



The Colorado Racquetball Association ENews

SPRING /
SUMMER 2019

HEAVY HITTERS IN SOUTHERN COLORADO

PAC hosts the GOAT to headline Spring lineup

In March, the Pueblo Athletic Club upped its pro game by scheduling a Tier 4 IRT stop and inviting all of the top pros to take part in the [Spring PAC OPEN](#). Oh ... and the sport's Greatest of all Time just happened to show up, too. [Kane Waselenchuk](#) holds an unmatched tour record and 14 US OPEN titles throughout a stellar pro career, and Southern Colorado players and fans were thrilled to see the legendary southpaw in action, right in their own backyard.

Other heavy-hitters included reigning USAR National Singles champ Jake Bredenbeck, Bobby Horn, and Nick Riffel, who all hold IRT ranking spots, along with Kane's long-time doubles partner and former Colorado resident, Ben Croft. Having some of the top pros on hand also generated one of our best turnouts, with over 125 players from 9 different states joining in the fun. We all got to witness some amazing matches and see racquetball being played at its highest level all weekend long.



Not surprisingly, Kane took home both the IRT singles and doubles

IN THIS ISSUE

- Mountain GOAT
- [Tournaments & Clubs](#)
- [Short Road Trips](#)
- [Board Updates](#)
- [Member Profile](#)
- [CRA Singles #45](#)
- [Junior News](#)
- [Upcoming Events](#)
- [Instruction](#)
- [Know your Rules](#)
- [From the President](#)
- [From the Editor](#)
- [National News](#)

All photos are provided with permission to publish by contributors, or acquired from public sourcing; any/all non-attributed content is copyright Editor.



titles, and there were plenty of great matches in both pro draws. The singles field nearly filled a round of 32 bracket, with 17 Colorado hopefuls bringing their best to the party. Seven won their first round, and three of those reached the quarterfinal, where Eric Garcia defeated Nick Riffel to get into an ill-fated semi against the top seed. In the end we got to see Kane vs. Bobby Horn in an exciting and fun-filled final.

From another packed draw in doubles, Erik Garcia reached his second pro semifinal with partner Riffel before being stopped short. In the final between Kane/Ben and Jake Bredenbeck/Bobby Horn, everyone knew we were in for some hard-hitting racquetball and the match didn't disappoint. We all enjoyed seeing amazing gets, great shots and four guys having some fun.

The pros weren't the only great matches to watch. We had our biggest tournament yet, with plenty to see all weekend long. On the women's side, we had a star-studded draw with some of the top young players in the game. Erika Manilla claimed the Women's Open title, after great battles with Carla Munoz and Adriana Riveros. Erika also earned a clean sweep by teaming with Adriana to win the women's open doubles, too.



After enjoying a PACKed house all weekend long, lots of great hospitality, and giving away plenty of prizes - we couldn't have asked for a better turn out, by a greater group of players. We also couldn't have done it without support from our Colorado racquetball community and the volunteers.

A special thanks to Danny Beaudry and the [Pueblo Athletic Club](#) for hosting and running such a great event year after year. *[Pictured: Steve Klumpp and Nicole Melster, happy taskmasters of the tournament desk.]*

-- Reporting & photos, courtesy Matt Melster



Posing briefly on the sidelines between games (l-r): Cisco Sandoval, Kane Waselenchuk, Matt Melster, Ben Croft. Three-time US OPEN Doubles champs Kane and Ben showed how it's done.



The SPRING Calendar is the current working edition, but you always want to be sure to switch 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 & Player News | Plenty of Action

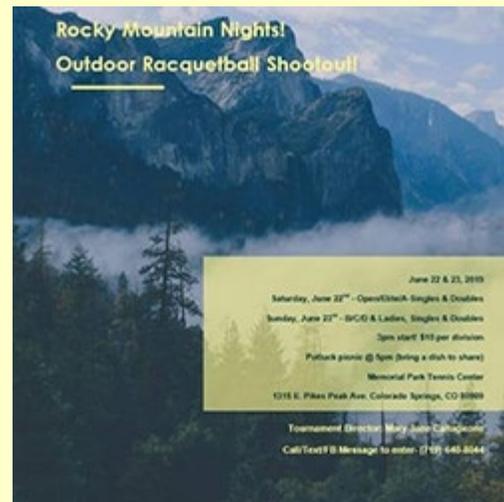
TOURNEY TICKER ... Save the dates! Keep an eye on the [online calendar](#) to see when registration opens, confirm event dates and verify details, then plan to get time off for ... [National Senior Games \(Albuquerque, June 14-19\)](#) ... [Rocky Mountain State & Senior Games \(July 19-21\)](#) ... [World Senior Racquetball Championships \(Albuquerque, August 27-31\)](#) ...

June 22-23 | Rocky Mountain Nights Outdoor Shootout in Colorado Springs ... Contact Mary Jane Caltagirone to enter, and see graphic at right for details.

July 25-29 | 35th Annual Elite Camp In Centennial ... Featuring group and one-on-one training with Coach Jim Winterton, National champion and top ranked LPRT pro Rhonda Rajsich, National and World Junior champion Erika Manilla, and IRT pros Thomas Carter and Nick Riffel. [Register today >>](#)

August 9 | Deadline for World Seniors ... this event has a three week lead time for entering, so don't miss signing up - [no later than Thursday, August 8.](#)

Sad loss in Wyoming ... Colorado players were saddened to learn of the passing of a young man who had only just begun making a name for himself in



June 22-23 ... this Outdoor Shootout is a fundraiser for Cody Scott and the CSU-Pueblo Freshman racquetball players. Click on the image for a larger view of the details.

the region. [Cody Scott](#) (pictured at right) succumbed to fatal injuries from an automobile accident in mid May. In his last tournament played in Colorado, Cody had entered three divisions and advanced into the semi-final round of Men's B at the PAC OPEN in early March. In the Wyoming State Singles, he'd reached the semis of Men's A, just weeks before his tragic accident. His eagerness to learn, great attitude and smiling face will be sorely missed by the entire racquetball community.

Update Needed ... Are you a **sponsored player** who has switched companies recently, or handed off your roster spot to another rep? The CRA publishes [a referral list of company experts](#) who can be sought out to try new frames and learn more about the different manufacturers and equipment. Take a moment to review the list, and [let us know](#) if you can help out with the latest info. Thanks!

Erika Manilla ... was nursing an injury during National Singles and didn't play, but still managed to make a little pocket \$ reffing - and enjoy a different USAR win. CRA's own 4x state Open champ (and World Junior gold medalist) was recently named one of three [2019 USAR Scholarship](#) recipients. The well-earned award will apply even more extra cash toward her studies at Northern Arizona University in the Fall. Bonus!

Due North ... Steve Strahler and Michiele Stapleton traveled to the Wyoming State Singles, and happily reported back: *Well, [Wyoming State Singles](#) is in the books for both of us! Michiele played lights out and was able to take both her finals in very hard fought matches! So the final tally was: 1st in Women's Open and 1st in Men's B (for Michiele), plus 1st in Men's 25+ Open and 3rd in Men's Open (for Steve). Been a great weekend and we made many new friends and were able to hook up with old ones!*



Steve Strahler and Cody Scott at Wyoming State Singles in April.



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

Welcome Addition ! Chantel Anderson and Gina Puzo welcomed Jax Jace Anderson to the family, who weighed in at 6lb 15oz, and arrived on February 27. He's pictured in an exclusive, recent shot of not-quite-napping with Ryder. If you're connected to them on social media, you'll find lots of great photos of this beautiful bouncing boy with his giddy Moms, friends and family. Congratulations!

Bon Voyage ! As Bruce Burkland prepared to up and move to California, Goodson's new



Court Court Coordinator, Bill Smyth and his wife Jane Grogan arranged a going-away picnic for him in late May so he could bid everyone a fond farewell. We've missed him at Goodson, and now wish him every happiness as he heads to the west coast!



*The next Ladies Day is scheduled for **June 29 - outdoors - in Colorado Springs.** [Check out the Facebook event](#) for more details - then sign up to receive emails about future get-togethers, or contact Chantel Anderson to be added to the list, at ColoradoLadiesRBall@gmail.com*

46th CRA SINGLES

Colorado State Singles drew slightly higher at Highlands Ranch this year, with 88 entrants competing for titles in 32 fields, mostly scheduled in pool play format. The largest division was Men's B, with 20 hopefuls, where Sean Hartling held out for the title. He took two pool wins to gain a playoff spot, then made two more straight draw advances and defeated Scott Heise in the final, 13-15, 15-8, 11-8.



Men's Open was the next largest field, with 18 challengers total, including eventual winner Carla Munoz. She made a similar run with two pool play wins to reach the single-elimination playoff round, then faced Eric Metherd and Michael Nigro to reach and defeat Luis Martinez for the title. In the dropdown Elite playoff, Nick Blanchard defeated Alex Brown in straight games.

Eight women were fielded in the single-elimination Women's Open draw, with defending champ

Nicole Cordova reclaiming her title by defeating Alyssa Street. [Find all the results and details >>](#)



*CRA State Singles Open finalists Luis Martinez, Carla Munoz & Nicole Cordova, Alyssa Street.
Photos courtesy Mary Jane Caltagirone (and there's plenty more on Facebook ... !)*

ROAD TRIPS | Team Colorado goes ... well ... across Town

Other Way Around ... High level out-of-state competition came to Colorado, in the form of the [USA Racquetball National Singles](#) at Highlands Ranch. This made it easy for a sizable roster of 67 local players to test their skills against top amateurs from across the country without crossing state lines. And making up over a third of the total players in the tournament, odds were good that plenty of hardware would stay close to home.

In the [Men's US Team Qualifying round](#), Woody Clouse, Nick Riffel and Adam Manilla started in the round of 16, but only Manilla advanced after defeating Clouse, then Utah's Anthony Martin to reach the semifinal. There, he played a great match and pushed the defending champ Jake Bredenbeck to his first and only tiebreaker of the tournament.

Once the [Men's Elite division](#) developed, seven of Colorado's top players went into single elimination playoffs that shaped an all-Colorado semifinal round between Nick Blanchard vs. Lee Beckwith and CJ Sanders vs. Luis Martinez. Then, in the head-to-head playoff they'd missed at State Singles, Luis Martinez defeated Nick Blanchard in a tiebreaker for the national gold medal, 11-15, 15-4, 11-3.

After the long holiday weekend, gold medalists in singles included Vikram Pathrojurhri (MB), Michael Durbin (MD), Jacob Eggemeyer (M25A), Kreg Flowers (M25B), Daniel Busekrus (M24C), Brandon Hopkins (M24C), Andy Schmidt (M40B), Dan Lundberg (M40C), Steve Strahler (M50E), Sherwyn Philip (M50B), PJ Williams (M60A), Mark Ashland (M60B), James Bixler (M70A), Rachel Washam (WC), Mary Jane Caltagirone (W50A), Lucy Jirik (W60B), Shirley Parsons (W70), Chuck Osborn (Heroes40), Philip Gaerlan (HeroesB).

USA Racquetball offers doubles-at-singles just for fun (National Doubles is in February), but the Mixed Open final still shaped up into an all-Colorado showdown. In the end Nicole

Cordova/Michael Nigro defeated Michiele Stapleton/Steve Strahler in straight games for the victory. [View all the results here](#) to see how your well your favorite local athletes fared. Congratulations to all!

If you were dialed into the livestreaming of the recent US National Singles Championships, you were treated to enthusiastic and insightful commentary by up-and-coming junior Lily Caldwell.

At 16, this young lady has already learned a great deal about the game and she's not shy about adding her two cents to the play-by-play. She assisted in scorekeeping for the announcers and instinctively learned about how to fill "dead air" in the broadcasts ... and seemed to enjoy every minute. Well done!



Pictured with Lily is [Leo Vasquez](#), USA Racquetball & US OPEN Public Relations Manager, who added in a social media comment: *"Lily operated the scoreboard for all the matches on Saturday and Sunday. She also kept tally of the \$3,000 in pledges we raised for Team USA. She kept track of every single name and every single dollar. Thank You Lily!"* [Photo courtesy John Foust]



After suffering a compound ankle fracture just under a year ago, Woody Clouse made his first court appearance at the [Life Time Spring Shootout](#), where he won his test-run and gained the confidence to post: *On June 6 of 2018, I broke my ankle in 3 places and - 4 pins and a plate later - I was told many things that all had limitations ... (their limitations). Less than a year later I'm excited to share my love for playing racquetball at the US Nationals. See you all in Denver!*

He's pictured with Tournament Director and Open runner-up CJ Sanders; along with Men's B champ Andy Schmidt and Men's A winner Wil Swindler. Photo courtesy Sanders FB.

BOARD REPORT | CRA Update

New METRO Club Directory Online ... The Board often discusses ways to improve communication with clubs and tournament directors, and has been working on a comprehensive court club and contact spreadsheet for many years. The long-time effort has been complicated by the difficulty in identifying the right people and obtaining accurate contact info from more remote facilities. Now new residents and visitors to Colorado can easily find the state's major, metro clubs right on the CRA website, under the re-titled "Find" tab > under the [Where to Play](#) dropdown.

Annual Awards ... The CRA Board is always on the lookout for candidates to be recognized among outstanding players and volunteers - and needs your help to build the bracket. [Review the list](#), then [send an email](#) to share the names that you would suggest for ...

Best Sportsmanship: Male & Female ?
 Player of the Year: Male & Female ?
 Outstanding Junior: ? ... Outstanding Volunteer: ?



Deb Beldring

John Mooney Lifetime Achievement: ?

Wait ... what ... When TD Joe Williams decided to place Carla Munoz into the Men's Open draw at State Singles, he neglected to consider how the record books would read if she won the division. [And then she won the division.](#) After the fact, the entire board engaged in a spirited debate about how to deal with the unprecedented situation and then committed to developing a clearer standing policy going forward. At the same time, the board chose not to penalize Carla, and simply record the win factually, although certainly not literally.

Want a Seat at the Table? ... at the end of the year, 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 to do worthwhile, good work.

Club is a pivot point in the new [Metro Club Directory](#), which contains website and email links for principals at over 20 public court club facilities throughout the state. [On the page](#), Deb Beldring and CRA Board member Ralph Graham are shown as "glad to help" if you have questions about DAC.

MEMBER PROFILE | Carla Munoz Montesinos

After gaining some first-rate practice at CRA State Singles - and claiming the Men's Open title - Carla Munoz went on to compete in her final year of intercollegiate nationals for CSU-Pueblo, before representing her home country of Chile at the Pan American Championships in Colombia. She finished second at [Intercollegiates](#), advanced to the semi-final at [Pan Ams](#) and is currently ranked on the LPRT at #21 in singles, and #15 in doubles.

In a social media post following intercollegiates, she thanked her supporters and congratulated her teammates, with pride: ... *most important, we were able to achieve the Women Overall Title for the first time ever and add another Overall combined title to the school history. It makes me so happy to give back to a school that helped me so much ... where I was able to pursue not only my bachelors, but also my masters degree while following my passion for racquetball.*



According to Wikipedia, Carla was raised in the capital city of Santiago, Chile, as the youngest of two sisters and a brother, attending school, competing in numerous sports and studying Flamenco dancing for 8 years. At 14, her father introduced her to racquetball and she became fascinated by the sport as she began winning junior tournaments. At 17, she enrolled in Adolfo Ibanez University, studying business & engineering, and quit playing for nearly two years to focus on her studies. After being drawn back to compete in the 2011 Pan American Games, she decided to commit to the [LPRT tour and turn pro](#). She began traveling to the United States to play in more tournaments and train, settling in the San Francisco Bay Area in 2014. She was [recruited to the CSU Pueblo team](#) in 2016, never looked back and [her future looks very bright!](#)

See the re-posted State Singles champions list, and videos of Carla's final match in CRA's Men's Open, at [Daily Racquetball](#). On Facebook, you'll find multiple videos by Mary Jane Caltagirone on both her personal page and the CRA page. *[Photos courtesy: Munoz FB]*



Munoz was front-and-center at Racquet for the Cure in 2018, where she conducted an early morning clinic for participants, and played in the fundraiser Mixed Doubles.

JUNIOR NEWS | High School Fun ... !

Report and photos by Kim Pedrie

It may have been a Saturday assignment, but it sure wasn't detention! On April 6 at Highlands Ranch, 28 students representing 7 different area high schools spent the day in healthy competition at the CRA sponsored Colorado High School Championships.

Students from Denver, Colorado Springs and Pueblo had a great time testing their skills to determine champions in beginning, intermediate and advanced levels of play.

[>> Ready for prime time? Joe Deville won the B18U advanced, and already looks like he has a coach and a fan club - all in one.]



Highlands Ranch RB coordinator Dan Davis was aided by co-CRA Board members Marcia Richards and Kim Pedrie, along with top open player C.J. Sanders and plenty of supportive parents who helped keep everyone on task and well-fed throughout the day.

2019 Colorado High School Tournament Results

Beginner

G14U: 1. Alana, 2. Vicki Wong

B14U: 1. Gavin Seltz, 2. Andreus Hoganson

B16U: 1. Ryan Latourrette

B18U: 1. Leo Pinzon, 2. Mitchel Goette

Intermediate

B14U: 1. Caleb Shaw, 2. Ian Wheelock



B16U: 1. Maddox Loyd, 2. Logan Weingandt
 B18U: 1. Brendan O'keefe, 2. Jonathan Aden-Griffen

Advanced

B14U: 1. Nate Hartling, 2. Elliot Mault
 B16U: 1. Daniel Busekrus, 2. Holden Koch
 B18U: 1. Joe Deville, 2. Ahbi Bhandavi
 G18U: 1. Khathay Velprin

Pictured, top row (l-r): Jonathan Aden-Griffin, Kathay Velprin, Leo Pinzon, Daniel Busekrus, Maddox Loyd. Bottom row (l-r): Nate Hartling, Caleb Shaw, Gavin Seltz, Elliot Mault, Holden Kochmore. *[added photos courtesy student parents]*

Earlier in the Spring, Mary Jane Caltagirone posted this fun recollection during State Singles ... Two years ago I played a skinny, 14 year old girl from Grand Junction. I beat her. But I knew this might be the last time I beat her. She had a fire in her eyes for racquetball and was gunning for me. After our match, she said to me, *"I'm going to beat you next time Miss Mary Jane"*.

Fast forward to yesterday. I'm scheduled to play her again in a third-place match for Women's Open State Championships. The day before, she had beaten one of our top players in the state to get to the semi-finals and was proving that her game had elevated tremendously in the past two years.

Our match was very close. First game went to her 15-12, second game went to me 15-13. The tiebreaker was neck-and-neck till the end and she pulled it out 11-9. This 16 year old young lady gave me a huge hug and she was so happy to finally beat me.

Even though I really wanted to win that match, I was very happy for her. If there's anyone I didn't mind getting beat by this past weekend, it was ... [Lily Caldwell](#). Not only is she becoming an excellent racquetball player, more importantly she's an amazing person. Polite, loving, smart and wise beyond her years. I'll see you at regionals! Rematch!

Ahem ... about that rematch ... The Pueblo Athletic Club also hosted the Rocky Mountain Regionals in April, and the happy field in Women's Skill divisions is pictured below in finish order!

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.



Lily Caldwell, Mary Jane Caltagirone, Rachel Washam, Jeri Daniel. Photo: Mike Daniel/FB.



SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS

ENTRY PLANNER

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



CERTIFIED INSTRUCTION | by [Marcia Richards](#)

Basic how-to: Preparation ... Drill ... Progression ... and Repeat



To bring your game to the next level you need to improve on what you already have and keep adding new skills. The following is a list of criteria put out by the USRA and AmPro to show the skills necessary to play at a certain skill level.

This criterion is used to rate players for skill divisions. *(Remember that ratings reflect skill levels, and are different from rankings and seedings used in tournaments.)*

- PRO - highest level of play / Competes internationally and for prize money.
- Open - highest level of amateur play / Rated higher than an A player and probably coaches or gives lessons.
- A- plays regularly and is a top player in the club / Trains regularly, backhand and forehand strokes are near equal. Has good depth, high shot percentage, no apparent weaknesses; has perfected the rollout and re-kills opponent's offensive shots.
- B - plays regularly and finds time to practice on their own to perfect shots / Has the knowledge, court strategy and positioning in offense and defense situations. Selects proper

shots most of the time and is inconsistent, but improving. Is developing patience and is able to take tips from better players.

- C - has played over 6 months, plays frequently and is developing strength in the basics / Can execute most shots with some precision. Knowledge of game is rising. Can safely attempt ceiling, pinches, passing shots, and occasionally kill shots
- D - is just beginning to receive instruction, but lacks the experience / Is learning the safety rules, the forehand backhand strokes. Experiments with the Z serve, backwall, angles, and passing shots.

Just like when you were a child - and had to learn how to crawl before walking, then master walking before learning how to run - the same is true with sport skills. We know that stumbling when learning how to walk is important for developing spatial abilities, a sense of physical place, and a host of other behaviors. Without that experience of trying to crawl, walk and then run, crucial basics to more complicated locomotor patterns are missed. There are certain basics to the game of racquetball that you should master in order to build a strong foundation. The stronger the foundation, the easier it will be for you to build your game.

So let's learn how to prepare to win. Learning what, and how, to drill will give structure to your workouts. You want a series of drills related to a specific topic, from the most basic to the more complicated. You'll do them by yourself, with a partner, or in lead up games. Drills are broken down into small parts of the game to create a drill progression. The proper way to use a drill progression is to start with the simplest drill, master it, then move on to the next. If you get to a point in your workout that you are having trouble reaching the goal of the drill, you should go back to the previous drill.

Drills should be listed in a sequence that will be easy to follow, with notations to give the player options on how to make the drill more challenging. Each step should be an easy transition, from first steps that build the foundation to the next. Added components will challenge your execution of the drill, to help you raise your game to the next level.

Feedback is critical to the learning process. When you know what to look for, you'll gain expertise in making form corrections and the ability to make changes as needed. With a goal and points to emphasize, you'll be able to self-evaluate and pinpoint common errors. When evaluating your execution, look to footwork first and stroke mechanics next. Check your base of support first - at your feet. Start at the bottom and work up when trying to adjust and improve your skills.

As you move through the progression, each of the drills will become more familiar and game-like. Hopefully you will find this fun and rewarding, and you'll begin to see yourself in game situations that look and feel like the drills you've been practicing.

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



KNOW YOUR RULES ! Rule Change Refresher

by [Ray Cornell](#)

Not too long ago (okay, maybe it's been a few years), there were some rule changes made that may still prompt questions before or during sanctioned match play. Although they've been in place a while, a refresher is good, especially for some who might have had trouble adjusting to, or recalling, them.



For example, there are some who still want to call “avoidable” hinders - even though that term was replaced with “penalty” hinder many years ago. So let's review the nuances and considerations for each of the more recent rule changes listed below, by following along in the [online rulebook](#) and taking a look at each one in turn. Do you know ...

- There is no carry unless it was on purpose
- Length of the safety cord is limited
- Audio devices are not allowed during play
- Doubles partners may serve in any order
- Court hinders must be designated prior to the start of the match

There is no carry unless it was on purpose | This rule is covered in two places: serve and rallies. Rule 3.10 lists various out serves, with 3.10(e) defining an illegal hit, which “includes contacting the ball twice, intentionally carrying the ball, or hitting the ball with the handle of the racquet or part of the body or uniform.” Rule 3.11(c)(10) defines “Failure to make a legal return” as “Intentionally carrying or slinging the ball with the racquet.” In each rule, the key word is “intentionally.” If you do it on purpose, then you lose the rally or the opportunity to serve. (Previously, any carry lost you the rally or the serve.) However, an accidental carry is not penalized. This rule is also true in IRT play (see rule 11.9). It can be difficult for an observer to distinguish between the two, but if there's an intentional carry (say when trying to “dink” the ball at the front wall), it should be called. Otherwise, play on!

Length of the safety cord | This is covered in detail in rule 2.4(d) Racquet Specifications. The rule is that “The wrist cord can be no longer than 18 inches as measured from one end of the cord to the other. When stretched to its maximum, the cord cannot be longer than 24 inches.” I'm not sure, but I think the 24 inch maximum was the change. Measure for the 18 inch length without any stretching of the cord. And, always attach the safety cord to your wrist during warmup as well as during games. It's a safety thing along with wearing goggles during warmups (see rule 2.5(d) - Equipment Requirements During Warm-up).

Audio devices not allowed during play | Under Rule 2.5 Apparel, paragraph (c) states that “Players may not wear audio devices during play unless they are needed to amplify one's hearing.” There is no mention about during warmup time, so you can use your music or other motivational audio while warming up (use ear buds or headphones, please); but, there are no other allowances made for audio devices being used during a game.

Doubles partners may serve in any order | Rule 4.2(a) states that after the very first server of a game is out, “either partner can serve first each time the team steps in to serve.” Note that it also says that “The referee must make sure that neither partner serves again after that partner had previously lost a rally while serving.” So, when you're a referee, be sure to pay attention to who's serving each time on a doubles team, and call the out when it's not correct. When self-officiating, all players should keep up with serve order of both teams and own up to mistakes when they occur. For additional credit, check out rule 4.4(a). Serving again after losing a rally results in an immediate out for that team.

Court hinders must be designated prior to the start of the match | Rule 3.14(a)(1) defines a court hinder. It states that play will stop immediately when “the ball hits any part of the court that was designated *prior* to the match as a court hinder (such as a vent grate)” (emphasis added). It’s not a court hinder if not declared prior to the match starting. However, play should also stop when the ball takes an irregular bounce as a result of contacting an irregular surface (e.g., light frame, uneven door) or a wet spot, **and** when the irregular bounce affected the rally (in the referee’s opinion). The distinction here is that a pre-match designated court hinder can be called, regardless of whether the ball has taken an irregular bounce. And in general, an irregular bounce that affects the rally should result in a replay hinder, regardless of designated court hinders.

Rule changes don’t happen very often (there is a formal process defined in rule E.1 and includes input by the general membership); so when they do occur, be sure to incorporate them into your play as often as you can. That way, they become second nature over time, everyone’s “on the same page,” and you won’t have excessive arguments among players and/or referees.

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

There ... I said it ... Make Racquetball Great Again ... !



Racquetball in Colorado remains in full swing after Colorado State Singles, Rocky Mountain Regionals, National Singles, and plenty of local tournaments in between, including a pro stop where King Kane showed why he’s the GOAT. For tournament players, it’s been a great time to be in Colorado (as if there’s ever a bad time) - with more to come!

As for the overall state of racquetball, I’d like to offer my two cents based on 30+ years in the sport and a couple of recent happenings. Thanks to Google, I spotted a story in my news feed that offered guidance to facility directors on how to repurpose racquetball courts to make (according to the author), the best use of the square footage. The article outlined the rationale for making better use of rarely used racquetball courts. How many of us have seen this type of transition in our local facilities for years?

I recently enjoyed spring break in a Tucson resort that had two racquetball courts in the gym. The only problem? They were now workout rooms. During a recent work trip to Tulsa, I connected with some friends who had been forced to play on college courts after all the local facilities closed or repurposed their courts. I left North Carolina 11 years ago, and learned that the private club I’d called home for over 15 years - and the only court club in a town of over 150,000 - had shut down for good. It’s no surprise that the tournament scene in some of these areas is all but non-existent.

Within the metro Denver area over the last decade or two, we have watched facilities convert courts, or simply close outright. As the racquetball faithful, many of us look at these closures with contempt as we move on to find other locations to play ... *but what happens when we no longer have viable options?* I submit, as do many others, that the time for action is *prior* to a club’s decision. That means EVERY court needs to be seen in frequent use by a valuable demographic of club members that boast a high retention rate. It’s much harder to make the argument that courts should be converted, when they’re being used extensively by members who reliably renew year after year.

On a more positive note, I recently accepted an invitation to join the Facebook group [Make Racquetball Great Again](#). [*Yes, it’s a play on President Trump’s slogan and no, I am not making a political statement by mentioning it*]. I recognize that it’s limited in membership and therefore has a limited platform. But I think it’s long overdue that we put our thoughts into action and

fiercely promote racquetball. If you share a passion and desire to see our sport rebound to the prominence we once enjoyed, I urge you to act. It should not take a facility director shutting down our favorite court before we take action.

So, what can YOU do? The first part is easy. Keep doing what you love - and play! Often. Make a point of letting your facility directors know that racquetball is the primary reason you frequent their center. Remember, for private facilities, it's about the revenue bottom line; for community Rec centers, it's about providing as many demand-based services as limited space allows. As consumers, reward companies like VASA Fitness and Lifetime Fitness that brought new courts into the Denver area.

The next part is harder - get more people onto those courts with you. That means inviting the guy at work who played back in college, or the lady from church looking for a fun workout. Don't let the difference in skill level deter you from helping someone else get hooked. For those who want to give more back to the sport, get involved with programs designed to help juniors or undergrads learn the game. If you're a sponsored player, this is an excellent way to promote the basic business equation: increased racquetball participation = more courts, retailers and industry success!

If you're not sure where to start, ask someone from the [Colorado Racquetball Association](#). Everyone on the CRA is dedicated to the sport's success and we need volunteers to support our efforts. Please consider joining the CRA or one of the committees designed to help us help the sport. If we all work together with a united purpose, we *can* ... ***Make Racquetball Great Again!***

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

Stop me if you've heard this one. When I shifted away from competing in skill divisions and moved into the age brackets, I carefully began to calibrate a window of opportunity in which I might gain even the slightest edge over my birthday peers. When I approached each speed limit ... turning 30 before everyone else ... then 35 ... and 40 ... I had about six months to bank some ranking points before the better players started to age in and show up. I did my best but, sooner or later, they all "qualified" through the unrelenting passage of time.



On the other end of the spectrum, the two-year junior guardrails are meant to assure fair play among the up-and-comers, to keep them from being overwhelmed and de-motivated by the older kids. Back in the day, pro tours would fine their top players for competing in amateur events.

For decades, State Singles has been limited to Colorado residents - clearly stated on the entry - with the expectation that *state* champions should actually *be* from Colorado. CRA members deserve a level playing field among known opponents, without risking elimination by someone who doesn't qualify to claim the title as a non-resident. Some states employ the same rule; smaller states may not, in the interest of filling their brackets. Either way, there's still plenty of "open" competition in, around and across state lines, year-round, at all levels (*ahem ... cough ... Regionals ... !*).

Experienced Tournament Committees are able to create solid, combined fields of play to maximize court time for the greatest number of entrants - and there's always a fair way to achieve that end. In fact, R2 is programmed to re-compute "actual" winners in combined divisions, so it's easy to clearly re-define who-won-what and properly name division champs where they originally qualified and entered. The rules bend pretty far, so there's no need to break them outright.

Facts matter. Fair play matters. Being nimble and prepared to do the right thing matters. Turning down one player's special request might be difficult, but when decisions are based on established policy that assures fair play for the larger field, it's the right call. And you thought all tournament directors did was sit behind the desk ... pushing scorecards and short pencils around. That *would* be easy ... !

NATIONAL NEWS



National Office Staffs UP ... USA Racquetball moved into a new offices in February, nearer to other sports' national governing bodies and at a savings of nearly \$20,000 per year in operating expenses. The new address is 1661 Mesa Avenue, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80906. All phone and email contact info remains unchanged.

Executive Director Mike Wedel also addressed the need for additional support for both indoor and outdoor USAR members. Renee Gundolff has taken on new role as

Associate Director of Events and Operations, assisted by two

membership coordinators focusing on outreach, R2 workflow, national event management, ambassador programs, facility programs, and high school/collegiate programs. [Brittany Clark](#) and [Bailee Jackson](#) have joined the staff in those roles and have already hit the ground running. Good luck!

 UnitedHealthcare®

US OPEN 2019

RACQUETBALL

MINNEAPOLIS, MN

OCT 2-6

24th
CHAMPIONSHIP

PRESENTED BY



Call 719.635.5396 ext. 0 for ticket and entry
information or visit UnitedHealthcareUSOPEN.com

Copyright © [Colorado Racquetball Association](http://ColoradoRacquetballAssociation.com) | Produced by [With Substance, Inc.](http://WithSubstance.com)

If you wish to cancel your subscription to this newsletter, manage your USAR preferences [here](#)