroke.<-

I guarantee this simple three step plan will improve your game a full level from where you are now with just a few months practice. It's a cakewalk, it's free, and if you're a C player you'll soon be a B, if you're a B player you'll become an A, and if you are an A player you'll soon join the big boys in the Open division as easily as one, two, three!



I Play. I Win.

By Coach Lucy DeSarto, WEC, TCOY
(Take Care of You) Wellness -

I PLAY. I WIN.

Do you remember when organized sports meant getting some kids together from the neighborhood to play kick-the-can, dodge ball, baseball or basketball? The perception was we were all winners because we got to play and have fun.

Today, the sports world seems to be obsessed with defeating opponents more than enjoying the game.

A healthier approach would be to focus on personal development and growth for lifetime fitness. Racquetball provides a perfect opportunity to be well and stay well.

Exercise is truly our best defense against everything from depression to ADD to addiction to menopause to Alzheimer's.

MENTAL BENEFITS – Racquetball requires quick thinking and reactions thus improves cognitive behavior. Unlike organs, the brain doesn't wear out with use - it improves. Staying mentally active is fundamental at any age; but especially important as we grow older.

PHYSICAL BENEFITS – Practically every muscle is used while playing racquetball. The body responds to being active with increased strength and flexibility as muscles are worked. The increased oxygen and blood flow help all the systems of the body work more efficiently. Weight management is yet another perk.

EMOTIONAL BENEFITS – Racquetball players are like extended family members (enough said there, lol). Besides the social connections it's a great stress reduction. Numerous studies have proven that exercise works as a great anti-depressant; with no toxic side-effects.

FINANCIAL BENEFITS - The financial rewards are also becoming more apparent as health insurance premiums continue to rise. Racquetball is what I call "the good addiction". By being proactive and committing to being active, you reap multiple benefits today and in the future through prevention.

Show up each day whether you feel like it or not. You'll never regret a workout. Emotions and conflicts will arise; however, knowing this happens and being prepared allows you to conquer these situations. Game on...racquetball anyone?

Wellness is about embracing each and every day. Make each day your masterpiece by being active; physically, mentally and spiritually. TCOY = Take Care of You. TCOY is a philosophy and way of life. Looking to enhance your racquetball game or over-all well-being...Coach Lucy is in.

Testimonials

"I have had Parkinson's for fifteen years. My physicians recommended I be more conscious of exercise. I chose to begin playing racquetball because it addressed many of the areas I wanted to enhance and improve. With a desire to play and learn, I began participating in Lucy's racquetball clinics. I went from playing an hour a week to as many as fifteen! My doctors are ecstatic. They are thrilled and encouraged by the results. Racquetball has been a blessing to me in many ways. If I can do this, you can too." Keith Allen

"I've been playing racquetball for thirty years and love it. There is no other sport that gives me such a high. Although I've had numerous surgeries in my life, my goal has always been to be able to get back on the racquetball court. Lucy's clinics are a great way to learn and play."
Rachel Hight

"Racquetball is such a great outlet. Having an enthusiastic coach and role model like Lucy has made all the difference. As a beginner, I'm here for the fun but am also enjoying a great workout!" Jill Hayes

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