

2009 Coastal Georgia Open!

*Pro/Am Racquetball Tournament
at Tominac Fitness Center*

By

Charles G. Knight – December 17, 2009

Racquetball players from near and far descended upon Hunter Army Airfield's Tominac Fitness Center December 11-13 to play in the 2009 Coastal Georgia Open Pro/Am Racquetball Tournament (CGO-P/A). This event was sponsored by MWR, Team Ektelon Racquetball, the Military Racquetball Federation, and the International Racquetball Tour.

Former World Champion Mike Ray, of Hilton Head Island, was the headliner, as he has been at previous Fort Stewart events. Players traveled from a five-state surrounding area and as far away as Pennsylvania to compete for over \$5000 in cash and prizes!

To continue his goal to bring professional racquetball to military members, Team Ektelon member and Army Retiree,

Charles G. Knight returned to Savannah to run the 2009 Coastal Georgia Open Pro/Am. Fellow Retirees and avid racquetballers William Lowery, Lorenzo Albino, and Robert Gordon completed the tournament team.



World Champion Mike Ray having fun with the crowd.



Terrence Pierce (L) battles Retired 1SG John Chretien of SC

MWR Facilities Manager Eli Wilson was instrumental in getting this event off the ground.

Many new faces gathered at HAAF than were at previous events. This had the crowd abuzz as to who would end up in the Men's Pro/Open finals – singles and doubles. Jim Minkel was the odds on favorite for singles against Mike Ray. Open doubles was another story. With a strong team, Eric Gordon and Lorenzo Albino proved to be just that.



(L-R) Eric Gordon, Tim Breen, Mike Ray, Lorenzo Albino

Albino/Gordon won their first doubles match advancing to the #1 seed, Mike Ray and Tim Breen. Losing their 1st game 15-11 and winning the 2nd 15-14 led to a tie-breaker that proceeded to be one of the most lopsided ever seen. Eric Gordon hit rollout after rollout resulting in an 11-0 annihilation of the #1 seed. This landed Albino/Gordon in the Open Doubles Finals and the audience in shock at what they just witnessed!

Waiting on the other end of the draw were former Pro and National Champion Jim Minkel and National Doubles Champion Jason Bernerth.

The Qualls – a family of eight teen players – left a lasting impression on the 2009 CGO-P/A. Brandon surprised the crowd with a tough showing in the Men’s Open against Danny Smith of Atlanta. Micah and Josh and the others battled in the Men’s A and B divisions in several back and forth matches.



Brandon Qualls leaps above a backhand from Danny Smith of Atl



GA State Champion Lynn Fonseca (L) loses to Andrea Gordon in the Women’s Open Finals

Lynn Fonseca and Andrea Gordon know each other well. Both are State Champions and seasoned racquetball players. Andrea proved to be a tougher and more consistent opponent than Lynn expected. With a lob serve that hugged the side wall and rollout after rollout, it was tough for Lynn to get control of the game. Andrea Gordon won the Women’s Open division against the current Georgia State Champion.



Charles G. Knight gets to a passing shot by Donald Grunstra

Tournament Director Charles G. Knight of Cincinnati showed his skills on the court as well. Knight defeated Donald Grunstra of Charleston, SC in a tie-breaker in the Men's Open division. Knight lost to Jim Minkel in the next round. Jim Minkel went on to win the Men's Pro/Open division and \$1000! The crowd was also surprised by a visit by Hollywood Actor Tom Berenger who came to watch several friends play.

Retiree SFC Lorenzo Albino is also the SC State Open Singles Champion, Puerto Rico National Champion, and a former All Army team member. Retiree SFC William Lowery is also a GA State Doubles Champion, State Singles Champion and Team Ektelon member. Both play and teach racquetball at Tominac Fitness Center M-F. Stop in and get some pointers from these true racquetball professionals.



Lorenzo Albino (L) backs up partner Eric Gordon (R) as he returns a shot from Ted Wilson (C)



Sarah Bates fights a tough battle against GA State Champion Lynn Fonseca

Sarah Bates tried her skills in the Women's Open division. It was a tough battle but she stuck to her guns and challenged every opponent. Although Sarah was clearly outclassed in this division, she knows what she needs to do to become a more competitive player. We can expect to see her again in the Women's Open division soon! Sarah donated her skills as a professional photographer and took all of the photos in this article. A big Thank You for those services!



Bryan Titus (L) lost to Lorenzo Albino in the Men's 45 Open Finals. Here he plays Ian Mullings from Atlanta

The Military Racquetball Federation has partnered with the Department of Defense, Team Ektelon, and E-Force to promote racquetball at military installations worldwide. For more information on how to establish a chapter at your installation or any military installation, visit www.militaryracquetball.com



All Winners:

Men's Open Singles

Jim Minkel (Atlanta) defeated Mike Ray (Hilton Head Island): 15-6, 15-12

Women's Open Singles

Andrea Gordon (Savannah) defeated Lynn Fonseca (Atlanta): 15-8, 15-8

Men's A

SGM Moises Martinez (Fort Bragg) defeated Maurice McKoy (Fort Bragg): 15-8, 15-9

Men's B

Charles Mathers (Fort Bragg) defeated Thomas Jackoby (Hilton Head Island) (11-15), 15-11, 11-7

Men's C

Scott Kelly (Florida) defeated Zach Qualls (Sumter, SC): 15-7, 15-11

Men's 35+

Ted Wilson (Atlanta) defeated 1SG John Chretien (Fort Jackson, SC): 15-10, 15-12

Men's 45+

SFC Lorenzo Albino (Savannah) defeated Bryan Titus (Atlanta): (3-15), 15-12, 11-8

Men's Open Doubles

Jim Minkel/Jason Bernerth (Atlanta) defeated Lorenzo Albino/Eric Gordon (Savannah): 15-12, 15-14

Mixed Open Doubles

Eric Gordon/Andrea Gordon (Savannah) defeated Roberto Cantos/Leah Upshaw (Florida/Georgia): 15-11, 15-6

Men's A Doubles

Bryan Titus/Terrence Pierce (Atlanta) defeated Micah Qualls/Josh Qualls (SC): (11-15), 15-7, 15-11

Men's B/C Doubles

Marc Gordon/Tim Thompson defeated Charles Mathers/Leon Johnson (Fort Bragg): 15-10, 15-13

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