

NPA

(INDOOR / FOUR-WALL)

National Paddleball Association

WWW.PADDLEBALL.ORG

NPA, 7642 Kingston, Portage, Mich. 49002

NEWSLETTER / WINTER 2006-2007

Happy Holidays



We know it's a little late but what the heck, if you play your cards right, every day can be happy and each day can be a holiday. (No charge for that bit of wisdom.)

**Have
you
hugged
your
paddle
today?**



NPA schedule

MIDWEST DOUBLES:
Feb. 16, 17, 18, 2007,
Midland (Mich.) Commu-
nity Center.
NATIONAL SINGLES:
March 16, 17, 18,
2007, Michigan Athletic
Club, E. Lansing, Mich.
NATIONAL DOUBLES:
April 20, 21, 22, 2007,
Tournament House,
Riverside, Calif.

Caprice's knee lets her down

By LOU GIAMPETRONI

There have been several paddleballers who established themselves over the years ... and then pretty much disappeared from the tournament scene.

Caprice Behner is one of them.

Behner, of New Buffalo, Mich., has to rank among the top three women players in the history of the sport.

She won nine national women's open singles championships and two national women's open doubles crowns.

And the amazing thing is that she accomplished these feats over an extended period of more than 20 years -- from the late 1970s to the late 1990s.

Like many athletes, she was felled by a knee injury -- in her case, while windsurfing.

Please see CAPRICE, Page 2



Eleven-time national champion Caprice Behner

CAPRICE

Continued from Page 1

How did she start playing paddleball?

"Well, I was in Sherman gym at Michigan Tech University and looked down through this window and saw this ball bouncing off four walls," she said.

"I thought, 'What a cool game.'"

It was racquetball and she gave it a try. However, she got whacked "on the backside" by a racquet and cracked her tailbone.

"I proclaimed I would never get into a court like that again," she said. But a friend said she might like paddleball better.

"Now that was love at first play," she declared.

She got a teaching job in Plainwell and started playing PB at the Kalamazoo YMCA.

"What a wonderful group all those guys were to allow me on the court with them" she said.

She reached the final of the State Singles Tournament in 1976 "and Judy Shirley ran me all over the court" and took a big lead but Caprice was able to come back and win the match.

"There were some really nice draws in those days and it seemed like the trophy (national) rotated around quite a bit," Caprice said.



Caprice: circa 1990

"So it sure was fun playing all those years. But I think that you meet so many nice people from so many nice towns in Michigan."

When she moved to Illinois, she said, "It was really hard to get ready for a tournament ... I had to give a paddle to practically everyone I played."

She got a job at the Wheaton, Ill., Sport Center and Marty Hogan was scheduled to play a racquetball exhibition there in 1984.

Caprice ended up playing Hogan in what was scheduled to be an 11-point paddles game, because she said she wouldn't have a chance against him with racquets. "I'll play that," said Hogan, pointing to her paddle.

Because of time constraints, the match was shortened to five points and Caprice won, 5-3.

"Do you think I had the most doubles partners of all time?" she asked. "Betsy Raymond, JoAnne Schafer, played once with Grace Louwsma, Barb Johnson (before Grace quit and Judy Shirley snapped her up), Yvonne Hackenbherg (fastest hands on a woman I have ever seen in my life, and most severe overhead pinch), Gloria Lang, Joan Azeka.

"And then there was Terry Smith ... There was no way anyone was going to beat Carla and Anna or Barb and Judy, but I think we did it once.

"I was shocked when Terry tore her ACL and didn't realize how a knee could buckle like that until I did it.

"Here, Terry and I were in the (National Singles) final in 1998 and I felt really good ... Thought I would play another 10 years but jumped off that windsurfing board going full tilt to save the fin on a reef ... so the old leg bent backwards from getting pulled over the board and not getting out of the harness in time."



FOR AL STOREY ON HIS 85TH BIRTHDAY JUNE 15, 2006 ... HE PERSONIFIES WHAT THE GREAT SPORT OF INDOOR, FOUR-WALL PADDLEBALL IS ALL ABOUT.

-- From the National Paddleball Association



PBers: A hit on the Web page is worth it

Hey, folks, if you want to know a lot about things paddleball, then it's time you started using the sport's Web page.

There's a bunch of stuff on it that will help you keep up with our great sport.

You can submit any questions, concerns, suggestions, etc. to the NPA Board of Managers through the Website.

Just E-mail to the Webmaster at www.paddleball.org

It all gets forwarded to the board secretary or you can write to NPA, 7642 Kingston, Portage, Mich., 49002.

Some recent changes to the Website:

- *You can post a message if you are looking for a partner for a tournament.

- *You can check for tourney starting times. Just go to the participant list and the times will be posted after 4 p.m. the Wednesday before a tournament.

- *We want local news. When you have an area tourney, let the Webmaster know. By posting news of local events, we will increase the number of participants.

Also, if you choose to receive the newsletter via E-mail, you will get it several days sooner than by regular mail.

And most of the photos will be in color.

You can notify the Webmaster by E-mail if you want it sent via E-mail.

The Website also has membership applications, NPA rules, newsletters, lists of national champions and local information on projects such as Team Paddleball.

It also provides schedules, entry forms and on-line payment for entering a tournament.

Ed Maher of Benton Harbor, Mich., is the Webmaster.

He started the Web page about 10 years ago.

"My best guess is that it started in the fall of 1996," he said. "The Website currently gets well over 1,000 hits per month. We have had 16,000 hits in the past 12 months."

Information is funneled to him and converted into Web pages "and then I upload them to the Website," he said. "I am also willing to post info related to any paddleball events that I am made aware of."

For example, he said, Jim Owns is supplying him with information on Team Paddleball, a new concept that apparently is having some success as the season started.

So get on the ball and use the Web page. It's there; might as well use it.

-- LOU GIAMPETRONI

**The day
Napoleon
lost in a
tiebreaker.**



Corrections ...

Had a couple of minor errors in last NPA newsletter so we would like to make corrections.

Walter (Jack) Hancock, 81, who plays a lot of paddleball and gives flying lessons to people in the Flint, Mich., area, is from Holly, Mich., not Grand Blanc, Mich.

Some of the newsletters had it right; others had it wrong.

And Lou Giampetroni did not have lymphatic cancer in 1972. It was 2002. (Don't know how I missed that one.)

Some of the newsletters had it right; others had it wrong.

Just to keep the record straight.

NATIONAL PADDLEBALL ASSOCIATION

2007 MIDWEST DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIPS

FEBRUARY 16TH ~ 18TH

SITE: MIDLAND COMMUNITY CENTER. 2001 GEORGE ST
MIDLAND, MICHIGAN 48640. (989) 832-7937

FEE: NPA MEMBERS -\$70.00 PER TEAM / NON-MEMBERS \$90 PER TEAM.
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. 2ND DIV: MEMBER \$22 /NON-MEMBER \$27 PER PLAYER. **CHECKS TO: N.P.A.**
MEMBERSHIP: ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE IS \$25. YOU MAY JOIN ON-LINE, AT TOURNAMENT SITE OR MAIL A CHECK TO ADDRESS UNDER "DEADLINE"

DEADLINE: SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11TH 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**

RULES: NPA RULES APPLY. INDICATE ALTERNATE DIVISION ON ENTRY BLANK OR 1 MAY BE ASSIGNED TO YOU IF YOUR 1ST 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 1ST CHOICE OF DIV. ENTRY IS SUBJECT TO TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS DISCRETION.

GIFT: T-SHIRTS TO ALL ON TIME ENTRANTS.

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

MISC: BRING YOUR OWN LOCK. NO ALCOHOL.

HOTELS: FAIRVIEW INN / 2200 W WACKERLY ST / MIDLAND MI 48642 (989) 631-0700

DIVISION: MENS ____ WOMENS ____ MIXED ____ / OPEN ____ A ____ B ____ C ____
NOVICE ____ **SENIORS (35+)** ____ **MASTERS (45+)** ____ **GOLD MASTERS (55+)** ____
PLATINUM MASTERS (65+) JRS A (TO 7TH GRADE) ____ JRS B (8TH – SNR) ____

NAME:	NAME:
ADDRESS:	ADDRESS:
DAY PHONE: ()	DAY PHONE: ()
EVENING PHONE: ()	EVENING PHONE: ()
CHECK HERE IF THIS IS A 2 ND DIV	CHECK HERE IF THIS IS A 2 ND DIV
IF PLAY CUT TO 1 DIV IS THIS 1 ST CHOICE?	IF PLAY CUT TO 1 DIV IS THIS 1 ST CHOICE?
T-SHIRT (M/LG/XL/XXL)	T-SHIRT (M/LG/XL/XXL)
NOTES:	

TEAM PADDLEBALL

(Editor's Note: Something new has been added to the paddleball picture. It's called Team Paddleball and it started out this year on a modest platform, with the hope that bigger and better things will happen with it in the future.

Progress and results of the matches between players from six areas are recorded on the paddleball Web page (www.paddleball.org)

While there are several key players involved, Jim Owens of Ann Arbor, Mich., generally is considered the spokesman for the project. This article was written by Owens.)

Over the years, I have heard a lot of talk about how players needed to play different people prior to NPA Tournaments to get tournament-ready.

I've listened to paddleball players complain about playing the same people all the time. Team Paddleball might provide an avenue to address these and other issues.

Team Paddleball officially debuted in southern and central Michigan this past fall. We started on a small scale, naming just six teams.

The teams include Kalamazoo, Bay City, Midland/Lansing, Flint/Schoolcraft/Waterford, Adrian/Jackson, and Ann Arbor. Round robin-formatted matches are scheduled on a monthly basis at three separate locations in southern and central Michigan.

After each team has played all the other teams, there will be a tournament. Tournament details have not been finalized as yet.

Each set of monthly matches consists of two doubles teams, and a pair of singles players. Team captains are encouraged to set up additional exhibition matches.

Eddie Maher has established a team paddleball page and posts the scores and standings on the Web site after each round. Eddie has also provided a means to note questions, ideas, complaints, and inquiries regarding Team Paddleball.

My original set of concepts got scaled down considerably at a decision meeting (last) summer. The consensus was to start off small and then grow if the desire and/or demand is there. I think we are off to a good start.

To date, Team Paddleball has provided us with several exciting matches. Those involved seem to view it very positively. The next question is: Should we expand?

There are several possibilities: We could simply add more teams to the developing format. We could add specific categories in order to provide matches for a broader spectrum of players. We could establish additional leagues targeting particular groups of players.

2006 FALL DOUBLES RESULTS

(M.A.C. -- E. Lansing, MI)

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

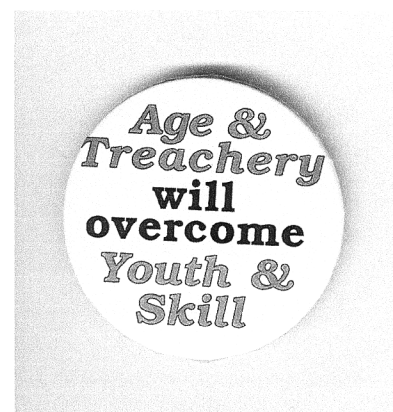
MEN'S A: 1st, Don Kirkconnell-Chad Krager; 2nd, Brandon Creamer-John Lowman.

MEN'S B: 1st, Paul Chritz-Greg Keenan; 2nd, Eugene Rush-Rick Clewis. Consolation: Steve Fiddie-Mike Fiddie.

MEN'S C: 1st, Steve Fiddie-Mike Fiddie; 2nd, Jim Howland-Skip Freysinger.

MASTERS: 1st, Mike Wisniewski-Andy Mitchell; 2nd, Jim Sterken-Jim Swendris.

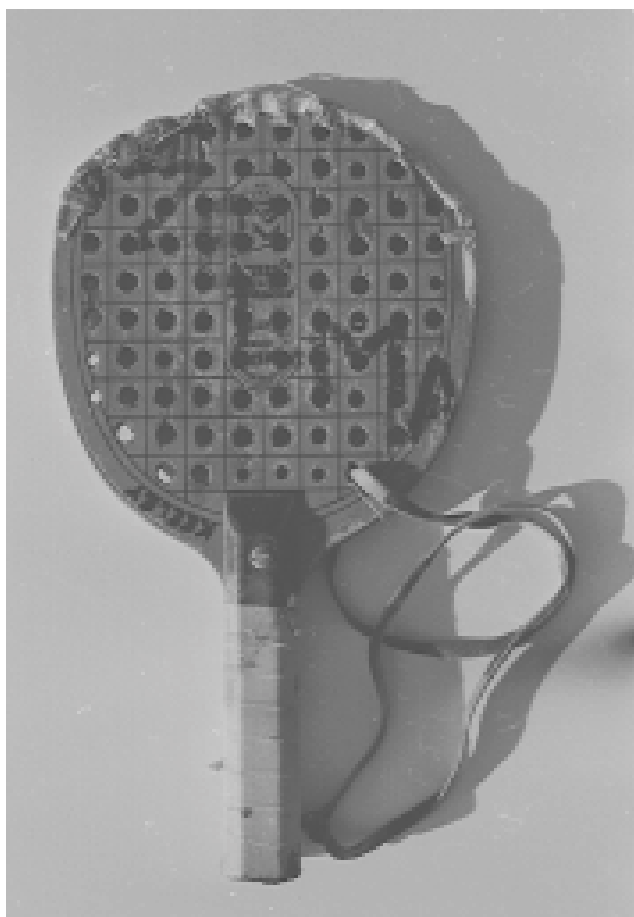
GOLDEN MASTERS: 1st, Randy Wackerle-Sandy DeGreif; 2nd, Brad Douglas-Bill Lott.



Listen Up

"If 'frequent flyer' miles were awarded for viewing television football games, many of my senior friends could spend their next life strapped into a 747 bucket seat on a continual and eternal journey."

-- Handballer Norman E. Bullock, Lapeer, MI



Paddles come in all shapes and sizes. Perhaps the most famous is the top left one, used by Steve Keeley to win most of his national championships in the 1970s. As the wood chipped off the top, he would lace shoe strings through the holes and put tape over the edge. “Zelma” is now in the PB “hall of fame” at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Top right is perhaps the largest paddle in history, made by Randy Wackerle in the mid-1970s for promotional use. It is 46 inches long, 22 inches wide and weighs 8 pounds. At right is one of the first paddles ever made exclusively for PB use. It also is at the U. of M.



This perhaps is the heaviest usable paddle ever made. It is the Marcraft Corp. PT-50 and felt like it weighed five pounds. No holes! It really was a war club.



Probably the most widely-used paddle before the advent of the modern paddles was the Pitcher Paddle, first offered by Marcraft and now by The Paddle Company.

PBaller Valenciano was a movie star -- after a fashion

By LOU GIAMPETRONI

The late R.P. Valenciano used to say "You gotta laugh ... If you don't, you're gonna cry."

And he -- and a large contingent of the Flint, Mich., YMCA paddleball group -- used to do just that. We laughed a lot.

In the late 1970s, I made a film with the cooperation of Valenciano -- who died in April 2003 -- and I looked at it recently.

It contained some funny sketches but the quality of the actual film left something to be desired. I didn't have any photographic equipment to smooth out the transitions from one sketch to the next.

Most of the film was shot in the Y courts.

It shows Val playing in the Flint Y courts in his street clothes (a tweedy, heavy suit) and gym shoes, an aqua lung and flippers, a serape and sombrero (when playing John Ortiz), a football helmet, shoulder pads and hip pads (when playing Barry Lucas), two pails of make-believe sand with his paddle between his knees (he actually hopped around and hit the ball once!).

It also shows Val leaving the Y in his sweats and ostensibly heading out to do some road work. He arrives at the White Horse Tavern, goes inside and later comes out weaving (he was pretending). Dick Sutcliffe is seen carrying Val piggy-back along the sidewalk (more road work but for whom?).

Then Val runs around the tavern -- alone. When he comes around the next time, he is accompanied by a young lady who is running alongside Val. When he circles the third time, he is shown with two young ladies running with him. On the fourth circuit, he is flanked by three young women running.

Back at the Y, Val faces two young players in a court. He is carrying an umbrella, running around chairs and a waste basket (all a la Bobby Riggs vs. Billie Jean King).

He received an award for winning the 1978 NPA national singles championship. In his usual humble style, he showed up in a Y court wearing a crown and a T-shirt that said "International Filipino Paddleball Champion."

As the film progressed, Val would call me from work and suggest sketches for it.

"How about we do this, or possibly that," he said.

Some of his ideas were good and are in the film.

Another scene shows Val in a court wearing a long overcoat and he's playing someone. As the player would turn around to go for the ball, Val would flash him by opening it as the guy ran by.

On another occasion, Val and two other players are au naturel and sitting on diapers in a court. Another player -- clothed -- pours water on the diapers. They were copying a TV commercial popular at the time on the effectiveness of a particular diaper.

I also convinced him to take off his shorts (it was the time of the streakers) and I filmed him from the balcony as he hit the ball.

All in all, it was a fun time and making the movie was enjoyable.

We all laughed a lot, especially Val.



Paddleballs

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



Rush

Paddleball Profile

What happens to a racquetballer when most of his companions switch to paddleball?

He switches also.

That's what happened to H. Eugene Rush, who switched from RB to PB in 1992.

Rush, of Ypsilanti, Mich., is a Washtenaw County sheriff's deputy.

Rush, who won a Men's C doubles crown with Dan Snedecor a few years ago, says he enjoys "the pace and the strategy of the game the most."

Improvements for tournaments?

"Pick locations where people can sit down and watch the matches, but all of the different courts have been fun to play on," he said.

NPA

7642 Kingston

Portage, Mich. 49002

National Paddleball Association Newsletter

