

MEN'S 1-WALL PRO HANDBALL TOUR

SMALL-BALL POINTS RACE 2001

YEAR #1

The justification of any sports (whether auto racing or tennis) must initially establish a system to rank/rate their competitors based on individual performances. For decades, the handball establishment has renege its responsibilities in creating a ranking system that promote the sport and add legitimacy to tournament draws. The purpose of the "Points Race 2001" is not to glorify any individual but instead, reward those competitors who strive for excellence and in many regards have dedicated their entire lives to playing the "perfect game", handball. Although this system is in its infancy, it is a beginning and worthwhile endeavor.

2001 TOURNAMENTS

NON-MAJOR TOURNAMENTS

- PHA Coney Island Little Ball June 3, 2001 - PHA 01
- Pedro Garcia Classic July 22, 2001 - PGC 01

MAJOR TOURNAMENTS

- ICHA Mayor's Cup July 15, 2001 - MC 01
- USHA Nationals August 2-5, 2001 - USHAN 01

2001 POINTS SYSTEM

➤ **POINTS - ACHIEVEMENT**

NON-MAJOR TOURNAMENT POINTS

- Quarterfinalist - 10 points
- Semifinalist - 20 points
- Finalist - 30 points
- Champion - 40 points

MAJOR TOURNAMENT POINTS

- Quarterfinalist - 15 points
- Semifinalist - 30 points
- Finalist - 45 points
- Champion - 60 points

2001 TOURNAMENT SUMMARY – MEN'S 1-WALL PRO SINGLES (SMALL-BALL)

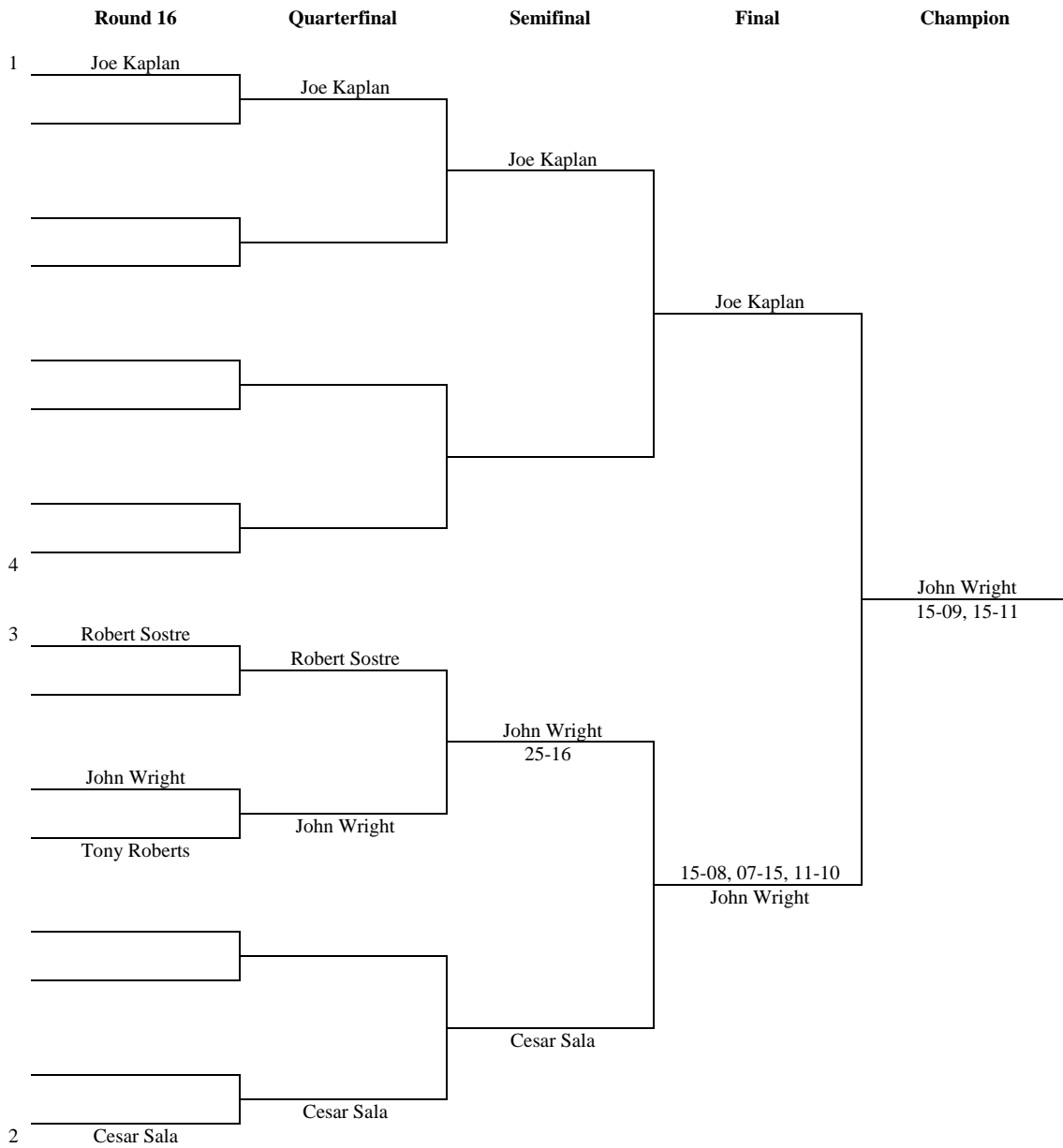
- Pro Stop #1 PHA Coney Island June 3, 2001 Kaplan defeats Apuzzi (02-15, 15-11, 15-02)
- Pro Stop #2 ICHA Mayor's Cup July 15, 2001 Wright defeats Kaplan (15-09, 15-11)
- Pro Stop #3 Pedro Garcia Classic July 22, 2001 Jagnandan defeats Lewis (25-18)
- Pro Stop #4 USHA 1-Wall Nationals August 2-5, 2001 Sala defeats Maisonet (21-05, 21-18)

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SMALL-BALL POINTS RACE 2001

PRO STOP #2
JULY 14-15, 2001 – ICHA MAYOR'S CUP TOURNAMENT (MAJOR)
(ORCHARD BEACH, BRONX)

TOURNAMENT DRAWSHEET

Rankings were based on the 2000 ICHA Mayor's Cup Tournament



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PRO STOP #2
JULY 14-15, 2001 - ICHA MAYOR'S CUP TOURNAMENT (MAJOR)
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TOURNAMENT SUMMARY
Major Small-Ball Upset as Rookie Takes 2001 Mayor's Cup

by Ben Brighton

It's part of human nature to aspire to test one's ability in new areas. For example, comedians love to try their hand at acting; singers try to write songs; actors try to paint. There is an immense satisfaction in excelling at something different. The same is true in sports. Many athletes think they could succeed in other sports.

Michael Jordan tried baseball, Ed "Too Tall" Jones tried boxing, and many others are proud of skills developed (in other sports) during their "off season".

Well the same desire to excel and test oneself in new waters exists in the world on one-wall sports. In many paddleball players there is a handball player waiting to come out. In handball there is "big blue" and "small ball", and the line separating the two is becoming blurry. Many stars have attempted to cross over with mixed results.

I would have to rank Rookie's performance on July 15th, at the ICHA Mayor's Cup, as one of the most amazing displays of handball I've seen in many years. During his visits to W5th Street I'd seen him play small ball singles several times. He played "Lefty" Pete, an "A" doubles player and looked pretty good. But then I saw Joe Durso spot him 10 on 25 and beat him. My conclusion, a "B" player, with the small ball, who could not elevate to the tremendous level he has achieved with the big blue. But like any great athlete, who is hungry to succeed, he might have learned more from his setbacks than his victories.

That all came to fruition at the Mayor's Cup. In the first round he met Tony Roberts, a top doubles player with either ball and a formidable challenge. Surprisingly, Rookie squeaked by Tony in the tiebreaker.

Spectators said that the matches would only get tougher and Rookie's next match, against reigning National Champion Robert Sostre, would be his last. Much to everyone's surprise Robert fell 25-16. I saw the match as Rookie being as adept at volleying as Rob, with Sostre being forced into uncharacteristic errors. Next up was World Champion Cesar Sala. A see-saw battle ensued with Rookie's backers paying off their bets. This immediately put the jinx into effect and Rookie outscored Cesar 4-0 the gain a 15-8, 7-15, 11-10 victory. Now all that stood between Rookie and glory was Joe Kaplan.

The atmosphere was charged with electricity. You have to understand that there is a fierce rivalry between small and big blue players. Each group thinks that their game is better and more deserving of recognition and respect. The two factions, while having mutual respect, have not always lived in harmony. The finals was like a championship fight with the crowd divided in it's loyalties for Wright and Kaplan. Kaplan, the last chance for the small ball establishment to assert it's superiority over big blue, fell 15-9, 15-11.

The way I saw it, Rookie gained confidence with each match. As a further testament to his stamina he also participated in the doubles with Emmitt Fitzpatrick beating Kendell Lewis and Robert Sostre. His chance for a "slam" ended with a 15-13 loss to Joe Kaplan and Cesar Sala. After his dramatic victory it would have been appropriate if Rookie had said "Now I'm going to Disneyland", like the super bowl MVP states on TV.

The best thing about Rookie's win is that it makes next month's National Championship much more interesting. There are going to be a lot of players looking to take Rookie down. His dramatic showing will only benefit the sport. What's next for Rookie? 4-Wall? 3-Wall? He has unlimited potential and nothing he does will surprise me.