

Winfield Ballance

Winfield Ballance's brilliance was like a meteor sweeping across the sky. Like the meteor, he shone brightly briefly (a few years), but then burnt out (abandoned handball to seek other pursuits).

Winfield was the City Junior 1-Wall Champion, winning the difficult 1960 New York Daily Mirror Parks Department Championship. The very next year he won the USHA National 1-Wall Junior title. Additionally in 1960, '61, and '63 he reached the semi-finals of the USHA National Open 1-Wall Doubles Tournament. In '63 he also earned a semi-final berth in the National AAU 1-Wall Singles event. In that tournament Ken Davidoff became AAU National 1-Wall Singles Champion, having obliterated the great Oscar Obert, 21-6, 21-9 in the championship match. Few people will recall that in Davidoff's semi-final match with Ballance, Davidoff eked out a third game win, 21-19.

An exceptionally athletic player, Winfield was catlike in frontcourt, diving for returns which other players couldn't even dream of reaching. The ball would come off his hand differently from the hands of others. His motion was deliberate, then, "whoosh," the ball came off the wall, straight like a rocket. He had an excellent fly kill as well. With tremendous speed added to his other qualities, he was the ultimate 1-waller.

Unfortunately the handball world never witnessed Winfield Ballance reach his full potential. He left the game at an early age to raise a family and to become a minister. He was missed by all who knew him.

PLAYERS OF DISTINCTION

