

DOWNtheLINEnews

Maryland Washington Racquetball Association Newsletter • www.mwraweb.com



FALL 2001



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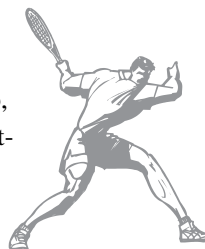
USRA Maryland DC

Sanctioned Racquetball

Tournaments • *Back Cover*

From the Editor

Hey folks. Hope everyone had a great summer. You might be wondering why you're receiving the fall newsletter so early. Well, I must confess, the last few newsletters have really been late, and we are attempting to get things back on the normal schedule. On the back cover you'll find the 2001-02 Tournament Schedule and Junior's Play Day schedule. Also, thanks to Andy Forsyth for writing our 2-part feature series titled, "The Last CBK," a short story about a man and a popular Ektelon racquet. Finally, look for a new and improved MWRA website in the not-so-distant future. Included on the new site will be a list of clubs with their respective number of racquetball courts. I hope for this information to be helpful to folks possi-



bly visiting from out of town and looking for a game. I don't have all the information I need, so please take a minute and look over the list to verify that we have the correct information for your club. If I have it wrong, or if there is a blank, please kindly relay the appropriate information to me. Also included on the new website is a list of AmPRO certified racquetball instructors in Maryland and D.C. If you've completed this training, please check the AmPRO list and let me know if I have your information correct. If you don't wish to be included on the site, then please let me know as well and I will swiftly remove you from the list. All correspondence can be sent to steve@mwraweb.com.

- Steve

The Last CBK

By Andy Forsyth, Crofton, Maryland – Member of the Severna Park Racquetball and Fitness Club

Editor's Note: This is the first part of a two-part series

This isn't a story on the complete history of racquetball, besides I don't think I could do justice to that. It's a story about a man and his racquet, a man and his CBK.

Racquetball racquets basically evolved from shortened versions of tennis racquets. I still have a wooden racquet (without a wrist tether) that has "Paddle Racquet" written on it. It actually looks like a short tennis racquet. I have another racquet made of lightweight wood with a rubber grip that has slipped off from so much play. In the late 70s the first aluminum racquets appeared, and the Pros'

racquet of choice was the Bill Schmidtke model. In the early 80s, Ektelon and other manufacturers introduced fiberglass and composite racquets.

I don't know the exact date the CBK was born, but it was around 1981 or 1982. The CBK was made of Carbon, Boron and Kevlar (hence the name CBK) and was lighter, longer, stronger, and had a slightly larger hitting surface than any of the other racquets made (still small by today's standards though). Most other composite racquets were made of graphite and fiberglass and would break pretty easily. The CBK was used by most of the Pros, and was extremely popular by many top ama-

teurs and the general racquetball community. One of those top amateurs was a fellow named Richard Driessen. Richard started playing racquetball in the early 70s at the local Jewish Community Center in Rockville, Maryland. By the mid 70s, Richard was beating everyone and won the Maryland State Open Singles and Doubles Championships. His Doubles partner was Tom Whipple. Tom also won the Maryland State Open Singles when Richard didn't.

Richard decided that he liked the CBK so much that he bought a couple of them, just in case. He would take off the leather handle grip and shave it down to a smaller

Continued on page 6

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The opinions voiced in any article or column are those of the particular author and are not an official position of the MWRA or the USRA. Newsletter advertising rates:

- Business Cards: \$25
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Larry Seidl: 410-269-1976
Val Rogolino Jr.: 410-987-0980

You will notice that there are several clubs that do not have names associated with them. This is due to the fact that those people who were listed ARE NOT currently USRA members as reported on the latest membership list from Colorado Springs.

Anyone from these clubs who is a USRA member and wishes to become a Board of Governors representative, please contact Larry Seidl at 410-269-1976.

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About MWRA

The Maryland Washington Racquetball Association (MWRA) is an independent, non-profit racquetball player group and is not affiliated in any way with any vendor or equipment manufacturer. Dues are renewable every year and includes membership in both the MWRA and the United States Racquetball Association (USRA).

Down the Line News is the official publication of the MWRA. We welcome your comments and views! Send your letters to the editor, advertisements, and other correspondence to us at:

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Gemini: 1-800-899-3367
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Organizations

USRA: 1-719-635-5396
 www.usra.org

*International Racquetball Tour
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 www.irt-tour.com

*Ladies Professional Racquetball
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USRA

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ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

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Business Telephone: () _____

Email: _____

Club Affiliation: _____

BIRTHDATE _____ (month)/_____ (day)/_____ (year)/

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Member signature _____ Date _____

Parent or Guardian (if member is 18 and under)

USRA Representative _____ Tournament/Club _____

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size that felt comfortable to him (this was when the handles were usually still a little larger). Finally, he would rewrap the grip and be ready for battle. He was a very methodical racquetball player who didn't hit with much power, but had excellent control and a knack for knowing where his opponent would hit the ball.

Richard designed and built the White Oak Racquetball Club and the Laurel Racquetball Club, both in Maryland. He later sold the clubs and started a partnership with a couple of associates buying, selling, leasing and managing business properties. This left him with lots of time to play racquetball, using his CBK of course.

The CBK stayed around until the end of the 80s, about the time the first midsize racquets were introduced. A midsize CBK became available, but Richard decided he liked the smaller racquet and stayed with his original CBK. In fact, he figured he better buy a few more, just in case.

As the racquets grew in size, the game began to change as well. In the late 70s, while the racquets were still small, Marty Hogan was the first pro to incorporate the power game into racquetball while still maintaining control of his shots. The larger racquets were a little more forgiving and as the game speeded up so did the players. The pros continued to hit harder while the racquets grew in size, but Richard continued to use the small CBK, and was still able to defeat most of his younger, stronger, and quicker opponents. He just had a knack at putting the ball where he wanted it and was still very good at anticipating his opponent's shots. Richard still used a CBK.

In the early 90s, the size of the racquets increased even more. There were several manufacturers and dozens of types of racquets. Surprisingly though, the cost didn't jump that much over the years. The

first CBK racquets cost \$129 in the early 80s and the larger racquets of the 90s were around \$149. But Richard still used the small CBK. After all, he had purchased several of them before Ektelon halted pro-



duction, and he always kept an eye and ear out for someone who might have one for sale. Every once in a while he would get lucky and pick up another CBK. He figured he should have enough CBKs to play with for the rest of his...wait, he had to stop and think about what he was saying. Would he really be able to keep playing with a CBK from now on? He didn't want to think about it. But how could he play with any

other racquet? He was used to the CBK, and frankly he could still beat nearly everyone with it.

From the mid 80s on through the early 90s, Richard didn't play in any tournaments. He just enjoyed playing with his friends at the local clubs. During the nicer weather he even played outdoor one-wall racquetball with a group of his friends at a local park, still using his CBK. In fact, that is where he would usually do the most damage to his racquets because of the hard concrete surface.

In the mid 90s, Richard decided to play in the Maryland State Singles again, but this time in the 45+ Open Masters Division. All the other players were using their large weapons and Richard had his tiny CBK. At first no one knew who he was, and when his opponents saw him show up with this little racquet to play against them with, they would think they were in for an easy match. After all, only a beginner or someone who didn't

know that much about racquetball would be using a little racquet. Boy were they in for a shock when he'd beat them two straight! In fact, he won the tournament, all with the little CBK. He played the State Doubles that year in the 45+ and won again. All in all, he won the State Doubles three years in a row—all the time using a CBK.

Today, racquetball racquets have evolved from many different designs and composites. A few of the manufacturers have folded, but some, including Ektelon, are still around. And even though Ektelon doesn't make the CBK anymore, Richard still uses one.

Then one day it finally happened. Richard broke his racquet. Now he was down to his last CBK and he knew it was just a matter of time before that one would break too. He couldn't bear the thought and even contemplated switching to one of those "bigger" racquets. He put ads in newspapers and checked internet auction sites. He just liked the CBK too much, and maybe, just maybe, he would find another one. ♣

Part 2 to be published in the Winter 2001 Newsletter.

Tournament Results

Summer Slam

Merritt Athletic Club - Security, June 16-17, 2001

Division	First Place	Second Place
<i>Men's Singles</i>		
Open	Steve Simpson	Stephen Lee
A	Sean Walker	Will Ferguson
B	Steve Droski	Don Joy
C	Donald Carter	Marcus Bezek
40+	Steve Simpson	Bob Compton
<i>Women's Singles</i>		
A	Yvonne Nelson	Danielle Emerson
C	Sharon Noll	Jenny Hough
<i>Men's Doubles</i>		
Open	Steven Lee Jamal Harris	Steve Simpson Jimmie Dorsey
A	Ben Wong Mike Kleinhammer	Sean Walker Jeff Nelson
<i>Mixed Doubles</i>		
	Ruth Hough Bob Compton	Sandy Kubany Bill Milbach

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USRA Maryland/DC Sanctioned Racquetball Tournaments

Make sure to check the MWRA website www.mwraweb.com for the latest updates and additions to this schedule. Interested in running a tournament? Contact Larry Seidl at 410.269.1976 or mdrball@aol.com for additional information on sanctioning.

Racquetball Round Up

September 22-23, 2001
The Aspen Hill Club
14501 Homecrest Rd
Silver Spring, MD 20906
Contact Will Ferguson at 301.598.5200 x30 for additional information.

Fran Davis Racquetball Camp

October 19-21, 2001
Sport Fit Laurel Racquet and Health Club
204 Fort Meade Rd
Laurel, MD 20707
Contact Fran Davis at fran@frandavisracquetball.com or 415.821.3726 or Steve Graham at steve@mwraweb.com for additional information.

MWRA State Doubles Championships

November 2-4, 2001
Merritt Athletic Club - Annapolis
1981 Moreland Pkwy
Annapolis, MD 21401
Contact Larry Seidl at 410.269.1976 or mdrball@aol.com for additional information.

Maryland State Games

January 18-20, 2002
Severna Park Racquetball and Fitness Club
8514 Veterans Highway
Millersville, MD 21108
Contact Val Rogolino at 410.987.0980 for additional information.

Wintergreen Classic

February 8-10, 2002
Sport Fit Laurel Racquet and Health Club
204 Fort Meade Rd
Laurel, MD 20707
Contact Steve Graham at steve@mwraweb.com for additional information.

MWRA Singles Championships

March 1-3, 2002
Location to be determined.

The Spring Splat

April 5-7, 2001
Aspen Hill Club
14501 Homecrest Rd
Silver Spring, MD 20906
Contact Will Ferguson at 301.598.5200 x30 for additional information.

USRA Regionals

April 17-21, 2001
Location to be determined.

American Cancer Society Benefit Tournament

May 4-6, 2001
Merritt Athletic Club - Annapolis
1981 Moreland Pkwy
Annapolis, MD 21401
Contact Larry Seidl at 410.269.1976 or mdrball@aol.com for additional information.

In Virginia...

7th Annual Fall Kickoff

September 28-30, 2001
Olympus Fitness
Sterling, VA
Visit EdWillisII.com or call 703.684.4146 for additional information.

3rd Annual Ghostly Gateway Open

October 26-28, 2001
Crystal Gateway Sport & Health Club
1235 Jefferson Davis Hwy
Arlington, VA 22201
Visit EdWillisII.com or call 703.684.4146 for additional information.

Christmas Classic

December 14-16, 2001
Tysons Sport & Health Club
8250 Greensboro Dr
McLean, VA 22102
Visit EdWillisII.com or call 703.684.4146 for additional information.

Junior's Play Day Schedule

Please be sure to check the MWRA website for updates to this schedule. For additional information about these events, or to schedule a Junior's Play Day at your club, contact Dave Bleyer, MWRA Junior's Coordinator at 410.465.0115 or daveb@myexcel.com.

October 6, 2001

Severna Park Racquetball and Fitness Club
8514 Veterans Highway
Millersville, MD 21108
410.987.0980

November 17, 2001

Merritt Athletic Club - Eldersburg
1388 Progress Way
Eldersburg, MD 21784
410.549.8855

December 8, 2001

Supreme Sports Club
7080 Deepage Drive
Columbia, MD
410.381.5355

January 12, 2002

The Aspen Hill Club
14501 Homecrest Rd
Silver Spring, MD 20906
301.598.5200

February 16, 2002

Bel Air Athletic Club
658 Boulton St
Bel Air, MD 21014
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March 2, 2002

(in conjunction with the MWRA Singles Championships)
Location to be determined.


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