

NPA NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL PADDLEBALL ASSOCIATION

2019 NPA National Doubles Championships

By Aaron Embry

This year's National Paddleball Championships held at the Meridian Sports Club March 3rd had something for all ages, with the oldest two players being Len Sonnenberg and Bruce Bear at 76 years young, and the youngest players were Victoria Rodriguez and Cesar Avila, both 11. The tournament offered a different format this year. All the divisions were pool play or round robin, so there were lots of matches to be played.

In the end, Gearbox's Emmett Coe and his partner Chris Crowther were crowned the Men's 2019 National Doubles Open Champions. In the finals, Emmett and Chris were able to get the victory over Gearbox sponsored player Steve Price and Mike Czabala. Price and Czabala took Coe and Crowther to a tie breaker (in paddleball, both semi and final round matches are 2 out of 3 games to 21 points), but Coe and Crowther played a great tie breaker to win the match. Emmett Coe showed why he continues to dominate with his amazing ability to cover the court and his exceptionally quick hands. Coe has now won six Open Doubles titles with three different partners since 2012. He is on track to become one of the best players in the history of the game.

In the Women's Doubles Open draw, we witnessed something very special...we had a glimpse of the future. For the first time in the history of paddleball, an 11 year old become a National Doubles Open Champion. Gearbox sponsored players Victoria Rodriguez, who is 11 year old, and Roxanne Rehling become the Women's 2019 National Doubles Open Champions. Rehling and Rodriguez only lost one game on their way to the championship. Rehling showed great court coverage and hit many of the winners, while Rodriguez consistently ripped balls from all angles.

A special thanks goes out to Edie Kromer and Victor Rodriguez for making the event enjoyable and run so smoothly.



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

Results of the 2019 National Doubles Championships

Fullerton, California

Pro/Open

1st Emmett Coe (San Diego, CA) & Chris Crowther (Carlsbad, CA) 17-21, 21-2, 21-3

2nd Mike Czabala (Camarillo, CA) & Steve Price (San Diego, CA)

A

1st Emmett Coe, left handed, (San Diego, CA) & Grant Leber (Tempe, AZ) 21-8, 21-10

2nd Steve Tillotson (El Cajon, CA) & Rigo Marin (San Diego, CA)

3rd Adam Koehler (San Jose, CA) & James Owens (Ann Arbor, MI)

BC Combined

1st Grant Leber (Tempe, AZ) & Jim Doyle (CA) 21-9, 21-9

2nd Dennis Conzemius (CA) & Juan Miranda (Fullerton, CA)

3rd Hugo Rodriguez (Fullerton, CA) & Pio Mortero (Fullerton, CA)

45+/55+ Combined

1st Peter Callstrom (San Diego, CA) & Paul Thiel (La Jolla, CA) forfeit

2nd Charlie Brumfield (San Diego, CA) & Jamie Lawson (San Diego, CA)

Women's

1st Roxanne Rehling (San Diego, CA) & Victoria Rodriguez (Fullerton, CA) Undefeated

Mixed

1st Steve Tillotson (El Cajon, CA) & Roxanne Rehling (San Diego, CA) 3 wins, 0 losses

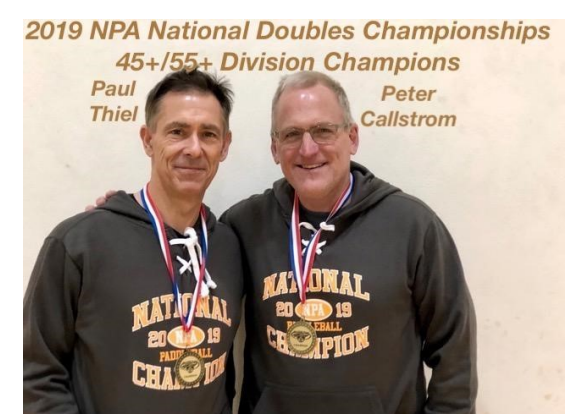
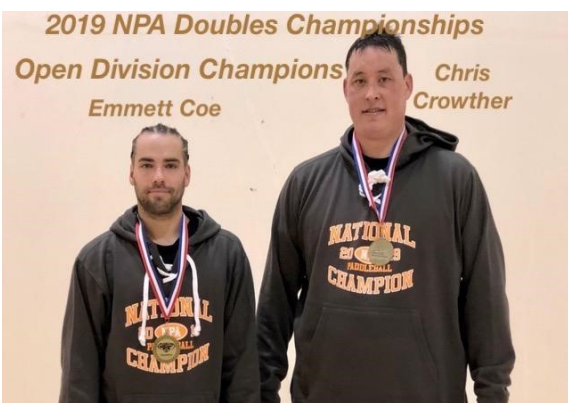
2nd Aaron Embry (San Diego, CA) & Edie Kromer (Escondido, CA) 2 wins, 1 loss

Juniors

1st Cody Elkins (Los Angeles, CA) 3 wins 0 losses

2nd Cesar Avila, (Wilmington, CA) 2 Wins 1 loss

(Photos on following page)



National Doubles Played in Round Robin Format

by Jamie Lawson

The 2019 NPA National Doubles was new and different in a lot of ways. Firstly, it was held at a new venue, the Meridian Club in Fullerton, CA. Fullerton is in Orange County. It's south of Los Angeles but close enough that many people live in Fullerton and work in LA. But Orange County has its own unique variation on LA culture and attitude. The Meridian Club is a monument to the glory days of racquetball. There are more than 20 courts, spread across three floors. Most of those are empty during this tournament, though some on the second level have ping pong tables set up and the Fullerton Table Tennis Club is practicing. There's pickleball outside, but since it's raining, they're playing on the cramped interior floors of the parking structure. There will be no high lobs today.

The players are different, too. Orange County has supported the tournament reasonably well, so there are some new faces, including some women and juniors, and some women who are juniors. Orange County is well known for its racquetball, especially outdoor racquetball. Marina Park is in Huntington Beach, just west of Fullerton, and they host a couple of the biggest outdoor racquetball tournaments in the world. The World Outdoor Racquetball Championships at Marina Park are lauded as the biggest party in racquetball, and they keep a huge outdoor grill going full speed to feed the hungry revelers. We've got a much smaller version of that here in Fullerton as the inclement weather has forced the small taco grill from Alberto's Mexican Food into a crease in the parking structure where they are protected from the rain but still can vent the smoke out.

For some reason, none of the heavies from Riverside have made this tournament. It's not an oppressive drive, especially on a weekend. The trip from Riverside to Fullerton is about a half hour. Most of the regulars from San Diego have made it, and even a few new faces from San Diego; people coming through the Kearny Mesa Paddleball League. But overall, the draws are a bit smaller, leading to another new feature: all the draws are round robins. Everyone gets to play everyone in their division, even in the open.

Emmett Coe and Chris Crowther are heavy favorites coming in, with Chris taking the left side. They've played together only once before. That was in the LA Open in Canoga Park last year, at what's now the Athletic Society, another of those relics of the glory days of racquetball with dozens of courts, most of which have been repurposed at this point. The Athletic Society is about another 45 minutes north of here. As a window into LA culture, distance is more commonly measured in time than in miles, and it's easy to see why. Freeways from Irvine, a bit south of here, to Ventura in the north, can be seven lanes wide on each side, and yet moving at less than five miles per hour because of the monumental traffic. Almost no time is immune from the gridlock. An old friend of mine, a psychologist and social worker who studied and kept statistics on such things in the LA area, said that people in the LA basin get numbed to traffic. They absolutely need to be someplace on time and so they work backwards to decide when they need to leave, then they get in their cars and turn their brains off for the duration of the ride, often commuting more than four hours a day. My social worker friend died in a rollover accident at three in the morning. It was the only time that the freeways were clear. Welcome to the jungle.

When they played the LA Open in Canoga Park, Emmett and Chris looked tough. No one really threatened them. They played Mike Myers and Tim Herman in the final and were never pushed too hard. That was a single elimination draw rather than a round robin. The format here is that the top two teams in the round robin (scored first by games won and second by points earned) will tee it up for a best-two-out-of-three final match.

Patrick Allen and Luis Avila are a couple of those Orange County racquetball players we talked about before, though Luis lives just on the LA side of the Orange County line about 30 minutes up the road from here). Both are pro racquetball players that are highly respected indoor and outdoor. This was the first time I'd seen either of them with a paddle. Their racquetball skills served them well, and they scored 16 against Chris and Emmett. They won three of their other matches, and if advancement had been done the basis of total points scored, they would have advanced to the final.

Nico Miramontes and Mario Meza are another Orange County team though technically, Mario lives a bit outside Orange County, about 30 minutes to the east of here. But whenever there's a big competition in Orange County, he's there to play. Nico and Mario are always tough together. I'm proud to have been part of their trial by fire in paddleball a few years ago. Charlie Brumfield and I played them in a knock-down-drag-out match at the now defunct Sorrento Valley Racquetball club. After the match, while Charlie and I were still gasping for air, Mario came over and said with a smile, "that was the most fun I've ever had on the court". Since then, we see them at most Southern California paddleball events, indoor or outdoor. They are great competitors, and in the round robin, scored 12 on Emmett and Chris. That was second best.

(National Doubles Article by Jamie Lawson continued)

Jacob Varela and Adam Koehler played together for the first time. Jacob is another guy you're likely to see in the quarterfinals of any big Southern California paddleball tournament. He got his trial by fire a few years ago at Sorrento Valley Racquetball where he quickly transformed from a pure racquetball player into a guy who could switch between games from racquetball to paddleball. Adam isn't from around here, he comes from "Team Wiz", but these two guys share a work ethic. They both play hard on every point, but Emmett and Chris were way too much and they only scored 2.

Paul Thiel and David Lorenz teamed up for this one. Racquetball players keep shaking their fingers at me for stealing Thiel from the racquetball roster. Hey, it wasn't me. But a couple years ago, Paul was playing elite level racquetball. He's been a paddleball reliable since, and the oldest player in the open draw (he and Pete Callstrom took the 45s). David Lorenz was a racquetball player who played at Northern Arizona University. He graduated about five years ago but is still young and fast. I haven't seen him with a strung racket in maybe four years, but he shows up pretty regularly with a paddle. David's dad, Paul ("Pappa Smurf") Lorenz is also a paddleball regular. They scored 5 on Emmett and Chris.

Finally we have Steve Price and Mike Czebala. Mike, a Michigan transplant who started in paddleball. He plays a lot of racquetball these days because that's what he can find in Ventura, but paddleball has always come first. Steve is a former racquetball pro whom Brumfield lured, with a paddle, back onto the court a few years back. Steve hits the ball as hard as anyone, has a great kill shot, and gives his all. And while they only scored 7 against Chris and Emmett, they won all of their other matches and that got them into the final with Chris and Emmett.

The first game of the final was shaping up to be a blowout. It was 17-2 with Chris and Emmett dominating Steve and Mike. But they seemed to let up just a bit and became slightly confused on coverage. Steve Price, while clearly tiring, still had just a bit left in the tank. And Mike picked up his game as well, moving fluidly, making his signature diving gets and punching his forehands into the corners from his right side position. Together, they assembled one of the most exciting comebacks I've ever seen, scoring 19 unanswered points to snatch the first game from the favorites.

The rest of the match did not go as well for Steve and Mike. Steve was clearly exhausted. He never completely gave up, but he'd obviously spent himself in the first game comeback. Meanwhile, Chris and Emmett had worked through the coverage confusion, and came back onto the court determined to win. Chris and Emmett took the second game 21-2, and the tiebreaker 21-3, sealing their first national doubles championship as a team. They didn't give any breaks in the last two games, and played like the machine they were at the beginning of the first game.

If there is a lesson to be learned from the 2019 National Doubles, it is that there are excellent players that you've never seen with a paddle. And if you bring paddleball to them, they will light up the game. Some of your old standby players might not be able to make it to a new location, but it's what we need to do to grow the game.

2019 NATIONAL PADDLEBALL ASSOCIATION NATIONAL SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIP AND EASTERN DOUBLES

By Cyrus Chinoy

This past weekend in the great State of Michigan, the [National Paddleball Association](#) held the 2019 National Singles Paddleball Championship (in partnership with [Gearbox Paddleball](#)) at the beautiful [Davison Athletic Club](#) in Davison, Michigan.

About 45 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 organizing a great tournament. They did an awesome job of organizing this fun event.

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. He is a great ambassador for Paddleball and is always receptive to listening to ideas and in keeping to grow the sport.

I would also like to recognize Lorri Brigham, who does so much hard work logistically from helping organizing tournaments, helping at the tournament desk getting the players signed in and registered. She is always very kind, warm, friendly and has a great personality.

Thank you as well to [Aaron Embry](#) and [Emmett Coe](#) of Gearbox Sports for both coming here to Michigan, all the way from California for the entire week and holding Paddleball Demos in different cities prior to the tournament on Saturday in order to introduce the game to new and old players, try out new Gearbox equipment and play against the pro Emmett Coe. Thank you very much gentlemen for all your hard work and dedication in helping to grow the sport of Paddleball.

Plenty of food with lunch and dinner provided were included, along with drinks and snacks provided throughout the weekend and players were very appreciative of that. We even had a nice dinner on Saturday night with yearly awards passed out to recognize Paddleball players for the year in terms of contribution and gamesmanship.

In addition, a 50/50 raffle drawing was held with half the amount going to the lucky raffle ticket holder. Prizes also included, a new high-powered Gearbox Paddle, a premium Gearbox athletic bag, and a pair of Gearbox eye guards. Just more ways the National Paddleball Association engages with their players and takes care of them. It is much appreciated by all players.

This year the 2019 Sportsmanship Award winner was [Andrew Pappas](#) and rightfully so. Andrew is a pleasure to play with on the court and great to get to know off the court. Well-deserved Andrew.

In addition, this year the 2018 Earl Risky Award for major contributions to Paddleball went to [Mitch Larson](#) and [Karl R. Briggs](#). The Remsberg Award for a young player who displays sportsmanship and skill in 4 wall Paddleball went to Hugo and Victoria Rodriquez.

Plenty of great action was seen in the singles Pro/Open, A, B, C, and Vintage divisions with players battling it out on the courts with great shots all weekend long, along with plenty of doubles action as well in those divisions.

In the Open/Pro division (to no one's surprise) Finals, it featured arguably the top 2 players in the world in Paddleball in [Emmett Coe](#) from California and Andrew Price from Illinois (although he's always our local Michigan player). Both of these tremendous athletes are

For my personal experience, this was my first National Paddleball Singles Championship that I have participated in and I knew no matter who I played, I was going to learn something new, but am always ready to go to battle and welcome any challenge.

In my first singles match, I went up against Paul Carr from Lansing. I started the match out on a hot serving streak and scored a bunch of points way too fast. I knew it couldn't be this easy and boy was I right. Paul came back with a vengeance and scored a bunch of points himself tightening up the match. Paul had tremendous speed and got to so many shots and kept them in play. He made me run for a bunch of shots as well, which made for a back and forth match indeed. In the end, I was lucky to close out the match in 2 closely contested games. Tremendous playing by Paul. He had a bunch of crafty shots and dinks that made this a difficult, but fun match to play.

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Headed into the semifinals, I already had some extreme motivation to play my next opponent, the talented [Dennis Dinauer](#). You see, Dennis was matched up against my friend and doubles “Ride or Die” partner Howie “Snacks” Webb in the first round and beat Howie in a close 3 game tiebreaker. That’s all the motivation I needed to pick up Howie and try to avenge his loss. After a brief introduction to each other, Dennis had mentioned that he’s from the Bay City area and plays with 9-time National Champion and Paddleball legend Mike Wisniewski aka “The Wiz”. After hearing him tell me that, I instantly knew that this would be a tough match.

Into battle, we go.

Dennis and I started the match going back and forth for a little bit trying to feel out each other’s game as we’ve never played one another. After a bit, Dennis got into a good groove and started to pull away a little bit scoring points easily hitting great pinch and passing shots. I couldn’t get anything going like I wanted to. Something clicked for me then as I started to slowly claw away at his lead and worked my way back into the match. Dennis and I kept going back and forth again and then I got onto a little roll and pulled away to win the first game.

My momentum carried me into the second game as I had to change my strategy not wanting to repeat my first games start. I began to serve a little more like how I wanted and began to build a lead. Dennis still kept hitting great shots I couldn’t get, but I was determined to stick with my game plan and keep putting myself in the best position I could. Dennis didn’t make it easy because he kept battling and hitting shots to end rallies quickly. I got on a good roll then again and was hitting better shots. Fortunately, I was able to win the second game and close out the match.

Dennis was definitely a tough competitor and a very skilled player. He was hitting great shots, moved me all over the court and just had an all-around great game. It was great playing and learning some new shots that I hadn’t seen before. Dennis, thank you very much for the games. It was a lot of fun and I appreciate the opportunity to play against you. Thank you for your sportsmanship and overall positive competitiveness.

Into the Finals I go where I was faced against [Jim Price](#), the brother of Andrew Price. With a family history of Paddleball excellence in their genes, I joked with Jim that if he decides to hit any type of shot that Andrew does or decides to dive for a ball, I’m leaving and retiring from the match ☹️. Both Jim and I started off the match trading shots and get into some sort of rhythm. I know Jim is a very experienced player and knows how to play this great game really well, so I had to do whatever I could to hit smart shots and try to end the rallies as soon as possible. After a little bit, I started to find a groove and hit shots I wanted to. Jim still kept me guessing though with plenty of his excellent shot selection. Luckily, I was able to pull away a bit and win the first game.

In the second game, I seemed more comfortable in my shot selection and wanted to try and get ahead and stay ahead because I knew plenty well the experience Jim has in this game is immeasurable. I had to take more calculated risks than I normally wanted to in order to end the rallies quickly. In the end, I, fortunately, won the second game, the match and the B National Singles Championship.

I have a tremendous amount of respect for Jim and his Paddleball experience as well as a person, having got to know him off the court for the past few years. Jim, thanks very much

ONTO DOUBLE MATCHES NOW.

My normal doubles partner Howie “Snacks” Webb decided to try our hand and battle with other talented Paddleball players.

We matched up first with the very difficult task of playing 2 very talented and experienced Paddleball players in Andy Pappas and Jim Cipponeri. Howie and I were in for a battle and we indeed got one.

Both teams went back and forth in the beginning to try and get a gauge of what the others were doing. Andrew and Jim played really well together showing us all the different types of Paddleball shots. Speaking of shots, Jim is a master at the “drop shot”. I have never in my life seen anyone attempt so many drop shots and successfully make them from all sorts of angles and heights. It was unreal and a work of art in my opinion. Jim was on fire all match hitting all sorts of drop shots on us and kept us guessing. On the other hand, Andy was serving really consistently and hit key shots at the right time. Their combined play helped them win game 1 and put us in a hole.

As for game 2, we tried a few different things and started to get into a little groove. Of course, Jim continued to hit his drop shots and Andy continued to serve well and hit consistent shots. Howie and I kept battling though and kept ourselves in the game. In the end though, Andy and Jim’s experience and shot selection proved to be the right recipe as they took game 2 and won the match. They both played fantastic and they absolutely deserved the win. Andy and Jim, thanks very much for the games and teaching Howie and I some valuable lessons in continually learning this sport. We appreciate it.

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Although not what we wanted, that match shifted Howie and I into the drop-down C division where we still had a shot at winning a division. Next up was our fellow friend and racquetball player Mike Stetz and his partner Doug Markham. Howie and I started out on fire in this match serving well and hitting all the shots we wanted. We got out to a huge lead and never looked back taking the first game. We continued our same plan in game 2 and developed another huge lead on Mike and Mike. We both served well and tried to end rallies as quick as possible. In the end, we took game 2 and that moved us into the finals.

In the Finals, we ended up playing Kerry Snow and John Letendre. We never played this left handed, right handed team, but we went in with a positive game plan and tried to put it into action. Both teams went back and forth in the beginning trading points, pinches and kill shots. Kerry had some great kill and passing shots, while John was running down a lot of our shots, keep rallies alive and hitting great shots himself Howie and I changed our serving strategy a little bit, learning it from our previous match and it worked to our advantage as we started to build a lead and eventually helped in us winning game 1.

As for Game 2, we tried to recreate our game 1 success by continuing to do what was working for us. Howie and I maintained our strategy trying to stick to the plan and keep the rallies as short as possible. Kerry and John kept battling all game long hitting the shots they wanted to. In the end, Howie and I pulled ahead for good, winning game 2, the match and the C Division title. Kerry and John, great meeting and playing you both. You both played really well and it was a pleasure to play with you both. Lots of fun and competitiveness from you both. Appreciate it.

Howie, my brother, we played great together as usual in this fairly new sport to us, but nothing ever really changes as we know where each other is going to be and covers each other's back. Great shooting and playing your game and giving it your all. You played awesome brother and it is always a joy to play with you and compete with you. Not the exact result we wanted, but proud to share the C division title with you as we keep moving up the ladder in this great sport.

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 getting advice from them. 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 for me, getting to know each other on a more personal level and just enjoying each other's company while playing this fantastic Paddlesport.

Thank you to my sponsor Gearbox Sports for all your support, passion, great products, great events and overall family atmosphere.

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

Congratulations to all the Champions!

2019 NATIONAL SINGLES AND EASTERN DOUBLES RESULTS

NATIONALS SINGLES

Pro/Open Division

1st Emmett Coe (San Diego, CA) 21-6, 21-4

2nd Andrew Price (Chicago, IL)

A Division

1st Sam Baldori (East Lansing, MI) 21-15, 21-18

2nd Luis Romero (Royal Oak, MI)

3rd Nathan Tucker (Davison, MI)

B Division

1st Cyrus Chinoy (Detroit, MI) 21-9, 21-4

2nd Jim Price (Freeland, MI)

Consolation Paul Carr (Lansing, MI)

C Division

1st Mike Stetz (East Lansing, MI) Forfeit

2nd Len Baldori (Haslett, MI)

3rd Rick Bhirdo (Birch Run, MI)

Vintage

1st Jim Cipponeri (South Lyon, MI) 100 points

2nd James Owens (Ann Arbor, MI) 97 points

3rd Rick Bhirdo (Birch Run, MI) 85 points

EASTERN DOUBLES

Open

1st Emmett Coe (San Diego, CA) & Sam Baldori (East Lansing, MI) 19-21, 21-14, 21-16

2nd Brandon Creamer (East Lansing, MI) & Nathan Tucker (Davison, MI)

A

1st Ryan Minto (Davison, MI) & Luis Romero (Royal Oak, MI) 21-17, 21-14

2nd Ted Wray (Jackson, MI) & Robert Stone (Jackson, MI)

B

1st Paul Carr (Lansing, MI) & Jim Price (Freeland, MI) 21-3, 21-18

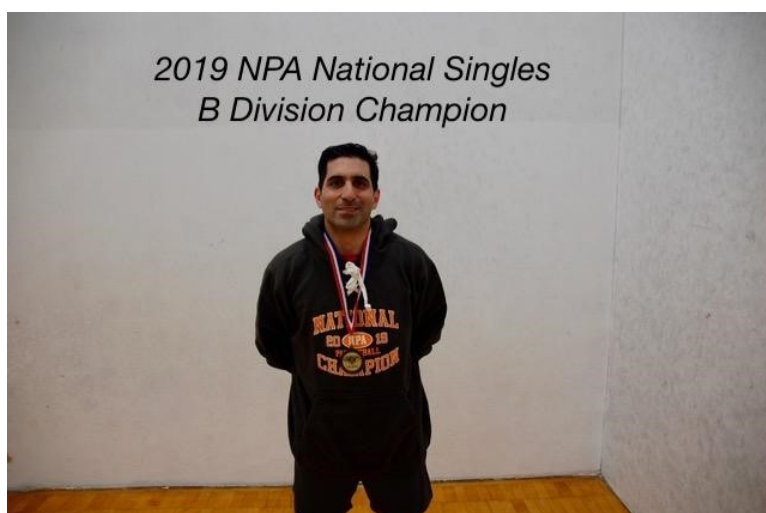
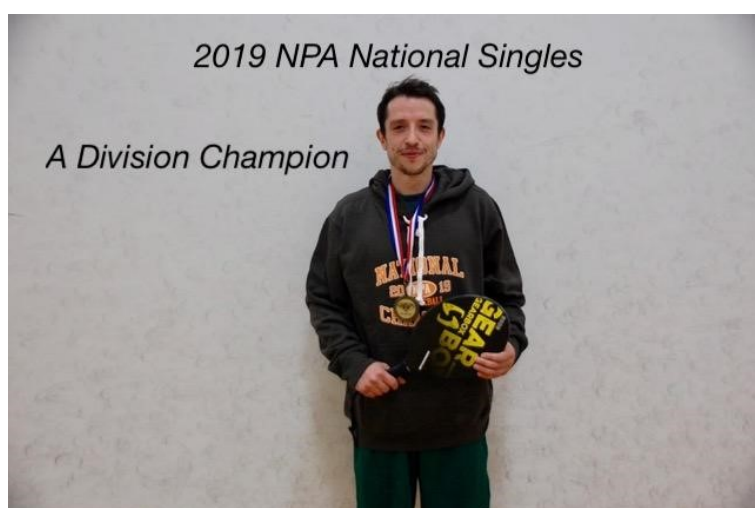
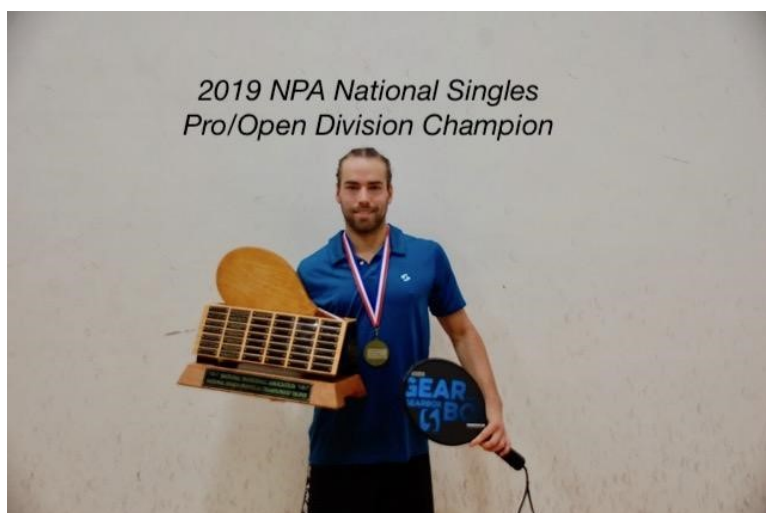
2nd Andy Pappas (Detroit, MI) & Jim Cipponeri (South Lyon, MI)

C

1st Howie Webb (Detroit, MI) & Chyrus Chinoy (Detroit, MI) 21-5, 21-6

2nd John Letendre (Waterford, MI) & Kerry Snow (Clarkston, MI)

2019 NATIONAL SINGLES CHAMPIONS

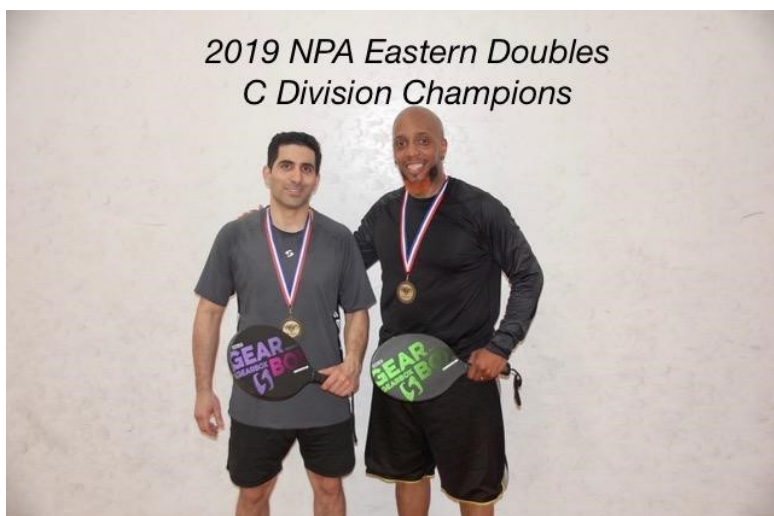


2019 EASTERN DOUBLES CHAMPIONS

2019 NPA Eastern Doubles
Open Division Champions



2019 NPA Eastern Doubles
C Division Champions

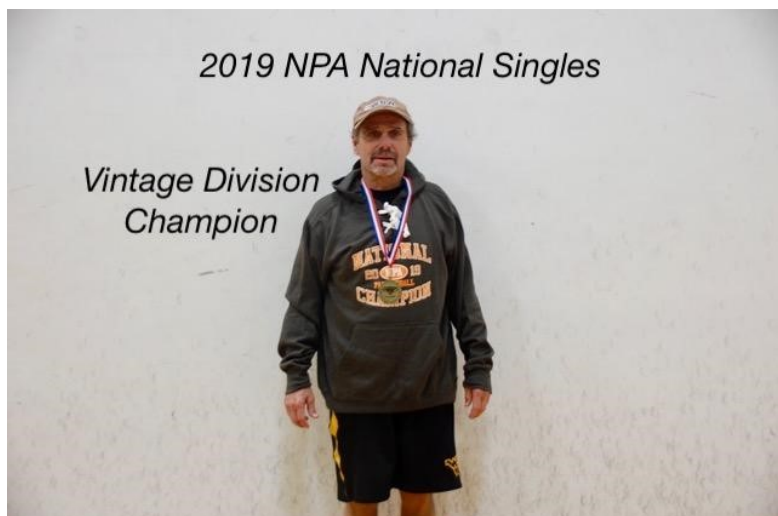


2019 NPA Eastern Doubles
B Division Champions



2019 NPA National Singles

Vintage Division
Champion



2019 Remsberg Award Winners

By Jim Owens & Aaron Embry

At the 2019 NPA National Singles Championships, Victoria and Hugo Rodriguez were named the 2019 Remsberg Award Winners. The Remsberg Award is intended "To acknowledge an outstanding young player who demonstrates talent, sportsmanship and a love of the game."

Victoria and Hugo reside in Fullerton, California and are the children of Victor Rodriguez, an avid outdoor and indoor paddleball and racquetball player, and the local tournament director of the 2019 NPA National Doubles Championships.

It was a lot of fun to watch Victoria and Hugo play paddleball. They are both extremely intense, very talented, exhibit considerable potential, and demonstrated good sportsmanship on the court.

At National Doubles, Victoria teamed with Roxanne Rehling to win the Women's Open Championship, and Hugo claimed 3rd place in the B/C Combined Division with Pio Mortero. Victoria was 11 years of age, and Hugo was 13. Very impressive results considering they were playing with and against adults.

In addition to their impressive play at Nationals, they did a lot of work helping make the tournament a success. They pitched in with their father preparing the generous food offering at the tournament, the two of them sold the bulk of the fundraising 50-50 tickets, and aided the tournament desk staff with a number of tasks. Overall, they were a joy to be around.

Victoria and Hugo Rodriguez are undoubtedly worthy recipients of this prestigious award, and we look forward to seeing them compete in the future!



2019 EARL RISKEY AWARD

By Jim Price

Congratulations to Mitch Larson and Karl Briggs for receiving the 2019 Earl Risky Award. The Risky is awarded to individuals who have demonstrated significant contributions to the sport of Paddleball.

This year's duo have certainly made an impact on the sport. Together, they have promoted, organized and participated in a multitude of events in Michigan, New Mexico and Illinois.

Mitch has been steadfast with his commitment to play and promote events. He is one of the first to rally those in the Saginaw area to support events in other locations. At the club level he is always looking to introduce new players to the game. He has approached many racquetball players, handed them a paddle and showed them the game. He is warm and welcoming, in a Mitch Larson kind of way, to those that come to Saginaw for events. When the courts at the local college closed for renovation, Mitch made sure those players had a place play. He worked out special pricing and Paddleball court times for the Delta College players to play at the Saginaw YMCA. The Saginaw Y has been the host of many events in the past couple of years, Mitch has always made sure the events run smoothly, acting as a liaison between the club and event organizers.

Karl, much like Mitch has also make significant contributions to the game. Karl is the driving force behind the multitude of events held in Saginaw this year. He was instrumental in bringing back the Midwest Single on the schedule after offering up the Saginaw Y as the venue. He has sponsored all of the events held in Saginaw this year, helping to reduce the cost of events in order to attract new tournament players. Karl always has an idea on how to make the events better each time. Karl was the 2017 Sportsmanship Award winner and now adds the Risky to his long list of sports accomplishments.

The pair, who are close friends outside of the paddleball world, couldn't agree upon who should house the Risky trophy. As a compromise, they have it proudly and prominently displayed at the Saginaw YMCA.

Great Job Guys, the Mid-Michigan players are proud of you.



2019 SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD WINNER

ANDY PAPPAS

This year's, well deserved, winner of the 2019 Sportsmanship award is Andy Pappas. Andy is from the Detroit area of Michigan and usually plays with the Ann Arbor crowd.

Andy has played paddleball in almost every tourney (with a small time-out for hip surgery) since he began playing many years ago. Most tourney's playing in multiple divisions, with different partners. Andy is always gracious whether winning or losing. He always is well composed both on the court and off.

Jim Howland (another long-time Michigan player) had these comments about Andy... I've played with and against Andy many times in the past 30 years or so. He's a hard-nosed competitor and there were times I wanted to hug him, and also times I wanted to kill him. Through it all, I think he tries to be fair on the court. No matter what the outcome, off the court, he never carried over the controversial exchanges of the game. No matter how heated the play became, it was over when the game was over. He is always amicable with the other players and loves to talk paddleball with anyone. He's a student of the game and works very hard to be better at it. He's an NPA board member and cares very much about the game. He's a fine ambassador for paddleball, and a worthy recipient of the sportsman of the year award.

Congratulations to Andy, a well-deserved addition to this coveted award!



2019 Midwest Doubles

By Jim Owens, NPA President

The National Paddleball Association returned to one of its standard tournament sites in the past for the 2019 Midwest Doubles tournament, Schoolcraft College in Livonia, Michigan. The facility is impressive: six well maintained old styled courts, no glass walls, viewing from above. I personally think the courts are some of the best around, no press board here, the walls are solid concrete. The balls bounce in a very consistent manner on these courts.

The tournament players apparently had a very good time. The food was good. The play was competitive. The tournament ran ahead of schedule.

There were numerous close and exciting match throughout the day. The Open Final was extremely entertaining and exciting. The combatants: veteran team Chad Krager and Dennis Negrete verses one of NPA's better open level players in the Midwest, Brandon Creamer, and a 22 year old, primarily racquetball player, Nathan Tucker. Nathan seemed to improve with each round and in each game, demonstrating considerable potential especially on the left-side of the court. The veterans prevailed in a hard fought Open final; 21-12, 16-21, 21-17.

Complete results follow.

2019 NPA Midwest Doubles Results

Open Division

Champs: Dennis Negrete (Chicago, IL) & Chad Krager (Bay City, MI) 21-12, 16-21, 21-17

2nd Place: Brandon Creamer (East Lansing, MI) & Nathan Tucker (Davison, MI)

A Division (Drop-down from Open)

Champs: Greg Keenan (Bay City, MI) & James Owens (Ann Arbor, MI) 21-10, 21-6

2nd Place: Chris Johnson (East Lansing, MI) & Eugene Rush (Ypsilanti, MI)

3rd Place: Ron Harris (Ypsilanti, MI) & Jim Richter (Dexter, MI)

B Division

Champs: Dan Gauthier (Waterford, MI) & Marty Gauthier (Waterford, MI) 21-4, 21-18

2nd Place: Paul Toth (Westland, MI) & Bret Mitea Beverly Hills (Beverly Hills, MI)

C Division (Drop-down from B)

Champs: Pete Magar (Northville, MI) & Bob St. Clair (Livonia, MI)

2nd Place: Judy Shirley (Ann Arbor, MI) & Andy Pappas (Detroit, MI)

Vintage Division (Rotational Doubles 6 games to 15. Ranked by total points scored.)

Champ: Pete Magar (Northville, MI) 90 points—Undefeated

2nd Place: Al Leveque (Dearborn, MI) 73 points

Photos on following page

2019 Midwest Doubles Tournament
Open Division Champs

Chad
Kraeger

Dennis
Negrete



A Division Champs

Greg
Keenan

James
Owens

**2019 Midwest
Doubles**



B Division Champs

Marty
Gauthier

Dan
Gauthier

2019 Midwest Doubles



C Division Champs
2019 Midwest Doubles

Bob
St. Clair

Pete
Magar



2019 Midwest Doubles

Pete
Magar

Vintage Division
Champ



**2019 PIG ROAST (AND HUMAN SACRIFICE) GRAB-BAG
TOURNEY**

SATURDAY AUGUST 24TH

This year is going to see some changes to this long running event. For the first year Pickleball will also be offered – both events will be Grab Bag Doubles. With the declining attendance in the recent paddleball events it was felt that by offering two events we can double the entrants and double the fun!

The paddleball event will be held at the Kalamazoo YMCA and the Pickleball event will be held at West Hills Athletic Club. With the tourney events being held at two different venues you can only sign up for one or the other. As always, the Pig Roast & Party will be held at the VFW on Kilgore Drive...with all the great food, drink and fun!!!

The cost is \$40.00 for the tourney (\$15.00 for guest of players to attend the Roast). We will have a sign-up on the NPA website soon.

Report from Albuquerque

NMRacquetball.com

The first Rocky Mountain Doubles Paddleball Championships were held in Albuquerque January 25-27, 2019. The venue was Midtown Sports & Wellness. Sixty-five individuals registered over eight categories. The following US States were represented: Arizona, California, Colorado, Michigan, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. The following countries were represented: Great Britain, India, Indonesia, Mauritius, Nigeria, and USA. Aaron Embry and Emmitt Coe, both representing Gearbox, presented two pre-tourney evening clinics; one at the El Gancho Club in Santa Fe; the other at the host Midtown Club. Energy was strong, and quality of play was high. The New Mexico Racquetball Association, the thrust of the LOC, hosted a Saturday night banquet at the Ramada Plaza. Tim Baghurst, from the IRF, sparked the production of video streaming over the three days. Results follow:

Womens Open Martha Allen & Frossene King def Iva Espinoza & Ysabel Espinoza 21-8, 21-19

3rd Yvonne Grinnell & Marisa Reimers

Mens Pro Emmett Coe & Steve Price def Adam Koehler & Mike Wisniewski 21-7, 21-15

3rd (tie) Cameron Cannady/Riley Sievers & Ramon Gomez/Raaj Mohan

Mens A Peter Callistrom & Emmett Coe def Paul Karl Briggs & Paul Carr 21-6, 21-10

3rd Michael Garcia/Michael Ytuarte & Steve Gallegos/Paul Thiel

Mens Seniors Steve Price & Paul Thiel def Dominic Maestas & Carlos Juarez 21-15, 21-1

3rd Jonathan Gutierrez & Ken Weinman

Mens Golden Masters Peter Callistrom & Paul Thiel def Karl Briggs & Paul Carr 21-5, 21-9

3rd (tie) Richard Hammer/Gary Mazaroff & Jay Gray/Doug Perea

Mixed Open Beth Dermer & Aaron Embry def Iva Espinoza & Tim Baghurst 21-15, 21-10

3rd (tie) Pam Garcia/Raaj Mohan & Danielle Smith/Ramon Gomez

Mixed A Ysabel Espinoza & Chuck Espinoza def Martha Allen & Jay Gray 21-19, 21-18

3rd Roseann Fitzpatrick/Donovan Duran &

Melissa McCollough/Gabriel Harrington

Mixed B Yvonne Grinnell & Joe Williams def

Marisa Reimers & Tim Blasiman 21-20, 21-10

Gary Mazaroff, President NM Racquetball

2019 Bean -Smith Tourney

By Chad Krager

The 42nd Annual Bean-Smith Paddleball Doubles Tournament was held at The Dow Bay Area Family Y this weekend. The 2019 version saw 16 teams do battle on the four courts. Tough competition saw all three divisions end with tie-breaker finals.

In the Open Division Greg Keenan and Don McIntyre took down defending champion Chad Krager and his new partner Scott Rettelle in a hard fought match 21-15, 14-21, 21-18. The victory snapped an eight year win streak for Krager and Randy Wackerle.

In the A Division Jim Owens and Mike Heinz out-lasting Lance Krager and Paul Carr with a score of

21-16, 13-21, 21-16.

The B Division had repeat champs with Bill Jamrog and Pat O'shea hanging on to win over Ted Jevicks and Rick Kogleman 14-21, 21-11, 21-18. Finishing in third place was Trevor Keyes and Joe Martin.



Mid-Michigan Paddleball Series

This season, Mid-Michigan hosted 11 events beginning with the Bill Allen Memorial Doubles in Saginaw and ending with the National Singles in Davison. Events spanned Mid Michigan and included clubs in Saginaw, Bay City, Midland, Schoolcraft College, and Davison. With so many events being held in the area, we thought it would be a fun exercise to track player activity. Borrowing heavily from the WOR racquetball rankings, we set up a point system that rewarded those who frequently played in events and their achievements. Points were awarded based on the prestige of the event and how a player placed. At the end of the season, we had 94 different players participating in these events- from professional players like Emmett Coe and Andrew Price, to first time and junior players such as Kirk Yackle and Chad McIntyre.

Additionally, the events held in Saginaw helped raise well over \$1000 for the Saginaw YMCA Youth Programs

When the dust settled after the last event in April, a ranked list of the 94 players emerged. The top 10 players by points are as follows.

Don McIntyre	2050
Jim Owens	2050
Jim Price	1850
Greg Keenan	1750
Wiz	1700
Doug McIntyre	1525
Karl Briggs	1325
Paul Carr	1275
Trevor Keyes	1125
Joe Baldori	950

I think it is fitting that the winners of this turned out to be a tie between Don McIntyre and Jim Owens. Most of us know Jim Owens and his longtime commitment to the sport of paddleball. As the current President of the NPA, he continues to make appearances at events both big and small a priority. We know his prowess on the court continues to be strong after more than 40 (????) years of playing. Congratulations for an excellent year!

Don McIntyre is a relatively new player that came from a racquetball background, recently he turned the corner and fell in love with the game of paddleball. He dominates the court with a strong forehand and good court coverage. His zeal for the game has brought in many new players. He spent much of last season working with recent converts and new players including his father Doug and his son Chad. Don works very hard at getting better. He spent much of last season working with Mike “the Wiz” learning the finer details of the game.

Recognition for these two great players is being planned for the first Mid Michigan event held during the 2019-2020 Paddleball Season.

Karl Briggs, 2017 Sportsmanship and 2019 Risky award winner, has offered to sponsor the next season’s recognition and promises to make the events even better than last year.

Thank you, everyone, for participating in these events and making the tournaments held in Mid Michigan a success.

1st Trax Law Challenge

by Jim Price

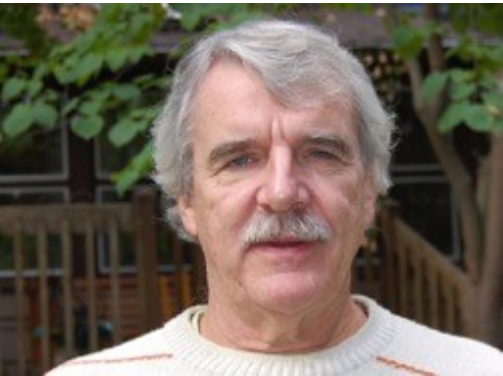
Congratulations to Lance Krager who was victorious in the King of the Court format event that honored Don Traxler.

Don is a staple at the Midland Michigan facility. In his 80's he still plays 3-4 days a week. Don started playing Paddleball in 1962, taking a break in 1963 to begin his career and start a family then starting again in 1964. He has several national championships under his belt and is in the NPA Hall of Fame.

His friends at the Community Center thought it would be a nice idea to have an event in his name. 15 players met this morning to play, share stories and reminisce.

Congrats to Don for his 55 years of playing this great game.





PRESIDENT’S CORNER

In this installment of the President’s Corner, I review some rules that are rarely discussed and may even occasionally be ignored.

When can the server’s partner come out of the service box? The service box is the area marked off at either end of the service zone where the partner is to stand during the serve.

Many years ago Mike Schafer, a talented paddleball player from Midland, and I, during a National Doubles Tournament at the Midland Community Center, noticed that several players routinely violated Rule 4.2 c. The partner of the server violated the rule by leaving the service box before the newly served ball crossed the short line, the back line of the service zone. At an NPA Board of Manager’s meeting later that year, I noted the pervasiveness of the violation and proposed that the rule be modified. After some discussion the board agreed, resulting in the service line, front line of the service zone, replacing the short line, back line, in rule 4.2c. Additionally, since it was now possible to legally be out of the service box before the ball passed the server’s partner, we added rule 4.2 e, so that if a player got hit with the ball while out of the box, the service would be lost.

How must the server’s partner stand during the service while in the service box?

At the National Single Championships and Eastern Doubles Tournament in April, I observed a very experienced paddleball player, when his partner served, standing facing the front wall while in the service box. None of the players or any of the spectator made a note of this clear violation of Rule 4.2c. During the service, the server’s partner is to have his/her back against the sidewall until the ball crossed the service line. This rule is frequently violated.

Rule 4.2 Position of Server

c) During the serve, the server’s partner is to stand within the service box (rule 4.6) with his/her back against the wall and both feet on the floor until the ball passes the service line (rule 2.1) with no part of either foot extending beyond the box.

Breach: Foot fault (rule 4.6)

d) If, while in the service box, the server’s partner is hit by a served ball on the fly, it is a dead ball.

Result: Replay serve

e) If, while out of the service box, the server’s partner is hit by a served ball on the fly, it is a dead ball.

Result: Serve-out

Is there an encroachment rule during the serve in paddleball?

It rarely occurs, but encroachment on a serve is against the indoor paddleball rules. I have talked with a number of experienced players who believe encroachment on a serve is not an issue. It is true that violations are very rare, but there is a rule. If a receiving player edges forward, it is easy for most players to lob over the aggressive player’s head. Many players routinely lob serves anyway. But, if the receiving players comes within five feet of the short line, it is a point for the server according to Rule 5.1(a).

Rule 5.1 RETURN OF SERVICE

a) The receiver must remain behind the receiving lines (5 feet behind the short line) until the ball crosses the short line.

Breach: Point to server

(continued on following page)

What is a screen?

During a rally, I often hear players call out screen when they cannot see ball because of an opponent's positioning. Technically, this is not a screen but a visual hinder. In the rules, a screen can only occur on a serve when the newly served ball comes within about 17 inches, the length of a paddle, near the server. The results between a visual hinder and a screen are significant. When a hinder occurs, be it visual or otherwise, the rally is to be replayed, a do-over. In the case of a screen, it is a fault. If the server has previously lost one fault, the result is a side-out.

Rule 4.6 Faults

Screen -A served ball that passes within a paddle's length of the server's body obstructing the view of the receiver.

Result: The serve is lost if two faults occur in succession.

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Jim Owens

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