



Women's Senior Masters 29th Annual Championships
January 12-14, 2018

By Cheryl Kirk

Photo By: Ric Shorrock

This largest and longest continually running event for women players in the world features a self-refereed format with plenty of court time. The round-robin format ensures play on every day of the three-day tournament. Women players competed in singles and doubles age divisions -- eight round robins, one double round robin, and three pool-play-with-playoff formats.

Sixty-seven players (ages 35-77) competed, and 39 of those entered both singles and doubles! Those individuals were promoted to "amazon status" (not the retailer) as a result. Three women played at age 77, and we LOVE that due to their youthful appearances, you would never be able to pick them out of a crowd (unless, of course, they proudly produced ID). This could happen.

Twenty-two states were represented: Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. Guatemala was in the house as well!

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 (led by Fitness Club Program Manager Renee Sitter)... what's not to love?

Much gratitude goes out to Tournament Directors Cindy Tilbury and Linda Moore and to WSMRA Tournament Committee members Terry Rogers, MeriJean Kelley, and Paula Sperling. Volunteers Lois Palmer, Carrie Reitmeier, Brent Johnson, Nidia Funes, and Carol Gellman helped ensure a smooth-running event.

Sun-Rise Baking Co. provided delicious pastries throughout the event. The popular silent auction was successful due to donations by E-Force, Gear-Box, Head, Pro Kennex, USA Racquetball, and generous individual donors.

Special thanks go to Doug Ganim and Ben Simons of Head/Penn Racquetball who have been very supportive of the WSMRA over the past several years. The WSMRA's gratitude also goes to sponsors Malibu Ladies Racquetball Camp, Ric Shorrock Photography, DJ Mark Mann, and the International Racquetball Tour (Malibu Branch).

WSMRA President Kendra Tutsch (Lodi, Wisconsin) offered her perspective on the WSMRA events and what they have meant to her since the beginning: "I have been involved with the Women's Senior/Masters tournament since I played in the first one way back in 1990 at my club in Madison, Wisconsin. I played an epic match with Pauline Kelly and I was hooked! I have played in all but one since then. Several years later we started the WSMRA as a way of keeping the tournament going and also promoting racquetball as a lifetime sport. It is an all-volunteer organization, and countless people work very hard to put on a first-class tournament each year, including the tournament directors, the WSMRA Board of Directors, and the players who volunteer their time during the tournament. Through this event I have made many close friendships that will last a lifetime. I am already looking forward to a very special 30th Annual event in January 2019!"

For pictures, updates and announcements, please "Like" us on Facebook -- Women's Senior/Masters Racquetball Association -- and visit our website, www.wsmra.com.

WSMRA Board of Directors: Kendra Tutsch (President), Jean Halahan, MeriJean Kelley, Linda Moore, Terry Rogers, Paula Sperling, Cindy Tilbury

Advisory: Nancy Kronenfeld, Debbie Tisinger-Moore

2018 WSMRA Championship Results

35+B/C, Cinnamon Untalan, AZ
45+B/C, Georgette Blomquist, OR
50+, Jean Halahan, NY
55+, Janet Tyler, FL
55+B/C, Dorette Leinemann, DE
60+, Marsha Berry, KY
65+, Diana Matthews, NE
65+B/C, Judy Tavano, MA
70+, Paula Sperling, NM
75+, Pauline Kelly, IL
35+ Doubles, Wendy Koop, AZ/Cinnamon Untalan, AZ
45+ Doubles, Marie Gomar, Guatemala/Jean Halahan, NY
55+ Doubles, Mary Keenan, CO/Marcia Richards, CO
65+/75+ Doubles, Nancy Kronenfeld, IL/Diana Matthews, NE

Check out full results at:

<http://www.r2sports.com/tourney/viewResults.asp?TID=21574>



Past and Present WSMRA Tournament Directors

Photo Courtesy of Cheryl Kirk



Marie Gomar (Guatemala) single-handedly made this 29th WSMRA Championships an international event! She offered this update on the Tracks Program in Guatemala City:

"The children from the Tracks Program have begun their second year of racquetball in Escuela Camino de Luz with great joy, better conditions, and new opportunities. As we begin 2018, a special thank you goes to the WSMRA Board and all the participants in this event's silent auction who for a second consecutive year have donated part of the proceeds to the Tracks program and warmed our hearts in Guatemala even well beyond those sunny days in Tucson."



Jere Luttner (Arlington, Texas) returned after several years...

"I've been playing racquetball since the late 70's and started playing in the WSMRA Tournaments in the late 90's. I always loved the WSMRA tournaments. The competition is awesome and the camaraderie can't be beat. Over the past several years, I have not been competing due to medical issues. I've had a hip replacement, both knees replaced, and most recently in February 2017, I had a total shoulder replacement (on my dominant side). The shoulder rehabilitation was grueling, but I felt strong enough to sign up for the tournament even knowing that it was a round robin format and that I would play the entire weekend. Upon arrival, old and new players greeted me warmly, and I am very happy to say that the tournament lived up to and exceeded my expectations. I'm looking forward to returning next year."



Venita Mitchell (San Antonio, Texas) was a first-time WSMRA competitor. What made her decide to attend?

"I've always wanted to play, it just seemed to not fit into my schedule. I just decided to pull the trigger. I'm proud and happy to be a part of this sisterhood. I met a new friend who was my doubles partner (Ingrid Callmann, Delaware) and win or lose, we had a wonderful time! It's great to just be with women that have the same interests, women that are competitive, women that are humble, also. This is my first tournament of the year. I'm going to National Doubles, and I want to try World Seniors in Albuquerque, too. This is my year to play different tournaments!"



Marcia Richards (Littleton, Colorado), returning after several years, offered some thoughts and a little advice:

"I stopped playing national events over five years ago because my knee was starting to really become a problem. I'd been in a knee brace for 12 years, so it was time for me to get that taken care of. Two years ago February 10th was the anniversary of my surgery, and it changed my life. I feel like I'm 20 again, not really, but yes in a way I do, just being able to get to balls that I hadn't been able to get to in years. If you need a replacement, don't wait if you can help it -- there's no reason to. I'm enjoying life so much more now than I did over the past 10 years. Some people say, 'I quit playing because I'm too old.' For me, I keep playing because it keeps me young!"