

GELHAUS, ENTRIKIN REPEAT AS NATIONAL DOUBLES CHAMPIONS

Riverside, Calif -- Kelly Gelhaus and Todd Entrikin successfully defended their National Paddleball Association national doubles championship at the Tournament House here on April 22, 2007.

Gelhaus and Entrikin -- both of Riverside -- topped Chris Crowther and Mike Czabala, 21-12, 21-14. Crowther is from Riverside and Czabala is from Ventura, Calif.

Gelhaus and Entrikin defeated Mike Wisniewski, of Bay City, Mich., and Czabala in the 2006 final. It was the fourth straight national doubles title for Gelhaus, who also has won three of the last four national singles crowns. That's seven of the last eight national singles and doubles championships. A rare achievement, indeed.

"I had a game plan that we were able to execute," said Gelhaus. "We played the ball deep and did not let Crowther's power take over and we tried to keep Mike from making so many great gets up front."

Crowther, who is called The Giant, is the 2006 national singles champion and checks in at 6-feet-6 and weighs about 225.

Gelhaus said Entrikin "kept a very level head and played a very smart match. Everyone knows who the fastest guy in the court is, and that is Todd ... (and) Todd can shoot his forehand better than anyone I have seen in paddleball."

Crowther "played a great game," said Gelhaus, "but I think he played a little too much racquetball and the ball is too hard to kill on a consistent basis from the back of the court. I played most of my return of serves right back to him."

Gelhaus said Czabala is "great up front. However, he is not capable of making the same offensive shots from mid- and back court."

Wisniewski, the eight-time national singles champion, said "Todd made some miraculous saves, as did Czabala; but in the end it was Kelly who drove the ball home time after time and kept Mike and Chris off balance."

Czabala said "It was one of the harder-fought matches that I've played in, with outstanding gets and rallies on pretty much every point. It was one of those matches that, even though I lost, I felt like 'Wow, that was some good paddleball.'

"It was actually a very clean game with no easy points and very few unforced errors ... I think everyone was spent and felt like they had been through a battle at the end of the match."

In earlier matches, Gelhaus-Entrikin defeated Bob Pfau-Brian Oates and Greg Badger-Kirk Loveday.

Crowther-Czabala topped Wisniewski-Chad Krager and Vince Carlone-Bryce Cooper in earlier matches. -- LOU GIAMPETRONI