

Angel Marquez

Angel's first influence in handball came from his dad, who was a good player from Arthur Park and Crotona Park in the Bronx. He took Angel and his two brothers to those venues when he went to play.

Angel was immediately attracted to the speed of the pink ball and the power with which it could be struck. He had a lot of anger back then, and he learned that this was one he could let go of those feelings.

When Angel began playing, in the early years he played only for fun. But at 13 years old he played in his first park tournament. In such tournaments it was always about playing the top competitors because there were no lower level tournaments for younger guys or beginners.

Therefore Angel was beaten badly, and he continued to take beatings in tournaments. But he learned a lot from losing so often. Those beatings eventually paid off!

One of his earlier and most memorable successes came when Angel, while still a teenager, beat his idol, Ruben Gonzalez, for money.

But the greatest change in handball for Angel came when he discovered West 4th Street in Manhattan. The people there kept a ranking system called the PEAK Pyramid. There were also stories about the players that a gentleman named Dave Andre would write and post around the handball courts of New York City. Dave would also run pink ball tournaments, which were just like national tournaments. All the great pink ball players would enter. Angel was frequently on the top of the Pyramid,

meaning he was ranked first in the category – the best! He ruled the courts for many years, eventually nicknaming himself “The Legend.”

Marquez had an ace serve that was second to none. He had amazing court savvy, and could out-volley everyone in his day. Not only did he win Dave Andre's tournaments, in 1985 Angel won the last USHA sponsored National Pink Ball Singles Championship. He was also an excellent small ball player, once losing in the quarter-finals of a USHA National Singles Tournament, 10-11, in the tie-breaker to National Hall of Fame player Albert Apuzzi.

But Marquez' greatest claim to fame was as a super pink ball player. Pink ball pundits and players alike generally acknowledged that Angel was as good in pink ball as he said he was!

