

CARRILLO GRABS 2ND NPA NATIONAL SINGLES CROWN

Cesar Carrillo is batting 1.000 in his two appearances in National Paddleball Association national singles championships.

Carrillo, 32, of Memphis, TN, captured his second such title on March 20, 2011, at the Forest View Racquet Club in Arlington Heights, IL, near Chicago.



CARRILLO

He topped Dennis Negrete, 43, of Schaumburg, IL, 21-6 21-5, in the final.

Carrillo, a sales representative for a paper and chemical supply company, also won the NPA national singles championship in 2009.

Carrillo defeated Joe Baldori, 21-11, 21-5, in the quarterfinals and Chad Krager in the semifinals.

The champion had his hands full with Krager, who lost 21-18, 21-14.

“I feel that I should mention Chad Krager for his incredible performance in the semifinals,” said Carrillo. “His height and mobility forced me to shoot with more precision to put the ball away.

“I was also impressed with his touch of the ball.”

Although he handled Negrete comfortably, Carrillo said “I respect (his) ability to shoot the ball. I knew going in that I was going to have to use my legs in order to keep up with his strong backhand and forehand.”

Negrete topped Don Kirkconnell, 20-21, 21-15, 11-8, in the quarterfinals and nine-time national champion Mike Wisniewski, 21-17, 15-21, 21-11 in the semifinals.

Carrillo said he decided to sit out last season’s National Singles Tournament “due to the birth of my son and having pneumonia.”

Regarding Carrillo, Negrete said: “You just can’t pass a person or kill the ball that won’t allow it to happen. Man, he was tough.

“Not many tournaments you get to play all three of the top seeds in the open. Just my luck I did.

“It’s good to see what you have to improve on in order to get to that next level of the game and I sure got a first-hand look this weekend -- Cesar, Chad, Whiz.

“I told (Andy) Mitchell he was the only piece of the puzzle I was missing.”

Negrete, who is an assistant manager at the Elk Grove Park District golf course, had to be exhausted because he also played in the final of the Seniors division against Krager, of Bay City, Mich., which he lost.

“Don’t know what happened to Whiz,” said Negrete. “He didn’t seem to have that command I usually see.

“You go against a player of his caliber and you just hope to do well. So, was I happy to win that match? Heck yeah.

“I can always say I beat the Legend in the Nationals even if I didn’t win it all.”

-- LOU GIAMPETRONI