

## **2006 BELLE ISLE RACQUETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

August 18-20, 2006

A **WOR**- Sanctioned event sponsored by Splathead, Ektelon, Pro Kennex, Gipson Brothers Trucking, and Raymond James.

Old man weather, not to be confused with our Old Man Willie “Shaka” Mason, made things difficult, but could not dampen the spirits of the outdoor racquetball enthusiasts from the many regions of the Midwest that are always a part of this tournament’s success.

Play was delayed until late Saturday afternoon when the rain stopped and the courts began to slowly dry up. Several players pitched in to get the courts dry and playable using squeegees, blowers, and towels one court at a time as the first matches began around 3pm and play continued late into the evening with a condensed format of two games to 11 and tiebreakers to 5 to make up for the lost time.

Sunday looked “iffy” at the outset, but kept getting better as the day went on. With understandably the largest contingent from Detroit, other parts of Michigan were well represented with players from Rochester, Grand Rapids, Warren, East Lansing, Sterling Heights, St. Clair Shores, and Southfield to name a few.

The Belle Isle Racquetball Championships always draw a great bunch of players from Dayton and Toledo Ohio, and also from the greater Chicago Illinois area. This inter-state competition has become a proud and highly contested rivalry over the years between Detroit and Chicago and now a new rivalry has emerged that looks to be just as formidable between the Maumee, Ohio crew and the Detroit/Belle Isle team.

The smack talk and bragging rights are no laughing matter between the combatants and no one wants to lose! Ain’t it great!?

Getting back to our Old Man Willie “Shaka” Mason... He was presented the “Golden Racquetball Award” for his outstanding contribution to the sport and to Belle Isle in particular. Last years Fun Doubles would not have happened without him.

The Father/Son division continues to gain in popularity, both from the participants and spectators it draws. It is a great way to enhance the parent/child relationship and to involve new young players in our sport. We are working to come up with a more politically correct name for this division such as, Parent/Child, Adult/Junior, etc... Suggestions are welcome!

This tournament also displayed a great degree of camaraderie with several doubles teams playing together as partners for the very first time. The

Chicago/Michigan Mixed Doubles team of George Bound/Lynn Kuczjada and the all Michigan team of Dan Mullin/Tia Lecland were two of the teams. There were several other first time doubles teams that competed...too many to mention here. This was Tia's first experience playing outdoor racquetball.

It was great to see 8 women in the Women's singles division. Could this be the start of a renewed interest by women players? We hope so. Part of this could be the result of including women in the appropriate Men's Division when there are not enough women to make a division. We had several divisions where women and men competed with each other, which was another great thing to see happening. Speaking of great things to see, how nice was it to see Greg Hodges playing with his daughter Brittany? Our sport needs more of this.

Centurian doubles continues to be one of our most popular divisions with 12 teams competing this year. It is always interesting to see the combination of the teams. This is a very competitive division.

A special part of the Belle Isle experience is not only the great mix of good people you meet and play with, but also the great hospitality surrounding the event. This year was no exception with a great BBQ. Chicken, burgers and pork with all of the fixings! The peach cobbler is to die for each year. Spectators, players, and visitors picnicking around the courts all day long is a wonderful experience.

This year's Championships added a nice twist celebrating Al Pugh's birthday with a DJ rolling out the tunes, and the after-party on Sunday catered by Phonz's wife. Several of the Maumee and Chicago crew stuck around to enjoy the fun. A nice gesture after getting their tails whipped! Hah, hah!

Thanks to the team who made this event such a success. Ron Barton, Thelma Howard, Greg Lewerenz, and all of the others who helped with scheduling, refereeing, the hospitality, cleaning up, and all the other things I forgot to mention! Thanks to all who worked to put the 2006 Belle Isle Championships on. We cannot thank our supporters enough. Without them none of this is possible. Most of all, thanks to all of you who participated and came out to watch.

Sincerely,

*Belle Isle Tournament Staff*

## 2006 BELLE ISLE CHAMPIONSHIPS RESULTS

<b>Men's Open</b>	Greg Hodges def. Jeff Mullins
<b>Men's A</b>	Ron Griggs def. Twayne Howard
<b>Men's B</b>	Dan Mullin def. Dave Chirio
<b>Men's C</b>	George Bound def. Lee Cherry
<b>Men's Masters (45)</b>	Chris Kelly def. Carlos Jones
<b>Men's Golden Masters (65)</b>	Al Pugh def. Joe Shaw
<b>Women's</b>	Margrit Shemechko def. Rachel Wolff
<b>Men's Open Doubles</b>	Ron Barton/Greg Lewerenz def. Greg Hodges/Carl Evans
<b>Men's A Doubles</b>	Ted Richardson/Frank Ball def. Dave Lilly/Will Rounsaville
<b>B Doubles</b>	Stan El-amin/Jack Pesis def. Ted Richardson/Howell Johnson
<b>C Doubles</b>	Bill Brock/Darryl Hunter def. Lee Cherry/Willie McGhee
<b>Centurion</b>	Greg Lewerenz/Al Pugh def. Marcos Rivera/Dave Smolinski
<b>Father/Son Open/A Doubles</b>	Greg/Brittany Hodges def. Carl/Jalen Evans
<b>Father/Son B/C Doubles</b>	Darryl Reed/Denzel Reed def. Matt Sr./Jr. Barbuscak
<b>Mixed Open/A</b>	Ron Barton/Teri Fields def. Dave Smolinski/Paula Saad
<b>Mixed B/C</b>	Dan Mullin/Tia Lecland def. George Bound/Lynn Kuczajda