

## THE MAINWALL SPECTATOR

DECEMBER 2009

Vernon Cassin, Editor

## PRO TIP:

On the service end you should aim to hit 99% of balls off the mainwall just in front of the tambour. Unless your handicap is under 25 the winning gallery is not a percentage shot. Missing high and short are both horrific (Penthouse/Hazard second gallery). Save your gong-shattering mega-blasters for friendly games!

## COMMITTEE

## PRESIDENT:

Bob Forbes

## PROFESSIONALS:

Ivan Ronaldson

Phil Shannon

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Temple Grassi

Ryan Carey

Christine Donovan

Pat Homer

Steve Hufford

Kim Jaske

Jason Hirama

Vernon Cassin

## UPCOMING EVENTS

## DEC. 4-6:

National Open (Singles)—  
Washington

## DEC. 11-13

Whitney Cup

(Team Doubles)—NY

## DEC. 11:

USCTA Annual Awards Dinner &  
Auction—NY

## JAN. 9-10:

Price Cup—level, hcps 20-40

## JAN. 15-18

US Parent-Child (Doubles) —  
Lakewood

Etchebaster Cup (Singles) —  
New York

## JAN. 22-24

Banded level championships:

20-29 handicap) —Philadelphia

40-49 handicap) —Washington

50-59 handicap—Newport

60+ handicap—Boston

## FEB. 5-7

Anne Boleyn (Ladies Hdcp  
Singles) - Philadelphia

## FEB. 12-15

Gold Racquet (singles) —  
Tuxedo

US Junior National Singles—  
Washington

## FEB. 22-23

US Open (Singles & Doubles)—  
New York

## MAR. 5-7

US 40's Amateur Championship  
(Singles & Doubles) — D.C.



*Rich Moroscak would prefer that the ball not go in the dedans.*

NATIONAL OPEN COMING TO PRINCE'S COURT  
(SEE DRAW ON PAGE TWO)

The National Open will come to Prince's Court this week, running from December 4th through 6th.

Tickets for Friday's cocktail party and matches are \$20 for members and \$10 for guests. All other matches are free to watch. The National Open is a singles tour-

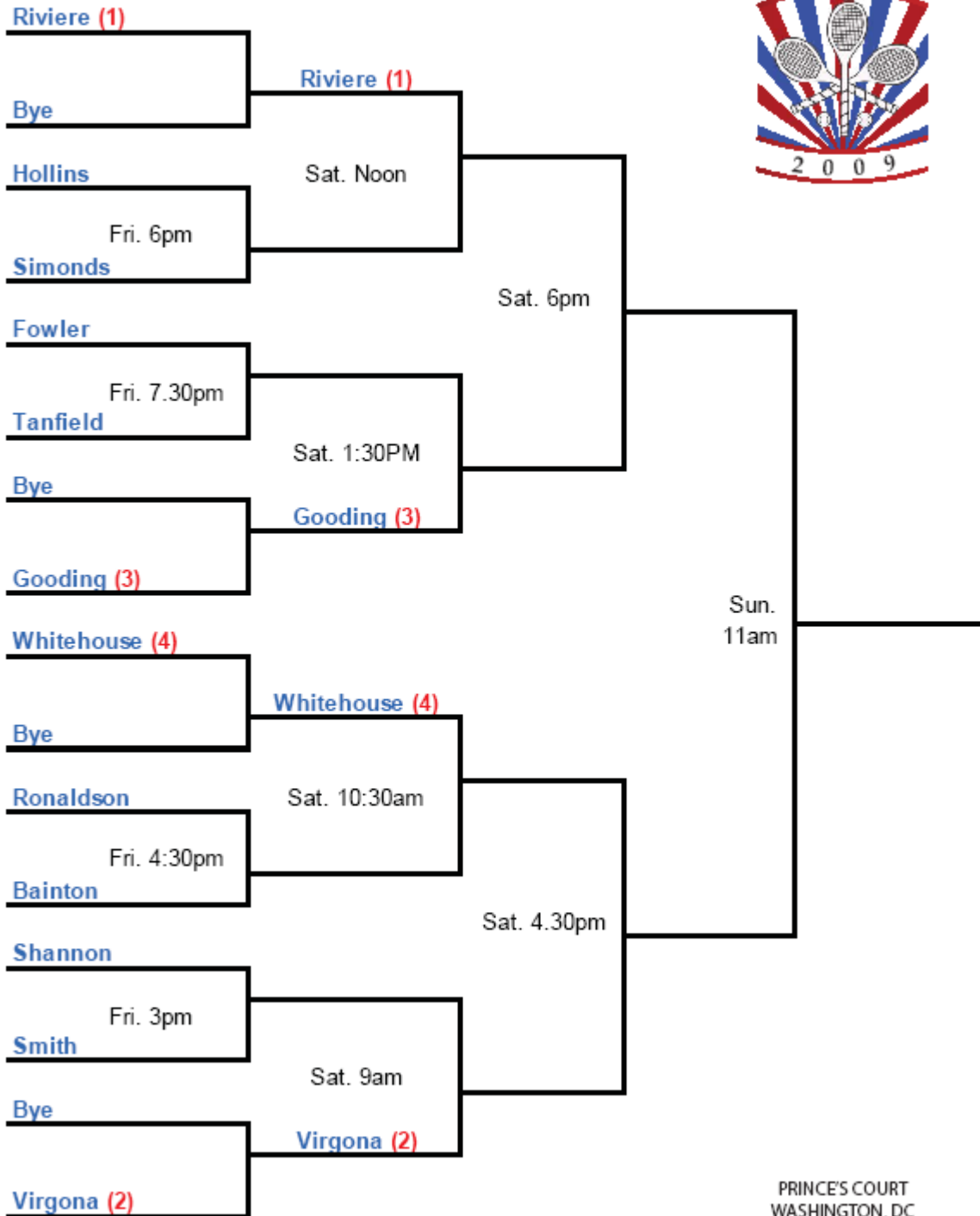
namment open to all professionals working in America.

Top-seeded professionals will include Camden Riviere and Steve Virgona. Prince's Court's own professionals will also participate. Phil Shannon will play in the tournament's first match, at

3 p.m. Friday, and Ivan Ronaldson will play at 4:30.

Finals are scheduled for 11 a.m. Sunday.

Those unable to watch the tournament can follow live on the RTO forums, either under the "live forums" tab (technology permitting) or on the Open Floor.



PRINCE'S COURT  
WASHINGTON, DC  
DECEMBER 4-6, 2009

## PRINCE'S COURT IN NEW YORK

Prince's Court sent six players up to New York City this month for two simultaneous tournaments—the Silver Racquet amateur invitational tournament, and the New York Open. Both were singles tournaments. The Silver Racquet was level; the New York Open was handicap, and divided into an A and B division.

Playing in the Silver Racquet was Prince's Court player John Motz. He played against A. Hombrecher and lost in two sets. Hombrecher went on to win the tournament, defeating Addison West in three sets.

John fared better in the New York Open, where he played in the A division. There he defeated C. Johnstone and N. Smith (8/1), before losing to P. Quick on Saturday evening.

Phil Shannon, Ryan Carey, and Bill Barker also played in the New York Open's A division. Phil won his first match at 2 p.m., but lost 8/6 on Saturday to Noah Wimmer, one of the top squash players at the New York Club. Wimmer eventually lost in the semifinals to P. Quick.

Ryan Carey defeated T. Rees on Friday but lost to the orange-haired Tony

Hollins (Newport, pro) on Saturday. Tony's ground game was spectacular, with excellent length and cut. We can expect great things out of this young professional.

Bill Barker kept the dedans enthralled with two nail-biting matches. His first match, against S. Herlihy, had Bill down 7-4. It looked like a losing proposition, but Barker buckled down and brought the score back to 7-7. But all seemed lost when Herlihy won three straight points, bringing it to 40-love against Barker, with chase half a yard. Not so. Barker drove the ball into the dedans and won the next four points to take the match.

Barker went on to beat Mike Gooding in the next match—once again 8/7. A tough-fought match by both players. In the end Barker was too consistent—especially on the backhand—for Gooding to overcome the hefty 30/owe-15 handicap.

But there's only so many miracles you can pull off in a tournament. Barker lost the next match to A. Fowler (semifinalist).

The eventual winner of the A division was J. Stout, who defeated P. Quick 8/4.

In the B division, Prince's Court fielded Vu Hoang, Ryan Carey, and Vernon Cassin.

Ryan was, in his own words, "Star-spangled" out of the B's on Friday morning by Arnold Spangler.

Both Hoang and Cassin made it through their first matches, Vu playing a strong match against J. Crowell, and Cassin beating Newport's Rob Buettner. Vu then lost his next match to Ted Pardoe, a remarkably consistent lefty whose backhand and forehand hit the tambour on almost every shot.

Vu was avenged by Cassin, who defeated Pardoe after a morning match against Gary Swantner of Philadelphia.

Cassin went on to lose in the semifinals to Bob Ursprung, who went on to win the B division.

Also present at the tournament was perennial favorite Peter Bender, who played a remarkably controlled game that won him several victories. He eventually lost to Ursprung after three victories.

Michael Do was also present and photographed many of the matches.

## SCORES

### SILVER RACQUET:

Motz v. Hombrecher: 6/1  
6/0

### NEW YORK OPEN A'S:

Motz v. Johnstone: 8/4

Motz v. N. Smith: 8/1

Motz v. Quick: 8/2

Barker v. Herlihy: 8/7

Barker v. Gooding: 8/7

Barker v. Fowler: 8/6

Shannon v. GVS: 8/6

Shannon v. Wimmer: 8/6

Carey v. Rees: 8/4

Carey v. Hollins: 8/4

### New York Open B's

Hoang v. Crowell: 8/4

Hoang v. Pardoe: 8/4

Cassin v. Buettner: 8/1

Cassin v. Swantner: 8/1

Cassin v. Pardoe: 8/2

Cassin v. Ursprung: 8/5

## PRINCE'S COURT AT THE CALHOUN WITHAM

Prince's Court sent several intensity game threw off David Sterrett and Ken Forton players down to Aiken for the their aggressive dynamic. ton won the tournament's annual Calhoun Witham Vernon Cassin III of Prince's highest honors after a series of hard-fought matches. Court played with his father, of hard-fought matches. November 13-15th. Vernon Cassin Jr., a recent Forton's enormously varied The Witham is an open convert to the game. Cassin serve kept the two on the handicap doubles tourna- Jr., a doubles tennis player, offensive , while Sterrett's ment for players handi- adapted quickly to the game, quick lunges recovered al- capped 30 or above. especially to the volley, and most every ball off the tam- Sara Lacombe and Michael the two Cassins progressed bour. In the finals, the two Moore were early favorites to to the semifinals. Their defeated Jen Winthrop and win the tournament. Mi- toughest qualifying game Gary Multer to claim the chael's consistent volleying was against John East and championship. Michael's consistent volleying was a perfect counterpoint Duncan Rutherford, a terrific The hospitality and warmth to Sara's terrific play in the couple of players who had to of the Aiken club was much back of the court. Sara and give the Cassins rec. 30 owe remarked-upon, and many of Michael won several 15. The Cassins eventually the players have already matches before losing to Jen lost to Prince's Court's David planned to return to the tour- Winthrop and Gary Multer, Sterrett and Boston's Ken nament next year. whose measured, low- Forton.

## PRINCE'S COURT TO KEEP KINKY

On November 21st, Prince's Court founder Haven Pell played a challenge match against Balarat stalwart Rob Jolly.

At stake was Kinky, the kangaroo banner that graces the wall above Prince's Court's bar. Kinky is the traditional trophy in contests between Prince's Court and Australian players, fought approximately whenever we feel like it.

Ivan Ronaldson officiated. The winner would

be the first to win two six game sets.

Haven got off to an early start, winning the first set 6/1. But Rob's increasingly aggressive play led to a complete reversal in the second set. Haven had a tough time in this set, winning few victories—with the notable exception of one miraculous lob, which hung in the air like the star of Bethlehem before falling like Lucifer into the dedans.

In the third set both players played at the top of their games. The style became notably more aggressive, with cut shots giving way to hard forces for the openings. After exchanging games up to 4-all, Haven pulled ahead, winning the match (and thus temporary custody of Kinky) 6/1, 1/6, 6/4.

This match was also a test run of live commentary on RTO online. Commentary will be available for the National Open.

**"The ball hung in the air like the star of Bethlehem, before falling like Lucifer into the dedans."**

## COURT TENNIS HISTORY: FLOORS

*By Vernon Cassin*

Floors.

We take them for granted. After all, there can't be much to the floor. Basically, a court tennis player requires a flat surface, free from cracks, pits, or rises, that will endure, contrast well with the ball, and prevent the players from falling into the earth's molten core. Ideally, it should also impart a regular and sporty bounce to the ball.

A simple order? Hardly. The problem of the correct floor has troubled the court tennis world for centuries.

Take, for example, the court at Hampton Court Palace.

The current court, according to David Best's excellent book "The Royal Tennis Court," was tiled with brick in 1625. Brick was the normal material for this period, being cheap, relatively easy to lay, and abundant. But brick was also unreliable, tending to warp with time and with the change of seasons. The floor was retiled in 1660 with new brick tiles. The new tiles were brick and one foot square.

But this brick lasted a mere 40 more years. In 1700 the floor was replaced with large tiles of Ketton stone at a cost of 200 pounds sterling. These stones, fortunately, proved more reliable. Although they were relaid in the 1790s, the original stones were re-used, and are still in use today.

But stone, while reliable, had its disadvantages. It was difficult to produce even floors, and they had a tendency to "sweat," especially in hot weather. They were also uneven and sometimes deadening to the bounce.

Fortunately, along came Joseph Bickley(1835-1923). Bickley built a career out of building and renovating courts. His innovative approach to court construction changed the nature of the game, and his influence continues today.

Bickley's new floors were laid in six large slabs. Instead of the traditional black color, his court used a bright red color to create more contrast with the ball and make the court appear brighter.

The slabs were made of concrete—a mixture of atlas cement with extremely fine sand—sifted through a sieve with holes finer than 1/2000th of an inch. This would be soaked every twelve hours for thirty days. The finishing coat was applied continuously for days to obtain a smooth even surface, and was made according to a secret recipe.

A similar process, incidentally, was used to treat the walls.

The first court in the United States to use Bickley's process was the court at Tuxedo, built in 1899-1900. So popular was the new floor that Henry Gould, owner of the Lakewood court, had his newly-made floor ripped up and replaced by Bickley. Afterwards, for decades, a new floor meant a Bickley floor.

Prince's Court, in fact, is unusual among US courts, as it does not use Bickley cement. The story of the construction of the Prince's Court floor will appear in a subsequent essay.

**FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE OUR WEBSITE:**

**WWW.PRINCESCOURT.INFO**

## **PRINCE'S COURT**

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Prince's Court was built in 1997, the first court to be built from scratch in the United States since before World War I. It is one of only ten courts in the United States, and about 40 throughout the world. It is one of the only courts to have a glass main wall, allowing many more spectators to view a match than is possible on older courts.

Prince's Court is located at the Regency Sport & Health club of McLean, Virginia. It is managed by its professionals and by a committee of its own members.

For more on the sport of court tennis, as well as a more comprehensive guide to upcoming events, see the website of the United States Court Tennis Association, available at [www.uscta.com](http://www.uscta.com).



σφαίρη ται δ' ἄρ' ἔπαιζον, ἀπὸ κρήδεμνα βαλοῦσαι

βῆ δ' ἴμεν ὧς τε λέων ὄρεσίτροφος ἄλκι πεποιθώς

## **PRINCES COURT'S NEW WEBSITE**

Prince's Court's website is undergoing a major renovation at the hands of committee member Ryan Carey.

For the moment, Prince's Court members should use the new website,

[www.princescourt.info](http://www.princescourt.info)

for all purposes while we continue remodel-

ing the main website.

The new website is updated much more regularly than the previous site and includes helpful information for Prince's Court members. Some articles previously contained in this newsletter may be moved to the left-hand side of the web-

page, which is dedicated to recent updates and blog entries.

In related news, Prince's Court will be transitioning to a new central e-mail address, [pros@princescourt.com](mailto:pros@princescourt.com). This address will replace Ivan Ronaldson's personal e-mail address for most club-related purposes.