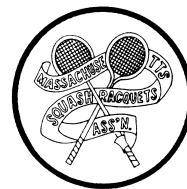


MSRA News



Massachusetts Squash Racquets Association Newsletter

President's Letter

After nearly thirty years of playing MSRA League squash and five years as your Treasurer, I am honored and pleased to address you as the President of this Association which has done so much for me. There is never a pause in the activity of our sport in Massachusetts, from junior and adult clinics, to tournaments and team competition by skill levels, club box leagues and summer fun with handicapped team play. Closing our fiscal year with a well-orchestrated Annual Meeting and State Doubles tournament, I do want to thank Eric Godes for two years of effort as your President. Well done! In the recent past, his work coordinating with the national organization, US Squash, has allowed us to benefit more from their initiatives even as we develop our own. We have converted our league play and tournament record-keeping to the national system on RailStation and we continue to work closely with them to improve its ease of use and to add functionality. We have sponsored several top tournaments each year in Massachusetts and our Junior program is the envy of the nation.

In wrapping up the 2006–2007 year, we must recognize the extraordinary effort put forth by the MSRA Junior Committee which ran four major tournaments with upwards of 200 participants each and provided weekend competition for novice players throughout the winter season. Tom Poor has become an expert at organizing draws and court assignments, even using radio communications with his committee members at the tournament site to keep the courts full of players and referees in position behind them. The entire tireless committee deserves recognition, including Chris Spahr, Lenny Bernheimer, Mike Loucks, Sharon Bradey, Gary and Barbara Rubin, Eric Kirby, Bill Nimmo, Jim Sullivan, Libby McClintock, Azi Djazani, and Chris Smith.

As we celebrate our sport here in Massachusetts, remember we are fortunate to have so many willing volunteers to create the events and the excitement we see all the time. We have over 1,000 members, but there are more squash players in the area. Help us to find ways to make the MSRA valuable to them so we can continue to increase our membership, support more courts and more squash professionals. I'm sure all of you have friends who are on the MSRA board. Talk to us and let us know what we can do for you.

—Sam Magruder
President



State Championships

Tennis & Racquet pro and native New Zealander Daniel Sharplin (above) and Union Boat Club's Preston Quick (below), finalist in the 2007 US National Closed tournament, battled it out for the Open 5.5 state title on May 7 at MSRA Finals Night at the Harvard Club. Quick was the winner by a score of 9-6, 9-4, 4-9, 9-5.

**Photos by Seth Packard,
www.squashots.com**





Doug Lifford gets ready for a backhand during his 2007 State Doubles championship win with partner Mary McKee (far right). They defeated Hope Crosier (far left) and UClub pro Chris Spahr. Photo by Seth Packard, www.squashshots.com.



Men's 70+ State Champion: Douglass Lee (Cambridge Racquet Club);
Finalist: Philip Clapp (Tennis & Racquet Club)



The MSRA sponsored the second annual Women's 2.5 League social. The event took place at Cambridge Racquet and Fitness Club. Enjoying the evening were (left-right): Phoebe Slanetz (Harvard Club), Bernadette Dixon (CFRC), Liz Davenny (CFRC), Lisa Macalaster (University Club), Betsy Johnson (Harvard Club), Maria Pelidis (CFRC), and Mary Ni (MSRA Grand Prix winner).

Tom Poor Awarded the 2007 President's Award

by Eric Godes, MSRA Past President

The MSRA President's Award is perhaps the most prestigious award granted in our state to the person who has contributed the most to Massachusetts squash. It is not an annual award, but rather can be presented at the discretion of the MSRA President if they feel there is someone truly deserving. This year's deserving recipient is Tom Poor.

While success on the squash court is not necessarily a prerequisite for this award, Tom has an unparalleled playing resume in both singles and doubles. In singles, Tom has won 14 major titles throughout the United States (4), Canada (9) and Mexico (1). His doubles track record is even more impressive with 31 major titles and still counting. Sixteen of these titles were accumulated in the United States, another 12 in Canada and an impressive 3 at the World's. Tom's most recent major title was the 2006 U.S. 60+ title with long-time partner Lenny Bernheimer.

As impressive as Tom's squash-playing career has been, we are fortunate in Massachusetts to have Tom working hard for us off the court as well. Known locally as the father of doubles squash, Tom has been running the state doubles tournament for over 15 years. Tom is also a past MSRA President, has been a member of the Executive Committee since 1980 and chairs the Investment Committee. Arguably his greatest local achievement has been his recent stewardship of the Massachusetts junior program, which has reached unprecedented heights through his leadership. Juniors from across the country travel to Massachusetts to compete in tournaments that are superbly organized by Tom and his committee. The MSRA Junior committee has even been recognized by our national governing body, the USSRA, as they've asked Massachusetts to host national team junior selection events.

Of course, Tom is almost as familiar to the national squash scene as he is here in Massachusetts. He Chairs the USSRA Endowment Fund, is a member of the USSRA Board of Directors, is part of the Doubles Committee and is founding member of the Hardball Doubles Rules Committee.

If that were not enough, Tom also has a philanthropic side, as anyone who has played at Squashbuster's in a court named after him will attest. He also serves Squashbusters as a member of their Investment Committee and Board of Directors.

While Massachusetts is rich in squash tradition, Tom Poor will certainly go down in history as one of the true great players in our state. On behalf of all Massachusetts squash players, we thank Tom for his innumerable contributions and congratulate him for winning this year's President's Award.


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Tom Poor (l) en route to victory over Lenny Bernheimer (r) in the 1982 35+ nationals, played in Washington, DC.

2006–2007 MSRA Junior Season Wrap-Up

by Libby McClintock, MSRA Junior Committee

This year was one of the most exciting years in Massachusetts junior squash with numerous MSRA local tournaments, our juniors performing outstandingly in the Selection and National tournaments, and growing numbers of kids starting squash and participating in junior programs. The MSRA Junior Committee organized and ran four tournaments this season: the New England Open in November, the Massachusetts Junior Open in January, the Frank Millet Championships (Selection) a week later in January, and the Massachusetts State Junior Championships in March. Our four tournaments drew over 700 players from all over the country and abroad, and over 1,400 matches were refereed by junior players and volunteers! Needless to say, about as many cups of coffee, sandwiches, and bananas were served to the hungry hoards. The kids from SquashBusters participated in large numbers in three of the tournaments, and again, were terrific and so helpful in every way.

In The New England Open, held in conjunction with the U.S. Open, our locals **Alli Rubin** won the Girls U15 Championship, with **Sarah Loucks** winning the Consolation. In the boys divisions, **Tripp Kaelin** won the Boys U13 Consolation, and **Mike Lillie** took the Boys U15 Consolation trophy. The Massachusetts Junior Open saw local girl juniors **Mikaela Johnson** win the U13 Consolation, and **Rhetta Nadas** was the Finalist in the U19. In the boys divisions, **James Fulham** was the Finalist in the U13, **Julian Kirby** defeated **Liam McClintock** in the Finals to win the Boys U15, and **Pehlaaj Bajwa** won the Consolation.

The following week, the MSRA Junior Committee hosted the Frank Millet Championships, named after our local squash legend, **Frank Millet**. There are four Selection tournaments held each year and are open to the top 32 ranked juniors in each division. Many of our Massachusetts players did very well in this tournament, including **Casey Cortes** winning the Girls U17 Title, **Liam McClintock** taking the Boys U13 Title and **Edward Columbia**, who claimed the Consolation trophy. **Julian Kirby** lost to the number one seed, **Gary Power**, and became the Finalist in the Boys U15. (For full details on the New England Open, Massachusetts Open and the Millet, see the Winter 2007 publication of the MSRA Newsletter)

Our final tournament, the Massachusetts State Junior Championships, was pulled together last minute by the efforts of University Club's **Chris Spahr** and a crew of dedicated parents and coaches. This event, held every year at the SquashBusters facility at Northeastern University, drew a large number of junior players, many playing in their first major tournament. Winners of the Massachusetts Championships Titles are: Girls U13 **Lily Grant**, U15 **Katherine Nimmo**, U17 **Sarah Crosky**, and U19 **Maura Neel**; and Boys U13 **Henry Bell**, U15 **Conor McClintock**, U17 **Taylor Foehl**, and U19 **Pedro Souza**. The Consolation winners are: Girls U13, **Zoe Carey**, U15 **Jennifer Huynh**, U17 **Caroline Palmer**, and U19 **Louisa Harrison**; Boys U13 **Edwin Hamlin**, U15 **Scott De Santis**, U17 **Ryan Mullaney**, and U19 **Andrew Fulham**. The Plate winners are: Girls U13 **Gloria Nwaocha**, U15 **Ida Kirnon**, U17 **Hoai Tran**, and U19 **Thuong Tran**; Boys U13 **John McDonough**, U15 **Tahj Harvey**, U17 **James Lee**, and U19 **Mikhail Darlington**. Congratulations to all of you! In addition to the MSRA tournaments, **Sharon Bradey** ran the Harvard Future Stars in February at The Harvard Club, and the squash committee in Williamstown organized the Purple Cow Junior Open in November and the Berkshire Junior Open in March.

The US Junior Open was held in Seattle, Washington, last December. In spite of the storm that cut off power to most of Seattle during the tournament, several of our local juniors arrived safely and competed in this event that drew kids from all over the world. **Liam McClintock** was the Finalist in the Boys U13, **Pehlaaj Bajwa** played in the U15, **Will Sullivan** and **Charles Gertler** played in the U17, and **Ryan Dowd** and **Amory Bennett** played in the U19.

The US Junior National Closed Championships was held this year in Baltimore in March. This tournament is the culmination of the four Selection events, and competition is very high for division Titles. Our Massachusetts girls who competed were **Corey Schafer**, **Alli Rubin**, **Casey Cortes**, and **Dori Rahbar** in U17, and in the U19 were **Cece Cortes**, **Elena Laird**, and **Rhetta Nadas**, who defeated the #4 seed, **Sarah Toomey**, and placed a commendable Fourth overall. The Boys U13 was represented by **Edward Columbia** and **Liam McClintock**, who took the U13 Championship Title. In the U15 there were **Pehlaaj Bajwa**, **Sam Sokolsky-Tiffit**, and **Julian Kirby**, who placed an impressive Fourth in the toughest boys division. **Will Sullivan** and **Charles Gertler** played in the U17, and **Ryan Dowd** and **Adam Vartikar** played in the U19. Based on a final national ranking and performance in the Selection

(Continued on next page)

2006–2007 MSRA Junior Season Wrap-Up

(Continued from previous page)

events, two of our Boston kids qualified for US Junior teams: **Cece Cortes** made the US Junior Women's Squad Team and **Liam McClintock** made the US Junior Men's Team that will compete against Canada this September in the annual "Battle of the Borders" held in Ontario.

The Silver US Junior Championships took place at Yale in April, and a large number of our juniors went down to compete. The Silver tournaments are open to those who are nationally ranked below the top 32 juniors. In the girls divisions there were **Haley Connor** in the U13, **Elizabeth Tapley** in the U15, and **Fannie Watkinson** in the U19. The boys divisions were represented by: **Carson Spahr** in the U11; **Tommy Dils**, **Benjamin Krant**, and **Tripp Kaelin** in the U13; **Scott De Santis**, **Toby Koekkoek**, **Greg Crane** in the U15. In the U17, there were **John Nimmo**, **Ryan Mullaney**, **William Watkinson**, **Matthew Baker-White**, and **Taylor Foehl**, who took the U17 Championship Title. Brookline resident **Adam Vartikar** was the only Mass junior competing in the Boys U19, and swept through the division taking the Championship Title. Our congratulations to all of these players who competed in these local, Selection, and National events!

On the school front, the ISL All-Scholastic MVP Awards are given to the top athletes who participate on independent school varsity teams that compete against other New England schools, all members of the Independent School League. In squash, these players had the best record of matches won in ISL competition. This year's recipients went to several local squash players, including seniors **Ryan Dowd** of Belmont Hill (he was undefeated at 15-0), **Ceci Cortes** of Milton Academy, and **Rhett Nadas**, a junior at Noble and Greenough. Both Nadas and Cortes were tied in their record in ISL competition. The ISL All League Players Award, given to the top nine players in the league, went to Massachusetts residents **Amory Bennet**, **Andy Bernard**, **Cece Cortes**, **Alli Rubin**, and **Sarah Loucks** of Milton Academy, **Ben** and **Sam Clayman** of The Groton School, **Ryan Dowd** of Belmont Hill, and **Rhett Nadas** and **Elena Laird** of Noble and Greenough. All League Honorable Mention went to **Dori Rahbar**, a freshman at Noble and Greenough. High School seniors who will be playing on college teams this fall are **Cece Cortes** at Harvard, **Ryan Dowd** at Yale, **Andy Bernard** at Bowdoin, and **Alex Place** at Colby. Best of luck to our graduating seniors!

There is an impressive number of juniors who are picking up the game of squash—something the MSRA Junior Committee and coaches welcome. Many local clubs are experiencing high demand for memberships, lessons, and junior programs. Fortunately, a team from the MSRA Junior Committee annually runs a program called the Junior League, which is designed for kids who are getting into the game and tournament play. The head of the team, **Azi Djazani**, scheduled six Sunday afternoons from October through April for juniors to come to Harvard's Murr Center and play from 2 to 5 pm. The kids, ranging in ages 8 to 16, were divided into five pods, based on their abilities, and played in round robins. Winners could then move up to a more advanced pod. The Junior League was the biggest this year with 65 to 80 kids showing up for each session, and Azi hopes for more kids next year. This growing and popular program could not have been successful without the assistance of **Tom Poor**, **Chris Spahr**, **Sharon Bradey**, **Chris Brownell**, and parent volunteers who consistently showed up to help coach and organize the pods. Great job to all the kids who participated, and a **huge** thanks to Harvard University for allowing the program to use the Murr courts for free.

Every year in May the MSRA Junior Committee likes to recognize Massachusetts juniors with awards for sportsmanship, most improved, and a camp scholarship. This year's recipients were: Best Sportsmanship: **Serena Fagan** and **Sam Sokolsky-Tiffit**; Most Improved Player: **Rhett Nadas** and **Ryan Mullaney**; and the Camp Award: **Alicia Forde** and **Christian Rodriguez**. Certificates were also given to a large number of juniors who had a Massachusetts ranking (based on USSRA ranking). Congratulations to all of you!

The MSRA Junior Committee looks forward to the squash season 2007-08, and hopes for another banner year in growing numbers of junior players, great tournaments, and many laughs and camaraderie. Squash is a fabulous sport for kids to participate in, regardless of their level, as it is a life-long activity. We look forward to seeing you all this fall.

Not the Ming Dynasty Yet!

2007 MSRA Doubles Tournaments

by Tom Poor

Ming Tsai was not quite able to transfer his award winning chef's talents to the doubles court this year, but he came darn close. After losing the first two games of the final to **Sandy Tierney & Pat Malloy**, Ming and partner **Preston Quick** clawed their way back, winning the next two at 9, primarily from Ming's reverse corners off the back-hand side. In the fifth, the continual hammering finally wore Ming down as Sandy & Pat won their first State A title, which was particularly gratifying since Sandy was forced to withdraw last year with injuries.

The A final was one of many exciting matches on finals night, May 7, held in conjunction with the MSRA's annual meeting at the University Club. The evening was the culmination of the 2007 State Doubles, run over two months and including 145 players in eight divisions.

Tierney & Malloy didn't have a cake walk to the finals either. In the semis, they ran into second-seeded University Club pros **Chris Spahr & Nadeem Osman** who many thought were the tournament favorites. Leading 2-1 in games, Tierney & Malloy led 14-10 in the fourth, only to lose five points in a row. They took the fifth, avoiding Nadeem who hit the ball so hard Sandy was hit twice with balls headed for the back wall. In the upper half, Preston & Ming dispatched **Tom Poor & Dan Sharplin** in four, then handled **Tyler Hill & Glenn Prichett** who had delivered this year's shocker in the quarters with a five game victory over top seeded and five time state champions, **Doug Lifford & Jamie Fagan**. Jamie claims to have "hit bottom" and is now in full time training for next season.



2007 State C Doubles (L-R): Winners John Hailer/Jon Hartnett; Finalists: Pepper Riley/Tucker Jones

Another disappointed player was **Mike McKee**, winner last year of the Cs with **Neil Paterson**, but losers in the quarters this year to **Jon Hartnett & John Hailer** when Neil pulled up lame after winning the first two games. Never ones to let opportunities slip, Hartnett & Hailer went on to a four game conquest of **Steve Neumeier & Ken Swan** in the semis and a finals victory over **Pepper Riley & Tucker Jones**. The latter pair eliminated second seeded **Curt Lefebvre & Dean Williams** in five in the quarters, then eased by **Ben Bailey & Dick Whitney** in three. Interestingly enough, but often the case in the C's, not one seeded team made it beyond the quarterfinals.



2007 State A Doubles (L-R): Winners: Pat Malloy/Sandy Tierney; Finalists: Preston Quick/Ming Tsai

However, all was not lost for Mike since he happens to be married to perhaps the best women's player in the state, **Mary McKee**. She carried the family banner by first winning the Women's with **Robin Silver Grace**, coaxed out of retirement when Mary's sister Lee was forced to withdraw with a hip injury. They won in five over **Hope Crosier & Hope Prockop** in the finals after a close semifinal with rising stars

Margaret Elias & Liz Steffey. Margaret moved to our area from Philadelphia, a hotbed of doubles activity, and Liz acquired plenty of doubles savvy from her companion, Preston Quick, one of the top ranked professionals.

Mary was not finished. Later in the evening she returned to the court with partner **Doug Lifford** to meet **Hope Crosier & Chris Spahr** in the Mixed final. Although Mary & Doug had won this title twice before (2002 & 2003), they had lost the last two years to Mary's two sisters, Berkeley and Lee. With no sisters in sight this year, they stumbled the first game in overtime but won the next three. Chris & Hope had pulled out a five game semi over the aforementioned **Margaret Elias & Dave Adams**, a portent of perhaps another new wave. In the other semi, **Steffey & Quick** lost in three after winning a five game quarterfinal matchup with **Jenny Holleran & Scott Poirier**. Jenny's sister **Lauren & Brian McGrory** also lost in five to Steffey-Quick the round before. The Hollerans are the younger sisters of many time national champion Demer, now the owner and director of the new Fairmount Athletic Club outside Philadelphia.

While Chris and Nadeem were otherwise occupied, the third University Club pro, **Greg Vernick** was having his own problems. Entered in the B with **Joe Cortes** and unseeded, they were one of 25 teams in a draw notable for the high caliber of

(continued on next page)

2007 MSRA Doubles Tournaments

(continued from previous page)



2007 State B Doubles (L-R): Finalists: Andrew Matuch/Len Zide; Winners: Greg Vernick/Joe Cortes

those traits more in evidence than in the 50's. **Tom Poor & Lenny Bernheimer**, holders of many national titles, but now well into their 60's, turned back the clock one more time by defeating **Mark Panarese & Court Chilton** (relative babes as newly turned 50's) in the quarters, then a very close encounter with defending champions **Mac Davidson & Jon Ross** in the semis, and finally a four game victory over 2004 champions **Sandy Tierney & John Connolly**.

And then to prove that a man's grasp can exceed his age, 65-year old **Lenny** took the court again with partner **John Brazilian** in the 60's. They faced last year's finalists, **Ed Serues & Fran Donlan**, demolishers of **Poor & Pete Laird** in the semis. After a shaky start in losing the first game, John righted himself, leading his partner to a four game victory. Thus concluded Lenny's five tournament matches in the space of approximately 48 hours following his return from his winter home in Florida.

If there was youth and speed on the one hand, and age and guile on the other, the combination of the two was the essence of the Parent/Child tournament. Daughters were the strength of several teams –**Cece Cortes & Joe, Alli Rubin & Gary, Serena Fagan & Jamie**. Young sons carried the

eligible teams but as notorious as the C's for failed seedings. Witness **Hill & Prichett**, instant stars after their Lifford-Fagan victory in the A's, gone in the quarters. **John Frantzis & Jeff Rodman** (seeded 3); gone in the quarters. **Jon Hyett & Adam Simms** (2); gone in the quarters. **Rob Dewees & John Palfrey** (1) and former champions, lost in the first round. Amidst this wreckage, Greg & Joe inched along with a five game conquest of **John Brazilian & Brian McGrory**, a close win over Hyett-Simms, and a tense semifinal over **Gerry Kirschner & Scott Beebe**. The lone remaining seed (4), **Andrew Matuch & Len Zide** awaited in the finals. After winning the first two games, Greg's forehand began to find the tin, and Andrew's strength forced more errors. The fifth game produced the elimination of the last remaining seed at 11.

While the younger players were relying on speed and strength, the veterans could only remember those days while turning to guile and strategy. Nowhere were



2007 State Women's Doubles (L-R): Winners Mary McKee/Robin Silver Grace; finalists Hope Prockop/Hope Crosier



2007 State Parent/Child Doubles (L-R): Winners Joel and Matthew Kozol; Finalists Barrett and Tom Takesian

day, however, as **Barrett Takesian** led dad **Tom** into the finals over top seeded **Bruce & Dave Shulman**, and **Matthew & Joel Kozol** advanced over second-seeded **Peter & Pete Laird**. The lawyers Kozol won the final in four, holding down for this year at least, the prowess of the younger Takesian.

So, the winners can crow for the summer while the losers lick their wounds and the injured heal theirs. More excitement is in store as the Union Boat Club lays plans for a new doubles court, sure to bring in a new influx of players and making Boston a suitable venue for a major tournament with four courts in the city. This development, the large number of players in the States, and the emergence of younger players bode well for the future of the doubles game in Boston.

Adult Leagues: End-of-Season Reports

Women's 3.5/4.0

by Bry Roskoz, League Chair

The 2006–2007 season has been a transition year for the women's 3.5 league. Over the years, the number of players at this skill level has decreased and become more concentrated at a few clubs.

As a result, we changed the format slightly to have mixed club teams with three players each. As a result of the format change, the traditional 3.5 league powerhouse University Club team, which had won every year in recent memory, was divided into two teams. That left the field wide open for all teams to have a shot at the title.

Although the teams were even skill-wise at the beginning of the season, a series of injuries, travel and pregnancies put the University Club at a severe disadvantage that the Maugus/Harvard Club and Concord-Acton teams took advantage from the start. Maugus/Harvard Club constantly played up its youth with **Szilivi Szombati**, **Corey Schafer** and **Ella Witcher** while Concord Acton played its experience with the perennial Fab Four of **Kara Kardon**, **Margo Grossberg**, **Tina Wu** and **Naomi Bradshaw**. The end of the regular season saw Maugus/Harvard Club dominate with an amazing 71% of points and Concord Acton trumping the UClub teams with 53% of points.

The final showdown for true bragging rights was held on Wednesday, March 7th at The Maugus Club. Despite losing their captain and rising A player **Szilvi Szombati** to a work commitment, Ella and Corey with bench strength from **Betsy Hargreaves** took on the seasons veterans of Kara, Margo and Naomi. Playing in the third position, Naomi had to dig in during the third game where Betsy showed her usual toughness to fight off the match at double match point. Eventually Naomi who, being the tireless and unshakeable player that she is, stuck it out for the next several points then games and finally emerged victorious.

At the number two and one positions, Concord-Acton's experience wasn't enough to hold out the youth of the Maugus/Harvard Club players or as Concord captain **Kara Kardon** noted, "Okay, so we played women whose combined age did not equal either of our ages... but we got outplayed by two very skillful players." In the number two match, high school sophomore **Corey Schafer** came out firing on all cylinders and took the first game in the amount of time it took the ref to get a scoresheet... While Margo's ever present sense of humor kept her in it, it wasn't enough to overcome Corey's strength. At the number one position, Kara put on a strong show vs. Ella to start the match. According to captain Kara, "It took us ten minutes to get to four all... but then it only took her another ten minutes to finish off the match! Ella hits with such authority and speed—she got used to the court, found her groove and that was all she wrote.

Congratulations to the Maugus/Harvard Club team on their outstanding season and strong win in the finals! Have a great summer!

Women's 2.5

by Sarah Lemaire, League Chair

The women's 2.5 league had a great season from start to finish. The level of play this season was much higher than in previous years. As expected at the outset, The Maugus Club and SquashBusters teams battled it out in the final, after easily vanquishing Cambridge Racquet and Fitness and Concord-Acton, respectively, in the semifinals. Maugus emerged the victor in the finals, after leading the league for most of the season. Congratulations and best wishes to captain **Kerry Wellington**, and her teammates **Betsy Hargreaves**, **Lucy Bradley**, **Louisa Harrison**, **Debbie Harrison**, **Sabrina Davies**, and **Becky Lingard**.

The state tournament rounds, except for the final, took place at the Boston Racquet Club on a weekend in late March. Aply organized by MSRA women's tournament chair Dominique Farinaux-Dumas, we played some great competitive matches and got to watch some even better competitive matches in the W4.5 and W3.5 draws. The #1 and #2 seeds in the 2.5 draw, **Betsy Hargreaves** and UClub's **Beth Collins**, faced each other on Finals Night at the Harvard Club, with Beth winning in three games. Both players played superbly all year and are moving up to the W3.5 next year. Betsy was undefeated in 2.5 league play this year, earning a record of 10-0. I know the UClub team will miss Beth's excellent play at #1!

When I thought about the most improved players this season, three names came immediately to mind, and all three of them play for the SquashBusters team (uh-oh!): **Melissa London**, **Leila Ripley**, and **Liz Young**. Melissa has improved tremendously this year and chases down *everything*, as does Leila. Leila almost caused an upset in the first round, but went on to win four matches, enough to clinch the consolation. Liz also played well at the states, upsetting the #3 seed in the quarterfinals and reaching the semifinals, taking the first set from eventual champion **Beth Collins**. Watch out for SquashBusters next year!

Have a terrific summer, play a little squash, and we'll see you on court next fall! But before league starts, it'll be time to get ready for the Howe Cup. Don't forget to contact **Dominique Farniaux-Dumas** or **Coleen Phillimore** if you're interested in playing in the C or D draws.

50+

by Sam Magruder, League Commish

Boston Racquet Club takes the Senior Circuit crown

The 50+ League playoff participants weren't decided until the last match of the season when the surprising Milton team of **Paul Stakutis**, **John Catlin**, **Mike Spatola**, and **Bob Bray** "only" beat the #2 team in the league by 3-1. That one point was enough to put the Harvard Club into the coveted fourth position thanks to their 2-2 loss to #6 Concord-Acton by the decisive margin of 204 points to 203!

This set up the first week's playoff matches with #4

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Adult Leagues: End-of-Season Reports (cont'd)

Harvard Club against top-seeded Boston Racquet Club, and Maugus traveling to lower Beacon Hill to take on the Union Boat Club. **Keith Munsell** stretched out **Jon Smith** to a full five game struggle before falling. **Mark Dickinson** put a convincing bagel on **Bob Loring** at #1, while UBC's **John Smith** and **Archie McIntyre** ran through their overmatched opponents, **Larry Stone** and **Larry Hargreaves**, in three straight games each. Meanwhile, the Harvard Club was extending Boston Racquet Club on the other side of Beacon Hill. **Barclay Douglas** extended his undefeated streak to 10 games with a 3-0 defeat of **Tom Quinn**, whose usual winning shots were easily retrieved by the eventual winner. **Len Miller** put on a convincing display for the first two games over **Digger Donahue** before losing the third game as the handicap changes maxed out. He reverted to form in the fourth game for the win. **Ken Weber**'s amazing rookie season continued as he won the fourth game over **Sam Magruder** by 15-14. **Rip Hastings**, one of the truly active tournament squash players this season, dropped the opening game to **Jay Darby**, but then reeled off three straight games.

The final was a classic downtown match as Captain **Mike MacDonald** has his entire 16-man roster on hand to cheer, coach, kibitz, referee, and generally make things miserable for the visiting Boat Club. As usual, **Barclay Douglas** was untouchable with a 7, 6, 8 victory over **Bob Loring**. **Digger Donahue** played the handicaps perfectly against higher rated **John C. Smith**, taking advantage of his starting 2-point advantage to win two games, then dropping two to regain it and finally putting the hammer down with a 15-7 fifth game. **Ken Weber** took a game to get used to **Archie McIntyre**'s power and shot selections, before running him off of the court with the help of an amazing through-the-legs half-volley for a winner in the fourth and final game. **Rip Hastings** put the exclamation point on the match with a well-fought 3-1 win over **Jonathan E. Smith** to complete the sweep and reclaim their title after a one-year hiatus.

Open 5.5

by Dave Adams, League Chair

The Tennis & Racquet Club avenged their defeat to the University Club I team in last year's final with an impressive 3-1 win on Tuesday night. At the #1 spot, three-time defending state champ **Daniel Sharplin** was simply too much for **Pat Malloy**, winning 3-0. The match was marked by absurdly long rallies played at a furious pace. However, Sharplin's impeccable length and pinpoint accuracy carried him past the lightning quick Malloy.

In the #2 slot, **Mike Semprucci** won a hard-fought 3-1 match against Doug Lifford. The first two games were neck and neck, split 10-9, 9-10. In the following two game's, Semprucci's superior fitness and retrieving abilities pulled him through, although Lifford controlled most of the points. The UClub, missing league regulars **Rags Gupta** and **Scott Poirier**, called on new father **Andrew Matuch** (Alexander, 6 lbs., 5 oz., born March 10th) and world traveler **Tom Barth** (cab from the airport to the match) to fill the #3 and #4 positions. Papa Matuch, emboldened by the thrill of procreation, took **Chris Lang** down in four tough

games. At #4, the much improved **Peter Gemma**'s consistency and quickness were too tough for the offensively minded Barth. 3-0 for Gemma.

Congrats to the T&R who won both the regular season and the playoffs. Special thanks to T&R captain **Chris Lang** who took over data entry and league administration while I was out of the country in January.

Congrats on a great season.

Open 4.5

by Dan Reagan, League Chair

Tennis & Racquet won all honors this year by going undefeated and winning both the regular season standings and the playoffs. Captain **Dave Tedeschi** had a great season, winning all his matches, winning the MA 4.5 Open championships, and achieving the #1 individual league ranking. Thanks to Dave for being a great captain, we wish you the best of luck in the 5.5's next year.

Union Boat Club was the other Open 4.5 league powerhouse, fielding the largest roster of players and losing only one match all season. Thanks and congratulations to UBC captains Alex McFerran and Bill Boardman for reaching the finals and semi-finals respectively in the MA 4.5 Open championships.

U-Club, BSC-Allston, and Concord-Acton completed the list of awesome Open 4.5 teams, a notch above the rest of the league. Success in any league is function of many things, not just good players. These three teams had the good players of course, but they also had good captains' coordination, and great team focus to win. Thanks to captains **Gerry Kirschner** (semi-finalist in the MA 4.5 Open championships), **Dan Zelman**, and **Nick Nevin**.

The rest of the teams had uneven or other strengths! Good luck to MIT captain **Clint Lawler** as he moves back south now to complete his military commitment. Clint—come back soon! Boston Racquet Club is looking forward to having all their players available at the same time next year to make a better run of it.

The Maugus 2 and Maugus 1 teams were among the better hosts and provided some of the most interesting commentary around things other than the squash matches on any given night. Thanks to their veteran captains Doug Carr and Rich Schafer.

Andover and Harvard Club completed the league roster. Both teams struggled this year with player availability and injury issues. We look forward to their return as stronger teams next season. On the plus side, both teams were great hosts. That Grille Bar at the HC! Thanks to veteran captains **Tim Wakeling** and **Jay Bradner**.

4.5 league had great dynamics all year. Match reports consistently indicated lots of good competition and sportsmanship, friendly atmosphere, and NO reports all season of any "difficult" situations! Thanks captains, thanks teams!

(continued on next page)

Adult Leagues: End-of-Season Reports (cont'd)

(continued from previous page)

A League Coordinators Lot... The Open 4.0 League Report

by Simon Graham, League Chair

This is my first report as the Open 4.0 League Coordinator. (It's important to get those Capital Letters on one's title!) The best thing about being a League Coordinator is the players and how easy they make my job. Almost every time I talk to folks about this or that during the season, they make a point of thanking me for the job I do making the Open 4.0 league run smoothly, but really it comes down to the players making my job a doddle!

So—what do I really do to deserve this:

- At the beginning of the season I spend a couple of hours entering the seasons schedule and team rosters into RailStation.
- During the season, I spend maybe ½ hr per week entering the week's results.
- At the end of the season, I spend another couple of hours figuring out the individual rankings.
- A total of maybe 2–3 days work per season! So, where do I really earn my “salary”? Well, I forgot to mention the biggest part of the job—chasing down captains and players for results, interpreting the rules and adjudicating disputes. THIS is where the players make my job a pleasure—I have captains who send me results promptly, teams who understand the spirit of the league rules and players who almost never require me to make a decision!

“How can we work together to make this even better next season?” I hear you ask... Well, continue making my job easy to start with! But I have a few ideas:

- Better communication: **Dan Reagan**, who runs the Open 4.5 league, has a great system where his captains send him a summary of each nights play along with the results—one sentence summarizing the play and one sentence per match—something that captures the essence of the play and the after-play socializing.
- Speaking of which; More post-match socializing!
- More referees! It's really very easy to become a club-level ref, and if there is one thing that causes “discussions”, it's two committed and passionate players attempting to self-referee their match! See <http://www.us-squash.org/rules/clubrefereecert.html> for information on becoming a club-level ref!

Lastly, I do want to mention a couple of high points of the league this season:

- First and foremost, the dominating Boston Racquet Club team headed by our #1 ranked player, **Jordan Berns** and ably assisted by a cast of other players, including two others who have been ranked this season; they jumped out to a commanding lead early

in the season and never really looked back, losing only two evenings the entire season (one to the eventual finalists from The Maugus Club).

- Secondly, the troupers-of-the-season award for those players who got out and played week after week goes jointly to **Szilvi Szombati** from Maugus Club (12 and 4 record), **Christian Hesse** from Union Boat Club (7 and 8), **David McGuire** from BSC-Waltham (8 and 7), **John Theberge** from Maugus (9 and 6) and **Scudder Sinclair**, also from UBC (10 and 5).

Congratulations to the winners, have a great summer, and see you in the fall!

Open 3.5

by Merrill Martin, League Chair

After leading the 3.5 league for most of the season, the Boston Racquet Club was overtaken in the final weeks of the season by the Milton team. The top 4 teams that moved onto the finals were:

1. Milton Academy
2. Boston Racquet Club
3. Boston Sports Club (Waltham)
4. Harvard Club

The semifinals were both close, with teams tied on matches and game scores determining the winners. Milton defeated Harvard 10-9, and Boston Sports Club upset Boston Racquet Club 8-7.

For the Open 3.5 league finals, a small crowd, including local squash legend Mr. **Frank Millet**, gathered at Milton Academy's Williams squash courts for the league championship.

The first match was the #2, **Steve Cohen** of BSC and **Paul Stakutis** of Milton. Paul, a former handball state champ, took Steve in a tightly contested match with 2 games going to overtime. Milton wins this match 3-0.

At #1, **Jon Hickok** of BSC squared off against **Robbie Lunkoto**. Robbie and Jon last played each other a few years ago, and Robbie was looking to even the score. Jon, being well aware of Robbie's undefeated season, knew this was not going to be a slam-dunk. Jon jumped out to win the first two games. Knowing Robbie's youth and fitness level, he hoped to shut the door in three, but it was not to be. The third game was close and went to Robbie. In the fourth game, Jon lost focus, and Robbie buried him. In the fifth game, Jon concentrated and gathered his dwindling energy reserves and was able to pick up the pace to take game 5. BSC wins this match 3-2.

At #3, **Bill Mackey** and **Sue Kerr** battled it out. It was a clearcut example of brawn versus grace. In this case, brawn carried the day. BSC won the match 3-0.

That left match #4 to decide the state championship: **Neil Berman** versus **Ed Lee**. Eddie and Neil knew that the state title rested on their shoulders. Neil won the first game. Ahead about 7-2 in the second game, Neil crashed his knee against the wall

Adult Leagues: End-of-Season Reports (cont'd)

and limped back to restart. Perhaps it was the knee, perhaps it was the wily front court play of Ed Lee, or perhaps a combination of both. Milton wins the match 3-1.

Final score: Milton won 3-2 under the tiebreaker rule counting games (8-7).

Jon Hickok (BSC) defeated **Robbie Lunkoto**(Milton): 4, 4,(6),(2),1.

Paul Stakutis (Milton) defeats **Steve Cohen** (BSC) 8, 8, 4

Bill Mackey (BSC) defeats **Sue Kerr** (Milton) 6, 4, 5

Eddie Lee (Milton) defeats **Neil Berman** (BSC) (2), 7, 7, 3

Open 2.5

by Carl Cummings, League Chair

The erstwhile D League became the BRC League this year, as Boston Racquet Club capped a near-perfect season by winning the Open 2.5 League playoffs. Led by **Dick Lammert** and **Andy Gossard**, who dropped only one match each (and were the # 1- and # 3-ranked 2.5 players, respectively, and both promoted to the 3.5 league at the end of the season), BRC was 14-1 during the regular season, capturing over 90% of the maximum 75 points available and 16 points ahead of second-place Andover.

In the playoff semifinals, BRC faced Tennis & Racquet Club, to whom it had suffered its sole loss during the regular season. T&R's fourth-place finish was deceiving because it didn't fully reflect the team's steady improvement as the season progressed but T&R faced a severe handicap when its no. 1, Alex Vadia (who ended the season as the # 2-ranked 2.5 player and was also promoted) was unable to make the match. T&R's strength was evident when three of the four matches still went to five games but BRC took two of those and one other to win 3-1.

The other semifinal, Cambridge Racquet at Andover, was even closer, as the teams each won two matches and seven games and had to count points to determine the winner. When the calculator cooled, Cambridge had 110 points to Andover's 86, and moved on to the final.

BRC won the final, 3-1, but they may have avoided the upset by only a couple of points. With the BRC's Lammert and Gossard each already having won, 3-1, at nos. 1 and 2, and Cambridge's **Madis Raukas** having captured the no. 4 match, 3-0, Cambridge captain **Jay Rogers** faced BRC's **Michael Belliveau** in the no. 3 slot. Belliveau won the first two games, and BRC seemed comfortably on its way to victory, but Rogers won the third game and then fought back from 7-2 down to tie the fourth game at 7-7. Most observers thought that if Rogers were to win that game, the fifth game, and thus the match would be a toss-up but, fortunately for the BRC, Belliveau was able to stanch the bleeding and relegate the fifth game to speculation by winning the fourth, 9-7, capping an outstanding season for his team.

Get Ready for the Howe Cup in Boston!

Are you a woman who loves to play squash and wants to try out your skills on a larger stage? If so, you're in luck, because this year's Howe Cup takes place November 2-4, 2007 in your very own home town—Boston. The local committee, headed by Meredith Johnson, is busy planning a terrific weekend. There will be great squash and social events on both Friday and Saturday nights.

For the uninitiated, the Howe Cup is a women's team squash tournament that began in 1928 as an inter-city competition between New York, Philadelphia and Boston. Teams made up of five women come to the Howe Cup representing their region of the country to compete against other teams. The MSRA sponsors the Boston teams, and often we field two teams in some divisions.

Best of all, the Howe Cup is open to women of all skill levels who are members of US Squash. (If you join the MSRA, you are automatically a member of US Squash.) It's a great opportunity to challenge yourself against players from all over and to meet women who love the sport as much as you do. The Boston women are the reigning Howe Cup champions in the A, B, and C divisions, so we're eager to prove ourselves on our home courts!

Now is the time to form a team, play challenge matches, and practice with your teammates to get ready. There are four skill-level divisions in Howe Cup singles. If you would like to represent the MSRA on a team this November, contact the appropriate person:

- **A (4.5+):** Wendy Ansdell, wendyansdell@verizon.net
- **B (3.5-4.0):** TBD: For now, contact Dominique Farinaux-Dumas, d.farinaux-dumas@neu.edu
- **C (2.5-3.0):** Dominique Farinaux-Dumas, d.farinaux-dumas@neu.edu
- **D (2.0):** Coleen Phillimore, coleenphillimore@netscape.net
- **Doubles:** Meredith Johnson, Meredith.T.Johnson@lahey.org

The singles matches will be played at Harvard University's Murr Center, which features 16 international courts and is a short walk from Harvard Square.

This year's Howe Cup also has a women's doubles draw. The doubles matches will take place at the University Club of Boston, which offers two doubles courts, and all the amenities of a full-service fitness club.

Check out www.howecup.com for more information about the 2007 Howe Cup.



**Men's 2.5 State Champion: Alejandro Vadia (Tennis & Racquet Club);
Finalist: Rob Soni (Union Boat Club)**



**Women's 3.5 State Champion: Kara Kardon (Concord-Acton Squash Club);
Finalist: Bry Roskoff (University Club)**



**Men's 65+ State Finalist: Michael Keating (Union Boat Club); Champion:
Sandy Frazee (Tennis & Racquet Club)**



**Men's 55+ State Champion: Malcolm Davidson (University Club);
Finalist: Robert Loring (Union Boat Club)**



**Men's 3.5 State Finalist: Robert Lunkoto (Friends of Milton Academy);
Champion: Jonathan Hickok (Boston Sports Club-Waltham)**



**Women's 2.5 State Finalist: Betsy Hargreaves (Maugus Club);
Champion: Beth Collins (University Club)**



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Questions: d.aguirre@squashbusters.org

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<http://www.squashbusters.org>

Taiwo's Tips

by Taiwo Kuti, Boston Racquet Club

The MSRA Clinics

The MSRA Squash Clinics held on March 3, 2007 at the Boston Racquet Club was a good initiative geared towards squash development for the MSRA members who want extra help with their squash skills. It was beneficial because I was able to give proper guidance based on my vast experience. Although the program did not run on a big scale, the participants went away with new determination to improve their skills.

People did not just hit balls and do court training. These are the basics and are not considered part of my special coaching. I individually check your game, work on court with you, and give you one-to-one coaching that will help you achieve your target. My style of coaching is very unorthodox! I'm a careful reader of the game and my approach has been totally creative, especially with coaching.

I really appreciated running the squash clinics at the Boston Racquet Club. It was an excellent opportunity for me to meet some squash players from the Boston area. I hope those of you who participated took away something to elevate their squash game

General Tips

At all levels in squash, whether it be beginner, club player or professional, you need to have a high level of fitness. For the club player, this fitness level will predominately come from playing plenty of games of squash and hitting with your club pro. Interestingly enough, squash was recently voted the healthiest sports to play (which I certainly believe should be made known worldwide and in all households—not only for health reasons, but also for the growth of our sport).

In squash like any other sport, practice makes perfect. However, squash can differ from other sports in that you are able to do quality practice (and a great workout session) without the need of a partner.

When you break down your game into component parts—fitness, endurance, strength, agility, ball skills, game strategy, technique, and **SPEED** are some examples—you realize just how much time, effort, and planning can go into your squash improvement program. Just like any sport you strive to play at the highest level, you need a fulltime **COMMITMENT** to micro-manage all the above facets, and even more is required to get the best out of time and performance.

RACKET GRIP: Hold your racket properly using the two index fingers for control (forehand/backhand).

EYES ON THE ON BALL: Always keep your eyes glued to and tracking the ball all the time.

MOVING INTO THE CENTER “T”: The center of the court is always an easy place to reach most of the shots, whether front play, middle play or back court. Always move into the center or “T”.

RACKET SKILLS: Grip your racquet firm and tight before striking the ball to improve control and confidence with all your shots.

Have fun playing the game and best of luck!

E-mail Taiwo Kuti at taiwosquash@yahoo.com, or call the Boston Racquet Club.

Editor's Note: Taiwo Kuti is a native of Nigeria. Taiwo gave three free clinics sponsored by the MSRA for all levels of squash players. This is the second year that the MSRA has sponsored free clinics as a membership benefit. Keep your eyes open for next year's clinic.



Visit the MSRA website for the latest news, rankings, tournaments, summer camp info, job openings, and more!

www.ma-squash.org

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