

SSRA NEWSLETTER

March 2006



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Kristen Goes World

by Kristen Lange

Worlds, the pinnacle of squash, and the reward for many years of hard work. It was everything that it was supposed to be: the suspense, the upsets, the winning, the losing, and the team unity.

The individual competition was hard and I did not win in the end, but I played some of the most fun squash that I have ever played. I played the #1 seed, Joshna Chinnappa, and girls from Malaysia, Australia, and Mexico. All matches were intense, tough, and thoroughly enjoyable.

But now onto the good stuff, the Teams! Since squash is an individual sport, I've never before had the opportunity to enjoy squash as a member of a team. Every match meant that much more because I was playing for myself, my team, and my country—all at the same time. We had team dinners and a spirited parent group that cheered their hearts out for everyone (I think every parent left without a voice!).

Our most memorable match was against Malaysia. We were definitely not the favorites to win, but we did. It started with Lily taking the court and winning 3-0, as usual. Emery Maine then lost, leaving the outcome of the match up to me. I played Low Wee Wern, a 14 year old who had already made quite a name for herself

by taking out Hong Kong's #1. Excited by the opportunity, I went up 2-0, then lost the next two games. I began the fifth game tentatively. Then I remembered what Azam said about not being afraid to win. I slowly chipped my way back to even at 5-5, then wrapped it up 9-5.

The emotions that I felt at the moment of victory were like nothing that I have ever experienced before: overwhelming and breathtaking. I started to walk off the court, but was pushed back by the rest of the team who began hugging and screaming that we'd made it to the semis! It still gives me shivers to think of that match; an experience that can only be understood by living through it.

We ended up in fourth place, a disappointment because I thought that we could have come in third. I tasted the joy of a team experience, and I can't wait until I get to play on a team again. I know that this memory will stay with me forever.

I would like to thank everyone who donated money to help send me to the Worlds, everyone who has played with me over the years, and everyone who has been a friend. I would like to give a big thanks to Steve and Allison Jamieson for managing the donations. I would like to thank the Khan family for their support, and especially Azam, who has always been my coach (and I couldn't not have asked for anyone better!) Thank you!!

Call for Votes

The SSRA is now accepting votes for the annual awards, which will be presented at the annual SSRA Banquet, **April 15**, at the **Space Needle**. The awards are:

1. **Brenda Wilcox Sportsmanship Award:** Awarded to any player who has shown exemplary sportsmanship.
2. **Dick Daly Service Award:** For someone who has volunteered time to help run the SSRA moving forward.
3. **Player of the Year Award:** Open to all players who have achieved success or made outstanding progress.

Submit your votes via e-mail to secretary@seattlesquash.com. **Voting deadline: April 10th.**

Results, Results, Results

9th Annual New Year's Squash Tournney

January 7-9

The 2006 Seattle -area squash calendar got off to a rousing start at the **Columbia Athletic Club**, Kirkland. Of the many outstanding performances, it should be noted that **Connor Smith** and **Claudia Regio** entered Juniors Round Robin and Men's C/D division..

The Mens A was predictable with **Sean Sunderland** easing his way to victories over **Andy Slater** and **Naveen Garg**. Naveen played a blistering first game before Sean settled down and took command of the match.

Mens B , hotly contested and played with great camaraderie, was taken by CAC's own **Ali Habib**, playing a sure and steady game. Runner up **Bill Weber** played well, taking two games from Ali. This group had so much fun, entertaining for all. Aussie **Gary Polain** played so hard we almost got the stretcher.

Juniors saw **Claudia, Connor, Nikita Gulati, and Buddy Gibbon** spar it out, with some excellent displays by all. In the determining match, Claudia prevailed over Connor, showing her natural ability to move and swing with a flowing, graceful composure. Full marks to Connor for a spirited contest.

Finally, Mens C/D, won by **Ram Bedi** in a tough match against **Tom Johnston**, 3-1. Consolation went to **Skip Holman** who had to show his best against **Claudia Regio** (and it's not easy for a 13 year old to play a man built like a bear!)

Thanks to **Red Hook** for the beer and sponsor **Grays Squash, USA** for the prizes. Many thanks to Tournament Directors **Sarah Razzaia** and **Steve Furneaux** for making the event fun for all.



Men's A runner-up **Naveen Garg** (L), tournament director **Steve Furneaux** (M), Men's A winner **Sean Sunderland** (R)



L-R: Mauro Regio, Sarah Razzaia, **Claudio Regio**, Steve Furneaux, **Connor Smith**, Connor's mom

Seattle Open

Seattle Athletic Club/Downtown

January 19-22

Tournament Director—Ayub Khan

Men's:

	<u>Winner</u>	<u>Runner-up</u>	<u>Consol.</u>
A-	Andrew Lynn	Jonathan Souza	Matt Bassist
A40-	Wm. Barrington	Anders Giltvedt	Jim Grimes
B-	Jeff Wilson	Eric Grimes	Thomas Kraft
B40-	Chuck Reeves	Ram Bedi	Al Stephen
C-	Andres Jewsbury	Oko Dazaafuren	Mark Reed
D-	Perry Pollack	Renato Martins	Brandley Howe
Novice-	Lloyd Adams	Dustyn Ruth	Chip McClelland

Women's:

A-	Vidya Rajan	Yarden Odinak	Mahoto Takata
B-	Lisa Borowsky	Anne Renne Vander Vaurs	
C-	Jenn. Abramson	Brooke Wallace	Coleen Miller
D-	Parisa Khalighi	Cindy Shurtleff	
Novice-	Reeham Sedky	Maureen Sullivan	Nikita Galati

Junior Philly Open

January 27-29

A competitive group of juniors braved the January cold and traveled to the East Coast for the Junior Philly Open. Standout performances:

GU15: **Yarden Odinak**, winner. Yarden is now ranked #2 in the GY15 division.

GU13: **Claudia Regio**, fourth place. Lost to #2 seed in semis.

Husky Squash

by Peter Langmaid

In early February, the UW Husky Squash Team traveled to Palo Alto, CA to play in the 2nd annual West Coast Round Robin, at Stanford's new squash facility. With one match Friday night and three matches Saturday, the schedule was grueling.

The Huskies opened on Friday with a 7-2 victory over **Notre Dame**, behind a strong showing by the middle of the lineup.

Saturday began with the Huskies beating USC (with Lakeside grad Brain Babcock at #8) 9-0, and featuring **Mauricio Cerna's** first win of the season. The Huskies then played **Cal**, again winning 9-0, though **Julian Wilson #2** and **Norman Wilson #3** had to fight back from slow starts.

Saturday's third match pitted the weary Huskies against rested **Stanford**. While losing 9-1, **Saumil Gandhi** played the match of the season, beating Stanford's #1 in five. #3 **Norman Wilson** and #4 **Rob Shaw** both lost valiantly in five, after being up 2-0. **Arjun Bandhari**, on the other hand, came back from a 0-2 deficit, only to lose by extra points in the fifth, after maneuvering himself to match point.

Two weeks later, the Husky Squash Team flew to Princeton, New Jersey for the Intercollegiate Nationals. As the last seed in their division, the Huskies faced the top seed, **Northwestern**, in the first round, losing 9-0, but making a great effort. Second round opponent **Hobart** also beat the Huskies, but not without close matches, including #3 **Norman Wilson's** tight five game marathon. The most exciting match of the weekend for the Huskies was the narrow loss to MIT, 5-4. **Saumil Gandhi, Evan Dengler**, and **Paul Higson** all won in five, while **Arjun Bandhari** lost in five. The outcome was in doubt until the very end.

The Husky Squash Team finished the season ranked #32, ahead of, among others, Penn State, Virginia, Boston College, and—it goes without saying—Cal and USC!

Good luck and thanks (hopefully not farewell) to **Saumil Gandhi, Julian Wolfson, Norman Wilson, Evan Dengler**, and **Gaurav Mehta**, all 2-year team members, who have used up their eligibility. When UW joins Harvard and Trinity as an elite squash program, you'll know you helped build the foundation.

Rose City Classic/Rosebud Junior

Hosted by the **Multnomah Athletic Club**, Portland, a well-run tournament with a great turnout and lots of competitive squash. Seattle was well represented and posted the following:

Men's A: **Hugh LaBossier**, winner
David Williams, consolation

Women's B: **Claudia Regio**, runner-up
C: **Brooke Wallace**, runner-up

Juniors:
G13/15: **Claudia Regio**, winner

The Language of Squash

by Peter Langmaid

Every sport has a language—the language of football is power and intimidation; the language of basketball is grace and accuracy; the language of baseball is precision and repetition. Squash, too, has a language, a language of deception, cunning, and imagination.

To become fluent in the language of squash, you must quickly process two types of input: body language and tendencies. In life, 55% of all communication comes through body language. If the words are soft and sweet, but the body is tense and menacing, watch out! Most squash players' body language will give away their shot before they hit it. The shoulder turn, the position of the feet, the length of the backswing, angle of the racquet head, etc. all combine to reveal intention before execution. If you read this body language, you will know what your opponent's going to do before they do it, and you can be on your way both physically and mentally before the shot is executed. This makes you quick, even if you're not fast.

A second component to the language of squash involves reading what an opponent will do in a particular situation. Things like when does he drop, lob, hit crosscourt, pound a boast, finesse a roll-corner, hit the nick, etc. Because most players can't comfortably hit a variety of shots from any given situation, we all tend to hit the same shot time and time again, especially if it produces early good results. And, as with reading body language, knowing what's going to happen before it happens is a huge advantage, like insider trading.

Applying the language of squash to your game is a simple matter of observation and verification. For example, I played someone for the first time last month. After the first three or four serves to the forehand side, I noticed that this person hit a crosscourt return every time. As the match progressed, I began to anticipate the crosscourt return and prepare for it in advance. This is called anticipation, which is different from guessing, and it produces an enormous advantage.

A good time to process the language of squash is between rallies. Instead of throwing a tantrum or waving to a passersby, spend the time reviewing what just happened—what went right, and what went wrong with the previous rally. You will store this information in your subconscious as images. Miraculously, these images will reappear in slow motion when the situation re-occurs. This allows you to break patterns and keep your opponent guessing, or waiting. This will only happen if you're engaged and paying attention.

You will never be able to read all your opponents shots, but the more fluent you get with an opponent's game, the greater your chances of winning.

SSRA League Season Winding Down

Hello SSRA Squash League participants! We hope you all are enjoying the SSRA League this year. All the feedback that's come our way points to another hugely successful season!

League squash balls have finally arrived, and league T-shirts shouldn't be more than a couple of weeks behind. We will distribute the balls to your captain; stay tuned for an announcement regarding the arrival of the T-shirts.

As the regular season comes to a conclusion, let's quickly recap where things currently stand. In the A Division, with one week to go, the **Garg** and **Hamon** teams are sure bets for playoffs, but four teams, within four points of each other, are competing for the final two spots. Division B1 is a tight bracket with team **Rattray** in first with 75 points and a mere two points separating the next three teams (Another close division!). **Bakalian** and **Shaffer** are in first place in divisions B2 and C/D, respectively.

Regular season league play will end on March 21, with playoffs beginning the following Tuesday, March 28th (qualifiers will be notified regarding where and when they play). League finals for all divisions will be held at the **Pro-Club** this year on Tuesday, April 4th. Please plan on attending and celebrating another great season. Food and beverages will be provided.

The end-of-season party is planned for Saturday, April 15, at the Space Needle.

As always, we welcome your feedback on what is working well and what can be improved. Thanks for your participation this season.

Steve, John, and Bill

How Would This Baby Look on the Mantle at Your Home?



The Seattle City Championship is Back!

The Seattle City Championship will be held the weekend of May 5-7, at the **Seattle Athletic Club/Downtown** (entry enclosed). Win the men's A and you can keep this trophy at your house until another champion is crowned. Your name will be engraved on the trophy, too, joining dozens of past champions dating back decades.

Upcoming Regional Events

2006 Seattle Junior Open, March 31-April 2

Seattle Athletic Club/Downtown
Tournament director, Shabana Khan
206/443-1111, ext. 229

2006 Seattle City Championship, May 5-7

Seattle Athletic Club/Downtown
206/443-1111

2nd Annual Mazama Racquets Tournament

June 23-25, in North Cascades

Please join our three-sport tournament of squash, tennis, and ping-pong, at the **Mazama Country Inn**. This tournament is about sportsmanship and fun! Not only do you get a chance to play in this lovely setting, but you will also have time to hike, bike, and swim. Players and their families (kids, too) will have time socialize Friday night, when the draw is

announced, and at a Saturday night dinner.

How does all this work? All matches are played to three games, with 15 points possible per game. All points are tallied and the three highest scores get valuable prizes.

What if I'm not strong in one of these sports? No worries! We have a handicapping system that enables everyone to attain high scores.

Where do we stay? Stay at the **Mazama Country Inn** for courtside lodging! Visit www.MazamaCountryInn.com, or call the inn at 800/843-7951. Ask for Mary.

How can I learn more about tournament arrangements? Just call Marizza Ohlsson, 206/370-0773, or Wendy Weeks, 206/769-1049.