



2016 WSMRA 27th Annual National Championship



Group photo by Ric Shorrock

by Cheryl Kirk

Let's begin with the stats for this year's long-awaited WSMRA championship: 77 participants, 11 divisions, 21 U.S. states plus Guatemala (Marie Gomar, a frequent participant, makes this an international event!). This largest and longest continually running event for women players in the world features a self-refereed format with plenty of court time: all round robins/pool play with playoffs, 2 games to 11 with bonus points for game and match wins. This is the second year that doubles divisions have been offered, a very popular addition.

The Tucson Racquet & Fitness Club provided the perfect setting for this competition – eleven excellent courts (two with glass back walls, all with top viewing), outstanding restaurant, full spa and workout facilities, pool, pro shop, friendly staff...what's not to love?

Here's a quick rundown of how this event unfolded...

- **Thursday:** fun doubles and raffle for Racquet for the Cure followed by player orientation meeting
- **Friday/Saturday/Sunday:** singles and doubles competition; silent auction benefiting the USAR scholarship fund and the WSMRA
- **Saturday:** Banquet, DJ Mark Mann
- **Sunday:** Finals and awards

There was an unexpected fun occurrence at the banquet when 18 young girls and their chaperones from the Venom Soccer Team of Gilbert, Arizona, in town for a competition, stuck their heads into our banquet room, curious when they heard the music. We invited them in, and we all had a wonderful time with the inclusion of an additional generation for dancing and general merriment. They might have taught us a few dance moves...or maybe it was the other way around. Lifting as we climb...

Much gratitude goes out to Tournament Director Cindy Tilbury, Desk Coordinator Joe Williams, and WSMRA Tournament Committee members Terry Rogers, MeriJean Kelley, and Paula Sperling. Volunteers Linda Moore, Ric Shorrock, Vickie Onesti, Marie Gomar, Nidia Funes, Carol Gellman, Pat Meyer, and Kathy Yurrick helped ensure a smooth-running event.



Front L-R: Carla Phillips, Victoria Pickard, Tina Marchie, Stacie Cato, Vickie Onesti; rear: Jane Nixon, Susie Boulanger. Photo by Tina Marchie.



Kendra Tutsch and Cindy Tilbury. Photo courtesy Kendra Tutsch

Sponsors included Wilson Sporting Goods; Malibu Ladies Racquetball Camp; Sun-Rise Baking Co., Tom Rossier, Tucson; Ric Shorrock Photography, Tucson; King Label, Phoenix; Dr. Mary Lee Amerian, Los Angeles; Splatshotz Apparel, Minneapolis; and generous individual donors.

WSMRA Board Chair Kendra Tutsch commented, "I played in the first Women's Senior Masters because it was at my club and I thought it would be fun to compete against some new players. I have played nearly every one since then and now I find that more than the competition, I enjoy the friendships that I have made and continue to make. There is really nothing like the combination of competition and fun that you find at our tournament. I also must say that we have a very

Tucson Racquet & Fitness Club - Tucson, AZ • January 15-17, 2016 • Tournament Director: Cindy Tilbury

loyal and hardworking core of Board members and volunteers without whom we could not continue to run such a great event."

Linda Covault is a medical technologist, racquetball instructor and 30-year enthusiast who was at the first two WSMRA events, both held at Supreme Court in Madison, Wisconsin. "I've heard from women here in Tucson that they think the WSMRA event is fantastic because they don't often have the opportunity to compete with a lot of different players." This long-time supporter also shared, "This should be on every woman player's bucket list! Thanks to everyone who contributed their time and energy to make this such a great tournament for women!"

Cindy Tilbury added, "I first played the WSMRA tournament in Orlando in 2007 and have been hooked ever since. Even before then, the women of racquetball have been so special and dear. Putting on this tournament was my gift to them. I hope I get the chance to do it again in the future. There are not all that many tournaments that can boast "the 27th Annual" and this one is still going strong. See you all at the 28th Annual WSMRA Championship!"

The 2017 Women's Senior/Masters National Racquetball Championships will be held in the Chicago area at the Glass Court Swim & Fitness Club in Lombard, Illinois, January 13-15. Visit our website at wsmra.com and find us on Facebook for pictures, updates, and announcements year-round.

2016 WSMRA CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS

40+: Victoria Pickard, Pennsylvania
45+: Marie Gomar, Guatemala
45+B/C: Ingrid Crawford, Texas
50+: Jean Halahan, New York
55+: Lisa Bu, Arizona
55+ B/C: Althea Bailey, Maryland
60+: Marsha Berry, Kentucky
65+: Laurie Kitchen, New York
70+: Teresa Rock, Delaware
75+: Mildred Gwinn, North Carolina
35/45+ Doubles: Marie Gomar, Guatemala/Jean Halahan, New York
55+ Doubles: Lynette Froehlich, South Carolina/Marsha Berry, Kentucky
65+ Doubles: Nancy Kronenfeld, Illinois/Shirley Parsons, Colorado

WSMRA Board of Directors: Kendra Tutsch, Terry Rogers, MeriJean Kelley, Paula Sperling, Jean Halahan, Cindy Tilbury. **Advisory:** Tina Marchie, Nancy Kronenfeld, Debbie Tisinger.

Jen Memhard

Jen Memhard, a business intelligence consultant for CSG Pro, played 55+B/C as a first-timer in Tucson. Hailing from Portland, Oregon, she has played off and on for 30 years.

When asked what she liked about the event that would bring her back again, she replied, "I love that it's all women, experienced women. With such grace, elegance, and finesse, it's great to see high-level women athletes compete. I also love that we have round robins and get to meet and compete with so many different players."

Jen recently received a sportsperson of the year award from the Multnomah Athletic Club racquetball committee recognizing her efforts to develop women's racquetball. "It's a challenge to keep the women coming to play. It would be great to have the WSMRA come to Portland!"



Photo by Cheryl Kirk

Tina Marchie

New York resident Tina Marchie first played in Sarasota. She had originally attended tournaments with another great New York player, Jean Halahan, primarily to photograph the action, but Tina soon decided she had to take part. "Within that time, I met so many great people of all ages. I admired them! I remember taking pictures and watching the 75/80 age group. I was in awe of them. I wanted to be like them at that age. The competition was there, but the sport brought them together as a family. I remembered the feeling it gave me, and I had to be a part of it. I wanted to support and keep it alive."

Tina worked hard on her game and names Mildred Gwinn as a mentor, saying "Each tournament, Mildred would watch and coach me between her matches. By the end I would have a written list of things to work on and practice. I cannot tell you how much this has helped me and how much it meant to me."

Tina adds, "What keeps me coming back to these tournaments is the love of a sport that brings competition and friendship together to another whole another level. Every tournament is a reunion of old and new friends and a great competition." From her first tournament Tina also jumped right into volunteering, offering to set up a Facebook page for the WSMRA and taking many great pictures at each tournament.



Marie Gomar, Jean Halahan, Laurie Kitchen, Tina Marchie (in front of the camera!). Photo courtesy Tina Marchie.