

NPA NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL PADDLEBALL ASSOCIATION



Gearbox is now the OFFICIAL ball and paddle of the NPA.

We look forward to partnering with the NPA to create excitement for existing players and to promote long term growth in Paddleball. Gearbox is absolutely committed to the sport of Paddleball and to producing quality equipment for all skill levels. We have designed a ball that has a consistent bounce and is exceptionally durable. Our cutting edge technology and innovative materials have allowed us to create an extraordinary line of paddles. These new paddles will appeal to the traditional Paddleball player and those who are new to the sport.

Please check out our full line of products at www.Gearboxsports.com

Balls can also be purchased through the NPA website at www.npa.paddleball.org

Thank you,

Aaron Embry

YOU CAN PURCHASE PADDLEBALLS AT THE NPA WEBSITE: WWW.PADDLEBALL.ORG

IN THE ANN ARBOR MI AREA THEY CAN BE PURCHASED FROM JIM OWENS—IN THE BAY CITY MI AREA FROM JIM PRICE - IN THE KALAMAZOO AREA FROM LORRI BRIGHAM



2017 NPA PADDLEBALL TOURNAMENTS

**BRIGHAM CLASSIC (DOUBLES) - BAY CITY MI –
JANUARY 21 & 22**

**MIDWEST DOUBLES (INCLUDES GRAB-BAG) –
DAVISON ATHLETIC CLUB – FEBRUARY 4 & 5**

**NATIONAL DOUBLES – RIVERSIDE ATHLETIC CLUB
– MARCH 10TH TO 12TH**

**NATIONAL SINGLES – MICHIGAN ATHLETIC CLUB –
APRIL 21ST TO 23RD**

You will notice a big change in the line-up of tournaments this season. The National Doubles is being played before the National Singles. This was discussed between Midwest and California players and it is believed we will get a significantly larger number of some of the top tier California players to play on these dates. This is just being done on a trial basis and will be reevaluated in the 2018 season.

2017 BRIGHAM CLASSIC

The Brigham Classic will be held at the Bay City YMCA on January 21 & 22, 2017. Divisions offered will be: Skill Divisions Open/A and B/C and Grab-Bag Divisions Open/A and B/C. We will gladly offer to customize age divisions with enough interest. Please contact Chad Kragger at cakrager@yahoo.com or Lorri Brigham at lbrigham@yahoo.com. There is a great new hotel/restaurant complex across from the YMCA. Information to enter the tournament and hotels will be posted on the NPA website (paddleball.org).

DATES FOR SOME LOCAL TOURNAMENTS...

HERB-BEAN MEMORIAL, YMCA BAY CITY MI, APRIL 8TH

WACK ATTACK, YMCA BAY CITY MI, APRIL 29TH

If you have any local tournaments you would like promoted on the NPA website please send the information to Jim Owens at: jmowens2@gmail.com

At the 2016 Board of Managers meeting several changes to rules or formats were made. They are noted below.

Rule Changes

RULE 3.2 THE BALL

The official ball is the Gearbox ball. When dropped from a height of 6 feet, it should rebound approximately 3.5 feet.

RULE 3.3 THE UNIFORM

Players may not play without shirts or shoes while playing in tournaments. Players may not dress in a way that provides an unfair advantage in tournaments.

Breach: A board member may require a player to change clothes or forfeit the match.

Round Robin Format

Each player or team will play a single 21-point game against each of the other players or teams in the division.

Players or teams are then ranked based on the total number of points scored.

If two players or teams tie, the player or team winning the head-to-head game will earn the higher ranking.

If three players or teams tie, a calculation of the points scored and the points scored against the two other players or teams will be conducted. The resulting higher difference will produce the higher ranking.

The first and second highest ranked players or teams will play a best two out of three 21-point games match to determine the championship of the division. In a like manner, the third and fourth highest ranked players or teams will play for third place.

Fees

The Membership Fee of \$25 will be reinstated.

Tournament fees are now \$50 per player.

(The fees for renting facilities is constantly going up and we need to adjust)

2016 3 WallBall World Championships Paddleball

David (Bobby) Horn of Pueblo (2nd from the left), Colorado and Andrew Price (2nd from the right) of Chicago, Illinois prevailed in the **Paddleball 3-Wall Pro Division**, defeating the former 3 time champs Emmett Coe (1st from the left) of San Diego, California and Brian Pineda of Fullerton, California 15-10, 7-15, 11-7. This tremendous match was broadcast live on ESPN3. Horn and Price split the \$1000 championship prize and claimed the Liquid Nitro Cup, presented by Vince Carlone (1st right). Coe and Pineda split \$500.



This year's champs were paired just three days before the tournament. Andrew was initially going to play with Robert Sostre, aka the Iceman, and Bobby had signed up only for Racquetball.

In previous years, players have been allowed to enter a maximum of five divisions combined in racquetball, handball and paddleball. This year, the maximum was changed to four divisions as a result of scheduling difficulties in the past. The Iceman, a major force in all three sports, had signed up for a total of five. When confronted with the choice of dropping one division, he regrettably dropped out of paddleball.

Bobby Horn, a highly regarded professional racquetball player, had been introduced to paddleball while living in Northern California. Last year in the 2015 3 WallBall World Championships Pro Paddleball Division, Bobby teamed up with Aaron Embry. The two of them proved to be a formidable team. Aaron, a co-director of paddleball for the last two years, was unable to play this year due to a concussion he suffered as a result of an automobile accident. Bobby only wanted to play paddleball if he had a partner good enough to have a real chance to win the division. When Price became available, Horn was in.

Private sponsors provided the prize money for the Pro Paddleball Division. The sponsors were Leonard Sonnenberg, John Falkiner, an anonymous benefactor and myself.

Vince Carlone and Albert Gutierrez of Riverside, California defeated Joe Lara of Riverside and Mario Meza of Moreno Valley, California in the **Paddleball 3-Wall Open Division** 3-15, 15-14, 11-7. Vince and Albert also won this division in 2013 and finished second the two previous years.



Continued on next page

In the **Paddleball 1-Wall Open Division**, Jasmine Suarez of New York City, New York and Mike Dembin of Pompano Beach, Florida defeated John Cherry and Manny Olmo of New York City, New York 15-11, 15-3.



About the only similarities between 1-wall and 3-wall paddleball is the paddle and the competitive yet friendly relationships among the players. Obviously, the number of walls and resulting shot selection are different. But, it is more than that. It was a real education for NPA style players who watched or played in the 1-wall division. In this tournament, Andrew Price, Albert Gutierrez, and Vince Carlone gave it a try. Each of these highly skilled 3 and 4 wall players were unquestionably like fish out of water.

There are numerous 1-wall matches on You-Tube. I encourage you to view one. Note: there are no straps on their paddles. They switch hands effortlessly. You rarely see a backhand shot.

The concept of a hinder is vastly different. You are expected to maintain your position after hitting a shot. You do not have to provide the straight-in shot. If you move and cross that path between the ball and your opponent, that's a hinder. They play exceptionally close to one another. If your opponent is between you and the ball and it is your turn to hit the ball, it's incumbent on you to go around. The opponent has a right to maintain his/her position.

I watched several of the 1-wall matches and gained respect for this very different paddle sport. The matches were fun to watch.

Marty Breed and his nephew Randy Jones of Riverside, California teamed up and finished 1st in the **Paddleball 3-Wall A Division** with 2 wins and 0 losses record. Tom Quiroz of Anaheim, California and Bill Kuhlman of Frankfort, Illinois finished 2nd with a 1 and 1 record.



The **Paddleball Mixed A 3-Wall Division** was claimed by a Northern Californian team, Laura Morin and Tyler Vorhies of Roseville with 3 wins and 0 losses record. Rocio Yepiz of North Hollywood, California and Randy Jones of Riverside, California finished 2nd with a 2 and 1 record.



On a side note: Rocio was awarded 3-Wall Racquetball's prestigious **Gold Cup Amateurs** award. She collected the most points from her results in a selected set of tournaments for men and/or women's divisions A or higher.

For completed R2 brackets go to: <http://www.r2sports.com/tourney/home.asp?TID=17087> click on **Brackets**

The Gearbox ball was used at this year's tournament and was clearly a big success. I am unaware of a single ball breaking and received no complaints at all about the ball.

The 2017 3 WallBall World Championships will be held in Las Vegas in the parking lot of the Stratosphere Hotel, September 20th-24th. This is a unique tournament in which paddleball, racquetball, and handball, 1-wall and 3-wall are all played side by side. It's one classy event.

I am looking forward to seeing returning players next September. I encourage those paddleball players who have not tried it, to give it a try. It is unquestionably a unique experience.

Jim Owens

NPA President



THE NPA WANTS TO KNOW WHERE YOU PLAY

We want to expand the "Looking For A Place To Play" section on the web. To get your club included please send the following info to: jmowens2@gmail.com

- The name, address and phone number of the club you play at
- Any drop-ins or scheduled times for regular paddleball play
- A contact person in the area (if possible)

2016 40th Annual Pig Roast

August 20th, 2016

Honoree (Human Sacrifice): Mike Wisniewski (Bay City, MI)



The Woody (Awarded to someone who exhibits a zeal for life)

"Big Daddy" Rick Phillips (Kalamazoo Area, MI) Pictured on the right below.



Tournament Winners: The team of Brandon Creamer (East Lansing, MI) and Jim Howland (Livonia, MI)



West Coast Player Profile: Dale Valentine--Adult Role Model

So Goodbook and I had gotten past Brumfield and Badger to make it to the quarters of the Man-nino Open where we faced MC Meyers and Dale Valentine. MC is a role model for your kids. I mean, he's a fireman. He risks life and limb to save people from near certain death. He lives clean and works hard. He opens doors for people and congratulates them when they do a good job. So why is he playing with Valentine, whose reputation precedes him like a long dark shadow and whom rumor has it is playing this tournament on percocet for a bad back? Dale cut his teeth on the racquetball pro tour, and he has always played a grind-it-out, punishing style, where you can win if you can be tougher than your opponent on every point. He's been tough enough to win 13 national titles in racquetball. Alas, only 5 in paddleball.

Valentine is on the left so I have to deal with him. Jimmy Coggburn is in the gallery jawboning at Dale from the opening serve. Maybe that will help. Dale plays close; really close, and he's asking for avoidables on every hinder. Jimmy's giving him an earful from the gallery: "It's not racquetball, Dale. Give it a rest!" And Dale's in my way more than once as well. We have a couple minor collisions. Yeah. Dale's a big guy. I'm a big guy. There are no minor collisions. And it's a grueling match. He's got a bad back and I'm still exhausted from the breaker against Brumfield and Badger, so I'm about to cough up a lung.

At one point, Dale storms out of the court to complain to the tournament director who comes in to counsel all of us on good behavior. Thank goodness. I need the break. About two points later, I get a ball to the backhand. Dale's in my way about ten feet in front of me, a pretty big target to hit around but woosie hinders are not an option at this point. Do I hit over his head or go low and assume he'll jump? Over his head it is! Dale chooses to jump and I hit him in the head with the ball. Okay, so it wasn't my best moment. Dale gives me the "what are we even doing here?" look, but he didn't try to kill me so I feel like I dodged a bullet.

Dale and MC go on to win a really close match, but I feel good to have survived. The next day, after the finals, I'm in the parking lot talking to Brumfield and we see Dale walk out. Brumfield excuses himself to go thank Dale for playing. When he gets back I say "I'm just thankful he's done playing." Brumfield pauses and says: "If Dale hadn't have come, we wouldn't have gotten any of the Riverside players. It would have been a club tournament. He made this a great tournament just by showing up." That put a different spin on it for me. There were a lot of Riverside players in the draw, and they tended to be really tough. Maybe it was worth dealing with Dale.

The next time I see Dale is a year later, in Riverside. It's one of Todd Entrikin's one day tournaments. Todd and Dale are like best buds, and while Todd is out in front explaining the special rules of the tournament (one serve, etc.), Dale is quietly making sure that everyone is on a court instead of sitting around. I see a plaque in the corner. It's from the City of Riverside, and it honors the Riverside Tournament House, and several of its distinguished players for their outstanding service to the community: Steve Lerner, Vance Lerner...and Dale Valentine. I know Dale's good, but outstanding service to the community? And I don't have much time to think about that because Dale has me back on the court, this time Brumfield and I are up against Todd and Dale. This time, Dale is on the right so I'm the lucky guy who gets to contain Todd. Dale's ripping the ball like he's playing with a hard-faced paddle, but on closer examination, he's hitting with an Ice Man, about the softest paddle there is. It's a tribute to his strength and toughness. We keep it relatively close, but the outcome is never really in doubt. And about $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way through the match, I get a forehand to kill in the front court. I snap the thing in, and as my arm recoils, my elbow pops Todd right in the nose. Todd falls to the floor like a sack of flour. Okay, so it wasn't my best moment. My first thought is that I've killed the nicest guy in the world and now Dale is going to kill me. Fortunately, Dale is too busy trying to help Todd to separate my body from my soul. After a couple minutes of terror, Todd pulls himself together and rises. I've dodged another bullet. Dale helps Todd shake it off, and we continue play. Like last time, I get a backhand with Dale about 10 feet in front of me. This time, I decide to go low rather than high. But this time Dale decides not to jump. Okay, so, that wasn't my best moment either. Fortunately, the ball goes between Dale's legs for a pretty good kill shot. Dale gives me one of those looks, but I'm feeling like I dodged another bullet.

When the match is over, we shake and I congratulate Todd and Dale on their win. I apologize to Dale, telling him that I just didn't bring my best that day. Dale says, "I thought you played really well. That was fun." So now I'm confused. We've had all of these opportunities for disputes, and each time, I've been at least as responsible as Dale...and I've never gotten a plaque for outstanding community service (I guess a lot of moments aren't my best moments), and now he's behaving like the good guy. Dale and Todd went on to win that tournament, beating Steve Lerner and Vince Carlone, and Steve and Vince had a couple of their, well, not their best moments in that match as well.

The next time I see Dale, he's behind the counter quietly serving lunch burritos to players at National Doubles. And he's behind the tournament desk getting players checked in and scheduled into their matches. This pattern repeats itself over several nationals and shootouts. In spite of the fanciful reputation, every time I see Dale, he's quietly, humbly, almost invisibly, doing something to better the game. He's never the tournament director but he's always doing the grunge work of running a tournament. He's making sure that players make the 90 mile drive from Riverside to San Diego to make the tournament better. And, by the way, that's a nasty drive. It's a desert, okay. It's 100 degrees, and there are sand storms and tumbleweeds. I hate tumbleweeds. But they make the trip and play well. And at the outdoor tournament in Vegas, Dale and Todd pretty much always make the finals. In 2013, they won, beating Coe and Pineda in a breaker that was a classic contrast in styles. Coe and Pineda played a flashy game with trick shots and a rich display of youthful athleticism. Todd and Dale--and especially Dale--chipped away, little by little, playing tough but cautiously, and by the book and according to the percentages. They got out to a big lead early in the breaker and never let go. If anything, that match made Emmett Coe the great player he has become. I had dinner with Emmett immediately after that match. He was upset. He wanted to win but also knew he wasn't prepared to win. It wasn't Emmett's best moment I guess. He digested the loss, and from that time, he has prepared himself. He's played more and harder and taken better care of himself,

My most recent on-court encounter with Dale was at the Battle of the Border a few months ago, an NPA-sanctioned outdoor tournament. It's held in San Marcos, which is about halfway between San Diego and Riverside. I got there really early because I didn't know how long the drive would be. And it's a pretty long walk from the parking lot to the courts. I couldn't see much because there's still that thin mist we get in Southern California during summer at daybreak. For the whole walk I hear the ping-ping-ping of a paddleball being hit pretty hard. When I get there, there's one lonely guy on the foggy courts, doing the work and preparing himself to play. That's Dale. I played with Dave "The Mop" Ratinsky, and we drew into Dale and Todd first round. It was a round robin, two games per round. We split, but I'm going to claim credit for a win on total points. We got out to a big lead early in the second game and never let go. Maybe I too learned something from that match in Vegas. But I think everyone would agree that it wasn't Todd's best moment. He was a bit slow and skipped some balls that he usually hits for winners. Nonetheless, Dale was very polite and congratulated us on a well played match. In fact, I think everyone would agree that it wasn't Todd's best day as he and Dale didn't come out on top in any of their matches. There was some really bad behavior in the tournament, but none of it on Dale or Todd. After pretty much all the other players flew the coup, I saw Dale quietly pack up and go; a truly gritty player who's always there from beginning to end, who never asks for praise or recognition but reliably delivers extremely high quality play and never turns down an opportunity to do some good for paddleball.

So if you are looking for a role model for your child...call MC Meyers. Who knows, maybe he can get your kid a ride on a firetruck. That would be awesome. But Dale Valentine is a damn good adult role model, and he'll kick your butt on the court if you give him any kind of opening, just to make sure he doesn't spoil his long shadow of a reputation. Based on the way I've played against Dale, the next time he gives me the beat down, he should get another plaque for "outstanding service to the community".



Saginaw Doubles

We had a good turn out and competitive matches at the 8th Annual Saginaw Doubles Paddleball Tournament with over \$300 in cash and prizes, lots of great food and Gearbox door prizes for everyone who entered this tournament.

Chad Krager and the Wiz were undefeated in round robin play and took the open division, 2nd went to Brandon Creamer and Ron Malecki.



The A Division was won by Eric Boks and Thomas Bodary defeating Karl Briggs and Mitch Larson (20-21, 21-6, 21-10) in a grueling double elimination bracket.



Special thanks to Jody Henning, Karl R. Briggs, and Mitch Larson for all their help setting this up and to our sponsors; The Tom Mudd Family, Gearbox Paddleball and Karl R Briggs State Farm Insurance. Thank you to everyone who brought hospitality- it was appreciated.

Again, special recognition needs to go Larry Jerman for running the tournament desk.

We look forward to hosting future tournaments at the paddleball friendly Saginaw YMCA.

Check paddleball.org and be sure to "like" the National Paddleball Association on Facebook for up to the minute information, pictures and upcoming tournaments.

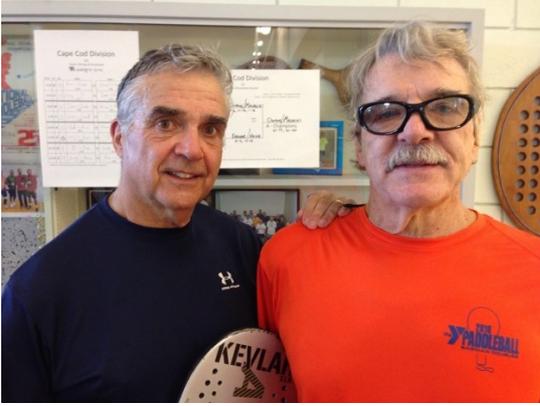
Jim Price

Tournament Director & NPA Board Member

Bay Area Turkey Shoot

November 12, 2016 at the Bay City Y

Ron Malecki and Jim Owens defeated Chad Krager and Mike Heinz in the Cape Cod Division final 21-17, 21-2.



Mitch Larson and Lance Krager defeated Paul Fehrman and Jim Price in the May Flower Division 21-15, 13-21, 21-2.



Sandy DeGrief and Tom Mudd prevailed in the Mashed Potatoes Division defeating Jody Henning and Bill Jamrog 11-5 in the final.

Explanations: There were 8 players in both the Cape Cod and Mayflower Divisions. Each player was assigned a number which determined a different partner and opponents for each of four games. The player with the most points scored in the four games was paired with the player with the least. The player with the second most point total was paired with player with the next to the least total. Etc. Teams were seeded and a conventional bracket was followed. First round losers were paired with a player from the other division and were moved into Mashed Potatoes.

Awards: Each winner of the Cape Cod and May Flower Divisions received a turkey. Each 2nd place finisher took home a pumpkin pie. Each winner of the Mashed Potato Division received some mashed potatoes.

It was a lot of fun. Chad Krager did a great job running this unique tournament.

Jim Owens

NPA President

THE SHORTS THAT WILL NOT DIE!

Among the paddleball stuff in my basement are three pairs of shorts I still wear when I play at the Flint, Mich., YMCA.

Most paddleballers have seen them because I wore them quite often in tournaments.

They are the same style. The colors are red, blue and green. They were made by MacGregor and I got them on sale at K-Mart about 35 years ago.

They still look new and I get a lot of kidding from the guys at the Y. I also used to wear them in tourneys where opponents usually got in some snarky comment about my wearing apparel.

I'm not that familiar with clothing and fabric so I don't know why the shorts still look fantastic. Almost like I just purchased them.

But my wife, Sue, is an expert on clothing and fabric – having worked with the Flint Board of Education for a number of years teaching sewing classes.

Sue says the shorts still look great because they're made of polyester.

"Polyester never dies," she said. "You cannot kill it."

The late Joe Emaar of Kalamazoo, Mich., the gracious host of the annual pig roast for the National Paddleball Association, accused me of an ulterior motive when I played against him in the old days.

"I know why you wear those tight shorts," Joe would say. "They make you look like you're faster than you really are."

LOU GIAMPETRONI

2017 MIDWEST DOUBLES AT DAVISON ATHLETIC CLUB, DAVISON MI

For those of you who have attended tourneys at this great facility in the past, you know what a great place it is to run an event.

We are really making an effort to ensure that this year's Midwest Doubles is going to be a big success. We know a lot of players really enjoy the grab-bag format of play. To ensure that we can fit both regular doubles and grab-bag doubles we will be changing the divisions a bit.

The divisions being offered for both Standard Doubles and Grab-bag Doubles are: Open/A, B/C, 70 Combined (we will have a roll-down division for all brackets with eight or more players).

We would really like to offer a Women's Division and will customize that division however needed to make sure it will run. If you don't have a doubles partner let us know and we will do what we can to match you up. Another option would be to have the Women's Division be a grab-bag doubles. A Mixed Doubles division is also an option.

We will also customize any age divisions as noted above as we are only offering 70 Combined as an age division.

We encourage all to play. We need to get Midwest Paddleball back on it's feet and we can only do that with your support.

Lorri Brigham, Executive Vice President

Franklin, Michigan Paddle Event



On November 12, the Franklin Athletic Club in Southfield, Michigan hosted a Paddleball Open House. The event was sponsored by Gearbox and organized by Greg Lewerenz, Franklin's Squash and Racquetball Pro.

Nearly 20 Metro Detroit players came out to give our sport a try. Skill sets ranged from current racquetball state champions to first time players. The event was well run, organized and a lot of fun. Players quickly adapted to the nuances of paddleball and many commented that they enjoyed the long rallies, strategic positioning and cardio that paddleball offered. Several women gave it a try and seemed to favor the lighter feel of the Gearbox paddle. We are hopeful to see some of these ladies continue to play and re-establish a competitive women's divisions at paddleball tournaments.

Overall the event was a success and we hope to see these new players at our upcoming NPA and local paddleball tournaments held throughout Michigan this season.

Special thanks to Greg (Big Daddy) Lewerenz, Gearbox Paddleball, Aaron Embry and the Franklin Athletic club.

Jim Price

NPA Board of Managers Member

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

IT'S OFFICIAL—IT'S GEARBOX

The Gearbox paddleball is now the official ball of the National Paddleball Association.

We used Gearbox balls in the 3 WallBall World Championships in Las Vegas, Nevada this past September. The balls proved to be extremely consistent in terms of bounce and speed. Not one complaint was received about them. To my knowledge, no balls broke; which is saying a lot. In the past, breakage of balls has been a major problem due to the heat and the hard-rough surface of the asphalt floor in Vegas.

I introduced the new official ball to the Ann Arbor players in late September. It quickly became the ball of choice. California and Bay City, Michigan players predominantly made the switch to Gearbox months ago. Kalamazoo's popular Otto League players are now playing their league matches with Gearbox balls.

At \$15 for a box of three balls, it is initially more expensive than the \$10 box of Ektelon balls, but the increased durability clearly makes it cost-effective.

The Gearbox paddle is now the official paddle of the National Paddleball Association.

The ball will be the exclusive ball used at all sanctioned NPA tournaments over the course of at least the next two years. As before, players will be allowed to use whatever NPA approved paddles they choose at sanctioned tournaments. The NPA is on board in promoting these high quality Gearbox paddles.

The collection of Gearbox paddles is already clearly the most popular set of paddles among NPA paddleball players. Most of the NPA's top players use Gearbox paddles: Emmett Coe, Todd Entrikin, Andrew Price, Bobby Horn, Mike Wisniewski, Brandon Creamer, Aaron Embry, and Alvaro Beltran included. The paddles are also gaining significant traction with 1-wall paddleball players.

There are three Gearbox paddles currently on the market: the new feather light GB275, the GB300, and the GB325. The respective names reflect their mass in grams. Each of these beautifully designed paddles have proven to be extremely durable and consistent with significant pop. Find them illustrated at the top of the approved paddles list with ordering information:

Test a Gearbox paddle with a Gearbox ball—they are official paddle and ball of the NPA!

Jim Owens

NPA President