

# NPA

(INDOOR / FOUR-WALL)  
**National Paddleball Association**  
WWW.PADDLEBALL.ORG

NPA, 7642 Kingston, Portage, Mich. 49002

NEWSLETTER / WINTER 2008-2009

## PB South **The game gets a push from four veterans**

By JIM OWENS

**MEMPHIS, TN** -- An exciting promotional display of paddleball took place Dec. 12-14, 2008, at the WellWorx Sporting Club here.

It was called a Hit-A-Round and was an opportunity to expose racquetball players to paddleball.

Four out-of-town guests

were on hand for exhibitions.

They are: Dennis Negrete of the Chicago area, Joe Baldori of Washington, D.C., Charlie Brumfield of San Diego and I.

David Fleetwood, the chief organizer of the event, has established a core of 6 to 8 players who play on a regular basis.

In an early release to

racquetballers, Fleetwood said: "... Bring your gear and get on the court for a great time. Paddleball is a great sport. Racquetballers will find this as a great alternative to the other greatest sport on the planet."

Numerous spectators commented on how entertaining the exhibitions were.

**See PB South on Page 2**



Barry Lucas, a fixture in paddleball tournaments in the late 1970s and 1980s, is dead at 80. Lucas (left) played in seniors and masters divisions. See Page 2 for details.



**PADDLEBALL AND PLANES** go together for a Flint, Mich., group. It includes Jerry Zerbe (above) and Walter (Jack) Hancock (below). See Page 4 for details.

### 2008-2009 NPA SCHEDULE

**MIDWEST SINGLES:** Jan. 16, 17, 18, 2009, Jackson, MI, YMCA.

**MIDWEST DOUBLES:** Feb. 20, 21, 22, 2009, Michigan Athletic Club, E. Lansing, MI

**NATIONAL SINGLES:** March 13, 14, 15, 2009, Old IM Building, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

**NATIONAL DOUBLES:** April 24, 25, 26, 2009, at Sorrento Valley Racquet & Fitness Center, San Diego, CA



# PB South

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Several former and current racquetball players showed up.

Memphis has been a hub of racquetball for years.

Regrettably, Marty Hogan withdrew because of a death in the family.

As a result, the feature match between Hogan and Cesar Carrillo did not take place.

Cesar was impressive throughout the weekend. If he travels to the NPA National Singles tournament, open players better beware.

Numerous spectators commented on how entertaining the exhibition matches were.

A few racquetball players tried and liked paddleball.

Several of the older spectators were happy to have the chance to see former racquet



Taking part in the Memphis Hit-A-Round were (from left) Roberto Ferie, Dennis Negrete, Jim Owens, Charlie Brumfield, David Fleetwood, Joe Baldori, Cesar Carrillo and Dino Tashie. Not in the photo are Randy Stafford and Pete Tashie.

ball pros such as Brumfield, Fleetwood and Randy Stafford play competitively again.

We all agreed that another hit-a-round is needed, whether it be in Memphis or another city.

## PBaller Lucas dead at 80

He still was the same old Barry Lucas.

He had been called a lot of things -- a jerk, mean, the Bully, Jack Dempsey -- and they were all accurate.

Lucas, who turned 80 on Nov. 18, 2008, died on Dec. 18.

A former longtime Flint, Mich., police detective and onetime assistant chief, Lucas had not played in a tournament in at least 20 years. But when he did, you knew he was around.



Lucas

He growled and sometimes drew the ire of his opponents

because of his style of play. He usually played doubles in the senior and masters divisions.

Everyone seemed to have an opinion about Lucas, and very few were laudatory.

I played with Lucas in many seniors and masters matches during the mid-1970s and the 1980s.

He hustled and did his job on the right side, his usual spot.

I remember one match especially, when we reached the final of the masters division in the 1978 National Doubles Tournament at Portage, Mich.

We had talked Gale Mikles and Herb Olsen -- a team from Michigan State University, where they were on the staff -- into playing masters. They could have

played in the division for a number of years -- they were eligible age-wise -- but refused to do so.

For years, Mikles and Olsen had played in the open division -- despite their age which was a little higher than most of the top-level hotshots. And Mikles-Olsen beat several very good open teams.

So there Lucas and I were -- playing Mikles and Olsen for the masters title. I mean this was something special for us. Playing those guys.

Well, they won the first game rather comfortably, 21-12. They were leading us in the second game, 20-13. That's when Lucas, usually stronger on defense, opened up and starting scoring points for us.

We narrowed the margin. They had several serves but couldn't get match point.

We finally pulled out the second game, 21-20, as we scored 8 unanswered points.

I remember as we walked out of the court for the rest between games before going in for the tiebreaker, Lucas bellowed: "We're gonna beat these (expletive deleted)."

I said: "Hold on ... these guys are good."

And they were, as they won the tiebreaker, 21-8. But it still was a thrill for both of us to have given Mikles-Olsen a pretty good run for their money.

Lucas continued to play paddleball at the Flint YMCA for a number of years -- up until the early 2000s -- after he had ended tournament competition. But he started to have rotator cuff problems and he gave it up.

-- LOU GIAMPETRONI

# Keeley on mirror writing, upside down reading

Steve Keeley, perhaps the best paddleball player ever, does some rather strange things.

For years, he has done it his way and traveled throughout the world.

He's a substitute teacher in Blythe, Calif., and has some unusual classroom practices.

He has sent along many, many E-mails from wherever -- recounting his experiences.

## His most recent concerns **the art and science of mirror writing**

Keeley, in his usual style of using no capital letters and very little punctuation, discusses his longtime practice of mirror writing and upside-down reading.

### Keeley's article:

seriously, we're bombarded by the written word. each letter of the alphabet is a little arrow directing the eyes from left to right. there go the face, neurological system and back. at an early age we become asymmetrically humped as igor because of the written word.

actually, 80% of the english alphabet lead the eyes left to rt.; 20% the opposite (z,q...); and 20% are neutral (o,i...) hebrews know better w/ about a 50-50 split in directional characters.

so, mirror writing is a balancing act for the body. the book is a gym for the eyes.

one of the ibmr's, bruce at lucian's colorado springs party, kindly wrote a program for me that types mirror from rt. to left across the monitor, however I don't have it loaded here. that takes care of our future in writing, but what about reading rt. to left?

i've read the last 500 books in the past two decades upside down. reversing the dust jacket avoids embarrassment in public places, but your book didn't have one.

i've typed 1000 pages of a one-ton autobiography with the monitor upside down.

the way I teach kids at school to mirror write is to take a blank page and write in pen the normal alphabet. turn the sheet over and there's the mirror template. or, just start writing the mirror abc's like a da vinci. two ten-minute practice sessions daily yields before week's end the ability write tac, hciwdnas, .cte.

the way I instruct to read upside down is just to do it. 90% succeed on the first try. ibm'r don reims stepped out of the crowd to convert instantly.

one day the school principal called me into the office to ask about kids on campus reading texts upside down. I explained the benefits: greater stamina by turning the book right-side up every hour; facial and body symmetry, not to mention exposing the split-brain theory, enhanced ability to track projectiles such as tennis, baseballs, and fists (he was an ex-boxer) from rt. to left; and two people can read the same newspaper over coffee.

there's not much more to say about mirror writing and backwards reading except to start. the comparative speed of reading will max at about 85%, with nearly 110% relative comprehension. upside-down works better for slow pace pieces such as poetry, your work, and narrow column articles.

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## Fall Doubles Results .....

Forest View Racquet Club  
Arlington Heights, ILL

**OPEN:** Chad Krager-Dennis Negrete defeated Andy Mitchell and Don Kirkconnell, 21-16, 21-20. Mike Wisniewski-Brandon Creamer took third, topping Mike Carlson-Mark Smith, 21-16, 21-16.

**MEN'S A:** Ron Malecki-Brandon Creamer defeated Jeremy Wheaton-Don Kirkconnell, 21-12, 21-13.

**MEN'S B:** Ed Maher-Jeremy Wheaton defeated Bill Kuhlman-Diane Moore, 21-5,

21-15. Terry Kennedy-Greg Keenan took third, topping Eugene Rush-Ron Harris, 21-12, 21-16. Consolation: Tony Sindt-Bob Brennan.

**MEN'S C:** Jim Thurber-Jim Camasto were undefeated in a 5-team round-robin. 2nd: John Mason-Adrian Montes; 3rd: Eugene Rush-Ron Harris.

**MASTERS:** Andy Mitchell-Ed Maher defeated Jim Swendris-Scott Lawrence, 11-21, 21-6, 21-8.

**GOLDEN MASTERS:** Randy Wackerle-Sandy DeGreif defeated Ron Malecki-Jim Owens.





Kerry Matthews (left), Lorne Minor (center) and Jerry Zerbe.

## High-flying paddleballers

By LOU GIAMPETRONI

FLINT, Mich. -- There's a group of paddleballers here who get high from something other than PB.

They play PB at the University of Michigan-Flint and spend a lot of time in the air -- they're all pilots.

Usually, they fly out of Dalton Airport in nearby Mt. Morris Township.

The group is made up of Walter (Jack) Hancock, Jerry Zerbe, Lorne Minor, Kerry Matthews and Hoyt Petty.

They usually play twice a week in the winter and in the summer also, with each alternating when one is unavailable.

Minor, who operates Minor Foods, Inc., lives in Sterling Heights, Mich. A retired employee of GMAC, he owns two Subway stores.

Minor, 64, said he was invited to play paddleball with a local dealer "and enjoyed it from the first time.

"I had previously played handball and racquetball for years."

He said the other player-fliers "are all good sports and extremely competitive."

Minor said he received his pilot's license in 1998 "and enjoy being a private pilot flying low and slow."

Zerbe, 78, of Flushing, Mich., is a retired administrator for the Flint School District.

He said he started playing paddleball in 1960 "and liked the athletic competition and great exercise. It's good companionship and an excellent fitness sport."

Zerbe said his "hobby is aviation-related. I learned to fly at the age of 17.

"I'm a flight instructor with 8,700 hours of flight time.

"Currently I fly about 350 hours a year. I still enjoy the activity as well as all my friends who are pilots."

Petty, 73, of nearby Flint Township, began flying about 40 years ago.



Petty

"One day they had a thing in the paper, a coupon for \$5 for a flying lesson," he said. "It was at Bishop Airport."

Eventually, he got his pilot's license.

Petty said he got into paddleball about 10 years ago through Zerbe and Hancock.

"I play it for exercise and fun," he said. "There's a lot of that with these guys."



Walter (Jack) Hancock

Hancock, 83, of Holly, Mich., got into flying in 1943 when he was in the Navy and was called back during the Korean War.

He gives flying lessons at Bishop Airport in Flint.

Hancock, the eldest member of the group, gets around on the paddleball court very well. He has an effective, low shot from the back wall and you really can't tire him.

Matthews, 58, a merchant, started flying in 1995 and began playing paddleball in 1997 -- with instructions in both coming from Hancock.

Matthews, of Flushing, is a former FAA air-traffic controller.

"My wife Sandy and I bought our first airplane in July 1996," he said. "We purchased a larger plane, a C-182, in 2002 and have flown to the Bahamas 12 times.

"Flying and being a pilot is one of the most important activities in my life."

He said "I especially enjoy paddleball when playing as Walter Hancock's partner."

So when the players take a break between games for a little rest and a drink of water, the conversation is not about shots, skips and great lobs.

It's about airplanes.

# Got paddleballs?

## *The great game needs them*

By LOU GIAMPETRONI

The sport of indoor, four-wall paddleball has undergone a lot of changes in the years since I became involved in the late 1960s.

But one thing that has remained the same is the name of the ball used -- the P-100.

"The P-100 is manufactured by HEAD/ Penn Racquet Sports in Phoenix, Ariz.," said Gordy Hatt, of Jackson, Mich., distributor of the balls.

"HEAD, based in Austria, purchased Penn Athletics a few years ago. Their main product is the Penn tennis ball, the #1-selling ball in the world."

There was a time when the paddleball might have disappeared forever.

"Paddleball being such a small sport relative to tennis, it was not surprising that Penn Athletics wanted to suspend production of the P-100 back in 1986," said Hatt.

It was that year when Hatt and Dave Haehnle, also of Jackson, joined to form Spectrum Sports Distributors -- a company that entered into an agreement with Penn to continue to produce the P-100.

The deal was to purchase three years' supply of balls. It was to be repeated every three

Gordy Hatt is right about the durability of the P-100. It's pretty hard to break one now.

But in the early days, Charlie Lambert -- one of our players at the Flint, Mich., YMCA -- disabled several balls which apparently weren't able to stand up to his power.

Lambert, usually a right-hander, had arthritis and had developed tremendous strength from either side.

If I was playing in a court and we were using my ball and Charlie joined us, I would take my ball out of play. He was that strong.

-- Lou Giampetroni

## **The early days of paddleball**

At one time, there was a collegiate paddleball tournament.

The first was on April 5-7, 1968, at the Old IM Building at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Singles and doubles were offered.

There were 16 players in singles, which was won by Paul Lawrence of the U. of M.

Two players who went on to bigger PB things were eliminated in the quarterfinals: Steve Keeley and Craig Finger.

Entry fee was \$5 and dormitory-type rooms were available at the Michigan Union for \$3.50 per day.



years.

"Our first order was almost our last," said Hatt, "250 cases (30,000 paddleballs) that were flawed with craters and bad seams. We personally hand-sorted the entire shipment.

"I believe 220 cases were returned, leaving us with approximately 30 cases. Penn scheduled another production run to replace the flawed balls."

Hatt for the last couple of years has been handling the paddleballs alone.

In 2004, "Dave decided we didn't need two people doing the job," said Hatt. "He was on the road a lot so I do it myself. We go through just under 400 dozen balls a year."

Hatt said "I like handling the paddleballs and I don't lose money. It's a hobby more than a business. Penn is kind of doing us a favor."

Hatt said "Every paddleballer (whether he/she realizes this or not) is extremely fortunate that Penn, for whatever reason, cares about the 'little guy' -- us.

"For the past 19 years, I have dealt with the same individual. Before inquiring about the next production run, I always take a few deep breaths, hoping that Jeff is still there. So far, I haven't been disappointed."

Hatt said the P-100 "is very durable and can take extreme heat and cold. You do not need to be nice to it. Just keep your P-100s away from sunlight -- the UV rays will break down the rubber compound."

# My brief career as a handballer

By LOU GIAMPETRONI

All the court sports offer cardiovascular benefits.

While some who play paddleball, racquetball, squash and handball all claim their sport to be the best, it's a given that each can be beneficial to the player.

The difficulty in each? Well, squash is recognized as the most difficult, with handball a close second (because of using the "off" arm).

Paddleball, I believe, is tougher than racquetball because in the latter the ball usually will come into the middle area of the court and the gut provides a lot of the force.



Fracassa  
A 1950 photo

Paddleballers can move you all over and around in the court. Chances are you get a better workout in paddleball.

I never tried squash (you only get one chance at a shot!), racquetball is too fast for me (I did try it three

times in the 1970s).

I've played paddleball since the late 1960s and, as most people know, it's my court sport of choice. I consider it THE court sport.

But I go round and round with the handballers at the Flint, Mich., YMCA.

It's a select group that puts a lot of effort into their pick-up games and their tournaments.

Most of the chatter is friendly. In their minds, of course, their game is the best.

I tell them the only handball story I have.

The year was 1955 and I had just joined The Flint Journal the year before.

Al Fracassa, a friend of mine at the old Detroit Northeastern High School and an all-state quarterback, was an assistant football coach at Mandeville High School in the Flint area.

He called me one day and asked if I wanted to play handball at the old Flint YMCA.

I had never played the game but said I would meet him there. Al was a



AL FRACASSA  
A recent photo

good all-around athlete and his brother, Angelo, was a state YMCA handball champion.

As I recall, we played three games and Al won them all. He only had his one glove (players now have 22 pair each). I used my hands as paddles and they were quite puffy afterward.

We went for a soda at a nearby restaurant and I remember telling Fracassa: "You know, Al, I don't think I'm ever going to play this game again."

And I never have.

Fracassa, the football coach at Birmingham Brother Rice, has gone on to be the winningest high school coach in Michigan with 380 victories.

He also coached at Royal Oak Shrine, after playing at Michigan State.

And HIS handball career?

"I played handball a few more times, but then I got into racquetball," Fracassa said. "It wasn't as hard."

## Taylor tourney produced some great champions

For a nine-year period in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Walter Taylor Memorial Tournament kicked off the paddleball season.

Held at the Flint, Mich., YMCA, it was designed to showcase the good, young players in the sport.

It was named for the late Rev. Walter L. Taylor, a longtime player and avid supporter of the game from Flint.

He was well-known for reworking the old wooden paddles, making them pieces of art.

Taylor was the 1977 recipient of the Earl Risky Memorial Trophy for outstanding contributions to the sport of paddleball.

The list of tournament winners reads like a "who's who" of paddleballers.

The champions:

- 1977 -- Jim Swendris
- 1978 -- Steve Wilson
- 1979 -- Andy Kasalo
- 1980 -- Larry Piper
- 1981 -- Randy Hoyle
- 1982 -- Jim Owens
- 1983 -- Pat Milkovich
- 1984 -- Phil Conlin
- 1985 -- Chris Dimanin



The Rev. Walter L. Taylor

# NATIONAL PADDLEBALL ASSOCIATION

## 2009 MIDWEST SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS JANUARY 16<sup>TH</sup> ~ 18<sup>TH</sup>

**SITE:** JACKSON Y.M.C.A. / 127 W WESLEY STREET / JACKSON MI 49203. (517) 782-0537

**FEE:** NPA MEMBERS -\$35 PER PLAYER / NON-MEMBERS \$45 PER . NOVICE & FULL-TIME STUDENTS \$10.00 PER PLAYER (NOVICE: ANY PLAYER WHO HAS NOT PLAYED IN AN NPA TOURNAMENT – YOU MAY PLAY IN NOVICE FOR ONE YEAR). JUNIORS DIVISIONS PLAY FREE. NOVICE/STUDENT/ JUNIOR DIVISIONS DO NOT INCLUDE AN ENTRY GIFT ~ A GIFT MAY BE PURCHASED FOR \$20.00 FOR GUARANTEE OF GIFT SEND \$ & SIZE WITH ENTRY BLANK. 2<sup>ND</sup> DIVISION: MEMBER \$22 /NON-MEMBER \$27 PER PLAYER. CHECKS TO: N.P.A. OR PAY ONLINE

**MEMBERSHIP:** ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE IS \$25.YOU MAY JOIN ON-LINE, AT TOURNAMENT SITE OR MAIL A CHECK TO ADDRESS UNDER "DEADLINE"

**DEADLINE:** **MONDAY, JANUARY 12TH** MAIL ENTRY TO:  
N.P.A. ~ 7642 KINGSTON ~ PORTAGE MI 49002 / FAX TO (269) 279-6275  
ENTER THROUGH OUR WEB SITE AT: [WWW.PADDLEBALL.ORG](http://WWW.PADDLEBALL.ORG)

**RULES:** NPA RULES APPLY. INDICATE ALTERNATE DIVISION ON ENTRY BLANK OR 1 MAY BE ASSIGNED TO YOU IF YOUR 1<sup>ST</sup> CHOICE DOES NOT FILL. PLAY IN 2 DIVISIONS ALLOWED IF # OF ENTRANTS PERMITS YOU MUST FILL OUT A SEPARATE ENTRY BLANK FOR EACH DIVISION AND INDICATE YOUR 1<sup>ST</sup> CHOICE OF DIV. ENTRY SUBJECT TO TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS DISCRETION.

**GIFT:** ENTRY GIFT TO BE ANNOUNCED

**TIMES:** CALL (269) 323-0121 AFTER 6:30 PM ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14TH OR CHECK THE WEBSITE AT PADDLEBALL.ORG FOR TIMES & PLAYERS

**MISC:** BRING YOUR OWN LOCK & TOWEL.

**HOTELS:** FAIRFIELD INN (517) 784-7877 / SUPER 8 (517) 788-8780 / HOLIDAY INN (517) 783-2681

**DIVISION:** MENS \_\_\_ WOMENS \_\_\_ / OPEN \_\_\_ A \_\_\_ (AS 2<sup>ND</sup> DIV ONLY) B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_  
NOVICE \_\_\_ SENIORS (35+) \_\_\_ MASTERS (45+) \_\_\_ GOLD MASTERS (55+) \_\_\_  
PLATINUM MASTERS (65+) \_\_\_ JRS A (TO 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE ) \_\_\_ JRS B (8<sup>TH</sup> – SNR) \_\_\_

NAME:	ADDRESS:
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**Paddleballs**  
... can be ordered  
through Spectrum  
Sports, 2618 South  
St. Anthony, Jack-  
son, Mich., 49203  
or by calling Gordy  
Hatt at (517) 784-  
1861.



**Jevicks**

## **Paddleball Profile**

“Fun, competition, joking around.”

That’s why Ted Jevicks says he plays  
paddleball.

Jevicks, a sewer operator from Bay City,  
Mich., has been playing about 15 years.

“For the exercise,” he said.

He took a Men’s C division title in a Fall  
Doubles tournament and finished second a couple  
of times in the Bean-Smith Tourney.

How can tournaments be improved?

“More interest,” he said. “Maybe lower  
price, more people might play.”

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