

NPA

(INDOOR / FOUR-WALL)

National Paddleball Association

WWW.PADDLEBALL.ORG

NPA, 7642 Kingston, Portage, Mich. 49002

NEWSLETTER / SPRING 2008-2009

PB newcomer grabs NPA singles crown

By LOU GIAMPETRONI

Ann Arbor, Mich. -- Paddleball got its second straight first-time national singles champion when Cesar Carrillo easily outmatched eight-time NPA champion Mike Wisniewski in the 2009 final.

Carrillo, 29, of Memphis, TN, topped Whiz, 21-3, 21-9, on March 15 at the Old IM Building at the University of Michigan.

First-time champion Aaron Embry of San Diego won in 2008. Another first-time champion was Chris Crowther of Riverside, Calif., in 2006.

Carrillo has been playing racquetball for a number of years and began playing paddleball about 1 1/2 years ago. This tournament was only his second in paddleball.

After the match, Wisniewski dubbed Carrillo "Gelhaus on wheels."

Carrillo's play was reminiscent of that of Kelly Gelhaus, a three-time national singles titlist from Riverside.

And the scores were reminiscent also of the scores in Gelhaus's first singles championship when he topped Andy Mitchell of Kalamazoo, Mich., 21-5, 21-7, in 2004.

Carrillo's victory came quite easily. Like Gelhaus, he

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Carrillo kisses the NPA trophy.



HE DID IT AGAIN!!

While everyone else was either playing or watching at the National Singles Tournament, Scott Lawrence (left) was up to his old tricks. Here he has Al Storey "presenting" the Earl Risky Trophy to him for contributions to paddleball. He did the same thing years ago with the Sportsmanship Trophy in a similar setup.

-- PHOTO by Sue Giampetroni

2008-09 NPA Schedule

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

SINGLES

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has great power and speed, and can get shots that most players cannot. He scored in a variety of ways -- straight-in kills, many pinches and -- like Gelhaus -- a maddening little dink in the left corner when he had Wisniewski off balance.

And he had Whiz, 51, of Bay City, Mich., off balance almost the entire match. Whiz could never get going. Actually, most of Whiz's best shots were for side-out.

Carrillo got off to a quick 6-0 lead in the first game. His winners came on a long left pinch, a miss by Whiz and easy passes.

Whiz's first point came on a miss by Carrillo. But then the latter ran off seven unanswered points to make it 13-1.

Then the athletic Carrillo wasted little time in running off point after point while Whiz loudly berated himself for his play.

As Carrillo rolled to the first-game win, Whiz got a couple of points sandwiched in there.

The second game started a little better for Whiz -- but not much. It was 5-3 early in the game in favor of Carrillo. But then he added six more points to lead, 11-3.

Whiz got two points to trail, 11-5. But then Carrillo powered off 10 points over the remainder of the game while Whiz got only four.

After the match, Carrillo -- originally from Chihuahua, Mexico -- said racquetball requires more power "but I can be original in paddleball. I cannot get them (opponents' shots) all but I will try."

Paddleball, he said, "keeps me healthy. It's better than sitting on the couch and watching TV."

Wisniewski, who was playing in his 15th national open singles championship (there have been 48), was rather philosophical about the loss.

"At least, I didn't get damaged physically," he said. "He usually had two options, sometimes three, on most shots and that makes it tough.

"I hit the ball good, I felt good and I had the power. But I was always off-balance.

"He's a Gelhaus on wheels. He was hungry."

Whiz said "I made it easy for him. He was comfortable on just about everything. He sets up very well. I watch him and I think I used to be like that."

Whiz said he rarely gets an opportunity locally to face players such as Carrillo or Gelhaus.

"I don't see that kind of stuff," he said. "I don't play anybody like that. And that makes a difference."

Wisniewski had a breathtaking semifinal against Kevin McLaughlin of San Diego when the latter, who is 24, took Whiz to a tiebreaker before losing 21-19.

After the final, the other players in the open division -- who definitely were very impressed with Carrillo -- were nosing around and trying to find out who got the most points against Carrillo.

There weren't many.

Jim Owens, of Ann Arbor, a member of the NPA Board of Managers, saw Carrillo in December of 2008 in a Hit-A-Round Exhibition in Memphis, and said this:

"If he travels to the NPA National Singles Tournament, open players better beware."

It's not just all about wins

Basil Baker didn't win a championship in the 2009 National Singles Tournament but it still was a personal victory for him.

Baker, who will be 66 in June of this year, reached the final of the platinum masters division for players at least 65.

He lost to Jer Fennell of Jackson, Mich., in two games.

Baker, a practicing attorney from Ann Arbor, Mich., was playing in his first tournament in 10 years.

And he



Baker

was doing it with one eye.

Baker lost the vision in his right eye when he was struck by a hard-hit paddleball in 2000 during a pickup game. He was not wearing eye protection at the time.

He has had five surgeries in an attempt to regain some vision in the eye. But none has been successful.

Over the years, he has continued to play what he calls "recreational paddleball."

Now he describes himself as "the poster boy for eye protection" because he wears glasses "every time."

Baker, who began playing PB in 1971, was asked if he had any concerns about playing now.

"Not with the eye protection," he said. "None whatsoever."

Baker was the recipient of the NPA's Sportsmanship Trophy in 1993.

He won the national seniors singles crown in 1981, the national seniors doubles title in 1987 and the national masters singles championship in 1991.

-- LOU GIAMPETRONI



**2009
NATIONAL
SINGLES
CHAMPIONS**



CESAR CARRILLO
OPEN



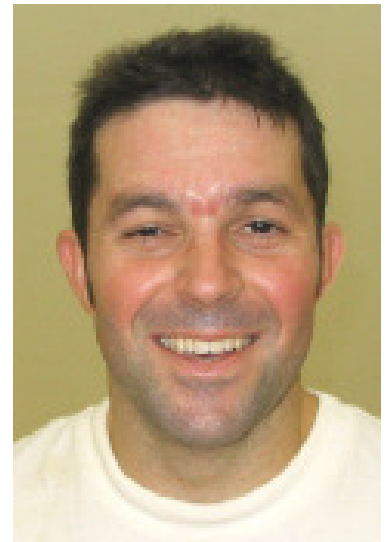
KEVIN MCLAUGHLIN
MEN'S A



DAVID FLEETWOOD
MEN'S B



RICK CLEWIS
MEN'S C



DON KIRKCONNELL
SENIORS



ANDY MITCHELL
MASTERS



DAN MCLAUGHLIN
GOLDEN MASTERS



JER FENNEL
PLATINUM MASTERS

2009 NATIONAL SINGLES HIGHLIGHTS

It was a memorable National Singles Tournament for Dan McLaughlin and his son, Kevin.

Dan, of Kalamazoo, Mich., already held the distinction of being the only PB player to win national open, seniors and masters singles championships.

He added the golden masters title at the 2009 tourney, winning in a tiebreaker, 21-15, over Jim Owens.

So that makes it even tougher for someone to try to match his record.

Kevin, 24, of San Diego, won the Men's A crown by topping Joe Baldori, of Washington, D.C.

In addition, he took 8-time national singles champ Mike Wisniewski of Bay City, Mich., to a tiebreaker in the open division.

Kevin lost, 21-19, in the crucial game. But he took third in the open division.



Kevin (left) and Dan McLaughlin



REMINISCING -- A visitor to the tournament was Andy Kasalo (right), seen chatting with Don Traxler, of Midland, Mich. Kasalo of Kalamazoo, Mich., has been away from the tournament wars for a few years. He and his longtime partner, Andy Mitchell, established a doubles record that likely will never be beaten, let alone equaled. They won 20 national titles and many other lesser ones. In the 2009 tournament, Traxler lost a semifinal match to Basil Baker, of Ann Arbor, Mich., 21-20, 21-20, in the platinum division for players at least 65.

QUICK LESSON -- It didn't take long for new national singles champion Cesar Carrillo (facing the camera) to be asked for some tips. Here, he's giving some advice to Shahebaz Malik, of Ann Arbor, Mich., shortly after receiving the singles championship trophy.





QUICK START -- Someone to watch in paddleball circles is Andrew Price (above) of Saginaw, Mich. The 17-year-old captured the Men's A and Men's B championships in the Midwest Singles Tournament. In both cases, he defeated veteran players who know their way around the court. He began playing PB three years ago as "cross-training for racquetball," he said.

2009 Midwest Singles Results

Jackson, Mich. YMCA

OPEN: 1st, Chad Krager; 2nd Don Kirkconnell; 3rd, Shahebaz Malik. Consolation: Robert Stone.

MEN'S A: 1st, Andrew Price; 2nd, Sonny Salazar.

MEN'S B: Andrew Price; 2nd, Jeremy Wheaton; 3rd, Greg Keenen.

MEN'S C: 1st, Dan Messerly; 2nd, Sam Baldori.

WOMENS: 1st, Barb Jones; 2nd, Christine Todd.

SENIORS: 1st, Chad Krager; 2nd, Jim Owens; 3rd, Rick Clewis.

MASTERS: 1st, Doug Hartung; 2nd, Greg Keenen.

GOLDEN MASTERS: 1st, Jim Owens; 2nd, Paul Chritz.

PLATINUM MASTERS: 1st, Jer Fennell; 2nd, Don Traxler.

PADDLEBALL PROFILE

An invitation by a friend to play paddleball led to a lifelong love affair for Glen Ostrander.



Ostrander

enjoy the mental side of strategy the game offers."

Any titles or accomplishments on the court?

"My greatest accomplishment is when the godfather of paddleball (Lou G) asks me to be his partner once a year," he said.

Ostrander said he finished second in Men's C singles a number of years ago.

Ostrander, 61, said the friend, Francis Hudson, asked him to play PB in 1975 at the Flint, Mich., YMCA.

"I fell in love with the game," said Ostrander, a financial adviser from Grand Blanc, Mich.

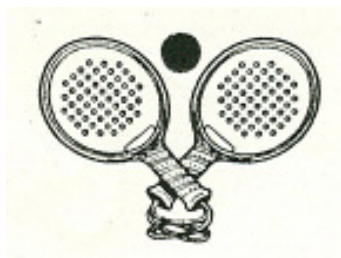
What does he enjoy about the game?

"The people most," he said. "Also the forced exercise is great. And I



UM REUNION -- When Rick Leach (left) was a student at the University of Michigan, he took a paddleball class from instructor Mobey Benedict. Benedict (right), the NPA's national singles champion in 1965, had a standing offer with his students: He gave each 20 points and the serve, or so the story goes. If the student won, he got an A in the class. No one got an A, said Benedict. Benedict also was Leach's baseball coach at U. of M. The pair shared memories when Leach was one of six athletes recognized January 24, 2009, in a Michigan Hall of Honor ceremony at the U. of M.

MARK IT DOWN ... DATE FOR THE PIG ROAST: SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 2009 ... DETAILS LATER



There were hot times in those season-enders at Bloomingdale

Bloomingtondale, ILL -- The court club is gone now but in its heyday, it hosted two National Paddleball Association national doubles tournaments and several end-of-the-season "cookouts" -- which were played in the blistering heat of mid-summer.

We're talking about The Athletic Club of Bloomingdale, due west of Chicago.



Negrete

It was owned by the family of Dennis Negrete, a national champion PBaller, who played in the Midwest Doubles Tournament in late February 2009.

Negrete, 41, said the place has been demolished and the site sold for housing construction.

Players talk long and lovingly about the outdoor courts at Bloomingdale.

The NPA season usually ends in April with the national doubles tournament.

But Negrete and Bloomingdale hosted several mid-summer, one-day, outdoor, three-wall tourneys which drew players from Michigan, Wisconsin and Illinois -- and a few other places.

Referring to the 2005 event, Jim Owens of Ann Arbor, Mich., said:



"You might call it the Dennis Negrete-runs-the-whole-show tournament. Crafty Negrete in consultation with Russ, Tony and others tampers with some of the NPA rules as well.

"Fundamentally, in addition to being held outdoors, the courts do not have back walls. Imagine how this changes the game."

Preliminary rounds, which started at 10 a.m. and lasted to maybe 7 p.m. or so, saw each team playing each of the others a game up to 11 points with no allowable faults.

Negrete paired up the players and, Owens said, the teams were consistently competitive "and everyone seemed to have a good time."

Owens said the regular tourney ended about 1:30 the next morning. There was tasty food and good beer available during the event.

John Lowman of Owosso, Mich., said: "What is so great about this event? Well, besides the 15-20 games that you play in the course of 12-14 hours in the heat and humidity of July, it's the participants."

"**The group** of men and women who play in this tournament year after year are worth the drive to hang out with for the day.

"This grab-bag event produces a new partner every year and lots of laughs."

The Bloomingdale club hosted the NPA National Doubles in 2002 and 2004.

Negrete said the club hosted "about a dozen tournaments," which includes the cookouts. The latter were called the Seasonal Concepts Annual Outdoor Paddleball Tournament.

Asked how long he had been playing paddleball, Negrete said: "Not long enough."

Actually he got into it about 10 years ago, he said. He also has played racquetball but said he enjoys PB more "because you get a better work-out."

Negrete won the NPA national seniors singles championships in 2003 and 2004.



Christian Remmo, 9, of Essexville, a fourth-grader at Hughes Elementary School in Bay City, appears to be catching up on his homework at the Bean-Smith Tournament.

Bean-Smith draws 20 doubles teams

Bay City, Mich. -- Twenty doubles teams from throughout the state competed in the 32nd annual Bean-Smith Paddleball Tournament at the Bay Area Family Y on Feb. 7, 2009.

Brandon Creamer and Ron Malecki won the open division title over Randy Wackerle and Paul Chritz, grabbing a third-game tiebreaker, 21-10.

The B championship was won by Rich Rahall and Steve Roe, who topped Sean Herrera and Scott Carmona, 18-21, 21-16, 21-10.

The C title was captured by Todd Carr and his son, Bryan, over Natalie Gilbert and Karl Briggs, 21-10, 21-14.

Leon Sirrine and Fred Herner took the golden masters crown with a 21-14, 21-10 victory over the C team of Mike Sheeran and Tim Hilk.

B consolation winners were Kerry Snow and Don Kitson.

Tourney sponsors were Barney's Bar & Grill, Green Hut and Bell Bar.

2009 National Singles

Old IM Building U. of M., Ann Arbor, Mich.
March 13, 14, 15

OPEN: 1st, Cesar Carrillo; 2nd, Mike Wisniewski; 3rd, Kevin McLaughlin. Consolation: Shahebaz Malik.

MEN'S A: 1st, Kevin McLaughlin; 2nd, Joe Baldori; 3rd, Jeremy Wheaton.

MEN'S B: 1st, David Fleetwood; 2nd, Nathan Martin; 3rd, Casey Baker. Consolation: Jamie Lawson.

MEN'S C: 1st, Rick Clewis; 2nd, Joe Pomathy; 3rd, James Reid II. Consolation: Paul Sylvester.

SENIORS: 1st, Don Kirkconnell; 2nd, Robert Stone.

MASTERS: 1st, Andy Mitchell; 2nd, Doug Hartung.

GOLDEN MASTERS: 1st, Dan McLaughlin; 2nd, Jim Owens; 3rd, Lynn Vermeulen.

PLATINUM MASTERS: 1st, Jer Fennell; 2nd, Basil Baker; 3rd, Don Traxler. Consolation: Jeff Duncan.

2009 Midwest Doubles

Michigan Athletic Club, E. Lansing, Mich.
February 20, 21, 22

OPEN: Andy Mitchell-Don Kirkconnell def. Jim Swendris-Jim Sterken, 21-10, 21-20. Jim Owens-Shahebaz Malik took third.

MEN'S A: Ron Malecki-Brandon Creamer def. Ted Wray-Robert Stone, 21-11, 21-9. Jim Swendris-Joe Baldori took third. Consolation: Rick Clewis-Shahebaz Malik.

MEN'S B: Ed Maher-Jeremy Wheaton def. Joe Baldori-Sam Baldori, 21-5, 21-15. Tony Mogel-Lynn Vermeulen took third.

Consolation: Preston Martin-Ron Harris.
MEN'S C: Bill Peak-Ken Polidan def. Ron Harris-Eugene Rush, 20-21, 21-17, 21-16. Don Traxler-Dave Coffey took third. Consolation: Jim Schorr-Ron Cunningham.

SENIORS: Chad Krager-Mike Wisniewski def. Norm Bruemmer-Don Kirkconnell.

MASTERS: Ed Maher-Andy Mitchell def. Randy Wackerle-Mike Wisniewski.

GOLDEN MASTERS: Jim Owens-Ron Malecki def. Brad Ex-Ted Ruble.

MIXED DOUBLES: Sonny Salazar-Dawn Goetz def. Skip Freysinger-Chris Todd.

Addendum

Catching up on the results of the Fall Doubles at the Forest View Racquet Club in Arlington Heights, Ill.:

Jim Owens and Jim Swendris defeated Sonny Salazar and Doug Hartung, 21-11, 21-13, for third place in the Men's A division.

Paddleballs
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son, Mich., 49203
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Hatt at (517) 784-
1861.



Gilbert

PADDLEBALL PROFILE

Natalie Gilbert has taken on paddleball to go with her other sport -- racquetball.

Gilbert, 43, of Saginaw, Mich., just got into PB last year.

A freelance court reporter-stenographer, she has been playing the OTHER game since she was 16.

"Two friends were playing (paddleball)," she said. "I joined them and I loved it. It has made my racquetball game better."

What does she enjoy about paddleball?

"The quickness," she said. "Small group. Quick friends. Burns tons of calories."

In her brief PB career, she has finished second in two tournaments.

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