

# NPA

(INDOOR / FOUR-WALL)

**National Paddleball Association**

WWW.PADDLEBALL.ORG

NPA, 7642 Kingston, Portage, Mich. 49002

NEWSLETTER / WINTER 2007-2008

## Steve Keeley and the Money Man

Paddleballer Steve Keeley is mentioned in the October 15, 2007, edition of *The New Yorker* magazine in a lengthy article on Victor Niederhoffer, a high-profile professional investor.

Keeley has been a friend of Niederhoffer since the mid-1970s.

In 1999, Keeley was asked to name the best players he either saw or played in his paddleball career.

Most of the names -- eight in all -- were familiar to most paddleballers -- except for Niederhoffer.

Keeley had a three-way tie for the best-ever paddleballers.

It included Niederhoffer, Paul Lawrence and Steve Keeley, who won five national open singles championships and two national open doubles titles.

Keeley said he first met Niederhoffer at the 1973 national racquetball tournament in St. Louis.

Niederhoffer is a former national squash champion.

"He had jetted first class and I had ridden a bicycle from San Diego," Keeley wrote in an E-mail.

"The speculator and the hobo over the next 25 years converged on a sports, business and intellectual relationship that flew to a head in *New Yorker's* October 15, 2007: 'THE BLOW-UP ARTIST.'"

It told of Niederhoffer losing all his clients' money -- and a good deal of his own -- in the Thai stock market crash of 1997.

See KEELEY -- Page 2



If you have any old paddles like this one around, donate them to some up and coming paddleballer.

## Donate your old paddles

Paddleballers: You can help expand the sphere of our sport by donating your old paddles to newcomers.

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

"We have had quite a bit of interest lately from new groups of PBallers starting up around the U.S.," said Lorri Brigham, secretary-treasurer of the NPA.

"We would like to be able to supply these start-ups with paddles and balls."

Brigham said that "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."

Brigham said players who want to donate old paddles should contact their representative on the NPA Board of Managers, take them to the next tournament or contact Brigham at [lbrigham@yahoo.com](mailto:lbrigham@yahoo.com)

"Also, if you know 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," Brigham said.

## Pballer has serious scare

See Page 3 for details on Jim Swendris's close call in the Fall.

## KEELEY

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Keeley said Niederhoffer hired "me for diverse business ventures throughout the USA, Europe and Southeast Asia.

"It was Fall, 1996 that I flew from JFK to the first of 13 emerging markets, including Egypt, Sri Lanka, India, Philippines, Korea, Turkey and Thailand," Keeley said.

"... I visited their national stock exchanges, brokers, banks and government dignitaries, and then typed and overnighted reports on the Low Life indicators and conventional indices for potential investments before flying on to the next country."

The New Yorker article said Keeley "believed that assessing a developing country's economic prospects involved not only meeting with the CEOs of leading companies but studying the lengths of discarded cigarettes -- the theory being that the wealthier people are, the longer their butts -- and the state of the brothels."

Keeley said "the Turkey report raked millions daily for weeks, but my final stop in Thailand sadly precipitated Niederhoffer's 'Black Day' of October 27, 1997.

"Victor is reported to have lost his entire \$130 million portfolio in the Thai stock market crash."

By that time, Keeley was back to his adventures in Florida, Colorado, Baja California and Death Valley: "It was just time to delve into nature."

Keeley, who lives in Blythe, California, said he stayed at Niederhoffer's home in the 1970s and 1980s and "there were extreme racquet fests.

"Though he never played indoor paddleball, my favorite sport, he is by my historic tally the third-ranked player, such is his overall prowess."

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE N.P.A.

By JIM OWENS

At the 2007 summer meeting, the board of managers discussed the need to raise more money than we typically do in a paddleball season without raising entry fees significantly. We usually just raise enough money to cover expenses. Actually, this past season the NPA fell a little short.

On the other hand, most of us on the board see a need to spend more time and money promoting paddleball. Charlie Brumfield spoke of the need to find a big money contributor.

Whereas this would be nice, I feel those of us who have benefited so much from this fine sport and are able might make helpful contributions beyond our entry fees.

This summer, I made a modest contribution to the organization and plan to do so annually. Jim Sterken, a long-time player from Ann Arbor and Caprice Behner, a former multiple women's open national champion and southwestern Michigan resident -- without any encouragement, each made a generous contribution this fall.

If you are inclined to make a contribution, please mail a check, made out to the National Paddleball Association, directly to NPA, 7642 Kingston, Portage, MI 49002.

Please note any special areas where you would like to see your contribution applied. Some possibilities: promoting paddleball, helping to cover our tournament manager's expenses (Lorri usually pays her own way to tournaments and does not charge us for all the time and effort she puts forth), and general NPA expenses.

## 25th anniversary

It was 25 years ago in the summer of 1982 that a permanent paddleball display was established at the Old IM Building at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

Photos and memorabilia are on exhibit in the large glass case near the courts in the building where the sport began more than 75 years ago.

The late Earl Risky, a former president of the NPA, founded the game in 1930.

The display includes photos of the national champions, winners of the Earl Risky Memorial Trophy, the Sportsmanship Trophy, old paddles, old balls and many photos of players over the years.

# PBaller has serious scare

By LOU GIAMPETRONI

Paddleballer Jim

Swendris probably will be sitting out much of the 2007-2008 NPA season.

Swendris, 54, of Ann Arbor, Mich., underwent emergency surgery after his esophagus was lacerated during an outpatient procedure in early October.

Swendris, a CPA and finance director at Domino's Pizza International, has acid reflux and takes Prilosec.

The procedure is called esophageal dilatation. It's used to stretch and straighten the esophagus.

"I have had it done before with no complications," Swendris said. "Well, the procedure went bad" this time and his esophagus was torn in a few places.

"The next thing I knew I was in an ambulance to U. of M. Hospital and they were trying to determine how to repair me," he said. "Since I was in good health (due to paddleball), they did this major surgery called an esophagectomy.

"They trim the bad parts of your esophagus out, pull your stomach up and connect it with your newly-shortened esophagus."

Swendris said "We were lucky in that the surgeon on call was Dr. Mark Orringer who invented this surgery at U. of M. He is the 'Wiz' of surgeons.

"I had some problems with liver functions and fluid in my right lung after the 7-hour surgery but all that has cleared up," he said. "I spent the next three weeks in the ICU recovering" before he was able to go home.

"The doctors think that my esophagus had just been weakening over time and finally burst. It may have been a blessing in disguise."

Swendris said "The good news to all this is that the surgeon guaranteed I will have a backhand when I return in 2008 ... So watch out ... Many thanks to everyone for the nice cards and prayers ... See you on the courts soon."



**Swendris**

Swendris began playing paddleball when he was a student at the U. of M. in 1972-76 and got into it in a roundabout way. He had played competitive table tennis in high school in Detroit and eventually went to Michigan on an Evans Scholarship.

"This is the scholarship that sends needy (golf) caddies to college," Swendris said.

"I was the house champion in table tennis so when paddleball came up as an intramural sport our athletic director said they were the same thing so I got drafted into playing.

"I got killed and couldn't lift my arm for a week but I liked the game."

Swendris said he has played PB for about 30 years, except for a transfer in 1980-83 to Australia.

Swendris, who plays with a brace on his right knee, said:

"Paddleball is a great combination sport with golf -- golf in the Summer and Fall and paddleball in the Winter and Spring. It is a great game combined with good people. I enjoy watching a good match as much as playing one."

**Jim Swendris, the NPA Sportsmanship Trophy recipient in 1980, was once asked in a questionnaire to list any titles or high finishes in his PB career.**

**He responded by writing: "Finalist a few times in a few divisions."**

**Well, he got to four national doubles finals but had the misfortune to meet probably the best team ever in Andy Mitchell and Andy Kasalo.**

**Swendris and his partner lost in all four.**

**But he did win the national seniors doubles finals in 1998 and 2002 with Jim Sterken, and the national masters doubles championships with Sterken in 2002 and 2006.**

**Swendris also won the national golden masters title with Sterken in 2006.**

**Not bad for a guy who was a "finalist a few times in a few divisions."**



# NATIONAL PADDLEBALL ASSOCIATION

## 2008 MIDWEST SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS

### JANUARY 19<sup>TH</sup> & 20<sup>TH</sup>

**SITE: UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN / ANN ARBOR, MI / OLD IM BUILDING.**

**FEE:** NPA MEMBERS -\$35.00 PER PERSON / NON-MEMBERS \$45. 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 2<sup>ND</sup> DIVISION: MEMBER \$22 /NON-MEMBER \$27 PER PLAYER. CHECKS TO: N.P.A. OR PAY ONLINE THROUGH THE WEBSITE.

**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 14<sup>TH</sup>. MAIL ENTRY TO:**  
**N.P.A. ~ 7642 KINGSTON ~ PORTAGE MI 49002 / FAX TO (269) 279-6275**  
**ENTER & PAY 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 ALL ON TIME ENTRANTS. (WILL BE POSTED ON WEB)

**TIMES:** CALL (269) 323-0121 AFTER 6:30 PM ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16TH  
 OR CHECK THE WEBSITE AT PADDLEBALL.ORG FOR TIMES & PLAYERS

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

**HOTELS:** BEST VALUE INN (734) 665-3500 / FAIRFIELD INN (734) 995-5200 /  
 SHERATON (734) 996-0600 / HOLIDAY INN (734) 761-2929 / COMFORT INN  
 (734) 761-8838

**DIVISION:** MENS \_\_\_\_ WOMENS \_\_\_\_ MIXED \_\_\_\_ / OPEN \_\_\_\_ A \_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_  
**NOVICE \_\_\_\_ SENIORS (35+) \_\_\_\_ MASTERS (45+) \_\_\_\_ GOLD MASTERS (55+) \_\_\_\_**  
**PLATINUM MASTERS (65+) JUNIORS A (TO 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE) \_\_\_\_ JUNIORS B (8<sup>TH</sup> - SNR) \_\_\_\_**

NAME:	
ADDRESS:	CITY: STATE:
DAY PHONE: ( )	EVENING PHONE
CHECK HERE IF THIS IS A 2 <sup>ND</sup> DIV	CHECK HERE IF THIS IS A 2 <sup>ND</sup> DIV
IF PLAY CUT TO 1 DIV IS THIS 1 <sup>ST</sup> CHOICE?	IF PLAY CUT TO 1 DIV IS THIS 1 <sup>ST</sup> CHOICE?

## 2007 FALL DOUBLES RESULTS

Midland (Mich.)

**OPEN:** 1st, Mike Wisniewski-Chad Krager; 2nd, Andy Mitchell-Don Kirkconnell.

**MEN'S A:** 1st, Chad Krager-Brandon Creamer; 2nd, Robert Stone-Ted Wray.

**MEN'S B:** 1st, Richard Rahall-Greg Keenan; 2nd, Ed Maher-Jeremy Wheaton; 3rd, Ron Malecki-Chris Malecki. Consolation: Jack Fisher-Frank Fernandez.

**MEN'S C:** 1st, Terry Kennedy-Greg Keenan; 2nd, Randy Allar-Dick Brouwer.

**SENIORS:** 1st, Ed Maher-Don Kirkconnell; 2nd, Robert Stone-Ted Wray.

**MASTERS:** 1st, Ron Malecki-Mike Schafer; 2nd, John Lowman-Randy Hoyle.

**GOLDEN MASTERS:** 1st, Brad Douglas-Bill Lott; 2nd, Preston Martin-Rick Clewis.



You know those little thingys that hold your glasses on while you're sweating up a storm on the paddleball court?

The ones where you put the ends of your glasses into the little loops?

Well, right off the bat when I started playing PB years ago, I knew I would need some.

I happened to stop by a store that sold fire-damaged merchandise and I saw a box full

of them. This was about the mid-1970s.

They cost almost \$2 each new and these merely had a little dirt on the packages.

And they cost 29 cents each!!

Well, never one to pass up a bargain, I purchased 30 of them.

When I got home, I couldn't wait to tell my wife, Sue, about my great buy.

She asked how long each one lasts and I said, depending on how careful one is, they could last two-three years.

She did some quick math in her head and declared: "YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LIVE THAT LONG!"

I still have a few of them. Mostly, I lost them rather than wore them out.

But they sure are useful.

They've helped me to a tournament record of about 50 wins and 500 losses.

-- LOU GIAMPETRONI



**Stiff and sore and glad all over.**

**PADDLEBALL**

*Happy Holidays!*

## Malecki wants help from everyone to get bigger tourney fields

Ron Malecki wants a little more help from everyone to assure that paddleballers know about tournaments and, more importantly, that they participate in them.

He is a member of the NPA Board of Managers.

Malecki, of Midland, Mich., is instrumental in staging tournaments at the Midland Community Center. He was upset about the number of entries for the Fall Doubles there in early November.

"I'm looking over the entries for the Fall Doubles this morning (Tuesday before the tourney) and can't help but be disappointed over the lack of participation," he wrote in an E-mail to NPA board members.

"Certainly pretty bummed over the fact that our Midlanders haven't populated the divisions in the tourney as they have in years past."

The situation "has prompted me to throw out some suggestions that may help in future tourneys."

"What if we put together committees responsible for each division. Get folks like (Lou) Giampetroni and (Don) Traxler to head up the Platinum Masters division and try to solicit teams to play in that division for each tourney, for example."

"We could do this for each division so that each committee is seeking players for the division they are responsible for."

"I believe that we talked about putting together a survey to help understand why people aren't playing in tournaments anymore. I don't know what the status of this is but am willing to help pull it together."

Malecki said that "Maybe our board needs



Malecki

some new blood with new/fresh ideas, even if it means keeping our core of board members and allowing new players to participate and rotate in, or whatever."

He said all players should have the attitude of getting players from their own club or area to play in tournaments.

"Okay, enough said," Malecki added. "Hopefully, this is some food for thought. Time to get ready for work."

There were 49 doubles teams in the Midland tournament.

## Need an official? Ask for one at tournament desk

For a variety of reasons, the old NPA tradition of providing officials for every tournament match has fallen by the wayside.

Since then, there have been complaints about players taking advantage of situations that turn easy shots for opponents into blocks by their foes -- and the necessity to call a hinder.

Generally speaking, most tournament players play by the rules and demonstrate sportsmanship.

As a matter of fact, NPA officials are very proud of that fact and talk about it being one of the good features of paddleball.

However, if you run into such a situation and believe an opponent is taking away your shot or blocking -- go to the tournament desk and ask for an official to be assigned to your match.

Better yet, analyze your style of play and determine whether you are one of the "blockers" and change your style.

It's only fair to everyone involved.

-- LOU GIAMPETRONI

### NPA

2007-08

### SCHEDULE

**MIDWEST SINGLES:** January 19, 20, 2008, Old IM Building, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

**MIDWEST DOUBLES:** February 23, 24, 2008, Forest View Racquet Club, Arlington Heights, Illinois, a northwest suburb of Chicago.

**NATIONAL SINGLES:** March 7, 8, 9, 2008, Sorrento Valley Racquet Club, San Diego, Calif.

**NATIONAL DOUBLES:** To be announced.

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



**Carr**

## **Paddleball Profile**

Todd Carr likes the positive qualities of paddleballers.

Carr, of Midland, Mich., when asked what he enjoyed about the sport, said:

"The competition and friendship that everyone displays wherever you play the game."

Carr, a retired electrician at Saginaw Delphi, began playing PB in the early 1970s when he joined a league at the Community Center.

Like many paddleballers, he doesn't have many trophies but he once was a runnerup in Men's C.

And, like a lot of PBers, he doesn't have any suggestions on how to improve tournaments.

That's a positive.

**NPA**  
**7642 Kingston**  
**Portage, Mich. 49002**

**National Paddleball Association Newsletter**