

WOR Ektelon Championships

The eight outdoor courts at the Marina Park in Huntington Beach, CA were the setting for the largest outdoor national championship in the past ten years. 220 players descended on So Cal, up 100 players from the '07 event. The four day racquetball party, equipped with two hospitality BBQ stands, a full fledged DJ booth and plenty of bleacher seating was by far one of the highlight events of 2008 so far. To top it all off, the WOR Ektelon Championships drew some of racquetball's greatest talents to the outdoor court to mix it up with the regular outdoor population. Here's a little insight on some of the players.

Rocky Carson once again dominated the Men's Pro Singles division, having to deal with a very difficult draw along the way to winning his 5th Hawkes Cup. Rocky's challenge got started early with a Round of 16 match up against IRT foe, Ben Croft. Rocky handled Ben in two games, using his superior outdoor skills to teach the newbie a thing or two. After a quarter final clash with good friend and practice partner, Dawoud Garfeshed, Rocky met up with brewing outdoor rival Cliff Swain for a semi final battle. The battle never happened as Rocky cruised in two easy games, leaving him with a finals match up against indoor rival and WOR Champs first timer, Alvaro Beltran. Alvaro proved to be a tough opponent, especially for a first time player at this event, but Rocky had too much experience and was able to capture a close two game victory for the title. Congrats to Rocky on his win and for a wonderful season of racquetball, resulting in a #1 ranking in both indoor and outdoor.

Moving on to the highlight division of Men's Pro Doubles, we saw some major changes this year to the regular teams. For starters, Rocky Carson did not have his regular partner and defending champion, Rob Hoff and ended up pairing up with local legend and former outdoor great Scott McMasters. Ruben Gonzalez and Alvaro Beltran brought a Latin flair to the division partnering up for the first time. Also partnering for the first time was the scary team of Cliff Swain and Chris Crowther. There were other new teams within the regular So Cal outdoor population that created quite a stir. All in all, the Men's Pro Doubles was a tremendous draw of 34 teams!! Some upsets were had as top seeds Craig "Clubber" Lane and Greg Solis went down in the quarter finals along with that scary team of Swain and Crowther. The semi finals came down to the match ups of Gonzalez/Beltran vs. Carson/McMasters and Booth/Peters vs. Tucker/Nguyen. In the end, we had two new finalist in Gonzalez/Beltran vs. Tucker/Nguyen, with Josh Tucker and Son Nguyen capturing their first Men's Pro Doubles Title on there fourth try together.

Rhonda Rajsich is back!!! That's right, Rhonda was present throughout the event, beginning with a grand entrance on the back of a sweet little convertible. She looked great considering what she's been through over the past month and a half and was constantly smiling and very approachable. Her game was rusty but that really was

besides the point for this event. Just having her as part of the tournament play was all we could ask for and as fate had it, Rhonda ended up playing the last match of tournament as well. All in all, Rhonda ended up with a quarter final performance in the Women's Pro Singles, a semi final effort in Women's Doubles and a runner up finish in the Mixed Pro Doubles. Due to her performance at the WOR Champs, Rhonda has been selected by USA Team Head Coach, Dave Ellis to represent the US Team in Ireland at the IRF World Championships this August. Her spot on the team was pending due to her injuries sustained in the attack. However, the weekend of outdoor play provided enough evidence to Coach Ellis to name her as a singles player for the event. Congrats to Rhonda on her "Speedy" return.

With Rhonda going down in the singles and doubles play, that meant a new champion would be crowned in both divisions. When the dust settled, the finals match ups of Angela Grisar vs. Keely Franks in the Women's Pro Singles and Veronica Sotomayor/Kristen Bellows vs. Angela Grisar/Keely Franks in Women's Pro Doubles were set. The doubles match was a battle that was captured by the first time pairing of Sotomayor and Bellows. This was the first year playing for Bellows and second year for Ecuadorian Sotomayor. Veronica also added the Mixed Pro Doubles title with Jacob Hutkins..... The Women's Pro Singles final matched up partners Grisar and Franks but was not much of a match. Angela used her superior experience to put away Keely in two quick games adding another title to her tremendous racquetball resume. Keely continues to improve her outdoor game and will be a threat to win this event in years to come.

To round out the highlight divisions, the Classic Pro Racquetball Tour (CPRT) sponsored the Men's 40+ Doubles, providing a nice prize purse for the winners and runner ups. The division was very populated with 20 teams in all and believe me, there were plenty of upsets along the way. The biggest upset of the event took place in the CPRT Doubles division as Floridians and outdoor only players, Dave Smith and Ken Grandy brought down the legendary pairing of Cliff Swain and Ruben Gonzalez, in the Round of 16!!! However, Smith and Grandy's run came to an end in the semis as top seeds Rick Sandello and Jeff Johnson advanced to a final's match up vs. #3 seeds Kevin Booth and Mike Peters. Even though the Booth and Peters were the #3 seeds, they were the favorite in this match and proved this to be the truth as they took down the top seeds with ease, winning the CPRT Outdoor Doubles Championship.

In addition to the Pro Divisions, the WOR Ektelon Championships hosted 24 amateur divisions with consolation brackets for each division. All WOR Ektelon Championship players were guaranteed at least two matches per division. Here's a list of the finalists for each division.

Men's Pro Singles: Rocky Carson d. Alvaro Beltran

Men's Open Singles: Ben Croft d. Mike Orr

Men's Pro Doubles: Josh Tucker/Son Nguyen d. Alvaro Beltran/Ruben Gonzalez

Men's Open Doubles: Ken Grandy/Dave Smith d. Brian Pineda/Charlie Pratt

Women's Pro Singles: Angela Grisar d. Keely Franks
Women's Open Singles: Aubrey O'Brien d. Christie Singleton
Women's Pro Doubles: Kristen Bellows/Veronica Sotomayor d. Angela Grisar/Keely Franks
Women's Open Doubles: Michelle Earl/Kris Kaskawal d. Jody Nance/Kathy Geels
Men's A Singles: Marcos Rojas d. Vic Leibofsky
Consolation Winner: Jody Davis
Men's A Doubles: Art Pena/Jim Fernandez d. Georges & Sam Barrera
Consolation Winner: Marcos Rojas/Jose Serrano
Women's A Singles (RR): 1st - Devon Pimentelli, 2nd - Sarah Warhaftig
Women's A Doubles (RR): 1st - Debra Garrett-Woods/Sonya Green, 2nd - Devon Pimentelli/Teresa Diaz
Men's B Singles: Justin Ivers d. Mario Estevez
Consolation Winner: Dave Rocchi
Men's B Doubles: Sam Brust/Geoff Osberg d. Rick "Soda Man" Koll/Victor Salinas
Consolation Winner: Steve Cook/Kyle Kazmierczak
Women's B Singles (RR): 1st - Misty Goldstone, 2nd - Sue Sublaban
Men's C Singles (RR): 1st - David Bogosian, 2nd - James Medina
Men's C Doubles (PP): James Medina/Javier Mendoza d. David Bogosian/Jill Federman
Men's First Time Player Singles: Kevin Holmes d. Jeremy White
Consolation Winner: Nathaniel Eck
Men's 40+ Singles: Ravi Sohoni d. Norm McNutt
Consolation Winner: Vince Santilli
Men's 40+ Doubles: Kevin Booth/Mike Peters d. Rick Sandello/Jeff Johnson
Consolation Winner: Marty Hogan/Gary Martin
Men's 50+ Singles: Bill George d. Raul Nieves
Consolation Winner: Ty Kelly
Men's 50+ Doubles (PP): Dennis Riggs/Mike Alderson d. Marty Hogan/Mike Augustine
Mixed Pro Doubles: Veronica Sotomayor/Jacob Hutkins d. Rhonda Rajsich/Son Nguyen
Consolation Winner: Martha & Greg McDonald
Mixed A Doubles (RR): 1st - Darrin McNally/Jill Federman, 2nd - Rick Koll/Sarah Houghtailing
Mixed B Doubles (RR): 1st - Sonya Green/Sam Barrera, 2nd - Robelyn Cadiz/Stephen Fitzsimmons
Junior 18 & Under Singles: Jody Davis d. Justin Ivers
Consolation Winner: Daniel Winters
Junior 12 & Under Singles: Christopher Kazem d. Dane Kazem
Consolation Winner: Keanu Ho
Junior 12 & Under Doubles (RR): 1st - Andrew Martin/Devin Herrick, 2nd - Christopher & Dane Kazem
Junior 10 & Under Singles (RR): 1st - Brandon Cook, 2nd - Carson Nguyen

*Special thanks to all of the Tournament Staff that help make this event possible, before and during. Also, this event would not have happened without our event sponsors, thanks for all of your support, especially Scott Winters and Ektelon Racquetball. Bad Ass BBQ and Jimbo & Gary's Grill were awesome all weekend long, we'll get it all together for next year. Orlando Mayo's DJ skills added a level of professionalism to this event that has not been seen on the outdoor courts in some time, thanks for your efforts. Same goes to Angela and Pablo for providing the online streaming service of Racquetball Online.TV. Thanks to these two, the whole world had the ability to watch outdoor racquetball live. Lastly, I want to thank Ryan & Tish Rodgers for their R2

Sports site. We have now introduced the outdoor racquetball world to the technology of the indoor world and it made things so much easier. I'm sure I'm leaving out a few of you but please know that all help was very much appreciated. Can't wait until next year as this could be the biggest and best event in racquetball. IT'S OUTDOOR BABY!!!