## the sports

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THE BATTALION

# Racquetball rising 'round the nation

United Press International YPSILANTI, Mich. — Imagine white-walled, super-heated room while invisible phantoms throw hard little black balls at you. That's what the novice feels like

n a racquetball court. The black rubber ball — about half the size of a tennis ball - caeens off any one of four walls or the ceiling with a loud thunk. It flies oward your face at a frightening speed as you scurry around franti-ally trying to defend yourself with a

awed-off tennis racquet. Racquetball is hot, intense and in-

NO LONG LEASE

REQUIRED

uriating. But for 5.5 million Amerians, it has become an enthralling experience that they put themselves hrough at least two or three times a veek in private clubs and college symnasiums.

Its fans say the game — a hybrid of handball and tennis — is so excit-ng it will soon overtake tennis as the No. 1 racquet sport in the nation. The U.S. Racquetball Associa-tion reports the number of players is

doubling every year. "I always look like I need a respirator when I get done playing," said Delores Gibson, 35, a housewife who had just finished an hour



on the court at Ypsilanti's Sports Illustrated Court Club in suburban Detroit

"But, it's great exercise — a great way to sweat off 40 pounds," she said, grinning as she pushed long strands of black, sweat-soaked hair from her forehead.

The game is being played by: -Suburban housewifes who park their children with free court club babysitters while they compete in

leagues -Retired men and women who use the clubs as a way to meet new

people -Students looking for a break from their studies

-Executives who play on courts rented by their companies.

-Night-shift factory employees who work away their frustrations at clubs open around the clock. To the devotee of tennis — a

centuries-old sport which has always been identified with the well-heeled - racquetball seems like a poor relation.

Many racquetball players shun the Paris-designed fashions of the tennis world and run around the courts in old, torn gym shorts, smelly T-shirts and ragged tennis shoes while swatting away with \$15 racquets.

The Sports Illustrated Court Clubs, a nationwide chain begun in Ypsilanti in 1976, advertises itself as "working man's country club" in order to capitalize on the anti-

country club atmosphere, maybe that's because we're all so sweaty when we get done.

The sport came into existence in the late 1940s when a tennis pro substituted a strung racquet for the paddle in paddleball, a form of handball played with a wooden pad-dle. It didn't get its name until 1969

### **Racquetball unlike tennis**

Racquetball, the nation's fastest-growing racquet sport, is a haven for the frustrated tennis player.

Unlike tennis, you can't lose your ball over the fence — the game is played in a four-walled court.

You won't end up screaming in frustration because your best forehand just thudded into the net — there isn't any net. Players hit the ball to the front

Racquetball is a phenomenon of

the 70s

At the beginning of the decade, only 50,000 Americans called them-selves racquetball players and there were no private clubs. This year, the number of players should pass six million and the number of clubs has climbed to 750.

wall, watch while their oppo-nents hit the ball and then hopefully - hit it back to the front wall again before it bounces twice on the floor.

A player scores a point when his opponent fails to return the ball to the front wall before it hits the floor twice. A player can only score while serving.

The best players use all four walls and the ceiling to return the ball to the front wall in a kind of four-dimensional pool. One

prizes. The key to racquetball's success appears to be the fact that anyone can learn to play within minutes. "It's not like tennis where you

have to learn the stroke," said Michigan-based racquetball pro Gil Schmitt. "Racquetball is like taking up a newspaper and swatting a fly." Another facet of the game is lur-

classy shot involves slamming the ball as hard as you can against the back wall so that it rockets over the head of your opponent and slams into the front wall.

The only equipment needed for the game is a racquet priced between \$10 and \$50, tennis shoes, shorts and a shirt. Courts can be found at col-

leges or community centers or at private clubs, which range in price from \$200 to \$1,000 annu-

when another tennis pro dubbed it "racquetball" before the first inter-prizes. money. When the tour began in 1974, it could only muster \$9,800 in prizes. number, Schmitt said. Racquetball is a test of strategy where strong muscles do not always determine the winner

vent the pressures of ye emotional release, there "An old man can walk in there (on the court) and run me around in cir-cles if he is a real smart player," Schmitt said. "It's like playing chess on the court. It takes intelligence

The sport's fans claim racquetball can do everything for a player from hardening his muscles to improving his mental health. Two University of British Colum-

# order to capitalize on the anti-aristocratic image of the sport. "It's not like snobs play it or any-thing," Mrs. Gibson said. "It's not a

#### **United Press International**

LAKE CHARLES, La. - With leaders in both men's and women's competition, Southeastern Okla-homa State University moved to a commanding lead in team standings with 270 points during the second go-round of the College National

Finals Rodeo. SOSU, trying to equal Casper (Wyo.) College's record four con-secutive team titles, was boosted by the strong performances of Jimmy Cleveland in bareback bronc riding and Sabrina Pike in goat tying. Cleveland in bareback bronc riding and Sabrina Pike in goat tying. Cleveland turned in a 75-point performance on a bareback bronc in the rodeo's second go-round. He also held the highest total with 146

Pike led the second go-round goat Pike led the second go-round goat tying competition with a time of wrestling lead with a time of 3.48 8.44 seconds. Her combined time of seconds. Raymond Dorenkamp of

top. Trailing SOSU in team totals were Dawson Community College (Glendive, Montana) with 195 points, the University of Southern Colorado with 135 points and Na-tional College of Business (Rapid City, S.D.) with 120.

Team roping winners in the sec-ond go-round were Mitch Copps and Clifton Wheeler of Sam Hous-Churchill of South Dakota State University and Dick Churchill of Chadron State College of Chadron, Nebraska.

Jeff Clubb of Sam Houston State

**AGGIES!** 

Douglas Jewelry

18.59 seconds also put her at the Lamar (Colo.) Community College was the rodeo leader with 8.64 second in total time.

Walter Parke of Weber State (Ogden, Utah) was the second go-round calf roping leader at 10.04 seconds. Scott Clements of National Business led in combined time with 21.26 seconds.

Jess Knight of Howard Junior College (Big Springs, Texas) with a 70-second ride in the second-go-round was the combined leader with 136 in the saddle bronc event.

The all-around lease grant, who Tuesday's competition as about the S Jeffries of Dawson and Sarment, A strong bull ride by Panhandle Oklahoma State University's Rod Breech moved him into the lead of SOSA.

Astros win, Rangers los

**United Press International** 

HOUSTON — Craig Reynolds' one-out triple in the eighth drove in Terry Puhl from first base with the winning run Wednesday night leading the Houston Astros to a 5-4 victory that completed a three-game sweep over the New York

Puhl collected his third single of the game to open the eighth inning off starter and loser Craig Swan, 7-5, after the Mets forged a 4-4 tie in the

In Anaheim, Don Bay in a pair of third-innin tend his major-league over the Texas Rangers.

Baylor's two-run starter and loser Jon Ma after Campaneris sing Angels' first run of the the gave him 59 RBI after b

70th game. Brian Dow California's fourth inni

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Their study showed apering racquetball uses up []

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Okla.) leads the combined

Cynthia Cook posted

second time in breakawa Pam Mitchell from Howard

College led the combine that event at 7.45.

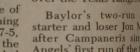
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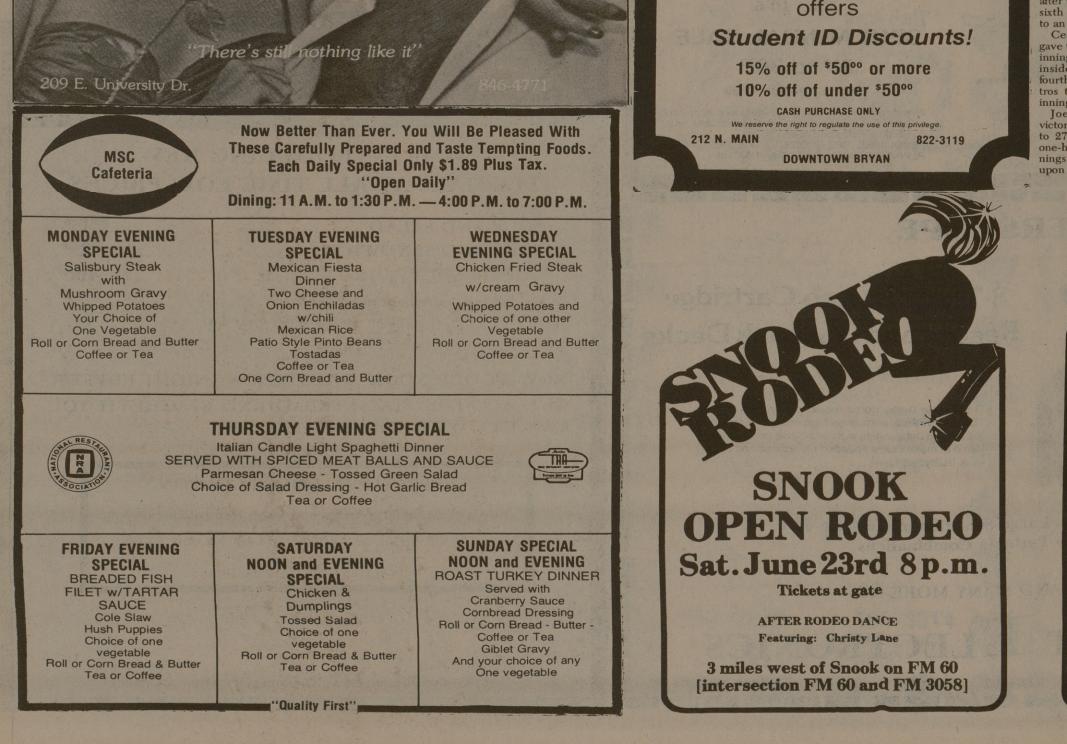
"If you want physical

and frustration.

The intense workout a



The sport's 12-city pro tour this ing women and the elderly onto the year posted \$200,000 in prize racquetball courts in increasing



sixth when Lee Mazzilli's walk led to an unearned run.

Cesar Cedeno's two-run double gave the Astros a 2-0 lead in the first inning and Dennis Walling hit an inside-the-park home run in the fourth to tie the score 3-3. The Astros took the lead on Puhl's fifthinning RBI single.

Joe Sambito, 4-2, earned the victory and ran his scoreless streak to 27 straight innings by hurling one-hit relief over the final two innings. Sambito has not been scored upon over his last 16 appearances.

sixth homer of the yea Campaneris, who tied ord with his three stea gled, stole second and scored what proved t ing run on Dan Ford sacrifice fly. Texas' fi came on Richie Zisk's single in the fourth and chased Frost in the

Putnam's two-run hom

Ire HEI noticea "I d shortas even h McCal one of ness McC beer, t Snook, Texas Jim set do DANCE grocer pump. Tim Featuring said, body then a they h Christy was H Lau Outsid county pled th spots Lake. Detroi Sat., June 23rd and th rain ar 9:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. keepir In t From \$4.50 3 miles west of Snook on FM 60 like "

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