



## The Colorado Racquetball Association ENews

SUMMER / FALL  
2018

### STATE DOUBLES at Denver Athletic Club

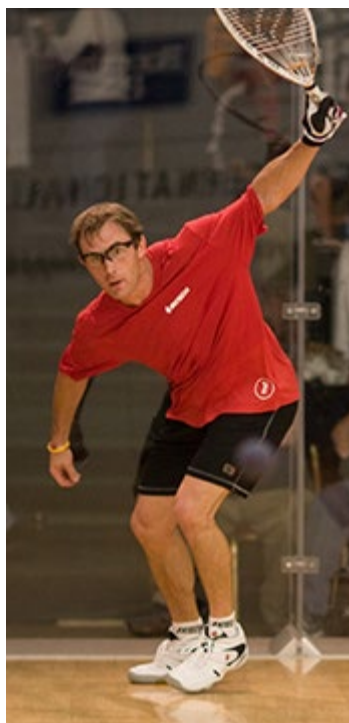
*CRA celebrates 45th Annual Championship at DAC*

The DAC will host the [45th Annual Colorado State Doubles](#) in just a few weeks, and the club is all set to offer its high-end facility, extended hours, convenient parking at a discount, and plenty of food service options for the weekend. The centrally located venue is a statewide favorite and CRA is looking for a great turnout on **November 8-11**.

Enter *before* Halloween (by Saturday, 10/27) to get your third/mixed entry for FREE ... or meet the **regular deadline of Noon on November 3** to join in the fun. Either way, get back into the swing of things at the first sanctioned event of the season - and add another great logoed souvenir to your "signature CRA" collection!

CRA Doubles has a long history, featuring standouts like 6x record-holder Tony Boscia ('88,90,93,97,99,03), who paired with Mark Helton 4x before 2000, and with Rob French and Woody Clouse a single time each. Clouse (right) is poised to tie Boscia's record, if he's able to capture just one more state open doubles win.\*

In all-time women's open, four players claim a 4x record - but none of them ever partnered to dominate. In the 80s, Sherry Armstrong had a string of wins, followed by Marcia Richards, Mary Keenan and Janelle Williams after 2010. In Mixed Open, Deb Beldring's name comes up the most often (3x), and Keenan and Richards each managed to earn double-gold in 2005 and 2006, by adding wins with Tony Feldstein and John Rhodes, respectively.



If they team up again, Woody Clouse and Ryan Rodgers will be

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*\*Clouse holds CRA*



**TOURNEY TICKER ... Save the dates!** Keep an eye on the [online calendar](#) to see when registration opens, note firm event dates and confirm added details, then plan to get time off for ... *Colorado Madness (Dec.7-9)* ... *Racquet for the Cure (Feb.1-2)* ... *Apex Open (Feb.15-17)* ... *PAC Open (March 1-3)* ... *State Singles (March 22-24)*.

**NMRA Recap:** The roster of 40 locals didn't have to travel far to mount challenges in the 21 brackets of the [National Masters International Championships](#) at Highlands Ranch in late July. Among the weekend's champs were Lee Beckwith, Jergen Denk, Brian Hunter, Mary Keenan, Shirley Parsons, Marcia Richards, Micky Richer, Jim Spinato, Luke St. Onge, Michele Stapleton, Steve Strahler and Michael Wouk.

*In a round robin format every point matters ... and nothing illustrates the complexity of that scoring better than a double set of rounds. If the top contenders trade wins when they face off, it's all about the math. In [Men's 75+ Doubles](#), the all-Colorado rounds that awarded the win to Jim Spinato and Luke St. Onge over Dennis Bollig and Kyle Smith could have gone either way. Bollig/Kyle split the first match games (10-15, 15-5) and Spinato/St.Onge won the second set (15-14, 15-11) to earn a narrow tallied win on total points, 34.17 to 32.67.*

Rounding out Team Colorado were: Leigh Adams, Duane Barone, [Mary Jane Boese](#), Dennis Bollig, Troy Cook, Steve Cox, Tud Dutcher, Francis Florey, Phillip Gaerlan, John Hulick, Harry Krausman, Gordon Levy, Mike Martin, Jim McHale, John McManamon, Barbara Mehegan, Jeremy Nickelson, Alberto Olivas, Chuck Powers, Kerry Rohweder, Rick Rubin, Manish Sharma, Mark Sikorski, Kyle Smith, Byron Thompson, Seshu Velpuri, John Vohland, and P.J. Williams.




**In Passing ...** Sadly, James Funk had entered the NMRA event, but [passed away on June 14](#) at the age of 83. Just a month earlier at the NMRA National Championships in Warren, New Jersey, James had been a stalwart challenger in the 80+ age division, taking his last two singles match wins over Mike Martin (Golden, Colo.) and David Maitland (Winsted, Conn.) at that event. At the time of his passing, his [official record](#) showed him to be a dedicated competitor at the national level, with the singular goal of remaining active and engaged in the sport, win or lose. He was sorely missed by his fellow NMRA members when they congregated in Denver, and his Colorado opponents will continue to do so for many years to come.

**! Coming Up !**



November 8-11 // [Enter NOW](#)



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

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### Racquet for the Cure Turns 20!

Colorado's Original RFTC celebrates a Milestone



[Racquet for the Cure](#) celebrates 20 years in 2019 and we're very proud of the reputation of this special event. It started out by raising only \$200 in each of its first two years, then grew to a combined total donation of well over \$100,000 toward the battle against breast cancer. Today's goals are still twofold and simple. The first and most obvious is to aid in breast cancer awareness, raise money for research to fund a cure, and to support those fighting to survive.

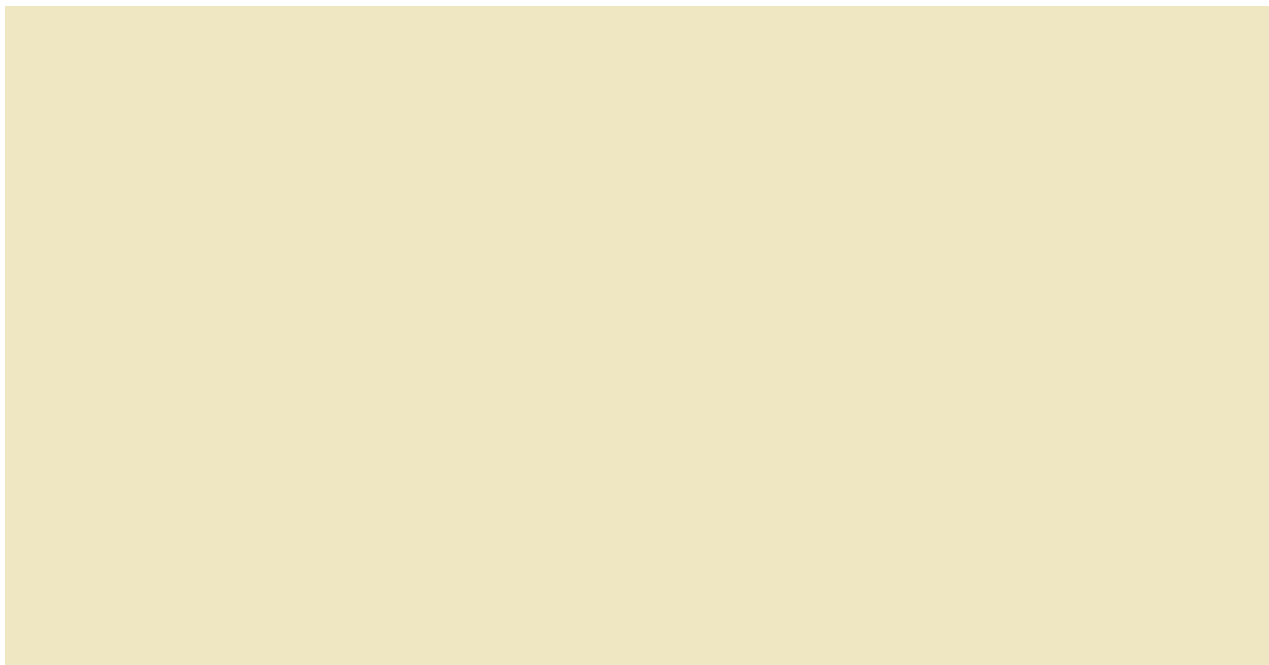


The second outcome is one that I've always been passionate about: to empower more women to play racquetball. This tournament has earned a great reputation for attracting the largest draws for women in the state. We make sure the entrants don't have to referee, but do have to engage and enjoy! Everyone gets assigned to a team that they'll earn points for by playing sideline games and contests in addition to their division matches. Most of us are competitive, but many women are driven to success by different influences. We're determined to HAVE FUN while playing a game we love.

The format is very conducive to connecting to something outside of ourselves ... achievement as a TEAM. Once entries have closed, every woman gets a roster spot on a skill-balanced squad. We look at the list of entrants and spread out the talent to make sure that each team has an equal shot at winning. Doubles teams are often matched up to introduce new players to the open players that inspire them. All of the ladies meet new players and the friendly format brings women together in a non-intimidating way. There's no pressure, since it really doesn't matter if you win all your games or lose all your games ... everybody celebrates at the end and the prize giveaways are endless!

The CRA tried to introduce the same type of balanced-team format to the sCRAMble but it didn't gain much traction, so we're planning to offer shootouts that are set up this way so more players can get a better understanding of how it works. So look for one of these shootouts, give it a try, and you'll get a true taste of what it's like for the ladies at RFTC each year.

Let me know if you have any questions or would like to donate to our groundbreaking 20th celebration year for RFTC! -- [Marcia Richards](#)





*First-time tournament players at Racquet for the Cure last year were thrilled to receive brand new racquets on check in! Photo courtesy Mary Jane Boese.*

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## ROAD TRIPS | Team Colorado Out of Town

**At US OPEN in October ...** Two dozen Colorado players made their way to Minneapolis for a mini-vacation at the [UnitedHealthcare US OPEN](#). Champions among them were Rick Busekrus in Men's 55+C and the Men's C Doubles title for Sherwyn Phillip and Jawara Riley. Alexander Bradt was the only other player on the roster to reach a final, and brought home a silver medal in the Heroes B/C division.

*Back up top, full circle ...* She qualifies easy enough, but breaking through is tough. Erika Manilla debuted at the US Open in 2015, and advanced into a first round against Paola Longoria, scoring 2,2,5. In 2016, she moved up a seed position and down in the bracket to play into #2 Frederique Lambert, scoring 3,8,7. She earned 3,5,4 against #2 Jessica Parrilla in 2017, before moving back up to face #1 Longoria this year. In her fourth Round of 32 start, Erika took her time coming out of the gate, but pushed Paola to a 13-11 game three before retiring. In Women's Open she reached the quarters.

The Manilla men also got a little court time, as Adam and Nick Riffel battled in the second round of qualifying for the IRT Pro Doubles, losing a tiebreaker for the spot in the main draw. In Men's 55+ Doubles Victor Manilla and his partner Robert Testa also drew a tough first round against the legendary Ruben Gonzalez and Chris Poucher, and still pushed the pro to a tiebreaker.

Perhaps the most ambitious of the travelers was CRA's own Ralph Graham who, recovering from injury, decided to enter three of the largest draws of the tournament: Men's A singles (with 51 entrants), doubles (30), and Men's 55+A (18). Luckily, he was also an event sponsor, so he was able to enjoy a nice comfy courtside box and VIP treatment once his matches were over.

**At World Seniors in August ...** the CRA player roster was smaller by half in Albuquerque for the International Racquetball Federation [World Senior Championships](#), and, included: Rick Busekrus, Francis Florey, Fred Langley, Shirley Parsons, Sammy Payne, Dean Schear, Mark Sikorski, Luke St. Onge, Michiele Stapleton, Steve Strahler, Joe Williams, and P.J. Williams.

Shirley Parsons captured the only gold, in W65+, while silver medals came home with Francis Florey (M80+D w/Arthur Hotchkiss), Dean Schear (M45+D w/Scott Lorig) and Michiele Stapleton and Steve Strahler in Mixed 45+.

## BOARD REPORT | CRA Update

**Turnaround time ...** terms are ending this year for "repeat defenders" Ralph Graham and Joe Williams (each on the board since 2012) and Matt Dockter (since 2016). Each has agreed to stand for re-election to retain their seat, which leaves two seats open for interested candidates.

**Annual Board Elections ...** Public [board member elections](#) are offered up each and every year, but low interest causes vacancies to be filled by appointment more often than not. Terms are staggered so that 4 of 12 available board seats are filled at the end of each year (those held by Dockter, Williams, Graham, and Alyssa Street in 2018).

Due to travel and time constraints, Alyssa has opted not to run again, so at least one seat is available to be contested, along with a short-term appointed seat that runs through 2019. So, if three new candidates come forward to express interest - a formal election will be held\*. If not, Dockter, Graham and Williams will stay on, along with two rookies who want to make a difference! Nominations are welcome year-round, so [send in your suggestions](#) for good prospects - or step up yourself. CRA welcomes new faces!

*\*Formal runoff elections are held only when there are **more** candidates than seats to be filled. So, if 3 current directors remain and 1 other person comes forward to fill Alyssa's seat, no election will be conducted. Any mid-term vacancies can be filled by appointment, or held open until the next election round.*



Jorge Cuellar

Earlier in the summer, Jorge Cuellar was appointed to serve out CJ Sanders' term, through 2019.

## MEMBER PROFILE | Jorge Cuellar joins CRA Board

*My name is Jorge Cuellar and I've played racquetball since I was 14 years old. My dad and older brother got me into playing, and loving, the sport of racquetball.*

*I have been playing competitively for about three years now, and I try and play every tournament in Colorado. I'm the Vice President of the Rocky Mountain Collegiate program here in Colorado, thanks to Shannin Rudman who gave me the opportunity to get involved.*



Based in Longmont, Cuellar is [currently ranked #44](#) in the state, and falls right in the middle of the pack nationally. Although he didn't make it out of a six-part pool play at State Singles last spring, he's holding his own among top players (and fellow board members) like Matt Melster and Matt Dockter. His doubles record goes back to 2014 and he's come out to support Racquet for the Cure in its Mixed Doubles Fundraiser.

He's a familiar face at tournaments, and will quickly become a welcome addition to the "behind the scenes" action as a board member. Be sure to thank him for jumping through all the requisite hoops to take over the vacated board seat!



Enjoying Rocky Mountain Nights Under the Lights in Colorado Springs, L-R: Standing: Michael Young, Ed Pedersen, Peggine Tellez, Robert Sanders, Bobby Rocha, Matt Dockter, Jawara Riley, Mike Kennedy, Mike Daniel. Leaning: Karen Childs, Michelle Dockter, Kareem Braithwaite, Mary Jane Boese, Sherwyn Phillip, Tedd Cassidy. Kneeling: Jorge Cuellar, Alexander Bradt, Rafael Bombacini. *Photo: Mary Jane Boese*

Mary Jane Boese just goes non-stop. Since the last issue, she's fulfilled a lifelong dream at NMRA, organized and hosted this outdoor tournament in August, gone back to school at UCCS for an advanced degree in her field, tried to stay away from RB for awhile (not working!), posted hundreds of RB photos and videos, managed dozens of home projects, and been interviewed by

the [Daily Racquetball blog](#). Congratulations, and thanks, for all your good work!

## JUNIOR NEWS | Dan Davis takes over HRCA HS Program



Okay ... so he's not a junior in his own right, but long-time CRA Board member **Dan Davis** recently took over the management of the High School program at Highlands Ranch, where he'll be working with the club to continue the lessons and playoffs for local students that have become so popular in recent years.

Dan has been an AmPRO certified advanced instructor for 20+ years and a coach for the Colorado juniors team for 10+ years. He's also been on the Colorado Racquetball Association board for over 15 years and helps run the annual CRA State Singles and State Doubles Championships.

He enjoys teaching and playing racquetball at all levels, and has won numerous local, state and national tournaments in his age group.

He's been retired from insurance sales for over 10 years, and is active in the Aurora Gateway Rotary Club where he's been a counselor for Rotary's hands on leadership camp for high school juniors and seniors for seven years. Thanks for sharing all that important experience with HRCA!

**Tournament Trekkers ...** *Lily Caldwell*, of Grand Junction, and *Benjamin Hyman*, of Denver, represented Colorado at the [USAR Junior Olympics](#) in Des Moines last June. They both moved into red division playoffs in singles, where Lily won her 14 and under and Benjamin won the 18 and under dropdown. Well done!

### 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.



### [SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS](#)

#### ENTRY PLANNER

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



## CERTIFIED INSTRUCTION | by [Marcia Richards](#)

*Add Club Programming Skills to your Resume!*

Right up front - if you have organizational skills, and any experience or interest in running racquetball programs, leagues, shuttles or tournaments, there are a





couple of local opportunities available. Life Time Fitness and Goodson are looking for staff to run their programs, right now. It's a unique way to share your love of the sport, in a way that can help build the player base and add value to court club facilities.

In prepping your bid for this type of work, it's important to consider becoming certified by either [USAR-IP](#) or [AmPRO/IPRO](#). Both programs have strong foundations in professional instruction, coaching and resource management. Already certified by one or the other? Great - make the call, fire off your resume and get ready to pitch your hire!

We're all concerned about the decline of our favorite sport, but it's a simple calculation at the corporate level: What's the profit margin? On the surface, it's easy to argue that empty racquetball courts should be re-purposed for activities that bring in more members and generate revenue - even if it's just in the short-term. But we all know that it takes attention and programming to consistently keep courts filled and busy.

According to [IPRO Director Gary Mazaroff's](#) latest outreach "*All of us who hold a stake in maintaining and upgrading the infrastructure must be proactive, we must insist on having qualified instructors and programmers in place at all locations in order to drive the [court] sports.*" **You** can make the difference, on the ground!



## **KNOW YOUR RULES ! Full Disclosure Self Referee-ing** by [Ray Cornell](#)

In general, playing racquetball without a referee occurs much more often than not. Virtually all recreational play is “self-refed” and some tournament formats are designed to be self-officiated. In other cases, court design doesn’t allow the viewing access needed for a referee to call a match. So, although it’s been covered in the Rollout before, it seems worthwhile to dust off the topic and revisit some key aspects. *Italicized emphasis is on text taken directly from the USAR rules.*



The [Official Rules & Regulations of Racquetball, Section D](#) is titled *Self-Officiating, or “How to Ref ‘Without’ a Ref.”* While most people may think of the referee as someone to keep score and enforce rules, maintaining a safe environment is also an important part of the role.

In fact, the section opens by stressing safety, with “**Safety Is the Responsibility Of Every Player Who Enters The Court!**” ... and “*At no time should the physical safety of the participants be compromised. Players are entitled, and expected, to hold up their swing, without penalty, any time they believe there might be a risk of physical contact.*”

**Score:** *It is important for the server to announce the score, ... and for the sides to agree on both the server's and receiver's score before each first serve. The server should do this before serving, not as the service motion begins.*

**Serve:** *The receiver has the primary responsibility to make the call ... of short, long, three walls, etc. Although either player may make that call, it must be made immediately, without waiting to see how the return of serve plays out. Calling a screen serve is the sole responsibility of the receiver and must be made before attempting a return or losing sight of the ball by starting the wrong way.*

**Rallies:** *During rallies, the hitter has the responsibility to make the call ... of skip, double-bounce, or illegal hit. If the call is not made, and the opposing player sees an illegal shot, play continues until the rally ends. At that point, appeal to the hitter by describing the shot in question and ask for consideration to change the outcome of the rally. If the hitter is sure of their non-call, and the opponent is equally sure of their own assessment, the rally should be replayed. *As a matter of etiquette, players are expected to make calls against themselves any time they are not sure. Unless the hitter is certain the shot was good, a challenged shot should be replayed.**

**Hinders:** *A hinder is called only by the person going for the shot, and they must do so immediately and not wait to see how good their resulting shot was. ... If the hindered party believes they can make an effective return - in spite of some physical contact or impairment that has occurred - they may continue to play and accept the outcome. They should not claim a hinder after losing a rally.*

*If a player realizes that they have committed a penalty hinder, then that player "should simply declare their opponent to be the winner of the rally. If the player does not immediately concede the point, when the rally ends the offended player should then suggest that a penalty hinder may have occurred. However, unless the player agrees to the penalty violation, it should not be called, but simply replayed.*

When a holdup for safety occurs as described above, it is the responsibility of the offensive player (the hitter) to make the call of hinder, and the players should agree as to whether the hinder is a replay or penalty hinder. If agreement is not reached, then at least replay the rally. A re-reading of the rules may be needed in order to determine if it's a replay or penalty hinder.

**Referee:** *But wait - isn't this article about self-refereeing? Yes, but ... Should either player, for any reason, desire to have a referee, then a referee should be sought, although there could be some delay in the match while one is sought. This is especially important in tournaments, and all players are entitled to make such a request to the tournament desk or director, to ensure fair play at all times.*

In conclusion, help maintain the integrity of the sport by playing ethically and honestly during games that are "self-refereed." And above all, keep an eye out for each other and be safe on the courts!

## **FROM THE PRESIDENT | by [Dave Stone](#)** ***Appreciating our Community***

With the changing of the seasons and a nip in the air, we swing back into the racquetball season in Colorado. With that, I'd like to thank the dedicated tournament directors who continue to put forth such considerable effort to make competition in our state more challenging and enjoyable. The CRA continues to look at ideas to improve State and Regional Championships,



while reaching out to engage and train new TDs and desk staffers. Competitive players are well represented in our efforts, so I'd like to address the status of the vast majority of non-tournament players - our recreational players.

I think most of us that have been playing racquetball for any length of time have noticed the shifting demographics of the sport and the drop in participation. To give some perspective, [statista.com](https://www.statista.com) reports that participation has dropped approximately 30% since 2008 (4.99 million in 2008 to 3.53 million in 2017). Conversely, pickleball has increased nearly 28% in half that period of time (from 2.46 million in 2014 to 3.13 million in 2017). Before moving on, I need to note that the recent surge in pickleball participation should not alarm us - we're quite capable and willing to play both! Nonetheless, we need to take a hard look at what we can do to inspire our next generation.

Apathy. I have written extensively about this subject in recent years while soliciting input from our players. However, the CRA receives very little feedback, and hears even less from those willing to donate their time. I am forced to question whether [The Rollout](#) sparks any interest, or whether our racquetball community reads the newsletters at all. Without the ability to fully track and monitor our email open rates, we'll have to call that a rhetorical question and move on, but it seems clear that our membership doesn't seem inspired to much (or any!) action outside the court.

For those who react better to social media, the CRA plans to post more inquiries about programs and participation at our local facilities. We ask for your help with taking the pulse of the state of racquetball in Colorado, so when you see these CRA posts, please take a moment to comment and let us know what's working at your club, and what's not. Of course, to get in on these conversations, we need you to make sure you're seeing our posts on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and Instagram. So, if you're lurking on social media, you can find direct links under the table of contents at the top of this email, or just take a few minutes to search for "Colorado Racquetball" on each of these platforms and like them to get connected to our feeds.

We're all tired of seeing our courts fade away and our gear choices disappear from the shelves of our local sporting goods store, so let's collectively agree to work together to get this sport back to the prominence it deserves. We are disillusioned if we sit back and hope that USA Racquetball will save the sport. Grassroots effort that gets younger recreational players back on the court is the only answer.

How can we do that? Glad you asked. Let's put our heads together and come up with some ideas. Let's support those programs that have shown promise with improving participation. I know the CRA has asked for your help in the past and I'll ask again. Join us at the year-end Annual Meeting at State Doubles to share your views and insights, or feel free to [offer your ideas to anyone on the CRA board](#), at any time. Bring it personally, publicly, privately, by phone or email. And ... if so inspired and inclined ... we would welcome your regular input as a full-fledged Board Member. Step up!

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

We're just playing around, right? Whether it's just chasing a racquetball for

hours inside the court a couple of times a week, or traveling to elite destination tournaments in faraway places - it's only a game after all. For the US Olympic Committee, USA Racquetball, State Associations, court club owners, and SafeSport certified professionals nationwide, there's a bit more to it.



Juniors. We're all aware that the sport needs a steady influx of new players who catch the bug early. But since racquetball is only offered in a closed, private environment, it's difficult to get minors onto courts unless they're accompanied by a club-member parent, known family friend, bonded facility staff, or trusted program volunteer.

Unfortunately, all sports run the risk of having predators test boundaries to gain access to youngsters. Responding to mounting scandals, the USOC established its [SafeSport program](#), and required all member national governing bodies, like USA Racquetball, to take part. That's done by making sure that all state association board members and program volunteers are individually trained and certified to create safe and respectful sport environments for all athletes.



You can rest assured that every CRA Board Member has completed that training, and that it's also [available to any USAR member](#) who wants to do good work responsibly. It may be a little time-consuming or uncomfortable, but everyone stands to benefit from knowing more about how to stop child abuse in sports.

It's enough to give any well-meaning volunteer pause to wonder if it's all worthwhile - but the answer is still yes. Want to share your love of the game with the next generation? Don't let some online homework and a little background check stop you!

## NATIONAL NEWS



**Taking the Helm ...** USA Racquetball recently [announced the appointment of Mike Wedel](#), of Louisburg, Kansas, to the vacated position of Executive Director, effective November 1. Wedel comes to the position after being elected to the National Board in May 2015 and serving as its vice president until the recent hire. He succeeds Jason Thoerner in the position, following a troubled transition earlier in the summer, and the Springs-based national office will continue to be managed remotely.

The new hire was facilitated by a search committee consisting of four Board members and former USAR Executive Director Steve Czarnecki.

The new ED plays at the A level and is an experienced tournament director, who also serves as past president and current VP of the Kansas Racquetball Association. [Wedel](#) holds a Bachelor of Science in Management from Baker University, and his prior business experience includes printing, manufacturing, sports management, general management, and as the current Director of Acquisitions for Harvesters Community Food Network in Kansas City and Topeka. We wish him all the best!



# 2019 National Championships

National Doubles	Feb. 6 - 10	Tempe, AZ
National High School	Feb. 27 - Mar. 3	St. Louis, MO
National Intercollegiate	Apr. 3 - 6	Tempe, AZ
National Singles	May 22 - 26	Denver, CO
National Junior Olympic	June 19 - 23	Portland, OR
UnitedHealthcare US OPEN	Oct. 2 - 6	Minneapolis, MN

Find more information and enter at [USARacquetball.com](http://USARacquetball.com)



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