

Stu Kirzner

Stuart Kirzner was born in Brooklyn, NY in 1954. Handball played a very influential role in his life right from its beginning. Stu's father, Irving "Lefty" Kirzner, was a two time National Doubles Champion and his mentor. His brother, Jeff, who was also an accomplished player, was his regular doubles partner.

After first hitting the courts at age 9, Stu played for Tilden High School, where he compiled a record of 45-3. Under the guidance of Coach Leo Hirsch, Stu and his teammates, including Junior National Champ Marcel Goldfarb, brought Tilden to the PSAL Championship I 1969 and 1971.

In 1969, at the age of 16, Stu began competing on the national scene as well. By 1970 Stu was a semi-finalist in the USHA National Junior 1-Wall Championships, and

then finished as runner-up to Ken Ginty in 1971 and 1972. He had some early success in the open division, but his erratic play kept him from seriously challenging for a championship.

In 1978 Stu put it all together, winning the 1978 USHA National 1-Wall Singles title. He defeated Hall of Famer Joe Durso in the quarter-finals, coming back from a 3-17 2nd game deficit, and down 16-20 in the third game. Stu defeated Billy Archival, 21-8, 21-4, for the championship. Stu's singles career ended two years later because of asthma.

Stu was also a formidable doubles player. Partnered with his brother, Jeff, he reached the semi-finals in the 1976 National AAU 1-Wall Doubles. The pair had success in local tournaments at Shore Haven Beach Club and Castle Hill Beach Club, finishing as finalists at Shore Haven twice and winning once. Stu was also a USHA National 1-Wall Doubles Semi-finalist three times: twice with Mark Levine in 1977 and 1980, and once with Neal Bocian in Stu's very last tournament in 1983.

Stu was known for his power game, strong serve and kill shots. He was a fixture at West 5th Street in Coney Island, and loved the competition and the camaraderie with the finest 1-wall players in New York.

