

NPA NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL PADDLEBALL ASSOCIATION

Report on the 2018 Gearbox Michigan Tour



The Franklin demo/play the pro was a lot of fun because we got to see some old friends and meet new ones. It seemed like half of the participants were either new to the sport of paddleball or returning from a long layoff. It definitely had a family vibe with the junior players present.

The Eastern Michigan University event was well attended and brought out lots of local seasoned players. Everyone enjoyed playing Emmett and they elevated their level of play as to give him their best! There were many happy and very tired paddleball players by the end!

The Dow Bay City YMCA junior paddleball clinic and demo/play the pro was a very special event because we were able to introduce the next generation of players to the fantastic game of paddleball. Many of the juniors had the opportunity to play Emmett and the ones that did left the court with a huge smile! Paddleball in Michigan is growing and it's fun to watch.

National Paddleball Doubles in East Lansing Michigan boasted one of the largest draws in years, yet another sign that paddleball is growing. The competition was fierce and everyone really seemed to enjoy themselves. What makes this event so special is that even though people are playing for national titles, there are no referees, players rely on sportsmanship and honesty and it's amazing how well it works out.

Gearbox player Emmett Coe won his fifth consecutive national doubles title and his sixth overall. Emmett's long time doubles partner Todd Entrikin had to cancel last minute because of a work conflict, so Emmett teamed up with Brian Pineda whom he won the national doubles title with in 2012. Both Emmett and Brian had to dig deep to win this tournament. In the finals Gearbox sponsored player Andrew Price and his partner Chad Kragger really pushed Emmett and Brian. Andrew showed up to play in a big way and dominated the left side causing Brian and Emmett to switch sides after losing game one 21-19. With both power players Emmett and Andrew playing on the left side made for some amazing gets and backhands. On the right you had Chad and Brian in a classic matchup of controlled shot making and court positioning. Emmett and Brian were able to take hard fought game two 21-18. The breaker was all Emmett Coe as he started off with 4 backhand kills and more amazing gets. Andrew and Chad tried to get back in the match with hustle and some great shot making of their own but in the end Brian and Emmett just played amazingly well.

Aaron Embry

www.gearboxsports.com

2018 NATIONAL DOUBLES RESULTS

Open Division



1stEmmett Coe (San Diego, CA) / Brian Pineda (Fullerton, CA) 19-21, 21-18, 21-10

2ndChad Krager (Bay City, MI) / Andrew Price (Chicago, IL)

A Division



1stJoe Baldori (East Lansing, MI) / Sam Baldori (East Lansing) 13-21, 21-8, 21-12

2ndLuiz Romero (Rochester Hills, MI) / Cyrus Chinoy (Detroit, MI)

3rdNorm Brummer (Kalamazoo, MI) / Paul Sylvester (Paw Paw, MI)

Consolation Jim Howland (Redford, MI) / Lance Krager (Bay City, MI)

B Division



1stRon Harris (Ypsilanti, MI) / Jim Howland (Redford, MI) 21-8, 21-15

2ndThomas Bodary (Bay City, MI) / Eric Boks (Bay City, MI)

Consolation Mike Brennan(Clinton Twp, MI) / Andy Pappas (Detroit, MI)

2018 NATIONAL DOUBLES RESULTS CONTINUED

C Division



1stKeith Warriner (Lansing, MI) / Paul Carr (Lansing, MI) 21-8, 21-10

2ndBill Bishop (Clarkston, MI) / Don Kitson (Clarkston, MI)

Novice Division



1stBrett Tull (Birch Run, MI) / Joe Mooney (Birch Run, MI) 21-11, 21-9

2ndEd Peters (East Lansing, MI) / Tab Jackson (Lansing, MI)

70+ Combined Division



1stEmmett Coe (San Diego, MI) / Chad Krager (Bay City, MI) 21-12, 21-7

2ndKevin McLaughlin (Camarillo, CA) / Don Kirkconnell (Grand Rapids, MI)

3rdAndrew Price (Chicago, IL) / James Owens (Ann Arbor, MI)

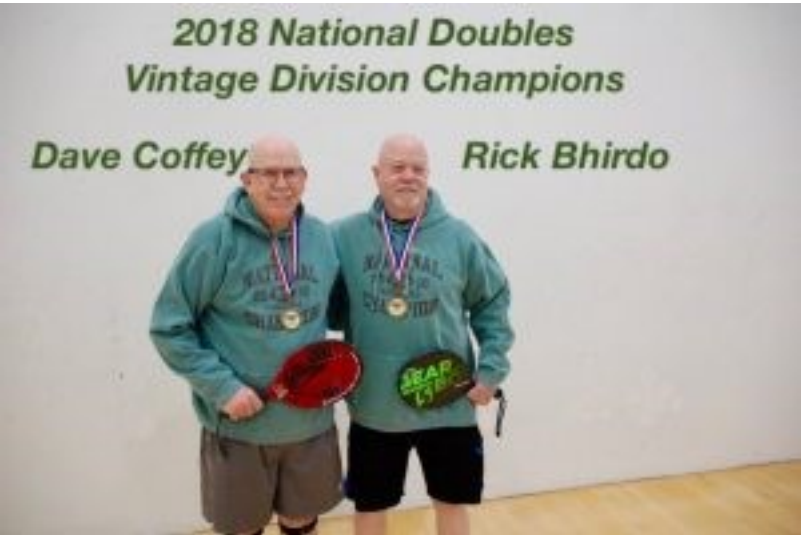
2018 NATIONAL DOUBLES RESULTS CONTINUED

55+ Division



- 1st Ron Malecki (Midland, MI) / Sandy DeGreif (Bay City, MI)
2nd Andy Mitchell (Portage, MI) / Ed Maher (Benton Harbor, MI)
3rd Matt Kollig (Kalamazoo, MI) / Paul Sylvester (Paw Paw, MI)

Vintage Division



- 1st Rick Bhirdo (Birch Run) / Dave Coffey (Midland, MI)
2nd Keith Thurlow (Midland, MI) / Don Traxler (Midland, MI)

Buy Gearbox Paddleballs From the NPA!

The Gearbox paddleball is of a higher quality than previous balls. They are very consistent, rarely break, and have a longer useable life. There are other businesses from which you can purchase Gearbox paddleball. As a result, NPA revenue from ball sales is down considerably. We urge you to buy balls from the NPA, \$15 for a box of three.

Order paddleballs from the paddleball.org webstore, <http://store.paddleball.org> or contact Lorri Brigham, lbrigham@yahoo.com . In the Ann Arbor area, you can buy balls directly from me and avoid shipping charges as is the case with Jim Price in the Mid-Michigan.

Gearbox is the official ball and paddle of the NPA!

Jim Owens
NPA President

2018 NATIONAL SINGLES RECAP by Jamie Lawson

The 2018 NPA National Singles final started out looking pretty much like the 2016 final: an en-core performance of the same play by the same actors and even on the very same stage: court 2 at Tournament House, Riverside; Emmett Coe and Chris Crowther to duke it out for the championship. It's vaguely like a Shakespearean troupe where the actors who play Richard II and Henry Bolingbroke are good friends but both know their parts and have been playing them for years. They know how this play goes.

But as Shakespearean as a championship is, these guys are actually more like Ralph the Wolf and Sam the Sheepdog from the old Loonie Tunes cartoons. Ralph a little younger and a little faster, Sam the more methodical. They get up each day, punch their time cards, and engage in small talk.

"Mornin' Ralph."

"Mornin' Sam."

"Time's a' waistin'."

And then as the whistle blows the play begins, Ralph on offense trying to steal the sheep and Sam on defense trying to protect them. And their struggle's a life-and-death battle, reaching the dramatic climax right as the final whistle blows.

"Evenin' Sam."

"Evenin' Ralph."

"Time's a' waistin'."

Last time, Sam the Sheepdog, (err, Chris Crowther) took home the prize money. He was bigger and stronger. He sealed Emmett on the sides while moving the ball to the opposite corner, and he prevailed in the most brutal form of paddleball; a way of playing the game that leaves even the greatest opponents feeling helpless to do anything. But this time Chris looks a bit bigger around the middle and a bit less imposing in the shoulders, which droop slightly, showing the effects of age. In fact, he really does look like Sam the Sheepdog. This time Emmett's shoulders look bigger, no doubt the result of a more concentrated workout, better nutrition, and two added years of experience; even more like Ralph the Wolf. This year, it's a different game. This may finally be the Wolf's time of glory.

Act one, scene one: Both are testing out the other, each hesitant to show everything they've got; the game is moving slowly but the ball is not. Points come hard, with lots of sideouts in between.

Act one, scene two: The players start to show their stuff. The Sheepdog keeps the ball high and The Wolf tries to kill it.

Act one, scene three: Four-serving-three. But The Wolf goes on a rollout spree, and takes a four point lead.

Act one, scene four: The Sheepdog lowers his sights and starts trying to kill the ball. He takes the lead and seizes momentum. But The Wolf turns it around leaping and diving side-to-side, and as the lunch whistle blows, game one is in the books, 21-16.

This is where the Wolf and the Sheepdog take a break, open their lunch pails, relax on the meadow green, and enjoy a midday respite.

Act two, scene one: They're at it again, hammering low drives at one another in long rallies from the midcourt. The Sheepdog goes up 5-1.

Act two, scene two: The Sheepdog is showing signs of fatigue. He starts hitting his drives higher and deeper. Much of the play moves to the back court, and The Wolf looks for opportunities to come in for the kill.

Act two, scene three: The trick shot! Nearing exhaustion, both players resort to some razzle dazzle. Some of it works; some of it doesn't, but all of it makes a great show.

Act two, scene four: The game returns to the midcourt. Back to the hard pinch. Back to the drive. They fight for a very small piece of court real estate. The Sheepdog is having trouble moving up and back but The Wolf is having trouble keeping the ball off the sidewall, giving The Sheepdog a chance to cut it off. It's neck-and-neck when the final whistle blows, 21-18.

But we all know how this story ends. The Sheepdog wins. Each cartoon riffs on a different line, and puts the Sheepdog in a different fix, but it's a foregone conclusion that the Sheepdog always wins. That's just how the storyline goes. They punch their timecards at the end of the day. The Sheepdog looks at the Wolf and says:

"Better luck next time Ralph."

"Oh sure," replies the Wolf. "You can't win 'em all you know."

They turn to head back home. Sam the Sheepdog puts his arm around Ralph, who says:

Nice day, huh Sam?"

"Yup. Good to be alive Ralph."

"Badee-badaah, That's All Folks!"" Chris Crowther takes the 2018 championship match in two beautifully played games, and wins his third NPA singles title in a span of twelve years.

2018 NATIONAL SINGLES / WESTERN DOUBLES

Chris Crowther claims his 3rd National Singles Championship, defeating Emmett Coe in final 21-16, 21-28.

Highlight Lights: 11 in the Combined Juniors Division and 4 in the 75+ Age Division. 64 entries.

2018 National Singles

Open

1st Chris Crowther (San Diego, CA) 21-16, 21-18

2nd Emmett Coe (San Diego, CA)

A

1st Mario Meza (Moreno Valley, CA) 21-15, 13-21,21-13

2nd Brannon Allison (San Diego, CA)

Consolation Alex Robles (Riverside, CA)

B

1st Matt Stanford (Riverside, CA) 21-11, 12-21,21-13

2nd Luis Ramos (San Diego, CA)

3rd Joe Pomathy (Dexter, MI)

C

1st Mike Chouinard (Riverside, CA) 21-18,21-9

2nd Gilbert Acuna (Riverside, CA)

55+

1st Vince Carlone (Riverside, CA) 21-9, 21-9

2nd Peter Callstrom (San Diego, CA)

75+ (Rotational Doubles)

1st Leonard Sonnenberg (San Diego, CA) 83 points

2nd Bruce Beare (Cardiff, CA) 81 points

2018 Western Doubles

A

1st David Lorenz (San Diego, CA) & Brannon Allison (San Diego, CA) 15-6, 15-8

2nd Joe Lara (Irvine, CA) & Mario Meza (Moreno Valley, CA)

B

1st Bryce Cooper Jr (Riverside, CA) & Mike Burgett (Riverside, CA) 15-7 15-4

2nd Luis Ramos (San Diego, CA) & Rigo Marin (San Diego, CA)

C

1st Chris Carlone (Riverside, CA) & Guy Pittman (Riverside, CA) forfeit

2nd Jerry Connine (San Diego, CA) & Mike Chouinard (San Diego, CA)

2018 NATIONAL SINGLES CHAMPIONS

2018 NPA NATIONAL SINGLES OPEN CHAMPION



CHRIS CROWTHER



2018 NPA NATIONAL SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS A SINGLES CHAMPION



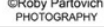
MARIO MEZA



2018 NPA NATIONAL SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS B SINGLES CHAMPION



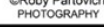
MATT STANFORD



2018 NPA NATIONAL SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS C SINGLES CHAMPION



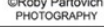
MICHAEL CHOUINARD



2018 NPA NATIONAL SINGLES 55 PLUS SINGLES CHAMPION



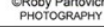
VINCE CARLONE



2018 NPA NATIONAL SINGLES 75 PLUS SINGLES CHAMPION



LEN SONNENBERG



2018 WESTERN DOUBLES CHAMPIONS



This year's 2018 National Paddleball Singles and Western Doubles was held at the historic Tournament House Gym in Riverside. The event highlighted some of the best paddleball players in the county, competing for national titles in singles. Even though doubles divisions didn't include a national title, many players decided to compete in both, making for many grueling and hard fought matches throughout the weekend.

The most senior player in the draw was Tournament House's own...the legendary Jerry Conine. Jerry, at 78 years young, is still a force to be reckoned with on the court! The youngest player was Jackie Paraiso-Larsson's daughter Rae, at 6 years old. Paddleball has seen a resurgence in new and returning players, and this event was a prime example of that trend.

The Juniors draw accounted for almost 20 percent of the total participants, making it the second largest draw in the event. All of the junior players were under the age of 14.

The Open Singles division saw a battle between the top two seeded players in the draw: Emmett Coe and Chris Crowther. Emmett showed his amazing court coverage and shot making ability while Chris demonstrated his willingness to dig deep and hit the big shot when necessary. In the end, Chris was able to hit a few more winners than Emmett did, and ended up taking a very punishing match in two close games 21-16, 21-18.

Paddleball is unique in that there are usually no referees--most matches are self-officiated so everyone is expected to play with fairness and honesty. This event was no exception.

Aaron Embry

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JIM PRICE

2018 EARL RISKEY AWARD RECEIPT

By: Karl Briggs



While preparing for the last week's National Paddleball Championship in Lansing Michigan, I received a text from my good friend, fellow paddleball player and 2018 Sportsman award recipient, Jody Henning. Jody informed me that I needed to attend the NPA banquet, because our good friend Jim Price was receiving the "Earl Risky" award. Having a rather limited knowledge of NPA awards, Jody's text left me a bit confused and assuming there had been a spelling error, but hey, I wasn't going to miss an opportunity to watch my buddy Jim get an award. Much like the speed of Elliot Cole digging out a potential kill shot, I responded to Jody, that I planned to attend the banquet. However, I realized that I needed to learn more about this "Earl Risky Award."

Please indulge me while I briefly share the findings of my wiki-search about the great Earl Risky and the history of Paddleball.

Earl Risky invented Paddleball in 1930; he was a Physical Education instructor and later Director of the Intramural Sports Program at the Great University of Michigan. During inclement weather, U of M's tennis teams would practice on the handball courts using wooden paddles from paddle tennis for their workouts. Risky saw the potential for the addition of a new intramural sport; using worn tennis balls or dime store rubber balls and wooden paddles the game of Paddleball was born. Thank you Earl Risky for your creativity that led to the creation of an awesome game that so many of us enjoy.

Paramount to a sport's invention, is maintaining its relevance and ensuring its longevity for generations of future enjoyment. This year's Earl Risky Award winner, Jim Price, has been doing just that. Jim has been on the 4 wall courts now for over 27 years playing racquetball, with the last 18 focused specifically on paddleball. The amicable Price said his love of the game all started with a racquetball class during his time at Saginaw Valley State University and peaked during a father-son showdown on the court. Having played racquetball in his younger years, Jim's dad Fred, offered to teach Jim a thing or two. Always up for a challenge, Jim, accepted and recounts that his father "literally kicked my butt all over the court!". From that point forward, Jim was hooked. Sports had always been a formative part of the Price Family and Jim's dad became a fixture at the Delta College Courts with his entourage of 8 children. Jim would soon come to dominate the B-C tournaments, claiming the C National Championship as his own. To say the least, paddleball is in Jim's blood and this fact is obvious to all who know him.

Jim and his wife Tina have two Daughters, Abigayle and Elycia. As is Price family tradition, Jim's family is intimately involved in world of Paddleball. It's not unusual to have Tina deliver food to the tournaments or see Abby registering players and acting as a tournaments host, family is important to Jim.

Jim is the current Vice President of the NPA and has sat on the NPA board for 6 years. He loves the fellowship, camaraderie, fun, competition and trash talking that goes on in paddleball. Jim's thousand watt smile makes him very approachable and his sense of humor makes him fun for everyone to be around. Needless to say, Jim has a lot of friends, and everyone likes Jim. He loves to travel, playing paddleball in Las Vegas, Chicago and on Belle Isle. He credits his development in Paddleball to long time players Judy Pretzer, Rick Kogelman and Pat Gahn from Bay City. Jim's contributions to the sport have been immeasurable. He has organized tournaments, raised money, listened to and implemented new ideas and has been the impetus behind the Vintage and Novice brackets at the National Tournament. With everything Jim brings to the NPA, he is the only choice for the 2018 Earl Risky Award. Congratulations, Jim!!



The 2018 National Paddleball Association Sportsmanship award was presented to Jody Henning of Carrollton Michigan at the National Doubles event in East Lansing, Michigan on April 21.

Jody, like many paddleball players in Mid-Michigan, is a racquetball convert. He has exclusively been playing paddleball for about 15 years. He began playing in leagues at the old Bay City Y and at the Midland Community Center after he lost interest in racquetball doubles. Since then, Jody has been a fixture at many of the areas paddleball events having won B divisions in the Brigham Classic, The Saginaw Doubles and the Bean Smith. Jody has participated in events as far away as Chicago and Las Vegas.

Jody has been instrumental in the promotion and growth of the sport in the Mid-Michigan area. He is the guy in the background quietly contributing to successful events, planning for future events and providing insight on how to make the game better; often without due recognition.

Jody adds that he enjoys the physical and mental exercise the game provides and has made life -long friends with those he plays with. He keeps our Mid-Michigan group motivated to play with a quick witted text or email that often sparks good natured ribbing and encouragement to get on the court and play.

Jody says he was surprised and honored by the nomination, he never thought he would have won the prestigious award. Those of us that have known him for a while aren't as surprised. He is always fair on the court especially under extreme physical conditions the sport is known for. He gives 110% to his partners and provides coaching and encouragement during play.

Jody certainly is worthy of the award and we are proud that he is a regular player/contributor in our Mid-Michigan Paddleball family

Jim Price

EIGHT is GREAT!!

No sir, we are not talking March Madness still. We are talking PADDLEBALL MADNESS at The Dow Bay Area Family Y. The 42nd Annual Bean-Smith Paddleball Doubles tournament champions have repeated 8 times! The 2018 tourney fielded 17 teams from around Michigan, including Bay City, Saginaw, Ann Arbor, Standish, Detroit, Kalamazoo and Benton Harbor.

In the Open division, the defending duo of Randy Wackerle (aka Wack-Attack) & Chad Krager of Bay City extended their winning streak to 8. Yes, that's eight and the Wack-Attack said it felt great!

Wackerle & Krager defeated the hard-hitting, swash-buckling, and quick-footed team of Adam Koehler & Greg Keenan from Bay City, in a hard-fought battle that went to a tie-breaking 3rd game 21-20, 8-21, 21-10. Game-1 was an epic battle won by the eventual champs that harbored quite a few lead changes and exciting rallies. Game-2 was dominated by the continued high-percentage shooting from Koehler & Keenan, as they suffocated every little wiggle of life from the defending champs. Unfortunately for Koehler & Keenan, it may have been the case of too much too fast which allowed Wackerle & Krager to catch their breathe. In Game-3, Wackerle & Krager's second wind proved to be the difference maker when it counted in the rubber-match game. They took control of the tie-breaker from the onset and never relinquished the lead to capture their 8th consecutive crown. The champs were the elder by almost 30 years-combined, so making a charge at the right time was instrumental to the success commented Wackerle.

Wackerle is a retired teacher from Bangor Junior High where he pioneered a 30+ year junior paddleball program. In 1986, Krager came along as a 7th grader in Wackerle's drafting class whereby he would be introduced to the junior high program and would eventually win as a 7th grader at the Y West Campus. Krager played sparingly after junior high, but rekindled a spirit for the game in 2006. Since 2006, the teacher/student combo has won 8 out of 10 Bean-Smith entries.

The "B" Division saw Saginaw-Ymca upstarts, Don McIntyre & Scott Rettelle; defeat the Delta Fitness Center duo of Erik Boks & Thomas Bodary 21-13, 21-12. The winning duo is the newest edition from the area to convert from Racquetball to now enjoying some time on the court with paddles. Their hard-hitting style placed the Delta team on the defensive all match long and would prove to be the difference maker. The Wack-Attack was the first one to congratulate them on their victory and welcomed them into the Open division. Will make for some good fun in 2019!

In the "C" Division, Bay City's own Pat O'Shea & Bill Jamrog defeated Don Kitson & Kerry Snow who reside in the northern Detroit suburbs. O'Shea & Jamrog were all smiles as their craft of well-placed dink shots was the trigger of defeat for the Detroit area duo.

Written by Chad Krager

2018 Midwest Doubles Tournament

Forty-four players participated in the 2018 Midwest Doubles Tournament at the Davison Athletic Club in Davison, Michigan, February 17th. There were numerous entertaining and competitive matches in the diverse set of divisions: Open, A, B, C, 70+ Combined, and 55+. The A and C divisions served as drop down divisions for Open and B, respectively.

Matches started on schedule throughout the day under the guidance of veteran tournament director Lorri Brigham. The Davison Athletic Club proved once again to be a gracious hosting facility. We had a very good time.

The youngest team in Open, Adam Koehler and Andrew Price, prevailed, defeating last year's champs, Chad Krager and Dennis Negrete in the final 21-9, 21-18. Koehler and Krager are from Bay City, Michigan. Price and Negrete are from Chicago, Illinois. Mike Madis and Ron Harris finished in 3rd place. Madis and Harris are from Livonia and Ypsilanti, Michigan, respectively.



Krager and Negrete did repeat in the 70+ Combined Division in decisive fashion, defeating the team of Jim Swendris and Brandon Creamer in the final, 21-12, 21-5. Veteran doubles master Swendris is from Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Brandon Creamer is from East Lansing, Michigan. Brandon, a rising star in racquetball the last few years, was on the two 2018 State of Michigan Racquetball Doubles Championship teams: Open and A Divisions.

Greg Lewerenz from Franklin Hills, Michigan and Ian Brooks from Rochester Hills, Michigan finished in 3rd place in the 70+ Combined. Andy Pappas from Detroit, Michigan and Jim Howland, Redford, Michigan won the consolation bracket. To qualify for 70+ Combined, the sum of the ages of the two teammates must be at least 70 years.



Two young crossovers from racquetball, Ian Brooks and Luis Romero, were victorious in the drop down A Division, defeating Paul Sylvester and Don Kirkconnell 21-14, 21-17 in the final. Brooks and Romero are from Rochester Hills. Sylvester and Kirkconnell are from Paw Paw and Kalamazoo, Michigan, respectively. This is only the second year Brooks and Romero, along with their mentor Greg Lewerenz and other Detroit Area players, have played in paddleball tournaments and have proven to be very adept paddleball players and tough competitors. Each possess considerable talent and sportsmanship, as such are fine additions to the paddleball community.



2018 Midwest Doubles Tournament continued

Marty Gouthier and Lance Krager claimed the B Division Championship, defeating the team of Thomas Bodary and Eric Boks in the final 21-10, 21-14. Krager, Bodary, and Boks are from the Bay City, Michigan area. Gouthier is from Waterford, Michigan.



Jim Cipponeri of South Lyon, Michigan and Curt Ullstrom of Fenton, Michigan were hot in the C Division final, defeating Mike Heinz of Benton Harbor, Michigan and Paul Fehman of Saginaw, Michigan 21-3, 21-2. C was the drop down division from B. Many were surprised when Cipponeri and Ullstrom lost in the first round of B.



Hall of Famers Michael Wisniewski and Andy Mitchell defeated longtime rivals Jim Swendris and Jim Sterken in the 55+ Age Division in the final 21-15, 13-21, 21-3. Mike is from Bay City, Michigan, Andy is from Kalamazoo, Michigan, and the Jims are from Ann Arbor, Michigan. Swendris and Sterken have won multiple age division championships through the years and were stopped from winning the Open numerous times by the legendary Andys, Mitchell and Kasalo. The Wiz, probably more of a dominant force in singles, has teamed with a number of players to win his share of open doubles titles, as well. The Wiz caught fire in this tie-breaker.



It was one nice day for paddleball in the Midwest!

Jim Owens

NPA President

2018 NATIONAL PADDLEBALL ASSOCIATION NATIONAL DOUBLES, by Cyrus Chinoy

This past weekend in the great State of Michigan, the National Paddleball Association held the 2018 National Doubles Paddleball Championship in partnership with Gearbox Sports at the beautiful Michigan Athletic Club in East Lansing, Michigan.

75 players from Michigan, California and Illinois attended this amazing tournament all having one goal in mind and that was to capture the title of being a National Champion in their respective divisions.

As always, before going any further into the action, these types of events are successful in large part due to the hard work and dedication of the tournament directors and support staff. This year a HUGE THANK YOU goes out to tournament directors Brandon Creamer and Joe Baldori for their awesome efforts in running a great tournament. They did an awesome job of organizing the event, communicating with the players, helping out in anything that was needed and were very accommodating. Plenty of food, drinks and snacks were provided throughout the weekend and players were very appreciative of that.

In addition, I would also like to thank the President of the National Paddleball Association, Jim Owens for all his hard work and support in welcoming all the players to the tournament and making us all feel right at home. He is always at these tournaments showing his support for the game, the players and even gets to play in matches showcasing his great skills in this fun sport.

I would also like to recognize Lorri Brigham, who does so much hard work logistically from helping organizing tournaments, getting the players signed in and registered in the beginning of the day and keeps us fed and hydrated all day long with food and drinks. She always is very kind, warm, friendly and has a great personality and vibe around her. She is wonderful to deal with and I just wanted to make sure she gets recognized for all of her hard work and dedication.

With there being so many participants entered, tournament play got started on Friday evening with matches throughout the night, all in hope to advance into Saturday and play into the next round or drop down to the consolation brackets. Plenty of great action was seen in the A, B, C, Novice and Vintage divisions with players battling it out on the courts with great shots all weekend long.

In the skilled 70+ combined division, 8 talented teams battled it out for bragging rights. The Finals, matched 2 very talented teams as Emmett Coe from California and Chad Krager from Michigan took on Kevin McLaughlin from Michigan and Mike Czabala from California. The match went back and forth with great shots hit by both teams, but in the end, Emmett and Chad captured the title in 2 games. All the players played a great match and it was a lot of fun to watch them all showcase their skill set on the court. Congrats to Emmett and Chad for earning the 70+ combined title.

The Open division equally had some great players grinding it out and battling throughout the weekend to capture the elusive title. 7 talented teams went through the draw and in the end, the Finals matched up the talented teams of Emmett Coe with partner Brian Pineda from California against Andrew Price from Illinois (but really we count him from Michigan) and his partner Chad Krager. This was a true role reversal of partners compared to the 70+ Combined division Finals.

The Open Finals provided a ton of great rallies as expected from both talented teams. It was an immense joy to watch from the get go with all 4 players putting their heart and determination out on the court in trying to hit every shot where their opponents were not. Plenty of passes, lobs, kill

pinches, ceiling balls, around the world shots, etc. to last a lifetime. With all 4 players being so skilled and having great reflexes, it took a lot of work to put the ball down and make a point or a side out. Each player was zoned in on moving their opponent all over the court making each shot that much more difficult for them to retrieve. This meant long, tiring rallies with strategies thrown in on the fly and all out smart, aggressive diving all over the court to keep the ball in play. The first game seemed to last forever as Andrew and Chad took it in a close battle 21-19.

The second game just seemed to be like a carbon copy of the first as both teams went back and forth putting together rallies and gaining points. Rallies continued to be long and drawn out with each player looking for an opportunity to put the ball away for a point or a side out. Players were diving over each other to keep the ball alive, which made for an incredible match in the court and just as equally entertaining for all the spectators watching the match. Great individual efforts by all. In another close game, this time Emmett and Brian won Game 2 in a closely contested game 21-18 to force the ever-popular TIE BREAKER.

The Tie Breaker did not disappoint as it was just a continuation of both Game 1 and 2. Teams traded shots for shots, rallies for rallies, dives for dives, kills for kills, splats for splats and all ran their legs to full capacity. As much as all the spectators wanted these teams to keep playing, unfortunately there had to be a winner. In the end, Emmett and Brian won in the tie breaker with a score of 21-10 and earned the 2018 National Open Doubles Championship.

Both teams played phenomenal and Andrew and Chad are true champions in their own right and battled until the end. An extremely well-played match by both teams and just a joy to watch as a spectator. This was Doubles Paddleball at the highest level. Congratulations to both teams!

The weekend also included the annual dinner banquet and awards ceremony at the Pizza House located right next door where players got the chance to relax, eat, drink and spend time with other players and the camaraderie that is formed from these great events.

This year the 2018 Sportsmanship Award winner was Jody Henning and rightfully so. Jody is a pleasure to play with on the court and great to get to know off the court. He is always a gentleman on the court and just has an all-around good game. Well-deserved Jody.

In addition, this year the 2018 Earl Risky Award for major contributions to Paddleball went to Jim Price. Jim has done a great job in communicating, coordinating and organizing Paddleball events throughout Mid-Michigan. He is a great player and person to be around both on and off the court and has done a lot to promote Paddleball and keep it growing by recruiting new people to play. A job well done Jim. You certainly deserve the recognition.

The National Paddleball Association would like to always recognize our sponsors, who are so thoughtful in donating their time and money to this great sport. Special recognition goes out to the following sponsors: Pro Taught Painting owned by TJ Garza, Charlie and Andie Creamer, Mark and Teri Mornate, Paul and Carl Otto, Jim Owens, Len Sonnenberg and John Falconer.

2018 NATIONAL PADDLEBALL ASSOCIATION NATIONAL DOUBLES, by Cyrus Chinoy continued

All the prize money for the divisions came from the sponsors and none of the funds were pulled from the National Paddleball Association. We thank our sponsors whole heartedly for their financial generosity. Open Division Winners received \$1000 for the team, while 2nd place received \$500 for the team. The A, B, & C Division winners received \$100 for the team. All division winners received a nice Championship sweatshirt, a \$25 Gearbox gift certificate, and a medal. Aaron Embry and Gearbox Sports does a great job of sponsoring Paddleball and donated a new paddle, a gym bag and a pair of eye guards for the 50/50 drawing at the awards ceremony.

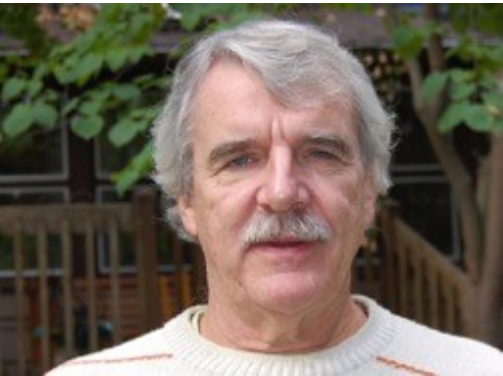
All in all, just a fantastic weekend in Michigan and for Paddleball. It was wonderful talking to all the players that have played for decades and listening to their great Paddleball competition stories, as well as get advice from them, as others are learning how to play the game. A true passing of knowledge from legends of the past still playing this great game of skill, grace, power, accuracy and timing. As always, the camaraderie between all players on and off the court is just the best part, getting to know each other on a more personal level and just enjoying each other's company while playing this fantastic Paddle sport.

Thank you, National Doubles and the National Paddleball Association, for putting on such a fantastic event.

Congratulations to all the Champions!



Go to www.paddleball.org to see the entire list of events and get a link to R2 to enter.



PRESIDENT’S CORNER

By Jim Owens

A Boost from Mid-Michigan

The Mid-Michigan to which I refer is an area in the middle portion of the lower penninsula of Michigan. It centers around the tri-cities area of Bay City, Midland, and Saginaw and includes Birch Run and Standish.

Mid-Michigan has provided a solid source of tournament and recreational paddleball players for years. The area hosted eight NPA national tournaments from 1983 to 2003: National Doubles in 1983, 1994, and 2001, National Singles in 1992, 1996, 1997, 1998, and 2003. All were held at the Midland Community Center in Midland Michigan.

Randy Wackerle ran very vibrant and successful youth programs from 1977 to 2006 at the “Old Bay City Y.” Over one thousand young people went through Wack’s programs. Several continued to play paddleball and remained in the paddleball community for an extended period of time. Some of Wack’s students began top-notch tournament players including: Chad Krager, Bob Groya, Mike Czabala, Chad Schwall, and Mike Heinz.

Paddleball and racquetball were considerably more popular in the mid to late 1970s into the early years of 21st century. Both sports have seen a noticeable decline in popularity in the last fifteen years or so. There are several initiatives taking place across the country attempting to reverse this trend. I know of no initiatives that are more encouraging than those in Mid-Michigan.

Exhibit A: The 2018 NPA National Doubles Tournament had seventy-five participants, many playing in two divisions. It was the largest NPA paddleball tournament of year and the biggest we have had in Michigan in several years. Twenty-seven of those players reside in Mid-Michigan. Two additional players grew up in the region but live elsewhere now: Mike Czabala from Camarillo, California and Andrew Price from Chicago.

There is paddleball for players of all ages in Mid-Michigan. Reflective of this, the oldest and the youngest players in National Doubles were from Mid-Michigan: Veteran tournament player 82 year-old Don Traxler is from Midland and first year player 13 year-old Chad McIntyre is from Standish. Trax was awarded the Earl Risky Trophy in 2003 for significant contributions to the sport, has won several national titles, and was inducted into the NPA Hall of Fame last year. Chad shows great promise.



Witness: An interview with Don McIntyre, a new enthusiastic player from Standish, Michigan, one of several new Mid-Michigan paddleball players. Chad Krager, when I asked about Don’s involvement in paddleball, noted: “He’s good testimony that you can love racquetball and then fall in love with pball too.”



JO: I understand you played racquetball before you started playing paddleball. What’s your history?

DM: My father Doug McIntyre taught me how to play racquetball about 3 years ago. I learned stroke mechanics and the fundamentals of the game from him. He played racquetball at the peak of the game and was an A level tournament player who has earned lots of tournament victories around the state. We started playing together and had been playing regularly a couple of years when I entered the Michigan Singles State Championships tournament in March of 2017 in the C division and won it.

JO: When and why did you start playing paddleball?

DM: I would go to the facilities in the area looking for a racquetball game and often times there was no one to play. Racquetball seems to be on the decline in Mid Michigan, but,

there were all kinds of guys playing paddleball. Guys like Wiz, Greg Keenan, Adam Kohler, Jim Price. I would play some racquetball with them. They were always talking about giving paddleball a try. So, I gave it a try. I entered my first paddleball tournament this past fall with a borrowed paddle and won the C-Division. As I got to know the players in the tri-cities, there really are some great people involved in the sport.

JO: Who’s in your group?

DM: I play at the Bay City YMCA with the gang there, at the Saginaw YMCA with my father Doug McIntyre, my two sons Chad McIntyre and Brett Tull, and at Delta College.

JO: What does Mid-Michigan offer in the way of paddleball?

DM: We can play any day of the week at the Bay City Y. Just about anytime we want to. There are drop-ins at the Saginaw Y at noon Mondays and Fridays and Tuesdays, Thursdays at 5 p.m., and Saturday morning. At Delta College, Wednesday at 5:00 in the evenings and Saturday at 9:00 in the mornings. In Midland, you can play on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings. We have had a large group of novices playing at the Saginaw YMCA on Tuesdays. It used to be open racquetball night, now it’s pretty much all paddleball.

JO: What did you think of the Open final at National Doubles?

DM: An electrifying final. It is hard to imagine that we can watch a match like that for free. If you went to see the US Open Championships which is pro racquetballs biggest event of the year, it would cost a lot of money to see the best of their sport.

JO: How do the players in the Open final compare to those in the racquetball championships?

DM: Those in the paddleball final are great. They are at the top of their sport for a reason and are tremendous athletes.

JO: Do you have any suggestions?

DM: I’m new to this game but maybe change the games from 21 to 15. In the final, it was very fast paced. The players were hurting near the end. The points lasted a long time and particularly with singles, 21 is a challenge for many, and it’s possibly hurting tournament registration numbers.

Exhibit B: Mid-Michigan hosted seven paddleball tournaments in the 2017-2018 season: November 4th Saginaw Doubles, November 18th The Turkey Shoot in Bay City, December 9th NPA’s Brigham Classic in Bay City, February 3rd 41st Bean Smith Doubles in Bay City, March 24th King-Queen/Prince-Princess of the Court in Saginaw, April 7th 6th Annual Wack Attack Paddleball Tournament in Bay City, and May 5th The Saginaw Singles Paddleball Tournament .

There is not another area in the country that offered as many indoor paddleball tournaments this past year. Mid-Michigan paddleball tournaments are affordable. Most of their local tournaments cost a player between \$20 and \$30. These one day tournaments proved to be very popular. Many reaching entry limits at or before the entry deadline.

Exhibit C: There is solid leadership in Mid-Michigan from Jim Price, Chad Krager, Mike Wisniewski, Randy Wackerle, and Karl Briggs. Don McIntyre is doing a lot of developmental work with novice players, so may well be joining this notable group. Vice President Jim Price, Chad Krager, and Mike Wisniewski serve on the National Paddleball Association’s Board of Managers. Randy Wackerle is an x-longtime board member. Jim, Chad, Wiz and Wack have all been awarded the Earl Risky Trophy for significant contributions: Jim—this year, Chad—2008, Wiz—1985, Wack—1982. These leaders have the confidence and the reliable support of their paddleball communities.

There have been eight NPA Sportsmanship Award winners from Mid-Michigan: Jody Henning—this year, Karl Briggs—2017, Adam Koehler—2016, Mark Piechoiak—2007, Ron Malecki—2004, Paul Chirtz—2003, Mick Czabala—2000, Randy Hoyle—1998, and Randy Wackerle—1981.

Conclusion: We are witnessing a boost from Mid-Michigan. Paddleball is better because of it. Thanks you