



## The Colorado Racquetball Association ENews

FALL 2019

### BACK IN THE SWING, TWICE OVER

*State Doubles returns to DAC*

The CRA has been brainstorming all summer, trying to come up with ways to restore a "back in the day" vibe to state championships. Access to the full amenities of a sophisticated venue like the Denver Athletic Club is half the battle, since it allows later evening play and comfortable sideline socializing to enjoy each other's company all weekend long.

Thanks to Board member Alex Brown, we're also able to share a great downtown hotel experience - at a hefty discount - to make it easy to treat yourself to a true racquetball getaway weekend. The historic [Warwick Denver](#) is within walking distance of DAC, features a rooftop pool with a view that's second to none, **and** has put together a great offer for CRA players. Be sure to [make your reservations](#) before the room block fills, then look for more late-breaking party news!

Then ... bring friends along! Urge someone to play in this event that hasn't played in three years (and isn't a current USAR member), and YOUR second event is free ... PLUS your friend's USAR membership for this tournament will be waived!

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***Top-notch stringer Philip Guerlain is a familiar face at DAC tournaments, where he has a birds-eye view of the action, and plenty of room to spread out to work his magic - in between competing in his own matches! Photo courtesy John Foust.***

Then ... get ready to compete! CRA offers a full lineup of championship playoffs, along with the popular Centurion brackets. Defending Open champions Erik Garcia & Steve Strahler, Brenda Laime & Adriana Riveros and Chantel Anderson & CJ Sanders can be expected to claim the top seeds in their respective divisions if they choose to re-team to seek another title.

Strong challengers could include last year's top-finishing teams, like: Alex Brown & Nick Riffel in Men's Open, Ginette Chapman & Michiele Stapleton in Women's Open, and a wide open field in Mixed Open, led by tough pairings like Carla Munoz & Danny Beaudry and Janelle Williams & Luis Martinez.

Last year, both the Men's Open and A divisions drew the largest fields with 13 teams in each. With that number, TDs elected to use the pool play qualifier to set the semi-final round and advance to finals, and also permitted cross-over gender play to further broaden the field. Centurion groupings often turn into mixed playoffs too, when teams are built of highly-skilled men, women, boys and girls, veterans and juniors ... whose ages total 100 or more.

So - no matter what your age or skill - you've got plenty of opportunity to claim a State title by Sunday afternoon. Right now, TDs are working to put together a generous player package, featuring a unique souvenir and plenty of extras. Downtown Denver is perfect for a "destination" racquetball weekend ... all you have to do is commit to have fun! What are you waiting for?

[ENTER online \(now!\) >>](#) (Deadline: November 2)  
[BOOK at the Warwick Denver \(today!\) >>](#) (limited rate availability)



Benefit Tournament. Be there!



**Congratulations in order ...** for Marcia Richards, who has been tapped for induction into the [NMRA Hall of Fame](#) at the next available presentation opportunity. The National Masters Racquetball Association routinely selects both athletes and contributors for the HOF honor, then

conducts a formal ceremony at a future event attended by the honoree. Richards was chosen for her accomplishments in the athlete category and it's expected that she'll receive her plaque at the March National Masters event Awards Banquet in St. Louis. Well done!

[RFTC Ladies Days](#) are scheduled around the state periodically - so sign up to receive emails about future get-togethers by contacting Chantel Anderson to be added to the list, at [ColoradoLadiesRBall@gmail.com](mailto:ColoradoLadiesRBall@gmail.com).

most popular holiday events - and it will celebrate its 26th playing this year!



[Racquet for the Cure](#) will shift to a FALL timeslot in 2020, to help kick off the CRA season calendar, and precede Breast Cancer Awareness Month.



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



*Darlene Sue was a double-medal winner at the [Rocky Mountain State Games](#) in July, with a Women's C first place and Women's B second place title. Congratulations! Photo courtesy Joe Williams.*

## **SUMMER FUN, DAY & NIGHT**

by Mary Jane Caltagirone

Never played racquetball outdoors? That's no excuse - join the FUN! From May to September you can find a loyal group of Springs players who welcome all to come check out racquetball played in the sunshine (and moonlight) of our great state! Colorado OUTDOOR is thriving!

Four shootout-style, one day events are held at the Memorial Park Tennis Center on two long 3-wall courts. Organizer



Mary Jane Caltagirone works hard to accommodate all levels of play (Pros to Novice) and offers singles, doubles and mixed at the shootouts. The \$10/division entry fee all goes to a charity that benefits the Colorado racquetball community. It's family friendly, and we always have good tunes to listen to while playing and potluck style food throughout the day!

An interesting mix of first-time players and local pros (yes, pros!) can be found at the shootouts! Shootouts are commonly attended by touring pros like Carla Munoz, Erik Garcia, and Adriana Riveros, along with top-notch Open players like Jorge Cuellar, Matt Dockter, CJ Sanders, Nick Blanchard, Steve Strahler, Chantel Anderson and Yesid Bazoberry.

Join our [Colorado Outdoor Racquetball Facebook group](#) for updates on our Spring/Summer tourney season. Once you're in, the group also issues "pop-up" notices, so you'll know when to show up for a late-breaking challenge court session on evenings or Saturday mornings. Who knows? You might like it so much you will join us in Las Vegas next September for the 3WallBall World Championships!



*Eddie Meredith has played a pivotal role at the US OPEN for over a decade - by supervising the construction of the portable stadium court each year. His first practice-run was a set-up and tear-down at Lynmar in Colorado Springs in 2007, and he's pictured then and now (inset with wife Mary in Minneapolis last year). 2018 photo by Roby Partovich.*

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## ROAD TRIPS | Team Colorado makes the Rounds

**US OPEN Bound ...** A small roster of 17 faithful made the trek to Minneapolis for the [24th UnitedHealthcare US OPEN](#), along with USA Racquetball staffers and contractors for support.

Among them, 11 were from southern half of the state, including a full "family affair" contingent of all four Rodgers'es from the Springs. Ryan, Trish, daughter Kayden and son Zach all enjoyed some court time at the Target Center. The youngsters played singles, while Mom and Dad stuck with doubles, where Ryan was lucky enough (!) to play straight into top-seeded legend Sudsy Monchik / Jose Ubilla (who went on to win the Men's Open).

The rest of the SoCo contingent included Rick Busekrus, Jacob Kingsford, Joey Lee and Michael Wagner (CSprings) and Felipe Camacho, Erik Garcia, Carla Munoz (Pueblo). Hailing from points north were Douglas Harrison, Ken Huey, Adam & Victor Manilla, Nicholas Riffel, and CJ Sanders. And nobody gets anywhere at the US OPEN without Eddie Meredith (pictured above), who is the exclusive "subject matter expert" on erecting the glass stadium court used at the event!

**Outside ... Big Time ...** Mary Jane Caltagirone did a firsthand review and reported results from the [3WB Outdoor Championships](#) in Las Vegas: *This was by far the most absolute fun I've ever had at a tournament! Can't wait for spring to start playing again! Colorado Proud in Vegas!*



1st Mixed Open - Adriana Riveros & Georges Barrera  
1st Women's Pro - Carla Munoz Montesinos & Michelle De La Rosa  
1st Mixed Pro One Wall - Carla Munoz & Nick Montalbano  
1st Men's B - Jay Riley  
1st Women's B- Mary Jane Caltagirone  
2nd Men's Hero & Men's B - Sherwyn Phillip & Jay Riley  
2nd Mixed B- Sherwyn Phillip & Mary Jane Caltagirone  
2nd Men's C- Mark Sikorski & Michael Young  
2nd Men's A - CJ Sanders  
2nd Women's A/B- Michiele Lani & Michelle Dockter  
2nd Women's Pro One Wall - Carla Munoz & Michelle Herbert

Thirteen pro & amateur players from Colorado invaded 3WallBall and took home 12 trophies! Great job from a state with an outdoor season that only spans 4-5 months. So, this Spring, what's holding you back from trying outdoor racquetball? It won't harm your indoor game; in fact, it's likely to improve your front court coverage! And who doesn't love killing a ball from 50 feet away from the front wall? Let's take 20+ players to Vegas next September and bring home 20+ trophies!



*Every September, the parking lot across from The STRAT (Stratosphere Hotel in Las Vegas) becomes a playground for pro and amateur athletes in outdoor Racquetball, Handball & Paddleball. Sixteen courts are erected for use over the four days of the 3WallBall World Championships ... where the atmosphere is electric yet laid back, creating a beach bash vibe in the desert! Pictured L-R: Mark Sikorski, Mary Jane Caltagirone, Sherwyn Phillip, CJ Sanders, Peggine Tellez. Photo: Mary Jane Caltagirone.*

## BOARD REPORT | CRA Director's Update

**Instagram-mers ...** Chantel Anderson and Alex Brown recently expressed interest in updating the CRA Instagram account, and have taken the lead in the effort. If Instagram is your social media of choice, have a [look at the CRA page](#), follow along, and share some of your own favorite court shots!

**End-of-Year Board Turnover ...** In just a few months, board 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. OR ... a slew of challengers could voice their intent, enter the race and force an election runoff decided by vote of the membership. Either way, it's time to begin a new election cycle, with terms that will run 2020-2022.

If you're interested, find out more from [any board member](#), then send an email stating why you'd like to serve and a little background about yourself - **BY the close of State Doubles, November 10!**

If you miss that deadline, remember that 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 fulfilling work for a good group of people.



Ralph Graham

The CRA's [Metro Club Directory](#) contains website and email links for principals at over 20 public court

**AND 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: ?  
John Mooney Lifetime Achievement: ?

club facilities throughout the state. [On the page](#), CRA Board member Ralph Graham and Deb Beldring are shown as "glad to help" if you have questions about the Denver Athletic Club.

## MEMBER PROFILE | Bill Smyth



Hi! I'm Bill Smyth. I was hired as racquetball coordinator at [Goodson Recreation Center](#) in Centennial this last April. Although there were two racquetball coordinators after Bruce Burkland left two years ago, many still call me the "new Bruce." Goodson Recreation Center is part of the South Suburban Recreation District in Metro Denver.

I played a bit of racquetball in college, graduating in 1980. I also played a bit after moving to Colorado, but lost interest in the mid-80's. I picked it up again here at Goodson in 2000, playing in the Low Intermediate and Intermediate Leagues. It took me seven years to win the Low Intermediate League, and I have one of the world famous mugs commemorating my victory. I have never gotten much better. Up until last year, I was still in Intermediate, and have tried High

Intermediate a few times, and get killed every time.

I don't play as much because I am working and my body is falling apart. The Achilles tendons have been my downfall. Ten years ago, I was out of the sport for about a year with my left, and for the last eight months or so with my right. Recovery is progressing, and I hope to play again.

Aside from racquetball, I enjoy photography, working with computers, and throwing my weight around here at the Goodson weight lifting room. I also play poker and a card game that only Wisconsinites know how to play called [Sheepshead](#).

The Blizzard Bash is set for January 10-12, 2020, and I look forward to meeting many of you then.



Vikram Pathrojuthri and Wil Swindler are regulars on the tournament circuit (seen here in at the Life Time Fitness [Splat Shootout](#)), where they make solid showings in Men's A. Photo: MJC

## JUNIOR NEWS | Some Summer Vacation!

Report and photos from Facebook

Once school started and things settled down a bit, proud Mom Kellie Caldwell Straub shared: *What an incredible young champion: six back-to-back Junior National Olympic appearances, honored with the 2019 "Sportsmanship of the Year" award by USA Racquetball, an endorsement deal from HEAD Penn Racquetball, and a passion for the sport that just doesn't quit. This is a great story about a great human and the great sport she loves. We are all rooting for you, Lily, and look forward to seeing all that your future holds.*

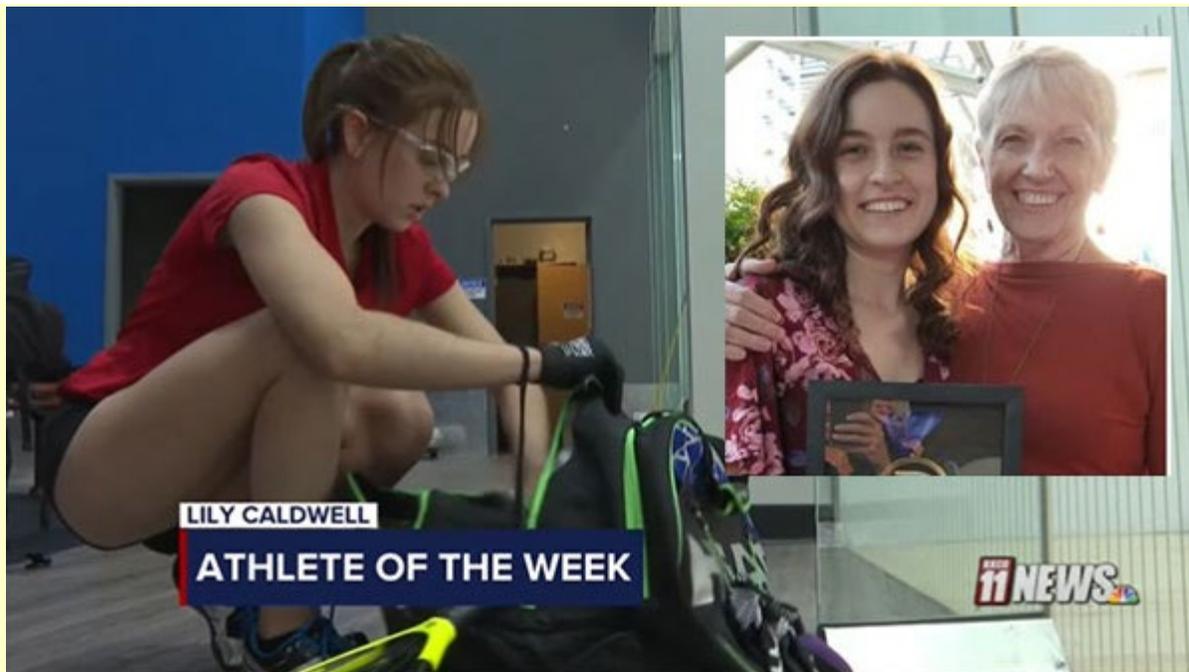
In June Lily had been the only Coloradoan to compete at the [Junior Olympics](#), where she reached the quarterfinals of both the Girls 16- and 18- singles. After school started up again, [the local NBC affiliate](#) in Grand Junction interviewed Lily and her coach, Carol Pellowski, while shooting court footage of the up-and-comer. They got everything right in selecting her as [Athlete of the Week](#).

*"We at Team HEAD USA/Colorado are very excited to have her as a member of the #1 team in Colorado and are behind her 100%. We would encourage all to watch her, and stay tuned - you'll be amazed! Also, hat's off to her coach and instructor, Carol Pellowski who helped her get here."* Andrew Rodriguez, Regional Marketing Coordinator, HEAD/Penn Racquetball.

### 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**  
**ATHLETE OF THE WEEK**

*Lily Caldwell and her coach Carol Pellowski were interviewed by KKCO in Grand Junction, when she was featured as the station's [Athlete of the Week](#) on September 16.*



[SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS](#)

**ENTRY PLANNER**

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



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

*It's about the **JOURNEY** ... not the **OUTCOME***



Sports can comprise a significant part of a child's education and development. To that end, it's a parents' obligation to find out what their child might want to get out of a sports experience. Too often, it's the adults who put the emphasis on winning, not the child. First and foremost, any young athletes' goal is to have fun. The number one reason for quitting is that they're no longer having fun. Does the same hold true for our adult players?

I believe it doesn't much matter *why* a player chooses to play racquetball. If they want to become an open player someday, or just play socially, I think the expectations are the same for all. Everyone needs to be receptive to learning, participate fully and learn something new - about themselves or the sport - each time they take the court. It's our job as the adult/veteran players to recognize where the player is each day and try to support that with our language and encouragement.

Most of the time, we view another's match performance from our own perspectives, which can be very different than what the newer player is experiencing. We might be wondering why they're not moving to the ball. Can't they see how hard or how high the bounce is? A beginner just doesn't process it the same way we do.

So be patient with these first timers. We can't expect the beginner to master skills in a week, a month, or even a year. But we can allow them to fail without judgments, to re-group and use feedback to improve, and hope they have fun in the process.

Celebrate successes and be patient when engaging newer players. Ask "what did you learn today?" ... or tell them how much you enjoyed watching them play ... or, it looked like you were having fun ... or, you looked like you were really working hard to return the ball ... and, I can see you are definitely improving. We want to help them stay in the moment and be positive about their experiences. Help them enjoy the ride we've been on for decades on end!

We have no control over winning, really. Our focus should be on the process and the journey - taking control of only what we can - because if we look ahead we are not in the moment. Being present to where you are today is the key to your success.

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



## KNOW YOUR RULES ! Crotch Shot Physics

by [Ray Cornell](#)

This article is about the “crotch shot,” which refers to hitting the ball into one of the many points on the court where two separate playing surfaces meet (aka “crotch”). My thanks to Mike Kennedy of Colorado Springs who prompted this discussion, after he had exchanged emails with Otto Dietrich, USAR National Rules Commissioner on the topic. That email dealt only with the floor and wall juncture, but we'll apply Otto's points to other affected areas. The places where a crotch shot can occur are:



- Floor and a wall
- Ceiling and a wall
- A wall and another wall

Quoting Otto's email, his starting concept is: “Whenever the ball (on the fly) approaches the right-angle juncture of the floor and any vertical wall, that ball does one of three things, it (1) hits the floor before it hits the wall, (2) hits the vertical wall before it hits the floor, or else (3) hits both surfaces at the same time or else so close to the same time that it cannot be reasonably determined which surface it hit first.” **Note: item (3) is the “crotch shot” in question.**

Otto further explains: “To be ‘good’, any shot to the front wall (either on a serve or else on a shot during a rally) must hit the front wall before it touches the floor. [See Rules 3.13\(c\)2 and 3.10\(f\)](#). Thus, the ruling on the first two “things” listed above, should be obvious -- for (1) is NOT good because it's either a non-front wall serve or a skip ball, respectively, resulting in the immediate

loss of that rally for whoever hit it and for (2) that is, by definition, a GOOD shot -- it hit the front wall before the floor. But, the ruling for the third "thing" I listed above is not that obvious. It has to be one or the other, so the sport decided many years ago that it should have the same outcome as the ball having hit the floor first! So, at the front wall, the crotch is either a non-front wall serve or a skip ball.”

A tip from Otto for determining where the ball hit first: “When the ball hits that floor/vertical wall crotch, it will tend to "pop up" (as opposed to roll out from the wall with top spin) due to the physics of the shot itself which I do not have time to explain in detail. This is one tool that players/referees use to decide if the ball hit the crotch or not.” *Note: So - on this basis - if the ball “pops up” from the floor/wall crotch, it’s considered to have hit the floor first.*

**So, let's apply these explainers, and expand further.**

On the Serve: Refer to Rule 3.10(g) for the full text of the Crotch Serve. Hitting a serve into the crotch of the front wall and floor, front wall and side wall, or front wall and ceiling is an out serve because it did not hit the front wall first (see Rule 3.3 - Manner of serve). Conversely, if a served ball passes the short line on the fly and hits the crotch formed by the floor and back wall, then it’s considered a good serve (i.e., the ball hit the floor first and did not go long). And, a serve that hits the crotch formed by the floor and a side wall beyond the short line is also a good serve. Note that on a Z serve a good ball typically will “pop up” at the crotch between the floor and side wall. If the ball angles to the center or continues to the back of the court at that point, it’s a 3-wall fault serve.

Regarding a crotch serve at the front wall and a side wall (typically when attempting a Z serve), it will tend to lose momentum, bisect the angle formed by the two walls, and land short. However, if the ball flies down the side wall from the corner, then it’s like a front wall “rollout” kill shot, owing to the physics that Otto referred to above, and so it hit the front wall first and is a good serve.

During rallies: When a “crotch shot” is hit during a rally, the following results assume that the ball has not yet touched the floor a second time, and the front wall has not yet been hit:

- A wall and the ceiling - keep playing until something else ends the rally
- A wall and another wall - keep playing until something else ends the rally
- Floor and any wall - skip ball, end of rally

In summary, there are many contexts for the crotch shot, so this article may not address all possible scenarios. But, consistently applying the above concepts and observing the associated rules should help to make the serve or rally result clear to all players.

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

***Make Racquetball a Getaway Weekend again ... !***



Who's ready for [Colorado State Doubles](#)? The CRA tournament season is back in full swing with many great events [on the calendar](#). Make no mistake, the state doubles is coming up fast - on the weekend of November 8-10 at the Denver Athletic Club - and promises to be a tournament that everyone will want to attend. In preparation, the CRA implemented some new marketing strategies aimed at getting recreational players back into our tournament pipeline.

As one of our incentives, regular tournament players can earn a free second

event by referring another entrant who has not maintained a USAR membership for the past three years. How many of you will step and engage a potential player at your club and urge them to enter? Better yet - offer to carpool to the club and hang out for a while. Share a little sage advice about tournament competition and coaching. Record your matches on Facebook Live to show all your friends that racquetball is alive and well!

In addition to great hospitality, the DAC offers top-notch facilities that make it easy to relax and enjoy hanging out with your racquetball family. One of our valued CRA Board members, Alex Brown, worked some magic to secure a historic host hotel - the Warwick Denver - [for an awesome rate of \\$109 / night](#). As a bonus, we'll also be conducting a drawing for prizes that will include a one-night stay at the Warwick. CRA Championships have always been a great opportunity to enjoy the close-knit racquetball family. Let's all work together to introduce another generation of players to that same type of great experience.

As for ALL the dedicated tournament directors in Colorado who work very hard to continue to host these annual events year-after-year ... THANK YOU! Every time you check in for a match, please take a minute to acknowledge all the work that goes into running a sanctioned event. Take another minute to give some thought to how you might promote participation for recreational or tournament play, then forward those innovative ideas to the CRA.

We welcome feedback from our players, and we really appreciate your willingness to volunteer. If you are interested in helping with racquetball programs and activities, or joining the CRA Board of Directors, please tell us what you're interested in, by email to [David Stone](#) or [Marcia Richards](#). Remember - you never make the shot you don't take ... !

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

Budget, budget, budget. I don't have to like it, but I do have to adhere to it. Ideological debate aside, no enterprise can spend more than it takes in and expect to stay in business - even when the business is the good old-fashioned FUN of tournament racquetball.



Whazzat? Tournament budget? Revenue? Expenses? I've said it before and I'll say it again - racquetball players have NO idea what it costs to run a tournament. Not in real dollars, not in management staff, not in volunteer hours, not in tech support. No. Idea.

It's a problem of our own making, after decades of well-meaning [volunteers](#) (you know who you are) ... who selflessly devoted hours on end to process entries, prepare draws, work shifts behind tournament desks, feed the masses, referee, input results and settle disputes. There have also been long-time, generous [sponsors](#) (you know who you are) ... who have reduced player costs by donating products and services. But basic hard costs still have to be covered with cold hard cash.

Players have come to expect at least 2-3 hours of court time (more if they're lucky!), a high-quality, branded apparel item as a souvenir, and three squares a day for the weekend. But even with ALL of the management costs [underwritten by volunteer effort](#), courts have to be rented, shirts have to be bought and screenprinted, and food must be arranged to venue specifications. It's break-even, at best.

So, when you see tournament costs creeping up, look around. Is that "on trend" with the other everyday expenses in your life? If we're honest, [a racquetball tournament](#) is still a great bargain. Just be sure to share your thanks, and enjoy!

## NATIONAL NEWS



**National Office Releases 2020 Schedule ... USA**  
Racquetball recently released its [2020 National Championships lineup](#), including the landmark #25 US OPEN. Of particular note is the return of the National Singles to the Lone Star State next year, where it had enjoyed many years of success in a center-of-the-country location and drawing record crowds in the 80s and 90s.

Rather than returning to metro Houston proper, the 2020 Singles will be hosted on campus at Texas State University in San Marcos - AND - will take place a week later than the traditional Memorial Day weekend (June 3-7). Look for added details to be issued soon, and make your plans early to attend!

| USA RACQUETBALL<br>NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS<br>JOIN US FOR THE 2020 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS<br>PRESENTED BY PENN |  |
|---|--|
| <b>NATIONAL DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIPS</b><br>Tempe, AZ<br>Feb. 5th - 9th  | <b>NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL CHAMPIONSHIPS</b><br>Portland, OR<br>Feb. 26th - March 1st |
| <b>NATIONAL INTERCOLLEGIATE CHAMPIONSHIPS</b><br>Baton Rouge, LA<br>March 25th - 28th                         | <b>NATIONAL SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS</b><br>San Marcos, TX<br>June 3rd - 7th          |
| <b>NATIONAL JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS</b><br>Fullerton, CA<br>June 24th - 28th                                     | <b>US OPEN</b><br>Minneapolis, MN<br>October 7th - 11th                            |

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USA Olympic & Paralympic Committees

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