



Southeastern Squash Racquets Association

December/January 2006

Hello SESRA:

First, what's ahead:

Diniar's Calcutta returns to Concourse on January 27 with all the attendant excitement. Kickoff betting night is Tuesday, January 24th. Although slots are dwindling, interested players need to contact Andre Maur at the Concourse Athletic Club.

Mark your calendars for the 25th annual Sandler O'Neill Southeastern Championships will be held February 24-26, 2006, at the Sporting Club at Windy Hill. First round matches will begin Friday the 24th as early as 2:00pm. Semifinals and Finals will be played on Sunday morning, and afternoon respectively. Last matches will commence before 4:00pm Sunday. **DIVISIONS OF PLAY include:** Men's: 2.5, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5, 5.0, 5.5, Open; 40+, 40B, 45+, 50+, 50B, 55+, 60+. Women's: 3.0, 4.0, Open. Juniors': B19, B17, B15; G17, G15; and International Doubles. Racquet fee is \$75; entry deadline is February 17th. Contact pro Tom Rumpler for more info.

Rule and Referee Clinics:

On Saturday, February 4th, SESRA is pleased to sponsor again a rules and referee clinic for its members and non-members. The course is \$5 for SESRA members and \$30 for non-members (or free if non-members join SESRA and attend). This will be a classroom venue and a site is still under discussion. If you are interested, please let your pro (Tom, Andre, or Alladin) know. We will keep them informed of place and time.

This clinic was requested by SESRA players. It is a great idea for all players, from those trying to understand the application of the fundamental concepts to top-level players unraveling the subtleties of the game and readying themselves for the upcoming USSRA National Championships.

We are very lucky to have **Rishad Alikhan** again conducting the clinic, which will last approximately three hours. Rishad is a Certified National Referee, as well as a Certified Referee Instructor and Assessor. He is chairman of the USSRA National Rules and Referee Committee and president of the Houston Squash Racquets Association.

Rishad has refereed at the Pan American Squash Federation Games, the WISPA Texas Open, the Dallas Open, and the US National Championship (S.L. Green Draw). On occasion, he even calls a stroke against his brother.

Participants in the clinic will gain a clearer understanding of the "interference rule" and learn about "minimal interference". They will learn what calls a marker makes, correct terminology, etc. They will know the new rules (not so new any more) covering turning, bleeding, etc. Basically, they will become better referees and better players to referee.

At some point during the clinic, he will give the participants a test, results of which will be sent in to the USSRA. Persons who pass the test will become a "Club Level Referee". In select cases, Rishad may recommend to the USSRA that certain participants leapfrog directly to either "State" or "Regional Level Referee". For anyone who cares about improving their squash, this is time well spent. Hope to see you there!

Atlanta Grand Masters Results:

Under the nurturing of Sporting Club at Windy Hill pro Tom Rumpler, the Merrill Lynch Grand Masters entered its 19th year with 130 entrants turning up in Atlanta December 9-11. Like other perennial tournament favorites, the Grand Masters begins with competition and camaraderie, before proceeding to hoary rivalries, young challengers, and the year's ironmen grinding away in two draws throughout the weekend.

“Because of the depth here, you can play any division you want and bite off as much as you can chew,” explained Dayton’s Mark Brady. An athlete with an appetite for as much exercise as he can get, the 45 year-old Brady returned to Atlanta in his annual stalking of Diniar Alikhan. Playing down to the 30+ division, as did several other top players, Brady took Atlanta local Sandy Draper in straight games and outran tender-hipped squash master Richard Millman, all while playing a parallel draw in the 45s. His weekend capped off with a five-game marathon loss in the 30+ semis to Atlanta pro Andre Maur, who went on to win the division in straight games over ironman Adam Walker.



Walker had played brilliantly through his two draws' 4 matches on Saturday, only to run empty in his 3rd match in 4 hours on Sunday. After a 3-game win over lefty Chris Tham, and an excruciating 5-game finals loss to Floridian Jose Luis Gonzalez in the 5.5s, where travelers outnumbered locals, Walker posed no threat to Maur.

Another ironman was Adrian Cronje, who played 9 matches in 42 hours in the 4.0s and 40B draw's. Cronje's legs, if not his spirit, finally gave out against Charleston's Mike Twiner in the 4.0s.

Like Brady, a number of travelers block off the second weekend after Thanksgiving for the annual stalking of a particular nemesis. For some travelers, the moment of familiarity strikes late in the draw. Massachusetts player Wayne Hodges and Washington's Andy Strasfogel played their way through a thicket of locals in an attempt to meet longtime rival and current 2-time National 65s champion Michael Gough. Hodges won the opportunity but failed to unseat Gough, who played down in the 60s and 55s, losing only one match, to 1st seed and eventual champion Murray Gilman in the 55s semis.

For many, the Atlanta Grand Masters is one of the very last good reasons to look forward to that next round-numbered birthday. Gilman, who turned 55 this year three months ahead of Atlanta pro and rival Alladin Mitha, enjoyed his five-year hiatus from that rivalry and took a four game finals match against returning New Yorker Jeffrey Blomstedt. In the 70s, perennial competitors Syd Ball and Brian Dyson matched shots that date back decades.

In the category of on-going rivalries, Cincinnati's Rob Goering defeated Atlanta's David Bridges in 5 games for the 3rd consecutive year in the 40B's finals. John Mahorner came up with his first tournament win over friend, sponsor & 1st seed Keith Clemens in the 40's semifinals, only to fall short in the finals to professional Edgar Navas.

Arguably the most heroic match award goes to Pat Millman. A five-game winner over local Karen Levine in the semifinals, she met a former top Canadian junior and national team member, Catherine Van Wanderham, in the finals. Giving away many years, and eternally coming from behind, Pat battled back in game after game, overcame a handful of match balls, and finally won the Women's title.



to America"

Maur named to captain U.S. vs. Mexico challenge:

Concourse pro Andre Maur has been asked by the USSRA to be the co-captain of the U.S. Copa Wadsworth Men's Team in its competition next spring in Mexico.

Said Andre, "This is a great honor for me and I hope to make the USSRA and US proud. This is the equivalent like playing the Ryder Cup in golf and I am looking forward to bringing the Cup back

Adil Ismail gets 10th spot in Princeton Open

Atlanta junior Adil Ismail and Coach Andre Maur returned from the Princeton Open two weeks ago where 350 of the best junior players from all over the country played in one of the largest national junior events. At 15, Adil is playing his first year in the under 17s and finished 10th in his age group, a very good showing in preparation for the junior nationals in March. Having played four national events this season he has finished 2nd, 12th, 3rd and 10th.



Williams Juniors Tournament:

By the bye, see the photo from the Atlanta juniors' trip to the Williams College tournament in December. (L to R) Players Derek Rowley, Sawyer Duncan, Keenan Fernandez, and played well in what Coach Tom Rumpler described as a terrific weekend.

Hope this continues to be of interest.

Best,

Bob