



The Colorado Racquetball Association ENews

WINTER 2019

STATE SINGLES (& Nationals!) at HRCA

CRA celebrates 46th Annual Championship at Highlands Ranch

The CRA will celebrate year #46 of the **Colorado State Singles**, March 22-24 at Highlands Ranch. According to [archived results](#) from the inaugural 1974 championship, only the A Division champions were recorded, with wins for Don Edwards and Nancy Gerou. In the decades since, CRA competition has grown to include many added skill divisions and name hundreds more state champions. [In 2018](#), the largest brackets were formed in the Men's A, B and 45+, where Hrishikesh Sane, Phil Zavala and Timothy Danos, respectively, bested those fields in multiple rounds.



Open champs Matt Melster and Nicole Martinez Cordova are expected to be on hand to defend their titles. If so, Melster will be seeking his third, after winning in 2016 and 2018, which would pull him even with Adam Manilla in modern-era records, but still leave them both trailing 5x Men's Open champ Tony Boscia.

Heading into the event, [Melster](#) will have just finished up hosting - and competing in - the 21st Annual Pueblo Athletic Club Shootout. In the last decade, the event has been designated as an IRT Pro Stop, drawing some of the tour's best players to southern Colorado.

This year the #1 ranked player in the world, Kane Waselenchuk, will be in the draw, along with #11 David Horn, #14 Jake Bredenbeck, #24 Nicholas Riffel and #28 Ben Croft. The [PAC Shootout](#) also sees plenty of top local talent from nearby Colorado State

University-Pueblo, which is home to a true college racquetball dynasty. Led by Erik Garcia and Carla Munoz, the CSU team is always expected to field great competition into any PAC draw. So,

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when all is said and done, Matt is likely to be either exhausted ... or raring to go!

Rookie champ [Nicole Cordova](#) has enjoyed steady improvement since earning her first CRA state title last March, and is viewed as a tournament regular who rarely misses an chance to play. Over the past year she's led her fields at Apex Open, Blizzard Bash, Rocky Mountain Regionals, PAC Shootout, and Racquet for the Cure, plus took her game up a notch with a debut appearance at National Singles.



She'll definitely have to work hard to hold onto the CRA title, especially if she's challenged by Chantel Anderson who claimed the win in 2017 and recently moved back to Colorado. Both women would be trying to capture a second crown, after a 4x lockdown by Erika Manilla between 2013-2016. [Photos: courtesy Facebook]

CRA State Singles online [registration is open NOW](#) ... and early birds can SAVE \$10 when they enter in advance. [Download a flyer](#) for more information, and [enter today >>](#)

All state singles championships nationwide serve as qualifiers for Nationals ... and ... USA Racquetball will host the [2019 National Singles Championships](#) - at Highlands Ranch - leading into the Memorial Day weekend, May 22-26.



The SPRING Calendar is the current working edition, but you still want to be vigilant about switching out older printouts 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](#) aims 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! Keep an eye on the [online calendar](#) to see when registration opens,

confirm event dates and verify details, then plan to get time off for ... *Rocky Mountain Regional (April 3-6) ... USAR National Singles (May 22-26) ... National Senior Games (Albuquerque, June 14-19) ... Rocky Mountain State & Senior Games (July 19-21) ...*

NMRA Recap: The only Colorado players to make their way down to the [NMRA Doubles-Only](#) tournament in Tuscon were Mary Keenan and Marcia Richards, who teamed up to win the Women's 60+ division. Richards was also matched up with Craig Wagner, of Oregon, to take silver in Mixed 60+.

Correction: Luke St. Onge clarified that he and partner Paula Sperling (NM) won the Mixed 70+ gold medal at the [World Senior Championships](#). Their head-to-head match win had decided the finish, rather than the points awarded in the official results. Better late-than-never congratulations!

New foursome: Expect to see plenty more of the Dockters - literally - now that Matt & Michelle have welcomed their second child to the family. Frame-sized Zoey Rose Dockter was born December 11, at 19-1/2" long and 6lbs, 3oz. Big brother Nathan will be showing Zoey the sideline ropes, as you'll start to see all four at more tournaments, along with doting grand-dad Mark Sikorski. Well done!

! Coming Up !



March 22-24 // [Enter NOW](#)



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



The next Ladies Day is scheduled for **March 30 at Lifetime Fitness in Centennial**. [Check out the Facebook event](#), sign up to receive emails about future get-togethers, or contact Chantel Anderson to be added to the list, at ColoradoLadiesRBall@gmail.com

Racquet for the Cure Turns 20!

Colorado's Original RFTC celebrates a Milestone

[Racquet for the Cure](#) celebrated its 20th - and possibly final - competition with another generous contribution to the Denver affiliate of Komen for the Cure. All told, the long-running

tournament series has donated nearly \$120,000 to the cause during its two-decade run, and organizers are exhausted!

It remains to be seen whether Denver's RFTC will begin another cycle in 2020, or if the women's only format will morph into a different type of tournament altogether. Either way, each and every supporter, volunteer, participant and fan should be very proud of their accomplishments over the years. Not to mention [the latest batch of winners](#) ... !



In observing the passage of time, RFTC poster girl Micky Richer proved that playing racquetball keeps you young! Photos from archive & Mary Jane Boese.

ROAD TRIPS | Team Colorado Out of Town

At USAR National Doubles in February ... Mary Jane Boese kept an eagle eye on Team Colorado, uploading results and photos to the CRA Facebook page throughout the tournament. When all was said and done, she culled results from R2 and reported on nearly a dozen die-hards, including Erik Garcia, Adam, Erika & Victor Manilla, Shirley Parsons, Sherwyn Phillip, Nick Riffel, Mark Sikorski, Michiele Stapleton and Steve Strahler.

Top finishers among them were Shirley Parsons (2nd MX 65+); Sherwyn Phillip & Jawara Riley, (1st M40+B, 1st in M30+/40+B, 2nd Hero B); Michiele Lani Stapleton (1st W45+) plus a triple-play with fiance Steve Strahler to capture 1st MX 30/35/45 Elite, 2nd MX Centurion+Open, and 1st MX45+Elite. [Check the details](#) of their outstanding weekend!

At the Huntsman World Senior Games in October ... a small contingent of veteran players traveled to Utah seeking hardware, including Charlie George, John McManamon, Shirley Parsons, Aiaga & Edward Roffey and Katharine Yurick. Congrats to Parsons and the Roffeys, who logged [gold medal finishes](#)!



In a rare, off-court moment at National Doubles, this group was as many of the Team Colorado roster as could be rustled up for a photo. L-R: Nick Riffel, Jawara Riley, Sherwyn Phillip, Shirley Parsons, Steve Strahler, Michiele Lani and Mark Sikorski. Photo courtesy: Steve Strahler.

BOARD REPORT | CRA Update

New Club Outreach ... At its last meeting, the Board discussed ways to improve communication with clubs and tournament directors throughout the state. In addition to more social media posts by Matt Melster, Board President Dave Stone issued a targeted preview of upcoming events to the state's club list, along with attached PDFs of the the new [CRA Calendar](#) and [State Singles flyer](#). It's hoped that these added reminders will help drive information direct to enthusiasts (and potential entrants), right where they play.

Full Boat ... With the addition of new board member *Alex Brown* (profiled below), and a re-boot of *Chantel Anderson's* term, the CRA Board is just about back to a full roster. Although Shannin Rudman stepped down recently, Matt Dockter, Ralph Graham and Joe Williams were each re-appointed to a new full term (2019-2021), leaving only a single spot open for appointment.

In the next election round ... at the close of 2019, terms will be up for Chantel Anderson, Jorge Cuellar, and Kim Pedrie. Each could stand for re-election to retain their seat, which would leave a single slot open for an interested candidate. Nominations are welcome year-round, so [send in your suggestions](#) for good prospects - or step up yourself. CRA always welcomes new faces and enthusiasm!

Annual Awards ... The CRA Board is ready to recognize a group of outstanding players and volunteers, with your help. [Review the list](#), then [send an email](#) to share the names that you would suggest for ...



Chantel Anderson

In case you haven't noticed, *Chantel Anderson is baaack!* This high-energy player and board member moved back to Colorado in the fall

Best Sportsmanship: Male & Female ?
Player of the Year: Male & Female ?
Outstanding Junior: ?
Outstanding Volunteer: ?
John Mooney Lifetime Achievement: ?

and promptly reclaimed her own open board seat. We're not letting her go again, so she'll fill out her 2019 term, then get back into the rotation.

Leagues & Shuttles Simplified ... The [R2 ladder racquetball program](#) makes it easy for players to make challenges and report results, using software that automatically updates the ranking positions after a lower ranked challenger wins a match. To help organizers get up to speed even faster, Chantel Anderson worked with Ryan Rodgers to develop a handy tutorial that explains the easy app for Colorado users. The two-page instructions are available as [a download](#), so you can easily walk through the setup. Good work!

MEMBER PROFILE | Alex Brown joins CRA Board



Alex Brown started playing racquetball at 12 years old in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and shares a backstory that many RB fans can relate to: *While I always enjoyed playing for fun, joining the Riverview Athletic Club was the beginning of my racquetball career. My best friend's dad was the club pro and took me under his wing. We drilled together 4 times a week and at the age of 14 I began playing in tournaments. By 16 I was ranked top 10 in the nation for my age and by 18 cracked into the top 3 for a while. I was a part of the all-American high school team in 2004 during my senior year of high school.*

My first year of college I participated in several pro tournaments, getting past the qualifiers a couple of times. After my first year I took some time off to play tennis at my college. I rejoined the racquetball community around 2010 and have been playing competitively ever since.

I wanted to join the CRA board because I want to grow the sport of racquetball and give back to the sport that's given me so much. As a junior many people invested their time and money into making sure I had the proper training and was able to get to as many tournaments as possible. I would like to make sure anyone interested in playing is given a chance and proper instruction.

A benefit I bring is my many years in hospitality, having been in the hotel industry for over a decade and making great connections throughout Denver. These many years have helped me grow in sales, marketing and hospitality. Branding is very important in our business. Growing and establishing who we are and consistently bringing a successful formula is the key to making any establishment thrive.

Welcome to the CRA Board - and thanks for stepping up to serve!



Alex Brown was in the winner's circle with the Men's Open finalists from State Doubles in November. L-R: Nicholas Riffel, winners Erik Garcia & Steve Strahler, Alex Brown. Photo courtesy: Dave Stone.

JUNIOR NEWS | Tools for Club Programs

[The CRA junior program](#) depends on enthusiasts and supporters at local clubs who are willing to help develop players from beginner through advanced levels. We also want the juniors themselves to take an active role in getting their friends to try the sport, and hopefully continue their training. This program asks juniors to bring friends to the club in order to advance past a certain level, then mentor younger, less experienced players. We all know from experience that youngsters associate better with peers.



Volunteer to coordinate or assist a program at your local club. It can be one of the most rewarding ways to share the passion that drives us all to play this game - so why not pass that along to the next generation? We want to see a dynamic, collaborative effort that works for our youth. It's an aggressive plan, but achievable with your help. Start using these tools today and let us know

how we can help get your program up and running.

Pictured above: Gabby Guentert played the high school division at Racquet for the Cure and has spent a great deal of quality time at tournaments with her dad David Guentert (2005 CRA Open Champion) over the years! Photo courtesy John Foust.

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](#)

The Will to Win Means Nothing Without The Will To Practice



Many years ago, I saw a quote printed on a t-shirt at the National Singles Championships in Houston, and I've found it appropriate to use many times since in my career as a coach and as a teacher. **“The will to win means nothing without the will to practice.** Too many times I hear players say, *“I just don't seem to be improving”, or “I practice all the time, but I'm not getting better.” or “I keep making the same mistakes”.* It could be the lack of proper practice sessions that cause a person to get frustrated with their games.

Is your practice session getting boring? Are you practicing the right skills? How can I tell if I am practicing the skills incorrectly? There is a popular saying that goes: *Practice makes perfect.* To take that a step further, the saying could go *“perfect practice makes perfect”.* Even further and we could say, ***“perfect practice makes permanence”.***

Making a skill become a habit in game situations is the goal. Having the skill become an automatic choice in the heat of competition will make a difference in your game. The individual skills are the puzzle pieces while the complete game is the whole picture once the puzzle is put together. What kind of picture does your game look like? What are the missing pieces that keep your game at a stand still?

If a player works on the skills using correct form, it will become a permanent part of their game. If the player practices skills, but uses incorrect form, the end result is a bad habit that needs to be broken. In order to correct the bad habit, the player must practice the skill 100 times the RIGHT way for every time they performed the skill incorrectly. Breaking bad habits are hard to do. Learning the skills correctly the first time around is easier and less work in the long run.

Let's use a passing shot for an example. A good passing shot should bounce twice before it hits the back wall. A player practices by hitting 100 forehand shots but does not hit the ball with their knees bent or their elbow is slightly bent each time they practice their 100 shots. The ball continuously goes too high and comes off the back wall. So each time they go to hit a forehand shot in a game, the ball keeps coming off the back wall for an easy set up. Their opponent keeps putting the ball away to end the rally. The player begins to get frustrated and is unsuccessful, because they have practiced the skill incorrectly to begin with. Knowing what to practice and how to practice is a very important component to skill development. But practicing should not seem like hard work. You have to draw on intrinsic motivation and design it to fit your personality and style of play.

Excerpt from *Repetition Racquetball: The Puzzle Pieces to a Complete Game*, by Marcia Richards.



KNOW YOUR RULES ! Double the Fun by [Ray Cornell](#)

Happy 2019! Most of us try doubles at some point, and that can make for interesting rally dynamics with twice as many players in the court! Since *doubles* is even played at National *Singles*, this article will cover some added considerations for doubles play. A previous article almost two years ago detailed serving in doubles, but there is much more to take into account.



The USA Racquetball *Official Rules & Regulations of Racquetball*, [Section 4 is titled “Doubles.”](#) The specific rule modifications defined there mainly refer to the serve, but also include team composition for tournament play. However, there also are references to doubles teams and partners in Section 3 - Play Regulations.

The primary aspect of doubles covered here is that, with regard to the rules, players must consider each team as a single unit. To a large extent, what applies to a singles player applies to a doubles team. For example:

- Regarding the serve, the rules governing being in the service zone or entering the safety zone apply equally to each player on the serving team (there is also a specific Doubles section rule for the position of the non-serving partner on a serving team).
- Regarding entering the safety zone by the receiver, the rule applies equally to each member of the receiving team.
- Regarding rally play, the last statement of Section 4 - Doubles, Rule 4.5(b), is key and says “Both partners on a side are entitled to return the ball.”

So, what are the practical implications to considering each team as a single unit?

In the serve, each team member must be ready to serve or receive serve, as appropriate, within the 10 seconds allowed between rallies, or risk a technical warning or foul for their team.

- If either player of the serving team has an entire foot past the serve line (the forwardmost solid line), or extended over/past the short line during the serve motion, it is a foot fault [Rule 3.9(a)(1)]. Generally, if the non-serving player has a foot extending anywhere outside his/her service box, it’s a foot fault [rule 4.2(b)].
- A screen serve can be called on either player of the serving team [Rule 3.9(i)], not only on the server.
- If either player on the serving team enters the safety zone before the served ball has crossed the short line, it is an out for the server [Rule 3.10(i)].
- The server can serve to either player on the receiving team, and not just to the one that’s on the same side of the court that they’re serving from. However, if you do serve to the opposite side, make sure that your partner knows to get out of the way of the return. Otherwise, your team could be called for a penalty hinder; or worse, your partner could get hurt by the return shot.

For the return of serve, either player can return the serve [Rule 4.5(b)].

- Either player on the receiving team can signal not ready. If the server serves the ball while either player is so signaling, then it is a fault serve [Rule 3.5(b)]. So servers, be sure to check both players!
- Neither player on the receiving team can violate the safety zone prior to the ball bouncing in the safety zone or crossing the receiving line [Rule 3.11(a)].

During rallies, in Rule 4.5(b), the statement of “Both partners on a side are entitled to return the ball” applies to the return of serve as well as during a rally and has several implications, including:

- A screen may be called on either player of the team who just hit the ball, depending on how each of the receiving players is positioned.
- A hinder (replay or penalty) may be called on either player of the offensive team interfering with either player of the defensive team’s opportunity to return the ball. Rule 3.14 (c) “It is the responsibility of the side that has just hit the ball to move so the receiving side may go straight to the ball and have an unobstructed view of and swing at the ball”; and Rule 3.15(c) (Blocking) includes “the offensive player who is not returning the ball.”
- Hitting your partner with the ball during a serve or rally is the same as hitting yourself with the ball (you lose the serve or rally see [Rule 4.4(b) and 4.5(a), respectively]). But note it’s only a fault serve if you hit your partner during your serve while your partner is still in the service box (Rule 4.3(b)).

In conclusion, serves and rallies can become complicated situations during doubles play; but if you evaluate each situation with the perspective of giving equal opportunity (and responsibility) to each player on a doubles team, then some outcomes might become clearer.

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

Our commitment to Safety in Sport



The CRA welcomes another great year of racquetball. We greatly appreciate the players who join USAR and help fund our efforts, but also need to reiterate that the CRA is committed to serving all the players in Colorado. It is our continued goal to facilitate the revitalization of racquetball for future generations. Our [dedicated board members](#) volunteer their time and experience, but we simply can't succeed without your help. We welcome your input and willingness to help as we rebuild grassroots racquetball. However, as we work towards this goal, we must avoid hazards that might hinder our progress.

Unless you've been on expedition in Antarctica over the past couple of years, you've heard repeated and unsettling reports about the US Olympic Committee. Several organizations, including USA Gymnastics, suffered negative publicity for their handling of sexual abuse allegations. USAR did not escape scrutiny, and the executive director and national events coordinator were dismissed last summer for undisclosed allegations of misconduct. Sadly, this behavior hit even closer to home when a local program coordinator was arrested on allegations of suspected sexual contact with a minor.

Although in recent years the USAR mandated that all instructors and state board members complete [SafeSport training](#), concerns regarding athlete safety still exist. The news over the last

year exposed weaknesses in protections for athletes which must be addressed. USOC and USAR experienced a change in personnel and instituted reviews of their respective programs regarding athlete safety. The CRA will incorporate any changes into our policies and comply with all required training.

For clarity, all CRA board members completed the SafeSport training and a background check. The training is periodically updated, as mandated by USAR. So, what is SafeSport? [SafeSport](#) is an independent nonprofit committed to ending all forms of abuse in sport, including bullying, harassment, hazing, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual misconduct and abuse. I think everyone would agree that these behaviors are not acceptable in racquetball, or in any other sport.

SafeSport identifies common sense approaches to help avoid the appearance of impropriety, and to help in recognizing and reporting suspected abuses. For anyone who performs any coaching, especially with youth, USAR and CRA highly advises that you take this training. This alone is not an adequate safeguard. All players, parents, and coaches should be vigilant in stopping abuses in sports. The CRA encourages the development of the next generation of racquetball players - it is imperative that we safeguard all players in the process.

If you have any questions regarding safety in racquetball, please feel free to contact [any of the board members](#). Additionally, you may consult [SafeSport](#) online.

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

I admit to being a bit of a sci-fi fan-girl. Just enough to jump into quote-duels about my favorite films and win the occasional round of Trivial Pursuit, but still short of conferences and cosplay. So I've always been curious about the "what if" of time travel. What was it about the 80s that made racquetball such a cultural phenomenon? What's different now?



Being able to look back at where we were - *in relation to* where we are now - is a useful exercise. But it can't happen without accurate records. I'm no historian, but when I'm searching for an answer, I get frustrated when I can't find what I need to round out a storyline or make a strong point.

Same goes, each year, when the Board wants to name [Award Winners](#) to recognize outstanding performances and contributors. Often the same names pop up (for good reason!), but we can only go back so far before running out of source material.

Same goes, each year, when I update the [State Recordbooks](#) and see all those empty spaces where winners names should be. Who saved copies of their drawsheets back then? Did you keep the newspaper clipping when you won state singles in the 90s? Who cares? I do.

It's one of the reasons why serial, published newsletters like [the Rollout](#) (or any print piece for that matter) remain critical to documenting a specific point in time. When memory doesn't serve, our ability to find answers in print shapes our worldview. In the 80s, racquetball was a thriving sports industry with a huge following. But those days (and courts!) are long gone and can't be brought back. What's changed about our culture today - and how can we use what we know to rebuild enthusiasm in a totally different environment? Answering that question might be the only way the sport will hold its place in history.



National Singles Details ... are forthcoming, and Colorado players will soon be able to schedule time off from work and plan their holiday weekend around this major event! [Use this link to check for official information as it's released.](#)

National Board Elections ... USA Racquetball recently announced that - with three seats available and three individuals applying - there would be no formal Board election this year. Thurman Brooks, Cheryl Kirk, and Dan Whitley (pictured L-R below) [will be re-installed](#) at the organization's annual meeting in May, after each had re-stated their desire to serve last fall.

"Imagine climbing half way up the hill, and not being able to finish the climb. That is how I feel about my work with USA Racquetball. We have accomplished quite a bit, but our

work here continues." -- Thurman Brooks

"The more I know and understand about our sport, the more I can make a difference; it is my one and only desire in being this involved. I want to see this sport be as meaningful in the lives of players for generations to come as it has been in mine." -- Cheryl Kirk

"It's been an honor to represent the USA Racquetball Board and membership as Board President. We need to provide more support for club owners, state boards, outdoor racquetball, and tournament directors. I want to complete development of a national junior program to introduce racquetball to more kids around the country." -- Dan Whitley



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