



CHAMPIONNAT CANADIEN DE
RACQUETBALL
CANADIAN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Event Guide

2018 Racquetball Canada
Canadian Championships

University of Winnipeg
Duckworth Centre
400 Spence Street
Winnipeg, MB

May 20 - 26, 2018



About Racquetball

Racquetball is a sport played by two players (singles) or four players (doubles) on an enclosed court measuring 20 ft. wide, 20 ft. high, and 40 ft. deep. A strung racquet and eye protection are mandatory pieces of equipment.

Each rally begins with a serve. Only the server scores points. On rebound from the front wall, the other player must retrieve the ball and return it to the front wall. If the ball bounces twice on the floor before it is returned to the front wall, the result is a loss of rally.

A match is best of three games. The first two games are played to 15 points. If a third game is needed, a tiebreaker game is played to 11 points.



Photo Credit: Milana Paddock Photography



Origins of Racquetball

Joseph Sobek, of Greenwich, Connecticut, who was looking for indoor sport that was face-paced and easy to learn and play, invented racquetball. The rules of the game were based on those of squash and handball.

Racquetball became one of the fastest-growing sports from the late 1970's to the early 1990's with up to 14 million players in over 90 countries worldwide.

The International Racquetball Federation (IRF) was founded in 1979 with 13 charter members, one of which was Canada. The IRF currently has 79 member federations and over 6 million racquetball players worldwide. Racquetball is a full medal sport in five IOC-recognized international sport competitions including the Pan Am Games, Pan Am Championships, Central American Games, Central American Caribbean Games and the World Games.

The 2018 Canadian Racquetball Championships

There will be 111 athletes competing from 10 provinces at the 2018 Canadian Racquetball Championships. The championships are held annually and are the ultimate competition of the Canadian racquetball season. Canada's high performance athletes compete in Men's and Women's Open Singles and Doubles events. There are also several other skill and age divisions for players who want to compete in Canada's highest level tournament.

The Canadian Championships are a consideration for naming Canada's teams for international competition. Results are also used to determine Sport Canada Athlete Assistance Program nominations and positions on national development teams.

The tournament features a round robin or pool play format depending on the number of competitors in a division. If there are enough competitors to require pools the top competitors will advance from each of the pools to a playoff bracket. Medals will be awarded in all divisions to the top three competitors.

Manitoba, the host province, has consistently produced high level athletes and 2018 is no exception. Jen Saunders and Christine Richardson both of Winnipeg are national team members and have represented Canada internationally on several occasions.

Saunders has won nine Canadian Championship Open Singles Championship titles and eleven Open Doubles titles over the span of her career. With the event being held in Winnipeg, she has the opportunity to round out her open titles at ten on home courts and add to her doubles titles.

Richardson, comes into the Canadian Championships as the defending Open Women's Double Champion, having won the doubles event for the past two years with partner Michèle Morissette of Québec. She has also had podium success in singles.

Kurtis Cullen of Brandon has advanced as far as the quarterfinals at the national level in Open singles and will be playing in Winnipeg in the Open events.



Photo Credit: Jan Hanson



Photo Credit: Timothy Baghurst

2018 Canadian Championship Events

Tournament play will begin on May 20 at 9:00 am and will continue through to the afternoon of May 26. Doubles matches take place from May 20 to 22, with singles matches being played from May 23 to 26. Matches will be live streamed on the International Racquetball Federation Facebook Page throughout the tournament.

The Host Facility for the tournament is University of Winnipeg Duckworth Centre. The Awards Banquet will be held on May 26 at the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

Racquetball Canada will also be holding their Annual General Meeting, an officiating clinic and social events in conjunction with the Canadian Championships.

The tournament is open to the public. There is no admission charge.

The media is also welcome to attend all events. If possible, please contact Jan Hanson, Racquetball Canada's media contact at 306-502-4422 or RballCanadaComms@outlook.com

Canada's Top Athletes

Canada's top ranked high performance athletes will be competing at the 2018 Canadian Championships including several athletes who have represented Canada at the international level.

Samuel Murray of Baie-Comeau is the top seed in the Men's Open Singles event. Murray has been on top of the podium at past national team selection events and he won silver at the 2017 Championships. Murray has gained considerable experience on the pro-circuit this season which could help him win his first Canadian Championship Open Singles title.

Coby Iwaasa of Lethbridge returned to competition at the beginning of the season after being out of the country for the last two years. Iwaasa had a great showing at the two recent National Team Selection events and is seeded second in the Men's Open Singles event. Iwaasa has the potential for a podium finish, giving him the opportunity to represent Canada again internationally.

Tim Landeryou of Calgary is also expected to challenge for a top finish. Landeryou, who is seeded third in the tournament has medaled for Canada internationally and is consistently in the top three at national events in both singles and doubles events.

Pedro Castro of Brossard is heading into the tournament as the fourth seed. Castro has also competed for Canada in international events.

The Men's Open Doubles event will be exciting as there are a number of changes in team partnerships. Of the eight teams entered, only two teams from 2017 are still together. Competition is expected to be intense between the veteran teams and those with new partners.

Jennifer Saunders of Winnipeg is the top seeded Women's Open singles athlete in the tournament. With a win in both singles and doubles, Saunders would own the Canadian record for the most combined Open Championship titles in the history of the sport in Canada.

Christine Richardson of Winnipeg comes into the Canadian Championships seeded second in open singles. She has won bronze on three occasions at the Canadian Championships and had the potential to move up the podium this year.

Alexis Iwaasa of Lethbridge is ranked third in the tournament, aided by a second place finish at the last National Team Selection Event held in February. Iwaasa is just one year out of the junior ranks and is already making her mark in elite competition.

Danielle Drury of Saskatoon has podium finishes at the Canadian Championships in doubles and is seeded fourth in singles for this year's championships. Drury has had a strong showing at the national level, particularly in the past year.

Open Doubles action for the women will be interesting to watch. Christine Richardson and Michèle Morissette are the defending Women's Open Doubles Champions, having won in both 2016 and 2017. But the newly formed team of Jennifer Saunders and Frédérique Lambert will definitely will be focused on a first place finish.

There are several other athletes from across Canada who will be looking for a podium result in singles and doubles. **Michèle Morissette** of Baie-Comeau has been on the podium in Women's Open Singles and could easily challenge for a spot this year. **James Landeryou** of Saskatoon and **Nicolas Bousquet** of Montréal have both shown that they have the desire and skill to be on the podium.

Fun Facts about Racquetball

- Racquetball was first competed in the Pan American Games in Argentina (1995).
- Racquetball will be competed in the TORONTO 2015 Pan Am Games. Four courts will be constructed near the Convention Centre in downtown Toronto.
- There are estimated to be over 6,000,000 players worldwide. In Canada, there are over 6,000 registered players, with another estimated 6,000 players who take part outside of organized programs and tournaments.
- Racquetball is a lifetime sport with ages under 6 to over 92 competing.
- In elite matches, the ball can travel over 200 kilometres per hour.
- Racquetball burns up to 400 calories per hour, which is more than most sports including tennis, basketball or aerobics.
- The "King of Rock and Roll", Elvis Presley, loved the sport of racquetball so much that he built a court at his Graceland estate.



Photo Credit: Timothy Baghurst

Web-links & Social Media

- Draws and results: <http://www.r2sports.com/website/event-website.asp?TID=22213>
- Live-streaming: www.facebook.com/internationalracquetball
- News and results summaries will be posted on the Racquetball Canada Facebook Page at: www.facebook.com/racquetballcanada
- The Racquetball Canada website is: www.racquetball.ca



Photo Credit: Timothy Bathurst

For information about Racquetball Canada contact:

Jan Hanson
Director of Marketing & Communications
Racquetball Canada Board of Directors
RballCanadaComms@outlook.com | 306-502-4422

For tournament information contact:

Adrian Webb
Tournament & Host Committee Chair
RACQREATION@sympatico.ca | 519-575-3370

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