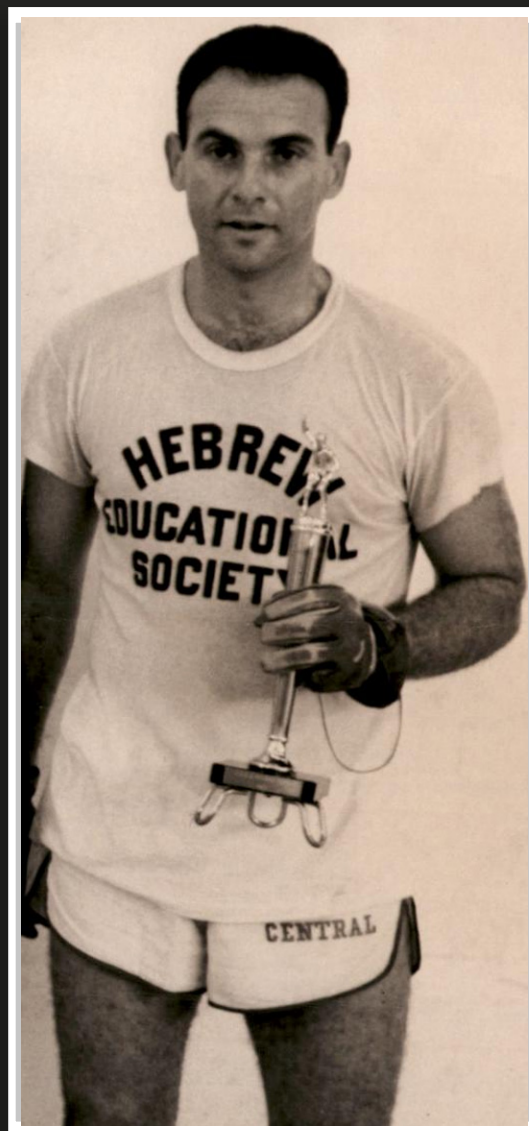


Dave Norvid

“Lefty Davey”, as he was called, was a sweet-swinging lefty, who competed on a high level in 1-wall doubles from the 1950’s to the mid ‘60’s.

He won the 1964 National 1-Wall USHA Doubles title and the 1965 1-Wall National AAU Doubles title. Additionally he was a semi-finalist in the National 1-wall AAU Doubles, and a semi-finalist again in the National 1-wall AAU event. He was a frequent participant in all-star exhibitions, and the Brighton Beach Baths Sweeps.

Though Davey did not have an overpowering aspect to his game, he was solid in every aspect of it: serve, power, shots, defense, and speed. He was a sought after partner by many of the top right-handed players of his time including Howie Eisenberg, Joe Danilczyk, and Steve Sandler.



Carl Obert* – 1999

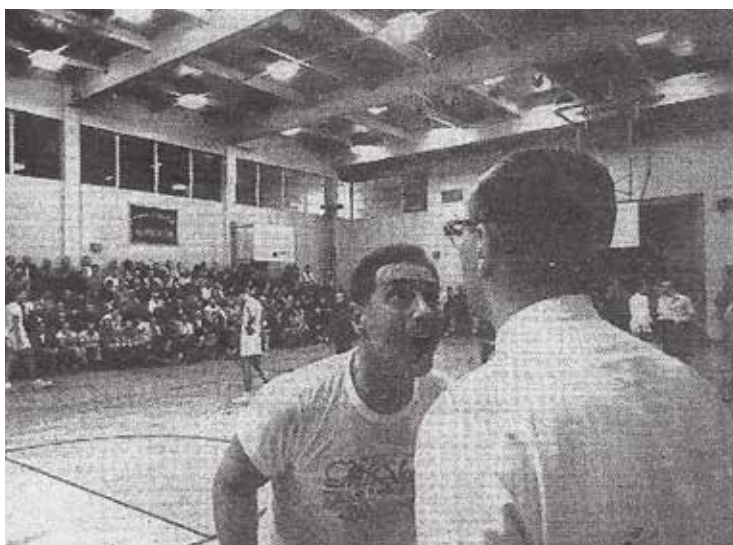
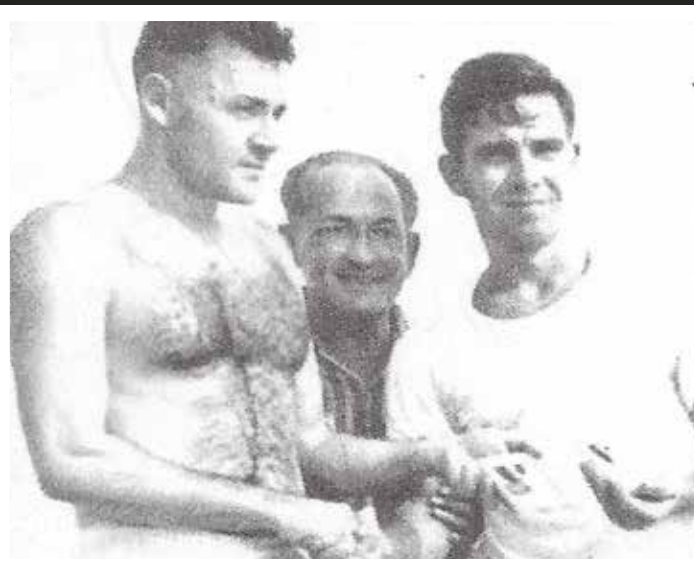
PHOTOGRAPHS
TO FOLLOW

An all-around champion like each of his brothers, Carl, also like each of his brothers, was always remarkably fit.

Possessed of great court savvy, he was a superb doubles player in 4-wall, 3-wall, and 1-wall. Known mostly for his amazing hopping service, Carl won National singles titles as well as National doubles crowns in both 3-wall and 1-wall. It was not uncommon for a Carl Obert rival to find himself down by ten points before

returning a serve to the wall. Always filled with hustle and spirit, his will to win, along with his great skills, brought him many victories.

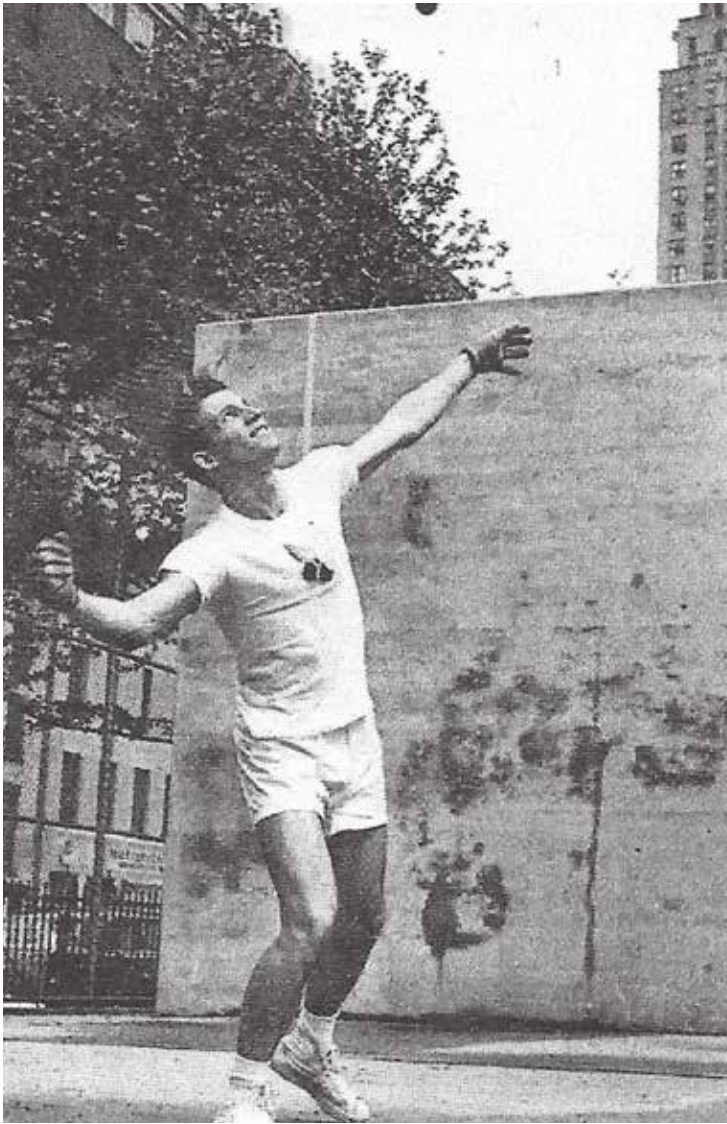
Oscar Obert* – 1972



Oscar Obert was the essence of aggression on any handball court in singles and doubles.

Constantly driving and shooting with incredible power with either hand, he was masterful in 4-wall, 3-wall, and, especially, in 1-wall, where his roots developed. Oscar probably hit more killers in one handball game than most players hit in a month! Always superbly fit, he was all business on the field of battle.

Ruby Obert* – 1987



A graceful, gifted player, Ruby won two National 1-Wall Singles Championships 21 years apart.

But his true brilliance shone during doubles play in all handball venues. On the right side in 1-wall and 4-wall, he was the perfect complement to his aggressive brother, Oscar. Very powerful with excellent control, Ruby helped Oscar immeasurably by keeping the ball in play and blasting opponents away from front court position. Later in his career, teamed with his left-handed brother Carl, Ruby proved himself a formidable left-side player with his great power, strong opposite left, and abundant kills of his own. He earned over 40 National handball titles.

Moey Orenstein

Moey was a 5'6", 165 pound package of muscle. From the early 1940's to the mid-1950's he was regarded as the untitled king of 1-wall handball. He had legs that resembled tree trunks and arms which were as powerful as his legs. Vic Hershkowitz, generally considered the best all-around handball player of all time, acknowledged that Moey was the most formidable 1-waller he ever faced.

Moey won the 1942 AAU Doubles Championship while partnered with aforementioned Vic, and in 1949 he slammed, winning both the National AAU 1-Wall Singles and Doubles. Additionally, in 1939 and '40 he reached the semi-

finals of the AAU doubles and singles respectively. World War II stole some of Moey's prime years, and then, in 1950, the AAU barred him from entering further tournament competition because he had joined a professional handball group, which was being paid for exhibiting their skills at a Broadway arena. That ban also robbed Moey of many of his prime years, when he might have won several more National titles.

Orenstein was also the best money player of his time. He thoroughly dominated Lincoln Terrace Park, the hub of top flight 1-wall handball in Brooklyn. He was respected everywhere in the city where there was handball turf. He was always a presence to be reckoned with on a handball court.

A fabulous retriever, Moey combined sheer speed with tremendous anticipation and reflexes. It was almost impossible to drive a ball through him. He had tremendous court sense, and was able to change the direction of a volley to throw his opponents off balance. His ability to block his opponents was second to none. One of his classic shots was a left-handed sweep of the ball for a kill in the right corner.

The AAU's banishing Moey Orenstein (and several other great players) from tournaments was a huge loss to the New York handball community.

PHOTOGRAPHS
TO FOLLOW

Graham Palmore – NGM

Handball became an integral part of Graham's life from the age of 11. He began playing at Knickerbocker Park in his neighborhood.

He played for his high school team, Bushwick, but on a limited basis because he had to work after school. He was aware, however, of the great rivalry between Bushwick's first singles player at the time, Winfield Balance, and Ken Davidoff of Brooklyn Tech. When the USHA initiated its National 1-Wall Tournament at the Brownsville Boys Club, Graham's lack of experience against strong competition rendered him unsuccessful in the open singles division.

But once passed forty, his game, both singles and doubles, began to excel. In 1982 he entered his first National 1-Wall Masters Tournament. At this writing (2015) he has missed only one such tournament since. Graham won in excess of 20 National 1-Wall Masters Championships, mostly in singles, elevating him to National Grandmaster.

At 39, having dabbled in 4-wall, he determined to become proficient in order to compete in the many local, state, and regional 4-wall events held in New York. Initially he entered "B" tournaments. At 40



he began competing in masters play.

Once committing himself to 4-wall, Graham entered more than 150 local, state, and regional tournaments resulting in approximately 50 championships. He played at: Albany, Fishkill, Rockville Center/Syosett, Long Island, NYAC, Fairfield, New Jersey, and many other venues. He is a member of the Fishkill Hall of Fame. He also entered several National 4-Wall Masters Tournaments traveling to Maryland, Michigan, and Texas. There he had more modest success, his greatest win coming

with his frequent partner, Al Green, against Fred Chapman and Stuffie Singer.

Generously, Palmore offered credit to the many players with whom he partnered over his long career in 1-, 3- and 4-wall: Al Green, Jerry Yee, Mike Dikman, Richie Saffer, Dan Maroney, Billy Farber, Dan Flickstein, Marc Goldberg, Dennis Uffer, Tom Vitale, Fred Munsch, Bill Kennedy, Joey Guzman, and others. But he credited his wife for being his greatest partner, who always supported his desire to play and improve.

Graham saw handball as a significant part of his life, providing him with health, both mental and physical, happiness and lifelong friendships.

A member of the 1-Wall Committee in the middle 1980's, Graham was also instrumental in helping create this virtual web site for the New York Handball Hall of Fame. It was his great hope that the site would be accessed by the general public as well as handball players and enthusiasts – and that it would prove to be a joy to all.

Brenda Pares

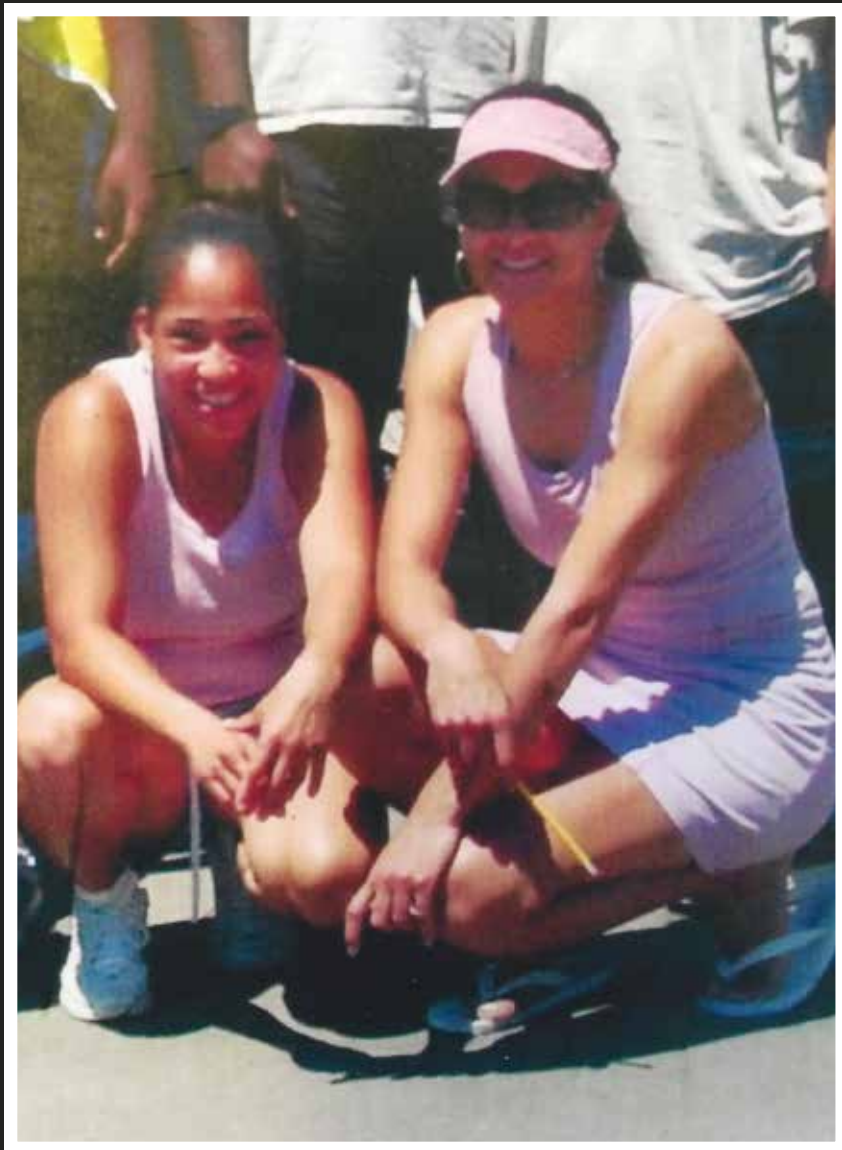
Born and raised in Brooklyn with easy access to her neighborhood park, Brenda was introduced to handball at an early age. Learning the game from her sister, Vivian, she shortly fell in love with the sport. The outdoor atmosphere, physical and mental challenge, and camaraderie provided an opportunity to stoke her competitive nature and passion.

In 1999 she entered and won her first competitive big blue B Doubles tournament with her partner Tracy Davis. The following year she won the Women's B singles and SAHA's B Doubles and the Women's Open Doubles events. This led to higher level competition and an interest in small ball tournaments as well.

To sharpen her skills, Brenda worked with trainer Benjamin Brettner. This allowed her to take her big blue style and bring it to the small ball game. As a result, she made her way to the finals in the 2003 USHA 1-Wall National Doubles, the H.E.S Women's One Wall Pro-Singles, Iron Maiden Women's Doubles, and a championship at the Y.M.C.A National One Wall Handball Women's Doubles with her new and current partner, Bernice Torres.

Her most accomplished and memorable year was 2004 when Brenda won the Triple Crown of Handball (Queen of the Court, Mayor's Cup and USHA One Wall National Singles titles). Along with those titles, she won the H.E.S. One Wall Women's Pro-Singles and the Y.M.C.A National 1-Wall Championship Women's Open Singles. In addition, Brenda and her partner Bernice were finalists in the Iron Maiden Women's Doubles, Citywide Big Blue Doubles, and were Champions in the YMCA 1-Wall National Women's Open Doubles giving her the slam to end the year. Brenda's accomplishments resulted in her receiving USHA Player of the Year, ICHA outstanding Athlete, and SAHA's Outstanding Athlete of the year.

Brenda remained at the top of the game for several years winning citywide singles and doubles titles three years in a row and becoming a doubles finalist twice: slamming in the 2007 international competition in Azkoitia, Spain; three A/B Championships with partner Evette Crespo, four mixed doubles finalist finishes with partner Yuber Castro; 2009 World Doubles Champion and Singles finalist; 1-Wall Big Blue Nationals Singles finalist. In 2010 she earned the 1-Wall Big Blue National Championship Singles title and was a Doubles finalist. Brenda ended 2010 as the Sky Bounce Big Blue Singles champion.



...Brenda Pares

After getting married in 2008 to her wonderful husband, Lacy DuBose III, Brenda took time off to start a family. After having her beautiful daughters, Kayden and Sydney, she went on to compete in the 2013 Big Blue Nationals and was a singles semi-finalist and doubles finalist. After taking another year off to have daughter Maya, Brenda again, at this writing, is looking forward to competing.

Brenda's journey is based on the collective efforts of family and friends who were critical to her success. She would like to personally thank...

- The founding members of the NYHHOF, all of the handball organizations and tournament organizers. Without your belief in this sport, none of this would be possible. Thank you for providing a venue for all of us to share in the love of this sport. You are responsible for the happiness of so many individuals. You continue to play a critical role in what it means to be a professional handball player/athlete.
- My sister Vivian for not only teaching me the game, but for always supporting me in all I do.
- My first handball partner and best friend, Margaret Maliga. Thank you for all the fun games we had, the early training, hard work and commitment, and, more importantly, the true meaning of partnership and friendship.
- My good friend Tristan Mena, who took me outside my local park and introduced me to a higher level of competition in NYC.
- My first competitive partner, Tracy Davis. Thank you for the introduction to handball tournaments. We had a blast.
- Cesar Sala for his shared knowledge of the game.
- My Coney Island Family for making me the player I am today. I am truly grateful for your continued support, friendship, and the amazing handball games and the laughs we shared.
- My trainer and friend Benjamin Brettner. I can't thank you enough for the endless games (literally) as well as the training for my mind and body. You helped me build my shot selection, stamina, consistency and confidence to reach my potential and be the best singles player I know how to be. I am forever grateful to you. And let's not forget your trips to the store. Without them I would have starved.
- My HB partner, friend and sister, Bernice Torres. We have been competing since 2001 and friends for even longer. Thank you for hanging tough and believing in me. Your support helped carry me through some of the toughest matches. Thank you for having faith in our partnership, for your dedication and big heart. I truly enjoy our laughs on and off the court. You continue to give me that push to want to play and to play at my best ability. Nothing but love Kid.
- To my wonderful friends and family for always supporting my love of the game.
- Mom and Dad, thank you for all your prayers, lessons, and values. You gave me the slight edge.
- My wonderful husband, friend and partner for life, Lacy DuBose III. I thank you for always taking my back no matter what. Thank you for your patience, guidance, support and love. You are an amazing husband and father. I am truly blessed to have you by my side. I love you!
- To my daughters Kayden, Sydney, and Maya. I love you more than words could ever express. Thank you for giving me purpose. Your explosive energy keeps me going and your laughter gets me through the day. I cannot wait to hit the ball around with you. Te Amo Mucho.
- To my Lord and Savior, I thank you for all of my blessings every day. "For with God, nothing shall be impossible." - Luke 1:37.

Walter Plekan* – 1991

A resident of Buffalo, and a handball legend in those parts, Plekan won several National AAU and National YMCA 4-Wall Championships. In 1951 he wrested the title away from the ever-brilliant Vic Hershkowitz. Walter Plekan was widely regarded as one of the greatest handball players ever.

From his beginnings on the 1-wall courts at Wende playground, the ambidextrous Plekan parlayed his dynamite, hooking serve and unpredictable trick shots to become the number one player in Western New York history. Known for his intensity on the court, Walter captured two New York State titles by the time he turned 21. He added the YMCA National Championship and the National Junior AAU titles in 1939. He hit his personal pinnacle in 1951, when he captured the first USHA 4-Wall National Championship.

While remaining unbeatable at the local level, he became regarded as one of the top four players in the country over a twelve year period. He dominated Western NY handball in both singles and doubles competition for more than thirty years, and he retired from competition in 1953. He was inducted into the USHA National Hall of Fame in 1991.

PHOTOGRAPHS
TO FOLLOW

Willie Polanco

One of the finest 1-wall doubles player of the first decade (and beyond) of the 21st century, Willie was a brilliant defensive lefty, and a steady influence on any partner fortunate enough to have paired with him, which was usually Pee Wee Castro.

PHOTOGRAPHS
TO FOLLOW

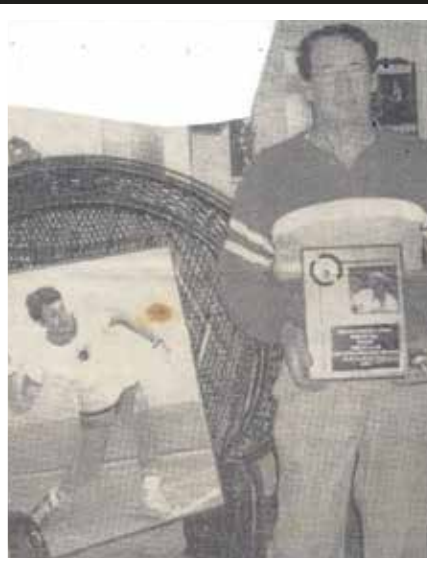
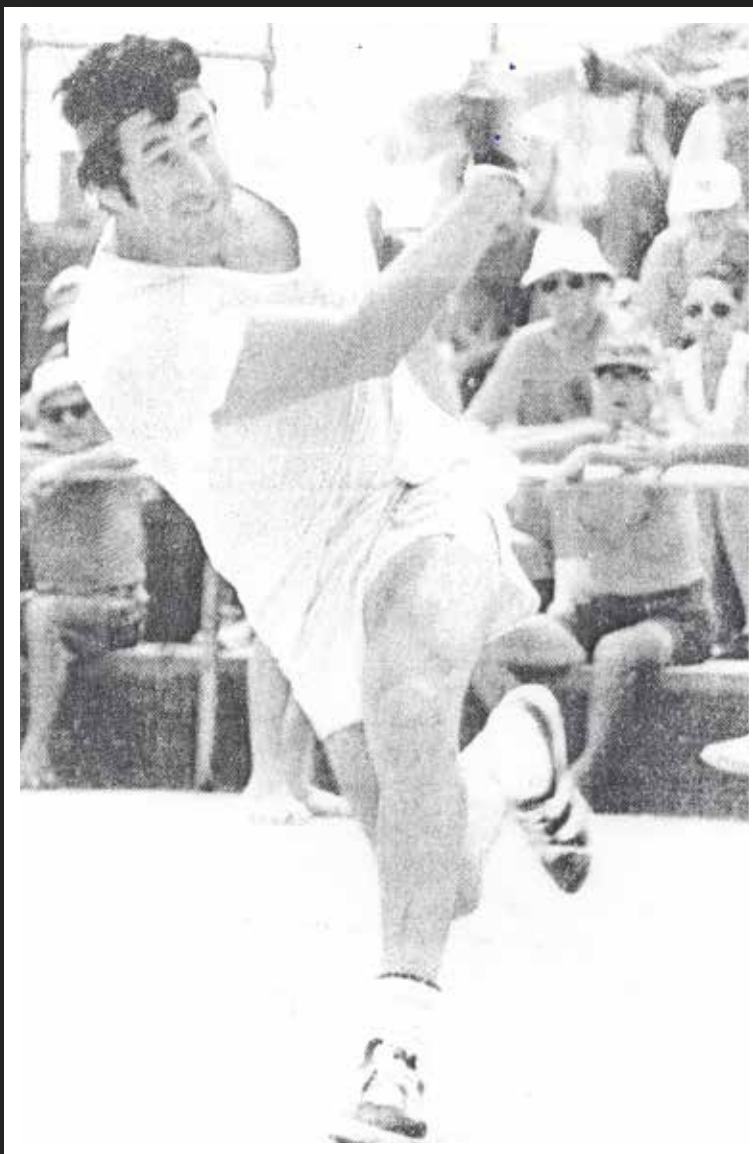
Polanco won the National USHA Open Doubles Championship in 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2012, all with Castro. In 2014 he won it again, but this time Mike Schneider was his partner. Willie was magnificent in steadying Schneider and helping him to his best outing ever, as they defeated the favored Bastidas brothers in the final.

Teamed with Castro, Willie also took second place in USHA National Doubles in 2007 and 2011. In 2010 he was runner-up in USHA National Singles, having eliminated the fabulous Satish Jagnandan in the semis.

But doubles was Willie's specialty. In addition to his USHA titles, he also won three National YMCA Doubles Championships: 2004, '05, and '13. In Ireland in 2003, teamed with Herman Mendez, Willie won the World's Bib Blue Doubles title. In 2006 he slammed in the World's held in Edmonton, Canada, winning the singles and the doubles, paired with Tony Roberts. In 2009, in Portland, Oregon, he slammed again, winning the small ball doubles with Castro and the big ball doubles with Roberts.

It was rare to find a finer gentleman on or off the court than Willie Polanco.

Arty Reyer* – 2003, NGM



Arty played handball for more than 65 years. On June 19, 2003, surrounded by 165 people, including the elite of handball, family, and friends, he was accorded the ultimate handball honor – induction into the National Handball Hall of Fame.

The occasion was held at the Immaculate Conception Center, in Douglaston, New York. Among the handball notables there were USHA President Bob Hickman, Vic Hershkowitz, Oscar and Carl Obert, and the first woman inducted into the Hall of Fame, Rosemary Bellini.

Arty won at least 43 titles, playing mostly 1-wall, with at least ten different partners. But he also played 4-wall, and won a few titles. He played some 3-wall tournaments as well when he was able.

At 8 years old Arty developed osteomyelitis, which created the need for his right hip to be fused. This was an infectious, inflammatory disease, which had him eating, sleeping, and getting educated in a sterile hospital environment for almost four years. It was the discovery of the wonder drug, penicillin, which cured him. Arty became the “miracle child!”

Arty Reyer* – 2003, NGM



At 14 Arty started to play handball. His father, who was a good handball player at the time, encouraged Arty to continue playing handball. But Arty played many sports including softball (pitching), tennis, and bowling to build his strength. Handball, however, proved to be his favorite sport and he excelled at it.

Among the many awards Arty won in handball include the following:

1989 – first player to win three divisions in one year: seniors, masters, golden (all 1-wall doubles)

1985 – first place Flamingo Park 4-wall with John Scola

1983 – only time a masters team (with Wisotsky) defeated an open team (Apuzi/Durso) in the finals

1980, '82 and '83 – first place in NYS 4-wall senior doubles with John Scola

1980 – “Greatest Player of the Quarter Century” (only 6th recipient of the honor)

1975 – first place in Flamingo Park 4-wall Holiday Tournament with Julie Rothman

1974 ('77, 81, 83) - first man to win both National Open Doubles and National Masters Doubles in the same year (1-wall)

1974 – Metropolitan AAU Award for Outstanding Athlete in Handball

1967 – runner-up in AAU National Singles; defeated Howie Eisenberg and Ruby Obert

1964 – HES 1-Wall Invitational: defeated (with C. Danilczyk), Decatur/Russo, 25-5; C. Obert/Rispoli 25-6; Norvid/Sandler, 25-8

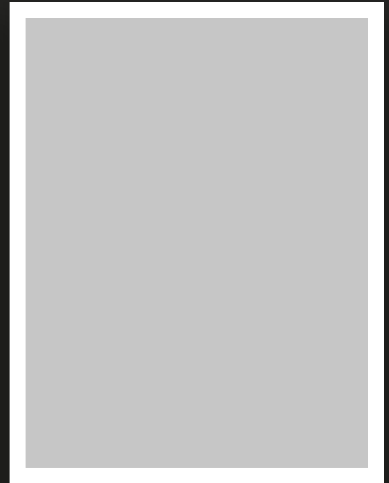
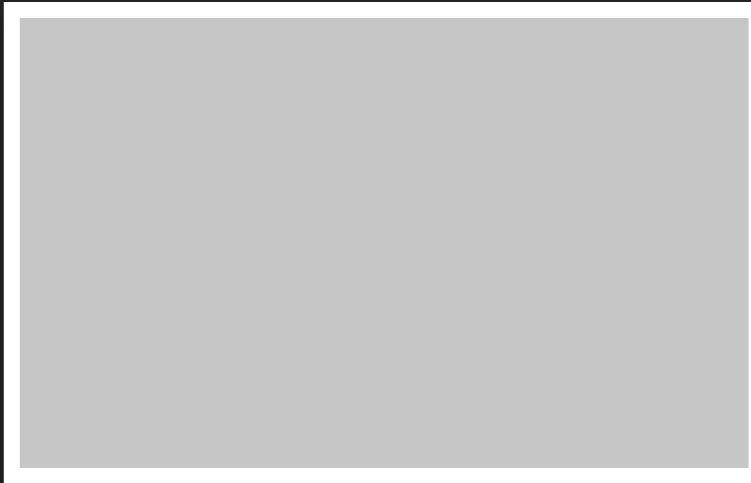
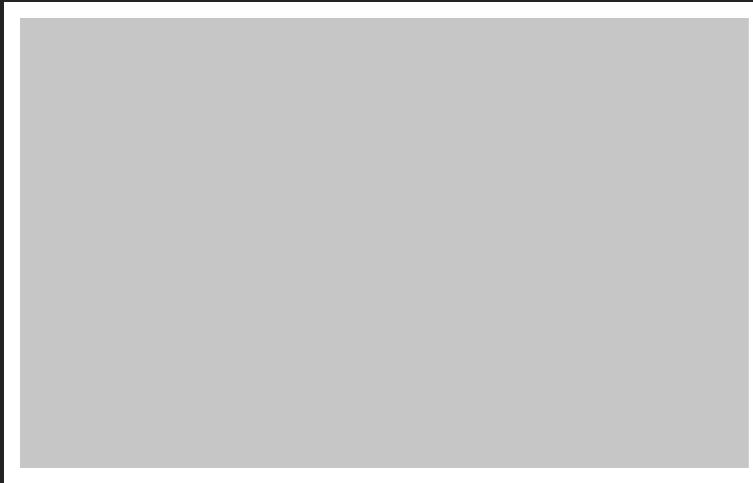
Arty Reyer played with and against the best. Those who played with him were almost assured of a victory. Moreover he always gave his all. In

1972, he was told not to play for two years after tearing his Achilles tendon. But he returned to the courts three months after surgery. In '96 he had his left hip replaced and was advised not to play in tournaments any more. Yet he won the Golden Masters with Tom Vitale in 2000 and 2001. Arty was over 60 playing men ten years younger!

Arty also arranged and directed tournaments at Castle Hill Beach Club and Shore Haven Beach Club in the Bronx as well as the Elks Club in Queens. The best players were always willing to play. Furthermore he donated his time to give instruction and demonstrations at various high schools, and often attended awards ceremonies to give support to young people.

Arty Reyer represented the best of being a handball player. He was a respected gentleman on and off the court. He was admired and respected by all who played with and against him a true inspiration to all.

Tony Roberts



For more than twenty years Tony Robert was a dominant force in 1-wall handball, first in National open play, then in National masters competition. In 1997, 1998 and 2002 he was USHA National 1-Wall Doubles Champion, while partnered with Dave Rojas. In 2003 he was USHA National 1-Wall Singles Champion. In 2005 he was, again, USHA National 1-Wall Doubles Champ. In addition he was a USHA National semi-finalist six time either in singles or doubles.

Roberts also excelled in big blue play, especially on the World's stage. In 2003 he was World's Big Blue Doubles Runner-up. In 2006 and 2009 he was World's Big Blue Doubles Champion. In '97, he was World's "Small Ball" Singles Runner-up, and in '03, and '06 he was World's Big Blue Singles Runner-up.

From the outside it appeared that Tony was not playing hard, but being on the court with him was a different experience as his retrieves and shot selection always baffled opponents. He did not rattle in close matches. These qualities helped produce the championship caliber player he became.

At this writing (2015) Tony Roberts has been a USHA National Masters Doubles Champion several times.

David Rojas

David Rojas has been referred to by many as a handball legend, winning consistently whether in big blue, little ball, and pink/pump ball for three decades. Described as having good court sense, great ball control, Dave was arguably the best right side player in the sport.

He was surely a formidable force on the court. Standing 6' 1", David had deceptive speed and a strong off-hand. Also known as "The Great Dave," he was introduced to the sport at the age of 12. David grew up in Manhattan, specifically in the Chelsea area where there were no available handball courts. As a result, he played in the driveway behind the schoolyard using the curves in the sidewalks as his short and long lines, having no idea that he would one day compete on the national and international level.

Eventually David ended up at West 4th Street, where he played with veterans such as Buddy Gantt, Fred Lynch, and Angel Marquez. He gave credit to these individuals for helping him develop his game including Joe Durso of Coney Island. He definitely felt embraced by the older "A" players and learned a lot from them. Dave

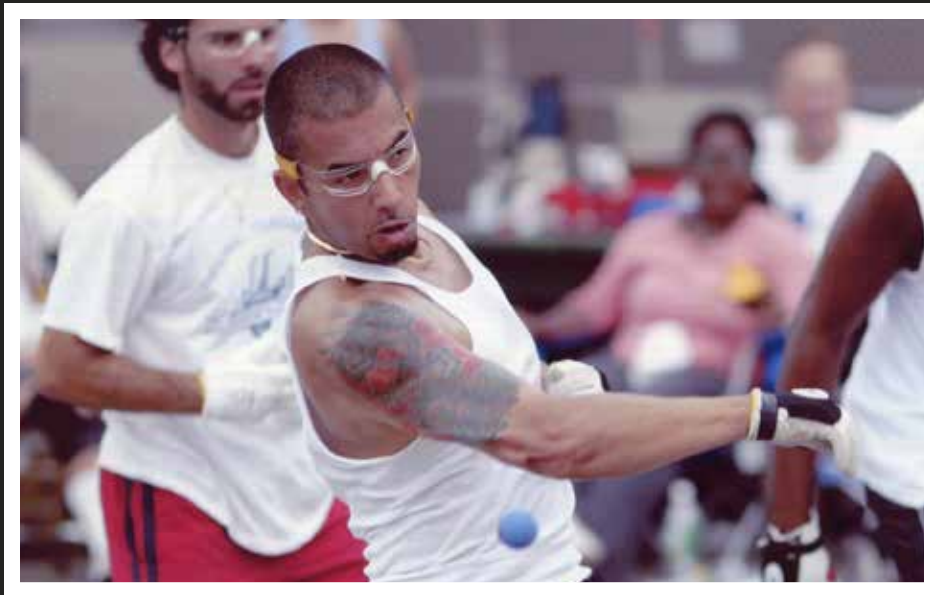
grew up in an era when you had to play the best to be the best. In his words, you had to "pay your dues" to become an "A" player. As such, he traveled from court to court playing the best park players and beating everyone in order to make a name for himself. In the '80's he observed a lot and on any given night, you would find him practicing what he learned during the day at West 4th Street and putting it into play on the nearby courts of Carmine Street. He would spend hours strengthening his game by incorporating drills in his daily routine. In order to improve his opposite, he would play three older players against his left. Determined, he was like a sponge watching the veteran players he called "Titans" battle one another. He often equated these players with watching a karate movie where you had to fight to the death to get to the next level in order to reach master status.

In 1985, at the age of 14, Rojas competed in his first pink ball tournament. One could not enter the "A" division without placing in the lower division, but, needless to say, David won the singles in both B and C divisions. The following year in Castle Hill he played in his first big blue "Open" tournament and took 1st Place playing with Fred Lynch, one of his mentors, and he won 1st Place in singles at West 4th. At 15, David was the youngest Open division player.

Although David was seasoned in tournaments, he wasn't yet experienced in doubles play. He felt a lot of pressure considering that the crowd was cheering for the hometown favorites and coming from the famous West 4th courts. In spring of 1987, Spaulding stopped manufacturing the pink ball, but by then David, at age 16, had quickly risen in the rankings to the fourth spot on the National PEAK Pyramid Singles (NAPP). To top off the summer, at only 17 he beat the legendary player Buddy Gantt, earning the respect of his mentors.



...David Rojas



For the next few years, players, who predominantly played pink ball, went through a transitional period while adjusting to the big blue. The handball circuit consisted mostly of several annualized neighborhood tournaments such as 12th Street Park and Handball City. In 1991, Dave won back-to-back singles titles in the 12th Street Park Tournament, and he won the Open Doubles with partner Joe Rodriguez at Handball City (E. 102nd Street). Dave Andre, the father of one-wall pink ball tournaments, was known for organizing the prestigious PEAK Singles Events, which, at this writing, would be the equivalent of King of the Courts. In 1994-'95 David Rojas was ranked #1 defeating Buddy Gantt in 1994 and Israel Amador

aka "Cricket" in 1995. To finish the 1995 season, Dave teamed up with friend and competitor, Cricket, to compete in the 1st ever ICHA NY State Championships in collaboration with Dave Andre. Dave and Cricket beat Paul Previti and Eddie Golden.

With the support and guidance of Tony Roberts and Cesar Sala, David first came on the little ball scene as early as 1995 by winning the Inner City Handball Association (ICHA) Singles State Championship, defeating Eric Davis in the finals. In the same year, he won the USHA One Wall National Tournament "A" Doubles with Tony Roberts and took the "B" Doubles with Cesar. In his first attempt at 3-wall, David won in 1998. That year he took 1st place in

the regionals "B" singles and doubles held in Maryland. In addition, David, along with Tony Roberts won the USHA Nationals in "B" doubles. By winning in the Nationals in Toledo Ohio, the team of Rojas and Roberts (RR) were no longer eligible to play in the "B" division. Their wins would propel them to compete in the Pros.

In regard to USHA National play, Dave consistently placed in the doubles competition from 1995 – 2005 reaching no lower than the top three seeds. David Rojas won the USHA National 1-Wall Doubles Championship in 1997, 1998, and 2001. In 2003, 2004, and 2005, he reached the finals. In 2006, he placed third. Unfortunately, for two straight years his partner, John "Rookie" Wright, was injured in play causing him to withdraw from competition in 2007 and 2008. Finally, in 2009 Dave and Rookie earned third place.

Dave's first taste of international play came in 1997 when he competed against 11 countries for the first time ever in the World competition in Winnipeg, Canada. He was humbled by the opportunity to represent his country. He trained intensely by working on cardio and timing with the little ball. Dave enjoyed meeting players from Japan, Ecuador, Spain and Ireland. In the finals, he ended up playing a 2 out of 3 game match edging out Eddie Maisonet, a 3 time USHA national singles champ, to win the 1st World Championship in singles. Once winning the singles title, he set his mark for the doubles competition hoping to slam. He knew he would have stiff competition from the team of Maisonet and Williams. Although these players met in National play and in the Mayor's Cup, the stakes in Winnipeg were high and either team could have been victorious. The match ended with Rojas and Roberts winning 15-9 and 15-7.

Once David was back on US soil, he made it a point to visit his father's grave. With his dad's favorite drink in hand (Barcardi dark) Dave toasted his father and shared his news of winning the world title. Dave's father had passed many years prior when he was just a young man. Jose Rojas had made a prediction prior to his son's involvement in the sport of handball, which he shared with Dave's mom, Gilma: "Dave will either follow in my footsteps as a military man or be someone great in sports." Truer words could not have been spoken.

To recap, Dave's international accomplishments include: in 2000, in the city of Chicago, he and Tony Roberts defended their title winning 21-6, 21-7 against rivals Maisonet and Williams. At this writing, they are the only team to repeat that championship title. They held their title for six years straight. In the singles category, David won 3rd place that year and in 2003 he repeated in Kilkenny Island. In the doubles competition, David and Tony were defeated in the final by Herman Mendez Jr. and William Polanco.

In the USHA Nationals of 1997, Dave was set to play Joe Durso in the quarter -finals. By this time, Dave was the world champ and, of course, Joe was a legend in his own right. It is unclear who initiated, but there was some trash talking before the match. Although this was the first time David played Joe in little ball, it was not the first time they faced one another. As a product of the trash talking, a friendly wager was made. If Joe won, Dave would have to wear Joe's favorite lucky spandex shorts and if David won, Joe would have to relinquish his most personal possession—a button which Joe received at a young age. The button simply read, "World's Best Handball Player."

NY HANDBALL HALL OF FAME



The crowd at Coney Island was standing room only. Spectators were hanging on the fences and even on the phone booth to watch the match. In the first game, Joe took the lead and won decisively. Joe had complete control of the first game not by score per se, but by sheer mastery and skill of his shots. After this loss, Dave walked out of the park to gain composure. Karen McConney, a USHA Woman's champion, then offered supportive words to Dave, which restored his determination and confidence. She said, "Forget about the first game- one game is not the match."

In game two, Dave won by changing the pace of the volleys and by elevating his level of play. Mixing his styles, David had Joe second-guessing his shot selection. Dave inevitably won the second game. In an 11 point tie-breaker, there is never a comfortable lead and by all indications Joe was "going for broke." David, reaching match point

first, committed to closing out the match by attempting an off the wall kill shot. Joe incredibly dug the shot out, much to Dave's amazement. In the process, Joe flicked the ball, causing it to flat roll. The crowd erupted and, in animated Joe fashion, he removed his goggles, raised his hands in the air "like Stallone in Rocky" and yelled over the crowd, "Come and touch greatness." Because of the roar of the crowd, Joe had to wait to serve; this gave Dave a moment to reflect on strategy. He foresaw Joe serving wide crosscourt to Dave's opposite. Dave took the chance, because he had the lead. When Joe committed to the serve, Dave cheated to the left, got a good hit, and killed the ball. Just like Durso, Dave removed his goggles and, in Joe-like fashion said, "Come touch greatness." Once again the crowd could not be contained, which made David feel strongly about his ability to close out the match.

From 2006 – 2008, a New Jersey based

trucking company (CPQ) sponsored tournaments with the largest cash prize to date in Flamingo Park. It brought in competitors from other states and the level of play was intense in these doubles competitions. For these events, Dave trained to build stamina in order to combat the Florida heat. The top prize in David's career in the early '80's was \$125. Twenty years later, the prize money was teetering around \$1,000 for first place. The Florida tournament elevated the level of play and increased the purse exponentially. The prize money ranged from \$5,000, which was for the first tournament thrown by CPQ to \$25,000 for the largest 1st place cash prize. David won two tournaments earning him a total of \$25,000 in prize money with partners Tony Roberts and Ray Lopez.

The Slaps Red Bull Tournament was in the forefront of showcasing the top players since 2010. This invite-only tournament brought 96 inner city players from the five boroughs to compete for the ultimate bragging rights. The tournament, at this writing, is a single elimination format with no player rankings. All players are put in a random draw to determine brackets and match ups. Rojas won 1st place in 2011 and 2013 in pump ball, and in 2014 was a finalist, two points away from winning three years in a row. Ironically, David saw himself battling Buddy in the finals as he has done so many times in his career.

David had some additional experiences in handball which are worth noting. He participated in clinics and taught the fundamentals of handball to students in inner-city high schools. He worked for Sports Authority as Manager, and, as such, he was able to work out a deal for product sponsorship. He wore the Sports Authority logo and their apparel at tournaments.

Along with another top seeded player, David was also sponsored by Avia sneakers for one season. In addition, he shot a commercial for the food chain, Subway, which appeared nationally. David was awarded "Best All-Around Player" by the Handball World Counsel in 1997 and "Player of the Year" by St. Albana's Handball Association. Not only has David Rojas made a name for himself in the sport of handball, but his skill in fishing has also brought him notoriety. As an avid fisherman, David was featured on two ESPN episodes- one dedicated to fishing in Central Park, viewed on Bass Center, and another named "Sportman's Quest," where David was competing head-to-head against Mike Dicka. As recently as October 2014, Rojas shot an episode on "Lunkerville" for the World Fishing Network. It aired to great reviews and was picked up by NBC Sports.

Looking back, Dave has won numerous doubles titles with different partners- over 15. However, he was always most grateful three individual players who helped him make his mark in the history of handball: John "Rookie Wright," a good friend on and off the court, Herman Mendez Jr., with whom he had a great two year run almost going undefeated, and finally, Tony Roberts, with whom he shared the most wins.

Regardless of how many tournaments and accolades David Rojas received, what meant the most to him was the admiration and support of his mother, Gilma Rojas. His sister, Diane, was also instrumental to his success because of the countless hours of support she offered at tournaments. He was proud to have had those individuals by his side throughout his career. Without them, he claimed, "none of this could have been possible."