

# NPA

(INDOOR / FOUR-WALL)

**National Paddleball Association**

WWW.PADDLEBALL.ORG

NPA, 7642 Kingston, Portage, Mich. 49002

NEWSLETTER / SPRING 2007-2008

## PROBE STARTED

The National Paddleball Association Board of Managers has launched an investigation into a photo purporting to show Scott Lawrence receiving the Sportsmanship Trophy years ago.

In the photo (at right), Lawrence (left) -- of Grand Blanc, Mich. -- smiles as he accepts the trophy from NPA President Lou Hekhuis.

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## NPA 2007-08 SCHEDULE

**NATIONAL DOUBLES:** April 18, 19, 20, 2008, Michigan Athletic Club, E. Lansing, MI



## Truth In Advertising

(See Page 2)

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**BUY BALLS -- THEY'RE  
GREAT FOR THE GAME!**  
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## Remember the paddles!

Paddleballers, don't forget:

Bring your old paddles to a tournament or contact Lorri Brigham, secretary-treasurer of the NPA, at [lbrigham@yahoo.com](mailto:lbrigham@yahoo.com)

The paddles will be sent to areas where people might get into the game.

Brigham said there has been quite a bit of interest from various areas of the U.S. in starting the game.

"We would like to be able to supply these start-ups with paddles and balls," she said. "A paddle that has become a little worn to you would be great for a beginner. The NPA will supply these groups with paddleballs to start them off."

In addition, Brigham said, if anyone knows of a group of beginners or "would like to help try to start a group in your area -- let me know and we will get you a starter kit."

She received a batch of paddles at the Fall Doubles in November 2007 at the Old IM Building at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

One guy brought 14 in a box.

Paddles also were donated earlier this year for the Mercer Island, (Seattle) Wash., area and Boulder, Colorado.

In my files, I have a letter dated February 21, 1978, from Richard J. Cole of Ann Arbor, Mich.

At the time, I was secretary-treasurer of the NPA. Cole wrote: "PADDLEBALL LIVES!"

He wanted to renew his NPA membership and enclosed a check.

Cole added: "Keep up the good work on the newsletter & tournaments -- three cheers for the 'Hole In The Ball Gang!'"

I still believe his last phrase describes paddleballers as well as anyone could.

-- Lou Giampetroni

## PROBE

Continued from Page 1

"No way," said Steve Wilson, the four-time national NPA singles champion, who has known Lawrence for umpteen years.

"There is no way he could have received the Sportsmanship Trophy. Why, he's probably one of the last guys I would ever consider for it.

"By the way, is he still playing?"

Declared Anna Thomas of Flint, Mich., who with her sister Carla Teare, won eight NPA womens open national doubles championships:

"Balderdash!! There's something fishy going on. Scott Lawrence a sportsman? HAH!!

"I can still remember when he used to cut in behind me while playing at the Flint YMCA and letting fly with one of his shots.

"I mean the man could strike the ball hard and I probably still have some evidence on my bod where he hit me.

"Never, never in a million years should Scott Lawrence even come close to the Sportsmanship Trophy."

Lou Hekhuis, president of the NPA, said the Board of Managers will talk with other players who competed against Lawrence over the years.

"I just don't remember handing the trophy to him, and wonder what were the circumstances," Hekhuis said. "What year was that?"

**Editor's Note: Those of you who know Lawrence and those of you who have played against him know that this article is all folderol.**

**One of the meanings of that word is "non-sense."**

**You know that he is a sportsman and has stopped his shot hundreds of times to avoid hitting a player.**

**The photo was a gag we set up in the mid-1980s.**

**The fact that it was around April Fool's Day spurred us on to come up with the article.**

**We thought we'd have some fun.**

-- LOU GIAMPETRONI



**T-SHIRT SAYS IT ALL --** One of the more interesting players at the Bean-Smith Tournament was this guy -- Rex Rolley. Rolley, of Midland, Mich., said he has lost 70 pounds. That puts him down to 320. Despite his size, he's very agile and can score points. And needless to say, he hits the ball very, very hard.

## Bean-Smith Tourney draws 40 players

BAY CITY, Mich. -- There was some hot and heavy competition at the 31st Bean-Smith Paddleball Tournament at the Bay Family Y on Feb. 2, 2008.

Twenty teams composed of 38 men and two women battled in four divisions.

In the open division, Mike Wisniewski and Cort Schepeler defeated Jim Richter and Shahebaz Malik, 21-20, in a single-game playoff after the teams tied in round-robin competition.

Scott Wittbrodt and Greg Keenan topped Ron Malecki and Chris Malecki by winning a tiebreaker in the Men's A division.

In Men's B, Todd Carr and Bryan Carr defeated Jim Rice and Pat Gahan in two games in the division final.

Jack Barenfanger and Earl Pratt captured the golden masters title by finishing unbeaten in round-robin competition against three other teams.



The 2008 Midwest Singles at the Old IM Building at the U. of M. in late January had a first. The eight divisions included a perfect draw of eight in the Platinum Division for players at least 65. They are (back from left) Al Storey, Larry Millen, Michael Fearer, Jeff Duncan, Bill Pavlichko and Paul Jones. In front are Don Traxler (left) and Lou Giampetroni. Traxler won the championship.

## 2008 MIDWEST SINGLES RESULTS

**January 19, 20, 2007 -- Ann Arbor, Mich.**

**OPEN:** Mike Wisniewski def. Chad Krager, 21-11, 21-7. Joe Baldori was third. Consolation: Robert Stone.

**MEN'S A:** Don Kirkconnell def. Chad Krager, 21-10, 21-15. Joe Baldori was third.

**MEN'S B:** Nathan Martin def. Scott Wittbrodt, 15-21, 21-14, 21-18. Ted Wray was third. Consolation: Greg Keenan.

**MEN'S C:** Terry Kennedy def. Dan Messerly, 21-18, 20-21, 21-11. Ron Harris was third. Consolation: Skip Freysinger.

**MEN'S NOVICE:** Ron Cunningham def. Steve Snow, 21-12, 21-1. Ken Foster was third. Consolation: Nathan Foster.

**MASTERS:** Andy Mitchell def. Bob Sterken, 21-14, 21-14. Bill Eaton was third. Consolation: Rick Clewis.

**GOLDEN MASTERS:** Bob Sterken def. Jim Owens, 21-9, 21-16. Pete Magar was third. Consolation: Terry Kennedy.

**PLATINUM MASTERS:** Don Traxler def. Jeff Duncan, 21-12, 21-1. Larry Millen was third. Consolation: Paul Jones.

# 2008 Midwest Doubles Results

**(Arlington Heights,  
Illinois)**

**February 23, 24.**

**OPEN:** 1<sup>st</sup>, Mike Wisniewski-Chad Krager; 2<sup>nd</sup>, Andy Mitchell-Don Kirkconnell; 3<sup>rd</sup>, Dennis Negrete-Russ Tater.

**MEN'S A:** 1<sup>st</sup>, Brandon Creamer-Ron Malecki; 2<sup>nd</sup>, Chad Krager-Don Kirkconnell; 3<sup>rd</sup>, Paul Sylvester-Sonny Salazar. Consolation: Jim Owens- Jim Richter.

**MEN'S B:** 1<sup>st</sup>, Brad Douglas-Bill Lott; 2<sup>nd</sup>, Andy Pappas-Jack Barenfanger; 3<sup>rd</sup>, Ted Wray-Jer Fennell. Consolation: Tony Sindt-John Mason.

**MEN'S C:** 1<sup>st</sup>, Eugene Rush-Ron Harris; 2<sup>nd</sup>, Jer Fennell-Terry Kennedy.

**MASTERS:** 1<sup>st</sup>, Andy Mitchell-Mark Smith; 2<sup>nd</sup>, Jack Barenfanger-Jim Richter.

**GOLDEN MASTERS:** 1<sup>st</sup>, Jim Owens-Ron Malecki; 2<sup>nd</sup>, Bill Farmer-Brad Ex.

... And now a word or two from Lorri and Chad on the Midwest Doubles Tourney

Lorri Brigham, secretary-treasurer of the NPA, and Chad Krager have some comments on the Midwest Doubles Tournament at the Forest View Racquet Club in Arlington Heights, Illinois:

**From Lorri:** "First, thank you, Chad, for all of the work you did to make this tourney such a hit. I know the time you spent searching out clubs, restaurants and hotels to make sure that everyone had a great time.

Second, for all of you who missed it ... what a great site. A good, old-fashioned club with six nice courts, viewing areas and a lounge. The local restaurants were top-notch and the hotel a great deal for the

price.

The next time we have a tourney here, you can't miss out."

**From Chad:** "I have appreciated all the positive feedback on our new venue and encourage anyone to please contact the NPA or myself with more. Also, thanks to Lorri for administering another well-orchestrated tournament. As we all know, her efforts consume many hours and I certainly appreciate it. Lastly, more praise to Mrs. Negrete, the Chicago area paddleballers, Dawn, Leslie, Lou and Lorri for all their time and donations to the great hospitality during the event."



These paddleballers restaged this national championship trophy presentation in 1969 at the Kona Kai Club on Shelter Island in San Diego. At left is Dr. Bud Muehleisen and with him is Charlie Brumfield. Brumfield sent along information with the photo. "The event it commemorated was the Ames, Iowa, national paddleball tourney (when men were men and doubles and singles were held at the same time)," he said. "I narrowly defeated defending champ Dr. Bud in the finals and we teamed to win the doubles." Brumfield topped Muehleisen, 21-14, 21-17. In the doubles final, they beat Bob and Bernie McNamara, 21-11, 21-15.

"If I have the time between my intergalactic duties, I will see all paddleballers at the 2008 NPA National Doubles Tournament at the Michigan Athletic Club in E. Lansing, Mich., on April 18, 19, 20. Be there."



## Deadeye Dick

Dick Shick, a retired periodontist, has been playing paddleball for a number of years at the Flint, Mich., YMCA.

He enjoys the game, playing as often as he can with a group that enjoys it as much as he does.

Shick, 78, of Grand Blanc, also has been involved in community work over the years.

Now his efforts are going global since as president-elect of the International College of Dentists he will take over the top post in January of next year.

It is an honorary group representing just three percent of U.S. dentists, he said.

And while the group began as a way to disseminate developments and advancements in dentistry, its hallmark today is humanitarian and public health projects.

But Shick still loves his PBall.

When I began playing with him many years ago, I noticed that when he got the opportunity he let go with a shot. No lobs for Mr. Shick.

When he is in the red line area, he lets go with a missile -- most often into the left corner since he usually plays the right side.

When I play against him, that's what he does -- wham, into the left corner. Not much left.

So years ago, I patterned a button (I love to do buttons, as most paddleballers know) for Dick that announced that he was "Shick The Shooter."

The nickname has stuck and the PBallers at the Y have a lot of fun with it.

At least I do.

-- LOU GIAMPETRONI



**Shick**



All paddleballers know that Randy Wackerle has done more than his share toward the success of the NPA over the years. But some probably don't know about his skill as a woodworker. Here are three of the items Wackerle, of Bay City, Mich., has crafted for PBallers

## The PB match without an end

The Grand Blanc (Mich.) Court Club, which was destroyed by fire in mid-December 2007, was the scene of one of the most memorable matches in PB history.

Steve Wilson and the late R.P. Valenciano reached the final of a Flint (Mich.) Paddleball Club singles tournament, as everyone expected they would.

The year was sometime in the mid-1980s, when both were at their peak -- especially in hitting it hard.

What was not expected was an abrupt end to the match after each had won a game.

Valenciano won the first game, 21-20, and Wilson, a four-time NPA national singles champion, grabbed the second, 21-10. It was in the second game that they began intentionally hitting each other.

Wilson said recently he questioned some of Valenciano's calls in the first game and they got into a discussion in the locker room.

The second game started "and there wasn't



much shooting at the front wall," Wilson said, and each took a shot at the other whenever possible.

After the second game, Wilson said, "We each wanted to forfeit to the other but finally decided to quit. It just wasn't worth the loss of a friendship."

No winner was declared. The scorecard bears the notation: "No Play" in the third-game area and Wilson said the tiebreaker was never started.

Scott Lawrence said he talked with each later and both claimed the other "started it."

Scott remembers that Tom Keel finished third and kiddingly declared himself the champion since there was no winner in the final. -- Lou Giampetroni



**CHAMPIONS ALL --** Paddleballers from the Kalamazoo, Mich., area gather to show off their trophies at a tournament of yesteryear. The reason for publishing the photo? Look at how svelte they are!! All were a big part of the PB scene in the 1980s and 1990s and some into the 21st century. They are (from left) Joe Emaar, Doug Greene, George Hobbs, Andy Mitchell, Andy Kasalo, Jeff Burkham, Dean Pennala, Brad Ex and Bill Farmer.

**PADDLEBALL PROFILE**



**Costanzo**

Who do you know started playing paddleball on one wall?

Duane Costanzo, of Lapeer, Mich., did just that.

He did it in 1972 “just for fun ... one wall at the Pontiac, Mich., YMCA.”

Costanzo, who is self-employed, says he enjoys PB for “the joy of winning and learning from my losses.”

Costanzo, who also is an accomplished handball player, won the 2004 national NPA Men’s C singles championship and also captured a state of Michigan Men’s C singles crown.

Any suggestions on how tournaments can be improved?

“Not really,” Costanzo said. “I think every tournament has been run excellently.”



**“I’M THE REFEREE AND I SAY THE BALL SKIPPED.”**

# The fur was flying in PB match

By LOU GIAMPETRONI

Two of the best players in paddleball history were sisters Carla Teare and Anna Sue Thomas.

The Flint, Mich., pair won eight NPA national women's open doubles championships and Carla won five national women's open singles titles. Anna had won a national novice singles crown.

They also happened to play in the Flint Paddleball Club's open singles league in the mid-1980s. Ten men and the two women.

They both were pretty good players and gave the guys all they could handle.

Both gave me a hard time. We had to play three 15-point games, even if one player won the first two. In my match against Carla, I won the first game but then she showed me a few things in taking the next two.

Throughout the season, I would see Anna going into a court and taking off a sweat shirt or some outer garment. I would say something like, "Boy, Anna, you're pulling out all the stops tonight, aren't you?"

And she would say something like, "Whatever it takes to win." It got to be a running joke.

Anna and I played the last night of the season. I went into the court and she was wearing sweat pants and a long-sleeved sweat shirt.

I was disappointed. I figured she would wear something special for our match.

Then, just before the first game, she stepped outside and returned without the sweat shirt and I saw she was wearing a swim suit. Dirty pool!

I learned long ago that concentration is essential to any athletic endeavor. Well, I had difficulty concentrating. She played exceptionally well and eventually had something like a 13-6 lead.

I looked at her and said, "Anna, if I give up one of my timeouts, would you go out and put your sweat shirt back on?" She smiled and said no.

Well, she finished me off in that game, 15-8. Let me digress.

In anticipation of something like she pulled with her wearing apparel, I initially had walked into the court wearing -- on the outside of my shorts -- a fur-lined jock strap (with the fur on the outside).

It was given to me at a surprise birthday party a few years earlier by a bunch of paddleballers.

So that's how I played the match -- with the supporter on the outside and the fur facing forward.



**Lou and Anna after the match.**

Now ... on with the story.

After the first game, I slumped to the floor and Anna left. A few minutes later, a number of players entered the court and began laughing at MY wearing apparel.

We started the second game and I decided I had to play better. And I did. After a while, as I was serving, I noticed the fur was beginning to fly. The stitches were coming undone and the fur piece was flapping.

Anna broke up, laughing, and yelled: "Talk about being distracted."

I got three straight points after that and they helped me to a 15-4 win in the second game.

Then Anna left and returned without the sweat pants! She had on a demure pair of scanties covering the lower part of the bathing suit. (Later, she said she was even ready to take off the scanties if necessary. Unfortunately, it wasn't necessary.)

It was a most trying time for me in the third game, and she blasted me, 15-8. She backhanded me to death. She must have learned that from Carla.

I shook her hand and then sat in the hallway, wondering how she could have taken two games from me. As she walked away, I swore I heard her say: "Whatever it takes to win."

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



**Lott**

## **Paddleball Profile**

Words of praise from paddleballer Bill Lott, of Ann Arbor, Michigan:

“Lorri (Brigham) and the NPA do a great job with every tournament I’ve played in.”

Lott, a housing manager, began playing paddleball about 1999 after a stretch of playing racquetball.

“When the (racquetball) season was over, I started playing paddleball and never went back,” he said.

What does he enjoy about PB?

“The great competition,” he said. “There are many nice people playing the game and everyone is a good sport.”

He won a golden masters championship at the 2005 Midwest Doubles and was runnerup that year in that division in the National Doubles -- both with Brad Douglas. He and Douglas also won the golden masters title at the 2007 Fall Doubles in Midland, Mich.

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