

newsline no.1 • player guide

Welcome to "The Finals" – the
Ektelon USRA 36th U.S.
National Singles
Championships for 2003,
presented by Head/Penn
Racquet Sports.

For the 21st consecutive year
at the Downtown YMCA in
Houston, the local organizing
committee would like to
welcome you with the hope
that all their hard work helps
to make your stay here
enjoyable.

With over 625 entrants and
nearly 1200 starting matches,
it is important that everyone
be informed of the basics – in
order to keep things running
smoothly. The information in
this first daily newsletter is
designed to give you just that
– the basics. Look here first
and the chances are very good
that you'll find your answer!

Plus ... you'll want to hold onto
this issue so you can schedule
your social calendar for the
week ... see the back page for
a preliminary list of activities
and make your plans
accordingly! And remember
that tickets (issued at
registration) are required for
admittance to all functions.

Want to submit news items or
announce a meeting? Contact
Linda Mojer in person, by
email [LMojer@usra.org], or
leave a note at registration,
and we'll try to get your note
into one of the editions.
Nightly deadline: 5:00 pm.

REGISTRATION HOURS

TU 6:00 pm – 10:00 pm
WE 8:00 am – 9:00 pm
TH 8:00 am – 8:30 pm
FR 8:00 am – 8:00 pm
SA 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

newsletter deadline: 5:00 pm

RACQUETBALL
editor: linda mojer



Welcome!

The USRA is pleased to welcome you to the Downtown Houston YMCA ... where we hope you'll enjoy spending your holiday week in spirited competition at the 2003 Ektelon 36th USRA National Singles Championships, presented by Penn Racquet Sports. Here in Houston, you'll be able to play and party hard ... thanks to a non-stop schedule of competition and social events! With luck, you'll earn plenty of court time as you advance in your divisions, all the way to Memorial Day. Between matches, you'll be able to socialize, learn and entertain yourselves at the YMCA, as well as at your "home away from home" for the week, the Hyatt Regency. Check the back page of this issue for scheduled events confirmed in advance, and then pick up a daily newsletter for breaking news of added events, player meetings and other functions.

If you still end up with more time on your hands than you'd bargained for, you'll see plenty from the sidelines as top athletes compete for spots on the U.S. National Team throughout the week. In fact, the men's and women's open divisions conclude a day early, on Sunday, to allow more players to watch the top names battle before heading home. And this year there's even more on the line, as finalists vie for a single roster spot to compete at the Pan American Games in August.

By night, enjoy the MegaBlast "American Idol" blow-out at the Hyatt on Thursday, where you'll be able to take your competition to another level ... by testing your physical and mental skills – including dancing – as you socialize with your fellow players. Then it's "Casino Night" on Friday, where you'll play the slots, blackjack, craps, roulette and end the evening bidding on a selection of grand prizes! Then on Saturday you'll enjoy an all-star, Red, White & Blue USRA Annual Banquet & Dance – where we will honor our own by recognizing outstanding athletes of the year, contributors and career achievers, then cap the evening with a Hall of Fame induction ceremony.

Throughout the week, you (and your supporters back home) will be able to follow the event online by following "marquee event" links at both www.usra.org and www.racquetballmagazine.com. Barring any "technical difficulties," you'll find updated event drawsheets, in-depth coverage, photos and even a live radio broadcast.

So we've got a lot more planned for you than a Memorial Day picnic to cap a long, holiday weekend! We're glad you chose to join us, and hope you thoroughly enjoy this season's "Finals." Thanks for coming!

YMCA Rules

Lockers & Towels • Using your own lock, tall lockers are available for day use only. *Locks left on overnight will be cut.* Towel service is provided, with supplies made available in all locker rooms. **Security** • Please safeguard your valuables, both in the locker rooms and outside courts. Security guards will be patrolling the area, but it is a large facility and the YMCA and USRA will not be responsible for lost or stolen items. **Children** • The YMCA is an adult facility, and children must be under the supervision of an adult at all times.

Where to First?

Getting into the YMCA

You must have a bag tag to get into the racquetball area of the YMCA – all week long! Players will be issued their bag tags in Booth Hall on the second floor of the YMCA, beginning on Tuesday at 5:00 pm.

One guest per player will be admitted into the competition area at no charge, but all evening social functions will require a ticket for admission. A guest package for the entire week, which includes all special event tickets plus an official tournament souvenir and bag tag, can be purchased at the registration desk for \$75.00.

Your First Match

Tournament check-in is a two-part process, starting at the registration desk. Although all entries are prepaid, players must personally check in at the registration desk before reporting for their first match. Failure to do so will delay your first round and could result in forfeiture. After completing registration, players must check in at the tournament control desk thirty minutes before their scheduled match. Make sure to allow plenty of time to complete both steps.

TOURNEY DESK FAQ ... Frequently asked Questions

"What court will I be playing on?" (Courts are not pre-assigned, so when your match comes up you'll be sent to the next open court). *"How soon will I get on a court?"* (Matches are assigned in the order they are checked in, so early check-in by both players gets you to the top of the heap.) *"What time is my next match and/or who do I play next round?"* (Check the posted draw sheets). *"Can I change my match time?"* (In an event of this size, draws are designed to give players adequate time to rest between matches. Even IF the schedule allowed, asking to change a time inconveniences your opponent, who may – legitimately – decline your request.)

Reporting for Play

Warm-Up Time • Once a match has been called to the court, a total maximum of 10 minutes is allowed for warm-up by both players. **Matches** • A regulation match is played two games to 15 points, with a tiebreaker to 11, if needed. A consolation match is the best of three games to 11.

Questions & Appeals

If you have problems, questions or rules disputes during your match, follow this procedure:

- 1) First appeal to your referee;
- 2) Next, appeal to the tournament director on duty
- 3) A final appeal is made to the Tournament Rules Committee (made up of national rules committee members on-site).

Your Eyewear

Rule 2.5 APPAREL states:
(a) Lensed eyewear designed for racquetball, and which meets or exceeds ASTM F803 or Canadian (CSA) impact standards, is required apparel. This rule applies to all persons, *including those who must wear corrective lenses*. Protective eyewear must be worn as designed and at all times. A first infraction results in an assessed technical and a timeout to obtain proper eyewear; a second infraction in the same match will result in immediate forfeiture.

The current ASTM rule has been on the books since 1995, so there are no exceptions. If you're unsure, check the complete list of approved eyeguards

online at www.usra.org > "Sitemap/Index" > "Eyeguards."

Had a bad day? Refereeing Rate Hike

Match losers are required to referee the next available match, and assigned referees will now be paid \$10.00 for that service. This method has proven to be the most equitable, since almost everyone will ref over the course of the tournament.

Consolation Round

Due to the large number of divisions offered, players will be able to participate in only *one* consolation round (your choice). First-*match* losers are eligible for a consolation round, but forfeits and byes are *not* considered matches played. If you lose the first match you play, you must sign up immediately at the tournament desk to enter consolation. Consolation rounds will begin on Sunday.

Off-Court Hospitality

Throughout the week, bagels and fruit will be available each morning at the YMCA, in addition to nightly social events hosted at the Hyatt Regency. Evening functions will require tickets for admission, which will be issued to players (and included with purchased guest packages) at registration.

Free Clinics

Want to become a better referee or coach? Level One Referee

Clinics and a Coaching Certification Clinic will be held on site at the YMCA (check back page and daily schedule updates for dates/times). All clinics will be held in the Player's Village and Level I, II and III referee certification tests may be taken after any scheduled clinic.

Awards Banquet

The USRA's 36th annual Awards Banquet will be held Saturday evening in the Hyatt Regency Ballroom, featuring a patriotic Red, White & Blue theme, and a menu and entertainment.

Arrive for no-host cocktails at 7:00, and plan to be seated for dinner by 7:30. Following the award program, dance with a live DJ! You must bring your ticket to be admitted and served (issued to you at check-in) and the cost to guests will be \$35.00.

And don't forget the dress code ... this is the association's most prestigious banquet of the year; cocktail dress is appropriate, but no racquetball attire will be permitted.

Bring cash for... Sustenance

The downstairs YMCA restaurant will offer buffet-style food service each morning and afternoon. Nearby facilities should be able to meet your lunch and dinner needs.

Parking

This downtown location offers no public parking adjacent to the club. The nearest lot is two blocks away, and it is very costly. Plan your transportation accordingly!

Court Fees

If you arrive before Tuesday and want to practice, the YMCA will charge a nominal court fee.

Last Chance!

As you know if you've been following Randy Stafford's fundraising efforts in RACQUETBALL magazine over the past six months, the current "Player's helping Players" capital campaign is coming to a close. But before it does you can still take advantage of substantial savings on a lifetime membership.

One of the mid-range benefits offered in the current fundraising campaign is a lifetime membership (a \$1,000.00 value) for half-price. Donate to the campaign at the "A" (or above) level and your name will be added to the list of lifetime members, and you'll receive a permanent "gold card" ... never have to haggle at a tournament desk again (or renew a magazine subscription) ... plus receive "VIP" treatment at national events.

But you'll want to hurry ... this campaign "promise" runs out

right after National Singles — May 31 — after which all lifetime memberships will cost the full \$1,000.00. Pick up a campaign donation card at the USRA booth and sign up today!

VIP Reception

On Wednesday evening the USRA will host an invitation-only VIP Reception for 2002 national champions, lifetime members and event sponsors. Bring your invitation to the Window Box at the Hyatt, at 8:30 pm, and enjoy some quiet time before the event really starts hopping!

Pan Am Qualifier

In addition to traditional U.S. Team qualifying, there is added importance on the results of this year's men's and women's open divisions. Winners will secure the final roster spots on the squad that compete at the 14th Pan American Games this August in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

Doubles champions from last fall have already been fielded [Mike Guidry & Ruben Gonzalez; Jackie Rice & Kim Russell], and the pro tour designates have been confirmed to be Cheryl Gudinas for the LPRA and Jack Huczek for the IRT. National Singles winners named in Houston will take the No.2 positions on the Pan Am roster.

In the event of "double-qualifying" (the same person qualifies in two or more events), additional spots will be filled by the U.S. Team coaching staff, from among the remaining, qualified U.S. Team members.

Racquetball was first included in the Pan American Games in 1995 in Buenos Aires, Argentina and again in 1999 in Winnipeg, Canada. The U.S. earned gold medals in every discipline at both events.

USRA National Office Staff on Site

Jim Hiser Executive Director
Linda Mojer Associate Executive Director
Ivan Davis Director of Marketing & Sponsorship
Kevin Joyce Director of Membership
Heather Fender Executive Assistant & Event Coordinator
Ryan John Media & Public Relations Manager

"The Finals" Tournament Desk & Event Staff

Desk Team 1 Annie Muniz, Susan Coy, Michelle Williams
Desk Team 2 Leo Vasquez, Monica Williams, Eddie Vann
Registration Carl Fuess, Karen Fuller, Eddie Meredith
Officiating Rich Clay, Otto Dietrich



WEDNESDAY – May 21

YMCA Player's Village: Registration 8:00 am – 9:00 pm
Bagels & Juice 8:30 am – 10:00 am
1996 U.S. Open Broadcast 11:30 am
Referee Clinic: Otto Dietrich 5:00 pm
HYATT: VIP Reception (invitation only) Window Box, 8:30 pm – 11:30 pm

THURSDAY – May 22

YMCA Player's Village: Registration 8:00 am – 8:30 pm
Bagels & Juice 8:30 am – 10:00 am
1997 U.S. Open Broadcast 11:30 am
Open Forum with USRA Executive Director: Jim Hiser 2:00 pm
General Membership Meeting 6:00 pm
State President's Meeting 7:00 pm
HYATT: Team E-Force Player Meeting Arboretum 1-2, 8:00 pm
MEGABLAST ALL-AMERICAN IDOL PARTY Regency Room, 8:30 pm – 11:30 pm
(ticketed social event) Munchies, Beverages, Dancing, Games, Prizes!

FRIDAY – May 23

YMCA Player's Village: Registration 8:00 am – 8:00 pm
Bagels & Juice 8:30 am – 10:00 am
1998 U.S. Open Broadcast 11:30 am
Open Forum with the USRA Board President: (newly elected, who will it be?) 2:00 pm
Referee Clinic: Lynn Stephens 3:00 pm
HYATT: Team E-Force Player Meeting Arboretum 1-2, 10:00 am
LPRA Players & Sponsors Reception (invitation only) Window Box, 7:00 – 9:30 pm
CASINO NIGHT Arboretum 1-5, 8:30 pm – Midnight
(ticketed social event) "Gamble" all night, then bid your winnings on Great Prizes!

SATURDAY – May 24

YMCA Player's Village: Registration 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
Bagels & Juice 8:30 am – 10:00 am
Level One Coaching Clinic & Test: Jim Winterton & Gary Mazaroff 11:00 am
1999 U.S. Open Broadcast 11:30 am
Lifetime Member Meeting 5:00 pm
HYATT: RED, WHITE & BLUE Awards Banquet Grand Ballroom, 7:00 pm – Midnight
(ticketed social event) Dinner, Entertainment, Awards, Dancing

SUNDAY – May 25

YMCA Player's Village: Bagels & Juice 8:30 am – 10:00 am
Referee & Coaching Certification Clinics 10:00 am
1999 U.S. Open Broadcast 11:30 am
Women's Open Final 1:30 pm
Men's Open Final 3:00 pm
HYATT: Karaoke in the Back Room Bar Back Room Bar, 8:00 – 11:00 pm

MONDAY – Memorial Day, May 26

YMCA Player's Village: Age & Skill Division finals 8:00 am – 2:00 pm
Bagels & Juice 8:30 am – 10:00 am
Medal Presentations 8:00 am – 3:00 pm

Online updates at www.usra.org & www.racquetballmagazine.com