



The Colorado Racquetball Association ENews

SPRING 2018

NATIONAL MASTERS Returns to Highlands Ranch

International Championship caps July lineup

The [National Masters Racquetball Association](#) is pleased to return to the Highlands Ranch Community Association [Northridge Recreation Center](#), for great mile-high competition July 25-28. Players from across the country will come out early to adjust to the altitude, plus sightsee and enjoy the Rockies in every sense of the word.

The NMRA (and generous sponsors) are also subsidizing room rates to keep them affordable so more players can attend and stay at the host hotel to socialize. Guests are welcome to spectate at no charge, and NMRA hospitality is legendary on the tourney circuit, with daily full lunches and an awards banquet on Friday night.



NMRA competition is offered in singles, doubles and mixed doubles, in age bracketed play set in five-year increments starting at 40+. All divisions are round-robin and all matches are self-officiated, which guarantees you are never eliminated, and that sportsmanship is assured. You'll be among good friends who share your love of the sport and value fair competition even more than winning.

First-time players are not required to join the NMRA right away; however, you must be a member in good standing of [USA Racquetball](#) to compete. [Enter today >>](#)

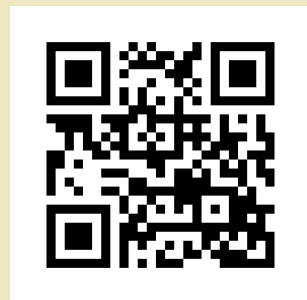
Fifteen players from ten states have already registered and, while there's no guarantee, top-notch competitors like the legendary [Ruben Gonzalez](#) are "regulars" on the NMRA circuit ... so who knows if he might make an appearance?! [Photo: Python Racquetball]

You're also certain to see former Colorado resident Cindy Tilbury, who was recently re-appointed as NMRA President. [Keep](#)

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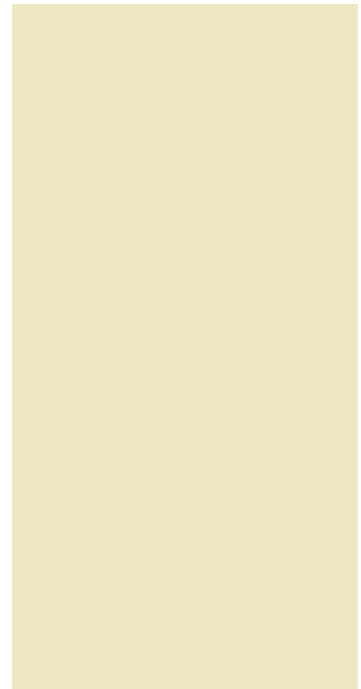
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[checking the entrants list for more notables](#)

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The SPRING Calendar is the current working edition, but you still want to be vigilant about switching out old versions wherever you come across them!

How to tell? Check the lower right reference date against the [current version](#) on ColoradoRacquetball.com. If the date of the copy you're looking at is **earlier** than the online copy, toss it out! Always go with the [PDF under the competition tab](#) and look for updates twice a year.

The [Colorado Racquetball Association](#) strives to schedule a sanctioned event in every month of the season, so look for the latest calendar to make sure you don't miss a thing.

Tourney News | Plenty of Action

TOURNEY TICKER ... Save the dates! *Rocky Mountain State Games* | July 20-22 (*COSprings*) ... *NMRA International Championship* | July 25-28 (*Highlands Ranch*) ... *World Senior Championships* | Aug.28-Sept.1 (*Albuquerque, NM*) ... [Enter online or check recent results for >>](#) ... *Blizzard Bash* ... *RFTC* ... *APEX Open* ... *PAC Open* ... *State Singles* ... *Regionals* ... and more!

CRA State Singles ... Entries topped 85, and 26 brackets were fielded over the weekend, which included an [Annual Awards](#) ceremony for the first time in several years.

! Coming Up !

July 20-22 // [Enter NOW](#)

In a series of head-to-heads at State Singles, CRA Board members faced off in Men's Open, as **Matt Metsler** headed toward his second CRA title. Matt Dockter was the first challenger in pool play, followed by Shannin Rudman in the opening round of the playoff. Metsler then advanced past Michael Nigro in the semi, and made quick work of Keith Sapp in their final, 15-7, 15-1.


On Twitter? Share your @handle by following [@ColoradoRB](#) and we'll cross-post more items, more often, as interest and audience grows!

Rising star **Nicole Martinez** entered Women's A, but was bumped up and quickly dominated the combined Open/Elite division, with straight-game wins over the Elite entrants. Martinez defeated both new Mom Michelle Dockter, and Most Improved Michiele Stapleton to take the state title.

Debut [World Doubles OPEN](#) ... The Denver Athletic Club hosted the premiere [World Doubles OPEN](#) event, welcoming both the IRT and LPRT tours for mile-high competition. A total of 136 entrants, including pros, battled through 17 brackets over the weekend.

Drawing into the [Men's IRT](#) round from the No.6 seed position, former Colorado resident Ben Croft and top-ranked Kane Waselenchuk made a steady advance to the final with straight game wins before taking an injury forfeit from Alvaro Beltran / Daniel De La Rosa in the title round.

On the Women's [LPRT side](#), Paola Longoria and Samantha Salas reached their final with ease, before taking their first tiebreaker against Alexandra Herrera / Monserrat Mejia, 15-5, 5-15, 11-6. Throughout the remaining draws, plenty of high-profile CRA players [claimed their wins](#). Congratulations!

USAR [Rocky Mountain Regionals](#) ... fielded 54 players in 20 divisions, and organizers experimented with a new "triple knockout" format to extend court time for players. *Pictured >> Philip Gaerlan / Alan Gershanov, Bronze medalists in M55+ doubles at Regionals / photo courtesy Joe Williams.*

19th Annual [Racquet for the Cure](#) ... drew 65 players into 19 fields of play, including Friday fundraisers that named Mixed division winners in Open (Carla Munoz/Deven Naik), Elite/A (Paula Postma/Vikram Pathrojuthri), and B/C (Khyathi Velpuri / Seshu Velpuri). On Saturday, playoff wins were recorded for a full slate of first-rate competitors. After a great evening of celebration, the [RFTC committee](#) was once again able to make a generous donation to the Denver Affiliate of Komen for the Cure.



North and South ... Just a few weeks apart, the Apex Open and the Pueblo Athletic Club Shootout bracketed February and March, with 57 players hitting the courts in Arvada, and 75 heading south to PAC for an IRT satellite. Both clubs do it up right, and the annual events are player favorites.



2018 USAR Hall of Fame Inductee // Dr. Jim Hiser
Local Contributor to be Honored

Along with Susan & Leo Klimaitis of Illinois, Dr. James Hiser will be inducted into the USA Racquetball Hall of Fame at National Singles at the end of May.

Jim first became involved in Michigan, where he was inducted into that state's [HOF in 1985](#), and later relocated to Colorado Springs to become Associate Executive Director at the American Amateur Racquetball Association. He served in that role from 1989 - 2003, when he took over as USA Racquetball's Executive Director for an added decade.

As recently as this year at World Doubles at the Denver Athletic Club, he has served as a premiere organizer, TD and promoter of the professional tours. At the 2016 U.S. OPEN, he was recognized by that event's founder, Doug Ganim, with a [feature interview](#) in the Championship program. Congratulations!



At the Denver Athletic Club for World Doubles, Jim Hiser congratulated event champions Kane Waselenchuk and Ben Croft. Photos courtesy John Foust.

ROAD TRIPS | Team Colorado Represents on the Road

At [National Doubles](#) ... this roster of 15 Team Colorado players traveled south to compete in Tempe, Arizona: Troy Cook, John Cooper, Francis Florey, James Funk, Billy Garcia, Adam Manilla, Erika Manilla, Shirley Parsons, Nicholas Riffel, Steve Roberts, Shannin Rudman, Keith

Sapp, Michiele Stapleton, Steve Strahler, Donnel Valdez. *Shannin Rudman lined up a good group for this selfie, L-R: Parsons, Strahler, Stapleton, Sapp, Rudman, Cook, Roberts and Riffel.*



At [National Intercollegiates](#) some played for out-of-state colleges and universities, but these eight represented Colorado at heart: Aaron Booker, Kayla Day, Erik Garcia, Erika Manilla, Carla Munoz, Thomas Riganti, Matt Sammons and Thomas Sammons. In an all-Colorado final, Carla Munoz defeated Erika Manilla for the Women's Open Gold individual title, while Manilla and her partner Erin Boadway won the Doubles.

Returning to campus, [Erika Manilla was featured](#) for her work in developing the Northern Arizona University racquetball team between classes.. *"We would show up to a tournament and teams would say, "Oh, who is NAU, where is that?"*" Manilla was quoted by phone. *"No one even knew we were a school, but now they are like, 'Oh, hey, Flagstaff has a really good racquetball team.'"*

Lily Caldwell was all on her own in representing Grand Junction High at the [National High School Championships](#) in Portland, mid-March, and she was stopped short early on. We admire her for making the trip and crossing state lines for elite-level competition. Well done!

BOARD REPORT | CRA Update

Long-serving Dan Davis and Marcia Richards (each on the board since 1999) and Dave Stone (since 2011), were re-appointed to their CRA Board seats in January. Also appointed to a vacancy was [Matt Meltzer](#), who stepped forward to join the fun in March.

2018 Board Elections ... Given the lack of interest in running for seats, public [board member elections](#) have not been warranted over many years, and vacancies are routinely filled by appointment. Terms are set to expire at year-end for Matt Dockter, Joe Williams, Ralph Graham, and Alyssa Street. Should each of them decide to remain on the board - and other candidates come forward - an

election will be held. If not, they'll be begged to stay on!
Nominations are welcome year-round, so [send in your suggestions](#)
for good prospects - or step up yourself. CRA needs you!

Formal runoff elections are held only when there are **more candidates than available board seats to be filled. So, if all current directors agree to stay on and no other names are placed into the running, no member election are needed or held. Any mid-term vacancies can be filled by appointment, or held open until the next election round.*

Annual Awards Given at States ... The CRA Board recognized a solid group of outstanding players and volunteers, with plaques and plenty of admiration from courtside onlookers. Congratulations go to:

Best Sportsmanship: Steve Roberts and Alyssa Street
Most Improved: Nathan Jacob and Michiele Stapleton
Outstanding Junior: Mikayla Postma
Outstanding Volunteer: April Settell
John Mooney Lifetime Achievement: Bruce Burkland



Outstanding Volunteer
April Settell



Good Sport
Alyssa Street



Congratulations to Bruce Burkland, Mikayla Postma, Michiele Stapleton, Steve Roberts and Nathan Jacob, who posed with their awards at State Singles. Photo courtesy Dave Stone.

MEMBER PROFILE | Matt Melster Joins Board of Directors

[Matt Melster](#) accepted appointment to an open board seat at the CRA's March meeting and has already brought expertise and enthusiasm to the job. He also took back-to-back Men's Open titles at the recent [State Singles](#) and again at [Regionals](#) so he's highly-skilled! We're happy to welcome him and and share a bit of his backstory.

I was born and raised in Waukesha Wisconsin. I moved to Pueblo in 2003 to attend Colorado State University - Pueblo and play racquetball. While I was there I achieved a degree in business management and marketing, along with winning four Men's National Championships.



I have been playing racquetball for almost 20+ years now, I started playing when I was about 10 years old. I enjoy competing all over the state and getting to see everyone. I also have had the pleasure of becoming a tournament director with Danny Beaudry for our pro stops at Pueblo Athletic Club for the last 10+ years. I now work for Pueblo Electrics as a project foreman, having done many jobs across southern Colorado. I have an amazing wife Nicole and two daughters, Isabella, 7, and Sofia, 4.

I love playing racquetball here in Colorado and have had a great time traveling to all the tournaments with my doubles partner Cisco Sandoval. We all play such a great sport and need to continue to do everything we can to make it better for the younger generation coming up. I am extremely happy to join the CRA board and look forward to working with everyone to make racquetball better in Colorado.



Colorado's First Family of Racquetball represents three generations of Sikorski-Dockters (with Jorge Valencia moving in for an excellent photo bomb!). Matt, Michelle and Nathan Dockter visit with Grandpa Mark Sikorski at State Singles. Photo courtesy Mary Jane Boese.

The Colorado Academy High School Racquetball Club challenged themselves against outside opponents when they faced the Colorado School of Mines Club Team. It was CA's third time playing college opponents, and the entire experience was a win-win for both squads.

Coaches Marcia Richards and George Boynton had decided that the only way to see how far this group had progressed would be to pit them against outside challengers. Competition was welcomed all-around, since it allowed players to put their hard work to a true test.

The sportsmanship and determination from all players was a tribute to both schools and the character of each player. Not only did the young men compete, they also had time to interact and ask questions about each other's school year, studies, major, and future.

Later in the Spring, a full squad of Colorado Academy players were on hand at the annual High School playoffs at Highlands Ranch. *Group pictured below / photo courtesy Marcia Richards.*

JUNIORS 101

Download a [12-page reference](#) outline containing tips, tests, drills, diagrams and a pull-out poster to help promote your local program

If you think you'd like to share your expertise by working with novice or junior players, there are plenty of opportunities. [Just contact the CRA](#) and we'll connect you with an event or program director.



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ENTRY PLANNER

[CRA Sanctioned Tournaments](#)
[CRA Tournament Player's Guide](#)



CERTIFIED INSTRUCTION | by [Marcia Richards](#)
Playing INSIDE the Box!

Most of us have heard the saying "think outside the box" ... meaning to be creative, open to new ideas, and to embrace the unknown. As an athlete



striving for better skills and hoping to take your game to another level, here's a helpful exercise that can walk you through a more focused process.

Self-confidence and a strong mental game are the keys to success. But it's not enough to simply tell yourself to "be confident" without also putting in the time to develop your entire game. Try to remember what it feels like to be "in the zone." Every shot goes where you want, you manipulate your opponent like a puppet on a string, and you didn't even know you were in the zone until the match was over. But if you happen to remark - between games - "wow, I am in the zone," your play is very likely to decline going into the next game. For the best result, being in the zone has to be an unconscious state of mind.

Aspire to be a top player? Gain confidence and improve execution by keeping your focus on your side and being present in the rally. Pressure is what you put upon yourself and is usually based on a fear that you need to face head on. What's the worst that can happen? Just stay in the present (the journey) - not in the end game (winning or losing).

So start thinking *inside the box*! Concentrate on these four corners: Discipline, Consistency, Patience, and Mental focus. Then get inside another box - your tool box - and start applying your skills to outline a winning strategy. Visualize your game and ask yourself:



1. What does it look like when I am **disciplined**? See yourself choosing the right shot at the right time, using a specific game plan on serve receive; what is the plan when in the back court/front court, what do my defensive/offensive games look like?
2. What does it look like to be **consistent**? What shots are my foundation and how many times will I hit that shot before a mistake is made (hitting tolerance)?
3. What does it look like to be **patient**? Am I trying to win the rally too soon? Am I waiting to play the ball at the right level (knee high, shin high)? Am I pushing or pressing the point? Players that push or press too hard will find themselves folding because they are usually looking at the finish line instead of staying in the NOW.
4. What is my **mental** game doing? What are you telling yourself? Does it have a positive or negative tone? It's important that you be your own best coach (supportive and uplifting).

Once you have identified these areas you are ready to put them to the test. On your next timeout, you can ask yourself if you are playing inside the box. You should be able to quickly recognize the area of your game that is not in sync, and make the necessary adjustments. Try *inside the box* for dependable "Ws" whenever you compete!



KNOW YOUR RULES ! Fake Rules ... Myth or Fact?

by [Ray Cornell](#)

Over the years, these articles have covered many aspects of the rules, from playing, refereeing and equipment, to court layout. So let's test your recall. Can you separate fact from myth or local lore? See how well you can spot "fake rules"!



Following are 10 commonly-held myths. First decide **why** you think it's a myth, then read the corresponding fact to see if you're right.

- **Myth #1:** As long as my foot at least touches the short line during serve, my serve is legal.
- **Myth #2:** I, or my doubles partner, can leave the service box right after I've hit my serve.
- **Myth #3:** How the non-serving partner in doubles positions himself in the box during the serve doesn't matter.
- **Myth #4:** I'm a good player, so I don't need safety goggles.
- **Myth #5:** A penalty hinder is only when my opponent blocks my set shot to the front wall.
- **Myth #6:** If the ball goes out of the court, the rally is replayed.
- **Myth #7:** We just replay anytime someone happens to be in the way.
- **Myth #8:** Any court hinder is replayed.
- **Myth #9:** I've seen the pros do it, so it must be okay.
- **Myth #10:** The referee's primary responsibility is to keep score.

Now the facts ... [all references are quoted from the [USAR Official Rules of Racquetball](#)] ...

Fact #1: Both feet of the server must be fully within the service zone. That means that no part of the foot can be over the painted line in the safety zone during the serve motion - rules 3.2 and 3.9(a)(1).

Fact #2: The server, and the non-serving partner in doubles, cannot leave the service zone until the served ball has crossed the plane of the short line - rule 3.10(i). However, this rule is different in the IRT - rule 11.4.

Fact #3: The server's partner shall stand erect with back facing the side wall and with both feet on the floor within the service box from the moment the server begins the service motion until the served ball passes the short line - rule 4.2(b).

Fact #4: Accidents happen, and you cannot control what other people do or when they do it. Safety is important in any sport, including racquetball. An eye is easily damaged by a ball hitting it at a high velocity, or by a swinging racquet. Besides loss of eyesight, there are game and match penalties for failure to use proper eyewear - rules 2.5(a) and 3.17(a)(9).

Fact #5: This is only a partial myth in that blocking a straight-in shot is not the *only* definition of a penalty hinder. There are nine penalty hinders, including failure to move, stroke interference, and moving into the ball, any of which can negate an offensive player's shot - rule 3.15. And don't call it an avoidable hinder - that term was discontinued several years ago because intent to

hinder is not part of the determination.

Fact #6: There are several things to consider before deciding if there is a replay or a loss of the rally when that happens. Considerations include: whether the ball bounced first (replay) or did it leave the court without bouncing (loss of rally); was a court hinder involved (replay) - rule 3.14(a)(1). Also determine if rules other than those for USA Racquetball being followed (generally, it's a replay) - e.g., rule 11.8.

Fact #7: Because there are players who regularly agree to do this, it's not a clear myth or fact determination of a rule. However, if the hinder is a penalty hinder, it can be a great disadvantage to someone if their opponent regularly takes away good offensive opportunities from them - rule 3.15. Replay hinders are just replayed.

Fact #8: In general, there is no court hinder unless it has been designated prior to the start of a match; otherwise, it is not fair to wait for the middle of a rally to call a court hinder that might be in your favor. However, the rule does call out specific cases where play should stop due to certain irregular bounces or a wet spot that affects the rally - rule 3.14(a)(1).

Fact #9: Not necessarily. There are multiple variations of the rules based on the governing body. While the core aspects of the rules are the same, there are many variations, several of which are covered in detail in the USA Racquetball rulebook. Variations by organization include: IRT, LPRT, CPRT, and NMRA. The IRF governs play among non-US countries. In addition, there are modifications for outdoor play, visually impaired players, deaf players, players using wheelchairs, and multi-bounce rules generally for very young players - rule sections 6-14.

Fact #10: The referee has a responsibility to keep score, but the primary responsibility is to manage the match, which involves a significant list of duties before and during the match, with authority over players and spectators. Managing the match includes: pre-match briefing; starting play; ensuring the pace of the match is maintained (i.e., 10-second rule, timeouts, breaks); rendering judgements on proper equipment, hinder calls, legal serves, and screens; keeping track of serve order; assessing technical warnings and fouls; and working with line judges if used - rule section B and references throughout the rules.

How did you do? I hope you did well, because that means these articles are worthwhile, that you are becoming an expert, and then encouraging and educating others as you enjoy this wonderful sport wherever you play!

FROM THE PRESIDENT | by [Dave Stone](#)

Appreciating our Community



As we approach the summer months, our attention turns to the many outdoor adventures available in Colorado. Even the most avid players find solace in the mountains and streams, and only occasionally seclude themselves within the 20' by 40' box we call a racquetball court. We dare not pick up a tennis or pickleball racquet ... that would be blasphemy to our one true love! Or would it?

Personally, I have always enjoyed any sport with a racquet, including tennis and badminton. Tennis maintains steady growth and pickleball is exploding, so perhaps there are opportunities to “crossover” without denying our first love. Conversely, many who wield a different racquet may be willing to venture onto a racquetball court to try one of the fastest sports on earth. The crossover idea came from former CRA President, Larry Haemmerle, and provides a possible path toward growth. Maybe if we

take the first step in this crossover adventure, we can enjoy other sports that share our athleticism and hand-eye coordination, while attracting others onto our courts.

I have written extensively on growing the sport and getting member feedback. The one thing that everyone agrees on is that we have a lot of work to do to get back to the sport's glory days. Sadly, despite many attempts to solicit feedback and assistance, the CRA continues to work in somewhat of a vacuum. Over the last six months input on award nominations and prospective board members was basically non-existent. We cannot emphasize enough the need for everyone to participate - our sport needs YOU!

So here's another opportunity to step up and express your opinions. Over several seasons, the CRA has attempted to schedule a team-based, summer tournament, akin to the Pepsi Cup that was so successful for decades. The Pepsi Cup attracted many players (despite frustration with the team format by some), and fielded teams from all across Colorado for 30 years. We would like to re-establish a playoff event that invites players to vie for individual and team awards. Do you still want that type of tournament? How would we re-structure such an event? We'd love to get your ideas!

Moreover, the CRA wants to hear your ideas on growing racquetball, running events, or anything else related to our great sport. We'll make more of an effort to put forums in place to spark discussions on social media and the CRA website. For now, please feel free to post on our [Facebook page](#), or send [emails to our board members](#) with your thoughts and suggestions. Thank you in advance for your efforts - and have a great summer!

FROM THE EDITOR | by [Linda Mojer](#)

Oh ... you were so close to coming out of your shells ... until Facebook breached your data (darn it!). We were coaxing you to unlock your pages and make your photos public. We were trying not to make any sudden movements, or loud noises. Please come back ... we promise to say only nice things, and just use the pretty pictures - really!



So ... what about giving it another try? Here are some tips for Facebook sharing, that will be very helpful ... EITHER 1. Go ahead and be free and open with your racquetball photos and stories by making them public all the time.

OR 2. You can enter a visitor post directly on the [CRA Facebook page](#) at any time. You write it, you attach your photos, you publish it right there and it will get released to the page after being read by an admin.

OR 3. You can create your own post on your page and message it over, same deal.

OR 4. You can use [this method](#) to make any of your posts "public" - individually - so they can be collected when someone like me stumbles on them. Whatever you choose, just be sure to manage your privacy settings to your own level of comfort, and be aware that what appears on the CRA FB page only gets there when it's made "shareable" by the owner.

If your post doesn't have a share arrow on it, we can't brag about you by re-posting your accomplishments, plain and simple. And we want to ... we really want to!



SafeSport ... In keeping with the USOC's renewed commitment to creating a healthy setting for all sport, USA Racquetball is also dedicated to raising awareness about misconduct, promoting open dialogue, and providing training and resources.

Working as a team, the [SafeSport](#) program helps build a game plan to make sport safe - for everyone. The safety of its participants is of paramount importance to USA Racquetball, which has **zero tolerance** for abuse and misconduct. This includes not only on-court safety, but also off-court safety in any part of USA Racquetball's programs. USA Racquetball is committed to creating safe and fun environments for youth. This includes, but is not limited to, providing training, educational materials and resources for our regions, clubs, coaches and parents. [Learn more](#) about this important partnership today.



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