

The Mongoose Musings



2009 New York City Pro/Am IRT Event – January 15-18, 2009

The **2009 New York City Pro/Am (IRT Event)** tournament was held at the **Sportime Fitness and Racquetball Club** in Syosset, NY. It was a historic event at a historic venue. The event drew a record of 283 participants from six countries and 19 states. For most players and fans, it was one of the most exciting events of the season – one that offered them the opportunity to watch their favorite IRT stars in action!

Breakdowns of participants are presented in Tables I, II, and III below.

Table I – Participants by Countries

Bolivia	3
Canada	4
Colombia	2
Japan	3
Mexico	1
United States	270

About The Sportime Facility

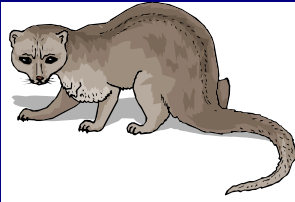
The Sportime Fitness and Racquetball Club is located at 10 Gordon Drive, Syosset, NY. The 40,000 square foot full service health and fitness facility is one of the finest on Long Island. The facility includes 11 modern racquetball courts, a sports pro shop, and a café and lounge area.



FEATURED MATCHES

Men's Pro Singles Round of 16 – #8 Ben Croft vs. #9 Chris Crowther: It was a match between two very intense and hard-hitting IRT players. Crowther won the first game 11-1 over an unsettled Croft. Utilizing his power, quickness, and poise, Croft turned the momentum to his corner – winning the next three games 4, 8, 8 to advance to the quarterfinals.

Men's Pro Singles Round of 16 – #5 Kane Waselenchuk vs. #12 Andy Hawthorne: This match on Court #4 drew a lot of fans. Waselenchuk didn't break much sweat in winning the first



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game 11-5. It was rather obvious that he didn't want to overextend himself. Unfortunately, Hawthorne was no Danish pastry. The second game was quite exciting. It produced some awesome shots and diving gets from both players. Hawthorne eventually prevailed, winning the second game 14-12. The loss was the smelling salt Waselenchuk needed to wake up from a casual reverie and kick his game up a notch. He handled Hawthorne easily in the next two games, winning 4 and 1 to advance to the quarterfinals.

Table II – Participants by States

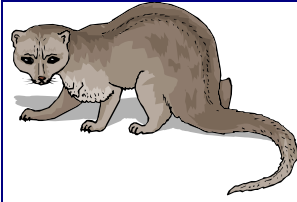
1. California, 6	11. New Mexico, 1
2. Colorado, 1	12. New York, 153
3. Connecticut, 21	13. Ohio, 3
4. Florida, 5	14. Pennsylvania, 19
5. Illinois, 2	15. Rhode Island, 5
6. Maine, 2	16. Tennessee, 1
7. Maryland, 11	17. Texas, 5
8. Massachusetts, 10	18. Vermont, 1
9. New Hampshire, 3	19. Virginia, 2
10. New Jersey, 21	

Men's Pro Singles Quarterfinals – #3 Alvaro Beltran vs. #6 Mitch “The Wild Thing”

Williams: Williams had that look in his eyes as if he was drunk or accidentally drugged. But he was as sober as they came. He came to kick butts and take names. He played with his usual unbridled power and seemingly reckless abandon. Beltran took the first game 12-10. Williams recovered to win the second game 11-2. Beltran made the necessary adjustments from his lopsided second game loss to win the third game 11-4. The swashbuckling New Mexico's hombre, Williams, made his own adjustments and won the fourth game 11-8. The fans were on the edge of their seats. An exciting tiebreaker was unfolding in front of them. The tiebreaker started as tight as the match itself, but Beltran pulled away with an 11-4 victory.

Men's Pro Singles Quarterfinals – #4 Jason Mannino vs. #5 Kane Waselenchuk: It was good seeing two good friends warming up and having good time with each other. Then it was all business. Using superior power and precision on both sides, coupled with soft touches upfront, Waselenchuk defeated Mannino in three games, 6, 2, 7 to advance to the semifinals.

Men's Pro Singles Quarterfinals – #2 Jack Huczek vs. #7 Shane Vanderson: Vanderson gave Huczek all he could handle. The Vanderson Backhand was viciously and relentlessly spitting out some eye-popping rollouts. Huczek's superior skills and experience eventually prevailed, enabling him to earn a four-game victory 3, (7), 8, 8 and advance to the semifinals.



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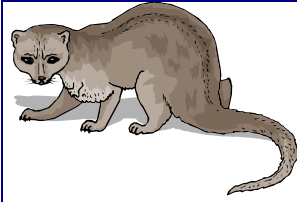
Men's Pro Singles Semifinals – #1 Rocky Carson vs. #5 Kane Waselenchuk: Both players got up for this match-up. They warmed up with discernible intensity. The first game was very tight. Great offensive and defensive shots were on display. Waselenchuk used deadly backhand splats and soft touches upfront to win the game 11-8. Carson seemed dispirited by the loss, as Waselenchuk proceeded to dominate the next two games, winning them 3 and 3 to advance to the finals. After the match, a dejected Carson quietly sat down with a towel over his head, pondering his yet another lopsided loss to Waselenchuk.

Men's Pro Singles Quarterfinals – #2 Jack Huczek vs. #3 Alvaro Beltran: In this match-up, Beltran proved once again why he's a warrior of the first order. Nobody in the IRT could cruise to an easy victory over this battle-hardened warrior. Huczek and Beltran clashed for more than two hours before Huczek emerged victorious in four games 8, 10, (9), 7. Both players really put a great show for the appreciative fans – displaying phenomenal footwork, prodigious stamina, smooth hitting strokes, accurate passing shots, and graceful dives.



Men's Pro Singles Finals – Jack Huczek vs. Kane Waselenchuk: Waselenchuk's crisp shooting during the warm-up was the harbinger of things to come in this match-up. Fans who expected an exciting battle between these two top-rated IRT players were sorely disappointed. The much anticipated battle didn't materialize. Waselenchuk was a man on mission. His backhand, which he perfected to a new art form for both entertainment and annihilation, was on a cruise control – generating splats after splats. When Huczek dared to test Waselenchuk's forehand with lob serves, he got more of the same – *ungettable* splats. Huczek fought as hard as he could to make the match a bit more competitive, but Waselenchuk's incomparable power, quickness, and cat-like reflexes were too much to overcome. Waselenchuk won in three games 4, 4, 7 to capture the title. The vanquished Huczek was gracious in congratulating the victor for a decisive win.

There was no question that Waselenchuk dominated the Men's Pro Singles division like he did for most of the Tier 1 tournaments he participated in this season. He dropped only one game in the tournament, courtesy of **Andy Hawthorne** in the Round of 16. When Waselenchuk starts hitting on all cylinders, he's like a freight train with absolutely nothing that can stop him. If he can sustain his current torrid pace of dominance, Waselenchuk will be racquetball and racquetball will be Waselenchuk. It's up to the rest of proud IRT players to prove this assertion as a rampant hyperbole.



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Other Tournament Winners

The following players emerged as official winners in other tournament events:

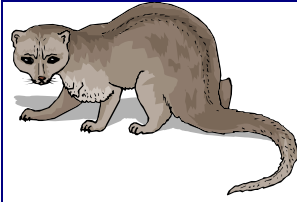
Table III – Participants By Divisions and Winners

Division	Number of Players/Teams	Draw Type	Winner
Men's Open Singles	45	Single Elimination	Andy Hawthorne
Men's A Singles	54	Single Elimination	Jeff Rubin
Men's B Singles	44	Single Elimination	Stewart Solomon
Men's C Singles	31	Single Elimination	Kenneth Ilgner
Men's D Singles	5	Single Elimination	Koichi Fujita
Men's 30+ Singles	12	Single Elimination	Jamie Hopkins
Men's 40+ Singles	13	Single Elimination	Anthony Dipietro
Men's 50+ Singles	16	Single Elimination	Stephen Mussachia
Men's 60+ Singles	9	Single Elimination	Dan Schaffer
Women's Open Singles	7	Single Elimination	Aimee Ruiz
Women's A Singles	10	Single Elimination	Susan Spinella
Women's B Singles	9	Single Elimination	Kaitlyn Simmons
Women's C Singles	6	Single Elimination	Kaitlyn Simmons
Men's Open Doubles	16	Single Elimination	Andy Hawthorne/Bryan Crosser
Men's A Doubles	27	Single Elimination	Joe Carrano/Wayne Storch
Men's B Doubles	14	Single Elimination	Troy Warigon/Slemo Warigon
Men's C Doubles	11	Single Elimination	Peter Simone, Jr./Robert Shenton
Men's 30+ Doubles	11	Single Elimination	John Isaza/Gemps Michelot
Men's 40+ Doubles	8	Single Elimination	Gregg Gasbarro/Robert Cerrito, Jr.
Women's Open Doubles	2	Single Elimination	Jen Saunders/Aimee Ruiz
Women's A Doubles	5	Single Elimination	Thao Le/Priscilla Gathoni
Mixed Open Doubles	5	Single Elimination	Aimee Ruiz/Sanjay LaForest
Mixed A Doubles	11	Single Elimination	Jim Hornsby/Dolly Watson
Mixed B/C Doubles	8	Single Elimination	Cesar Carrion/Clara Pomerantz

SPOTLIGHT ON IRT PLAYERS

IRT players are arguably the most accessible in all professional sports. Their commendable accessibility to fans throughout the tournament only served to hammer this point home.

Shane Vanderson: Known for his sweet and deadly backhand, this gentleman was everywhere. Whether he was preparing for his next match or out of the competition, he made sure that he soaked in as many amateur matches as possible. He shook hands with fans and gave them helpful advice when asked.



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Rocky Carson: After getting over his painful loss to Kane Waselenchuk in the semifinals, he stayed around to catch some entertaining amateur matches and socialize with old friends. He was the darling of many fans. He freely dispensed advice to fans on how to play their best and be mentally tough.

Alvaro Beltran: He hobnobbed happily with fans at the club and nearby local eatery, Diner's. His humility, approachability, and sense of humor were some of his sterling personal qualities that endeared him to fans and fellow competitors alike.

Ruben Gonzalez: The living legend was also everywhere – encouraging the vanquished, cracking jokes with friends, and dishing out some pearls of wisdom to his adoring fans.

Jack Huczek: He made himself more accessible to fans during this tournament than other IRT events in recent memory. He talked about his new and exciting job in Texas, and about his golf game. Fans got to know his gentle and funny side.

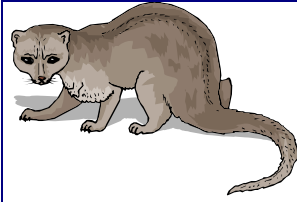
Kane Waselenchuk: He was relatively more secluded, but readily available to fans before and immediately after his matches.

Rafael Filippini: The Gearbox racquetball founder and designer did not act like one. He was humble, down to earth, accessible, and downright comical. Fans enjoyed his hospitable company at both the club and Diner's restaurant. He proudly showed off some basic sign language he mastered from his interaction with a hearing impaired relative. He was a joy to watch in Men's Open Doubles.

Mitch Williams: This dude continued to show why he's one of the most gregarious animals on the IRT planet. There was no stopping him from constant socialization with fans. He enjoyed the company of his good friend, **Sanjay LaForest**, as much as he did other fans.

Ben Croft: This cool, happy-go-lucky chap always had smile on his face on and off the court. He did not give a rat ass about catching germs from socializing endlessly with his fans. He's born to kick butts, take names, and keep fans entertained.

Jason Thoerner: This enigmatic IRT personality was pleasantly cantankerous. He was alternately entertaining fans and irritating his opponents during matches with his playful antics. Off the court, you could not find a more approachable IRT player.



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Travis Woodbury: He's blossoming into a terrific IRT player, thanks largely to his close friendship with **Jason Thoerner**. He was a local favorite. His proud papa, Paris, made damn sure that the kid was raised properly with a good head on his shoulders.



From Northern Virginia With Love: This picture taken by **Carlos Hip** shows Ruben Gonzalez after he made an amazing diving shot to win the Men's Open Doubles championship with Dan Fowler at the **2008 Annual Christmas Classic Pro/Am WPRO Event** on Sunday, December 14, 2008 at the Crystal Gateway Sports and Health Club, Arlington, VA. It was the **"Shot of the Tournament"** cited in The Mongoose Musings issue of January 23, 2009.

SPOTLIGHT ON AMATEUR PLAYERS

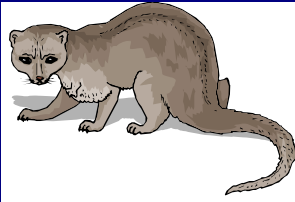
Paris Woodbury: He lost a tough one in the second round of Men's 50+ Singles to the eventual champion, **Stephen Mussachia**. He probably did it intentionally so that he could get more free time to watch his son, Travis, play! He gave some free E-Force shirts to The Mongoose and his kids – wonderful presents that are real keepers!!

Jim Hornsby: The Redneck Bubba came to play with his famous redneck T-shirts. There was no denying the fact that he's one of the best doubles players in A division. He teamed up with **Dolly Watson** to win Mixed A Doubles championship, an event he dominated for years with his regular mixed doubles partner, **Angela Adams**. Rumors had it that his bow legs give him an edge over his opponents.

Priscilla Gathoni: There are not many women in A division who pound the ball with the same power and ferocity as this Rastafarian woman with the Jamaican/Kenyan accent. She teamed up with **Thao Le** to overpower their opponents and win Women's A Doubles championship.

Thao Le: She is gradually redefining how a smart racquetball should be played. She did not need power to win. She favored placing ball where it was extremely difficult for her opponent to retrieve it. She made about as many unforced errors as Kane Waselenchuk dropped games during the tournament.

Richard Simmons: He played with his immensely talented daughter, Samantha, in Mixed A Doubles for the first time in a major tournament, and lost in the semifinals to the number one seeded team. Had it not been for an injury-prone right knee, he would be making waves in the



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Men's Open Singles division. He has the agility, power, and intellect to hold his own against the hard-hitting big dogs.

Richard Sledzik: He hates to lose. He plays to win. Other than drinking exotic beers, nothing delights him more than kicking butts and taking names back to Massachusetts! When it comes to pounding the ball, and pounding it really hard, he has no conscience!!

Russ Bonnano: He's the ultimate showman. His constant yap-yapping on the court tends to irritate his opponents. That's what happened in the semifinals of Men's 30+ Doubles when Russ kept reminding the referee and fans that one of the opposing players was quacking like a bleeping duck. The drama that unfolded drew a lot of fans. Unfortunately, Russ' team lost a very tight one. Thanks for a very entertaining show, Russ!

The Tournament Ratings

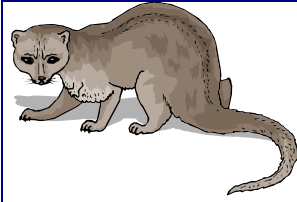
The table below reflects The Mongoose's ratings for the tournament.

Category	Grade
Cost/Price	A
Prizes/Trophies	A+
Shirts/Sweatshirts	A+
Facility	A+
Participation	A+
Courts/Matches Scheduling	A+
Foods/Hospitality	B
Players' Performance	A+
Disputes Resolution	A+
Overall Atmosphere	A+

Future Tournaments

Future racquetball tournaments are as follows:

- **2009 MWRA Singles Championships**, March 6-8, 2009, Severna Park Racquetball and Fitness Club. Check: <http://www.r2sports.com/tourney/home.asp?TID=4526>.
- **2009 Virginia STATE Singles Championships**, March 6-8, 2009, Greenbrier North YMCA in Chesapeake. Contact Malia Bailey at xl2b1@cox.net for details (application will be posted at www.cvra.org).



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- **2009 NY State Singles Championships**, March 13-15, 2009, Court Club, Albany, NY. For details, check: <http://www.r2sports.com/tourney/home.asp?TID=4601>.
- **2009 Miller Lite Open-IRT Tier 4**, March 20-22, 2009, The Athletic Club, York, PA. Check: <http://www.theathleticclubofyork.com/about.php>.
- **2009 Dr. Edward Jewusiak Memorial Tournament**, March 20-22, 2009, Riverside Wellness Family Center, Newport News, VA. Email Mr. Carl Moody at cemood@wm.edu or check: <http://www.r2sports.com/tourney/home.asp?TID=5116>.
- **2009 Delaware State Singles Championships**, March 21-22, 2009, Kirkwood Fitness & Racquetball Club, Wilmington, DE (application will be posted at www.dara.org).
- **2009 Terrapin Shootout-WPRO Tier 1**, March 26-29, 2009, Lakeforest Sport & Health Club, Gaithersburg, MD. Check: <http://www.r2sports.com/tourney/home.asp?TID=4519>.
- **2009 Dennis Rosenberg Pro/Am-IRT Tier 1**, April 3-5, 2009, Allentown, PA (application will be posted at <http://irt-tour.com/200809Schedule.aspx>).

A Parting Thought

Tom Keogh and his army of dedicated volunteers did an excellent job of hosting this historic tournament. Keogh decided to forgo playing so that he could focus on running the tournament as smoothly as possible. He probably took his vitamins because he worked tirelessly like an Energizer Bunny to ensure that the tournament was a smashing success. Kudos, Tom, for a job well done, and more grease to your elbows!!

Racquetbally yours,

Slemo

Slemo Warigon, MBA, CIA, CISA, CICA

The Mongoose Domain

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