

# NPA

(INDOOR / FOUR-WALL)

**National Paddleball Association**

WWW.PADDLEBALL.ORG

NPA, 7642 Kingston, Portage, Mich. 49002

NEWSLETTER / SUMMER 2004-2005



**Two-time singles champion Kelly Gelhaus celebrates with his wife, Sara.**

## Kelly is king again

By LOU GIAMPETRONI

Ann Arbor, Mich. --

Kelly Gelhaus proved last year was no fluke as he successfully defended his National Paddleball Association national open singles title here.

Gelhaus, of Riverside, Calif., topped Mike Wisniewski, 21-15, 21-9, in the Old IM Building of the University of Michigan on March 13, 2005.

Wisniewski, of Bay City, Mich., has won eight national singles crowns. Next best is five victories for Steve Keeley in the 1970s.

Last year, Gelhaus

easily defeated three-time singles champion Andy Mitchell in the final. It was Gelhaus's first NPA tournament and he was an unknown quantity.

But he sure has made an impression in the last two years.

Gelhaus's win this time was similar to his conquest in 2004 of Wisniewski in a semifinal, 21-13, 21-9.

Gelhaus, who will be 35 on July 17, did not display the skills he showed in last year's tournament. But he wasn't far off.

Please see KELLY on Page 2

## West Coast duo repeats

*(Editor's Note: This report is a compilation of comments from players involved in the 2005 NPA open doubles final and onlookers.)*

RIVERSIDE, Calif. -- It was a little tougher this time but the result was the same: Kelly Gelhaus and Steve Lerner repeated as National Open Doubles champions.

They topped Mike Wisniewski and Mike Czabala, 11-21, 21-12, 21-14, on April 24, 2005, at the Tournament House.

A year ago, Gelhaus-Lerner topped the same opponents, 21-17, 21-14, in the Chicago area.

The victory gave Gelhaus a rare double: back-to-back national singles and doubles championships. He won both titles in 2004 also.

Please see West Coast, Page 2



**Steve Lerner (left) and Kelly Gelhaus**

# KELLY

## Continued from Page 1

Both players started out slowly and the score was tied at six before each scored a point here and there, with neither establishing control.

Eventually, Gelhaus took a 14-8 lead with one of the points coming when one of Whiz's shots was let go by Gelhaus and the ball hit Wisniewski.

Whiz always seemed to be on the short end and was trailing, 15-11, when he got three straight points to cut it to a point deficit. Things looking good for Mike, it appeared.

But Gelhaus's 16th point was a little short of miraculous. The players got into a heated rally near the front of the court, during which Gelhaus was off balance and had his back to the front wall.

Somehow, Gelhaus slapped at the ball backwards, kept it in play and, after a few more hits, won the point.

That seemed to deflate Wisniewski who got only one more point and Gelhaus went on to win a very tough, well-played first game.

The finalists were playing in the Old IM Building's Court 14, site of the 1979 final between Keeley and Marty Hogan, a classic three-game struggle won by Hogan.

In the second game, Wisniewski stayed with Gelhaus early, with Gelhaus holding only a 9-8 lead. But after that, Gelhaus began to settle down and suddenly take control of the match.

Gelhaus, who said he picked up a paddle only a couple of weeks ago in preparation for the tournament, is very skillful. He's got all the shots.

And more importantly, he usually controls the

pace of the match.

He doesn't appear athletic but if he has to dive, he dives -- and he did that several times during well-played rallies. If he has to dink shots in the corners, he hits dink shots in the corners.

Those corner soft shots are a big part of his repertoire.

He has made several top-level open players look a little bewildered when he finally throws in a soft kill into the corner after running his opponent all over the court. Much of the time, his foe is off-balance.

That's one thing that is very evident -- Kelly Gelhaus usually controls the tempo of the match. He doesn't look overly-excited out there.

Asked how he could play at this level while not playing paddles that much, Gelhaus said: "I play a pretty fundamental game. I don't reach up over my head and try to hit an overhead backhand.

"He had me off-balance in the first game. I had all that nervous energy and my legs wouldn't react. I didn't feel comfortable until midway in the second game."

Gelhaus now has beaten convincingly everyone he has played in the last two National Singles Tournaments.

If he decides to play again next year, he's got a good chance for a three-peat. He's that good.

Only two players -- Mitchell and Steve Wilson -- have won three successive national open singles championships in the 44-year history of tournament play.

Gelhaus also teamed with Steve Lerner to win the 2004 NPA national open doubles crown.

# West Coast

## Continued from Page 1

**Andy Mitchell of Kalamazoo, Mich., is the only player to win back-to-back-to-back national singles and doubles titles.**

**He did it in 1999, 2000, 2001.**

**Gelhaus-Lerner had to come from behind this year in more ways than one.**

**They lost the first game and even though they took the second, they fell behind early in the tiebreaker, 8-4.**

**Wisniewski said his strategy and that of Czabala was to put some distance between the teams by shooting. It didn't work as both players came up short.**

**"With intense volleying and great playing on both sides, you could feel the momentum swing back in their favor," Whiz said.**

**"It was a clean, well-played match," he added. "We played the finals without one, single controversial call. We only had a score-keeper, and no linesmen."**

## Outdoor summer tourney

Mark your calendar for Saturday, July 30, 2005.

That's the date for the Seasonal Concepts Outdoor Paddleball Tournament in Bloomingdale, Ill.

If you have never attended this event, a warning word or two: get plenty of sleep for the week before.

You won't be getting any that weekend. The event starts at 10:30 a.m. and goes till the last player is standing.

This truly is a fight to the finish and the boys from Bloomingdale also make it one great party.

Contact Dennis Negrete at (312) 615-3100 or enter through the Website at: [www.paddleball.org](http://www.paddleball.org)

Age requirements for NPA divisions:

Seniors: At least 35.

Masters: At least 45.

Golden Masters: At least 55.

Platinum Masters: At least 65.

# 2005 NATIONAL SINGLES CHAMPIONS



**BOB PFAU**  
Men's A



**JOHN LOWMAN**  
Men's B



**TED WRAY**  
Men's C



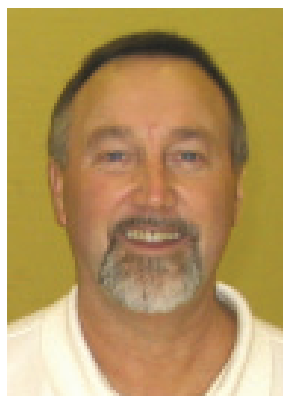
**MIKE ALLISON**  
Men's Novice



**MIKE WISNIEWSKI**  
Seniors



**C. BRUMFIELD**  
Masters



**ERIC CAMPBELL**  
Golden Masters



**JEFF DUNCAN**  
Platinum Masters



Jeff Louwsma (above) played in the Men's C division of the 2005 National Singles. He played PB when he was much younger. He's 10 in 1982 in the photo at right. He also was the 1987 recipient of the Dmitri Remsberg trophy which goes to a young player who demonstrates both skills and sportsmanship. Louwsma, who lives near Beulah, is a house builder.



## 2005 National Singles Results

(March 11-13, Ann Arbor, Mich.)

**OPEN:** Kelly Gelhaus def. Mike Wisniewski, 21-15, 21-9. Dennis Negrete was third. Consolation: Jim Owens.

**MEN'S A:** Bob Pfau def. Sonny Salazar, 21-5, 21-8.

**MEN'S B:** John Lowman def. Robert Stone, 4-21, 21-14, 21-16. Bob McLean was third. Consolation: Jack Barenfanger.

**MEN'S C:** Ted Wray def. James Reid IV, 21-17, 21-19. Joe Baldori was third. Consolation: Mike Fiddie.

**MEN'S NOVICE:** Mike Allison was unbeaten in round-robin competition with four wins. Paul Bantle was second.

**SENIORS:** Mike Wisniewski was unbeaten in round-robin competition with four wins. Bob Pfau was second.

**MASTERS:** Charlie Brumfield def. Andy Mitchell, 21-7, 13-21, 21-4. Jim Swendris was third. Consolation: Lynn Vermeulen.

**GOLDEN MASTERS:** Eric Campbell def. Jim Owens, 21-4, 21-6. Earl Pratt was third. Consolation: Dave Hale.

**PLATINUM MASTERS:** Jeff Duncan was unbeaten in round-robin competition with three wins. Al Storey was second.



# Brigham, Poli get major NPA awards

If it ever was going to happen, it was going to happen to the former Barefoot Contessa.

The "it" was the unprecedented reception of the 2005 Earl Risky Memorial Trophy by Lorri Brigham, the ubiquitous secretary-treasurer of the National Paddleball Association.

She also received the trophy in 1986. It is awarded in honor of the founder of paddleball and goes to the person who has contributed most to the sport.

She is the only person in the 30-year history of the NPA's top major award to win it twice.

At the 2001 National Doubles, paddleballer Larry Piper presented Lorri with a large card and on it he said:

Who is Lorri Brigham?

- \* Former Miss Kalamazoo.

- \* Last person voted off "The Survivor."

- \* Only living person to have never been a doubles partner with Lou Giampetroni.

- \* Organizer of all the NPA tournaments.

That last notation says it all. She has been there -- it seems -- forever. Putting everything together and making sure the tourneys are class operations.

The "Barefoot Contessa" reference was for her penchant in her playing days to compete without shoes.

The headline on a 2001 NPA newsletter article appropriately described her importance to the organization:

"We couldn't do it without Lorri Brigham."

To many players, Kim Poli is your typical paddleballer: gregarious, fun-loving and hard-working. Poli, of Green Bay, Wis., doesn't miss many



**Kim Poli and Lorri Brigham celebrate their awards at the National Doubles in Riverside, CA.**

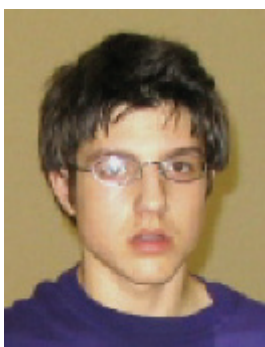
tournaments and you generally can find him in a group laughing it up or zipping around in the courts.

Poli is the 2005 recipient of the Sportsmanship Trophy, one of two major NPA awards.

It goes to the player "who most represents the American ideal of good sportsmanship under extreme competitive conditions."

While players over the years have been good sports as a group, there are those who stand out.

They almost go to great lengths to give their opponent a shot. Poli is one of those.



**Baumer**

## Baumer wins PB title

Bay City, Mich. -- Chuck Baumer won the 29th High School Paddleball Tournament in March 2005.

Baumer, a freshman at Bangor John Glenn High, topped defending champion Brad Pretzer, 21-2, 21-15.

Justin Reed was third and Kyle Piechowiak was fourth.

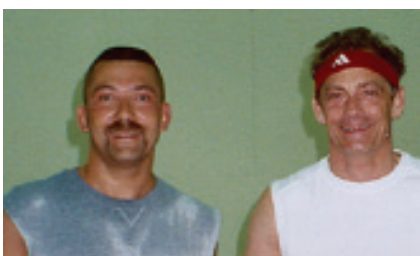


**DON'T FORGET** -- The paddleball season doesn't end officially until after the Pig Roast & Human Sacrifice in Kalamazoo, Mich. This is all that was left at a recent such event. This year's will be held on Saturday, June 18, at Bronson Athletic Club and party at VFW (same as last year). So hold the month open. It's a ton of fun. Check the paddleball web page -- [www.paddleball.org](http://www.paddleball.org) -- for an entry or fax Lorri Brigham at (269) 279-6275 or call her at (888) 871-1501.

# 2005 NATIONAL DOUBLES CHAMPIONS



Vince Carlone (left), Todd Entriken  
Men's A



Bob Stone (left) and Ted Wray  
Men's B



Bryce Cooper (left) and Jason Sypolt  
Men's C

## 2005 National Doubles Results

### Tournament House, Riverside, Calif.

**OPEN:** Kelly Gelhaus-Steve Lerner def. Mike Czabala-Mike Wisniewski 11-21, 21-12, 21-14. 3rd. Aaron Embry-Steve Trent. Consolation: Andy Mitchell-Don Kirkconnell.

**MEN'S A:** Vince Carlone-Todd Entriken def. Bob Pfau-Jason Muth, 20-21, 21-10, 21-5; 3rd. Jim Swendris-Brad Cook. Consolation: Robert Mendez-Giulliermo Layva.

**MEN'S B:** Ted Wray-Robert Stone def. Greg Badger-Randy Calentine, 21-15, 21-18; 3rd. Jack Barenfanger-Jim Richter.

**MEN'S C:** Bryce Cooper-Jason Sypolt def. Greg Childs-George Ovido, 21-7, 21-10; 3rd. Dave Ratynski-Rengan Rajendran.

**MEN'S NOVICE:** Alex Roblis-R.C. Saenz def. Amy Foster-Daryl Flinn, 21-18, 21-13; Consolation: Len Sonnenberg-Curtis Cramer.

**SENIORS:** Vince Carlone-Steve Lerner def. Mike Wisniewski-Sandy DeGreif, 21-12, 21-10.

**MASTERS:** Andy Mitchell-Steve Trent def. Ron Malecki-Mike Schafer, 21-18, 21-9; 3rd. Eric Campbell-Mark Susson. Consolation: Jim Owens-Andy Pappas.



R.C. Saenz (left) and Alex Roblis  
Men's Novice



Steve Lerner (left) and Vince Carlone  
Seniors



Steve Trent (left) and Andy Mitchell  
Masters



Jim Owens (left) and Jim Sterken  
Golden Masters



Lori Soares (left) and Michelle Turner  
Womens



Lori Soares and Hal Brown  
Mixed Doubles

**GOLDEN MASTERS:** Jim Owens-Jim Sterken def. Bill Lott-Brad Douglas, 21-8, 21-12. 3rd. Eric Campbell-Mark Susson.

**WOMENS:** Lori Soares-Michell Turner won in round-robin compe-

tition. Amy Foster-Daryl Flinn was second.

**MIXED DOUBLES:** Lori Soares-Hal Brown won in round-robin competition. Michelle Turner-Matt Schulz was second.



# 2005 National Singles highlights ...



One player wore a 1992 Earl Risky Tournament T-shirt. It referred to the event as "The Last Blast" -- the final Risky tourney.



Lenny Baldori (left) was a little disappointed because he was unable to play in the National Singles. He tore his right Achilles tendon during the Golden Masters final in the Midwest Doubles Championships in February. He and his partner, Charlie Brumfield, were en route to victory when the injury forced the team to forfeit.



Enjoying a tale by Andy Mitchell (right) are Bob Pfau (left), Charlie Brumfield (seated) and Don Kirkconnell.



The message is appropriate in this case. The wearer is Jeff Duncan, who won the Platinum Masters division for players at least 65.



Among fans was Dick Pitcher, ex-national paddleball champion and UM staff member who ran many tournaments at the Old IM Building over the years.

# National Doubles Tournament termed a 'winner'

*Editor's Note: The 2005 National Doubles Tournament in Riverside, California, was very important in the progress of the National*

*Paddleball Association. It was the first-ever major tournament on the West Coast. Here are two reviews of the tourney.*

By LORRI BRIGHAM

I think that the 2005 National Doubles Tournament held at the Tournament House in Riverside, California, was one of the best things to happen to paddleball in a long time!

The enthusiasm generated by the high level of play and sportsmanship was fantastic to observe. We had a large number of players stop by the tourney desk to ask when the next National Doubles would be and to let us know that they would be there.

Amy Foster, a female on the racquetball pro tour, said that she would now be taking her paddle with her to her racquetball events.

(Yea for paddleball ...  
Yea for women's paddleball.)

I want to be sure to

give out some "thank yous" ... but the biggest thank you of all goes to all the California players for their great hospitality and sportsmanship and to all of the Midwest players who traveled to attend this event.

In particular, I would like to thank Robin Dixon and all of the owners and staff of the Tournament House for all of the work they did before, during and after the tourney. You all set a new bar for hospitality at tournaments.

Thank you to all who donated the extras that made winning that much sweeter ... paddles from Laser, sunglasses from Vinny Carlone, shirts from Todd Entriken's sponsor "One Shot." To Randy Calentine and Greg Badger for their incredible sportsmanship by playing the

Men's B finals on Saturday night to accommodate the flight schedule of their Midwest opponents.

To Sara and Kelly Gelhaus, for opening their house to so many Midwest players. The list could go on and on.

And last, but not least ... Thank you to all of the NPA board members for awarding me the Earl Risky Trophy.

It was very much appreciated but certainly not necessary.

I get more out of this sport than I put into it. I have always felt that paddleball players are without a doubt the best people I have ever met. This California trip just reinforced that.

I don't know what it is about the sport that attracts such great folks, but it does -- and you all are!!

By ANDY MITCHELL

California was awesome! Everyone I talked to thought it was the best-run (great tournament director), had the best players (Thank you), had great diversity, and was the friendliest tournament that they had ever been to!

The Open Finals was fantastic with each team winning a game and then was neck and neck in the third game before Lerner and Gelhaus put Wiz and El Gato (Czabala) away with a dazzling display of passes and kill shots. Of course, a few skips were thrown in there, too!

After all the talk and worry about the hinder and ref rules, it turned out to be a non-issue. In fact, everyone I talked to liked the way we did it. They thought it made the tournament more fun and interesting!!

There were some great divisions and matches! I was particularly impressed with the women's division. We need to get some more players in this division from the Midwest!



**Midwest paddleballers had a lot of fun in the California sun!**

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



**DeGreif**

## **Paddleball Profile**

What does Sandy DeGreif enjoy about paddleball?

“The people, the competition and not getting hit by the ball whenever possible,” said DeGreif, of Bay City, Mich.

DeGreif, who works at Delphi Automotive, has been playing the game since 1968.

“Harry Neal asked me to play,” he said. “What a guy.”

DeGreif has won state and national doubles championships.

How to improve tournaments?

“They seem to be run extremely well but it would be great to bring in a new group of younger players,” he said.

**NPA**  
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