



## **PROS ET EXHIBITIONS (THEME 11) (07/06/2021)**

As seen in Theme # 8 covering the Quebec-Open tournament, the venue of high-caliber players in Quebec City was one of the activities targeted by Alain Pélissier and Donald Côté. Already in 1978, there was the visit of Naty Alvarado Sr., Terry Muck and Brewer Kitchings to the Du Vallon Club. Then, in 1980, for the first time in Canada the Spalding-Gatorade Pro Tour, launched in 1973 by Robert Kendler, stopped at the Neufchatel Club in Quebec City. This circuit prided itself on bringing together the elite of American players with a regular ranking based on matches' results. Twelve players were pre-qualified, while the remaining four places were decided through a qualification round.

Given Pélissier and Côté's goal, which was to develop the level of Quebec players, they had convinced Bob Peters, Manager of the Tour, to fill the four open spots with players of their choice. Quebec stars of the time Richard Vandal and Gérard Caya met Lewis and Terry Muck; Ken Ayube of Boston (North-Eastern US and Quebec Open Champion) played Vern Roberts and Luc Gosselin, a young player from the Quebec development program, met Naty Alvarado. The final victory went to Naty Alvarado over Vern Roberts.

In 1984, at the Lebourgneuf Club, more than 300 handball players registered in the Canadian Championships paired with a second stop for the pros in Quebec City. The challenge was great for the organization as, the following week, the club will host the Canadian Racquetball Championships with more than 500 players. This time, Danny Bell from Quebec City is part of the qualifiers with his victory over Tom Blaikie (Florida). Jamie Paredes (California) takes the win on Vern Roberts and Merv Deckert (Man.), with the title of world champion in his pocket, wins another Canadian title by defeating Keith Gracey (BC) in the closed final.

In 1988, thanks to Jim Barrière and Ed Brennan, a Pro-Stop is presented at the Sani-Sports Club in Brossard. This time Danny Bell and Peter Service (Ont.) do not have to qualify since they are already part of the Handball Pro Tour. Naty Alvarado Sr. defeated John Bike Jr, the new rising star.

In 1998, last presentation of a Pro-Stop at the Lebourgneuf - Nautilus Plus Club, still as part of a Canadian Championships. David Chapman, another handball legend, defeated John Bike Jr. in the final. On the Canadian Championships side in the open categories, Danny Bell beats Peter Service in Men Singles and Rob Golan (Alta.) and Kevin Kopchuck (Ont.) get the Open Doubles title over the 2 lefties from Quebec City, Éric Bédard and Frédéric Jaffry. The first victory for Danny on the professional circuit will come in 1991 in Atlanta (Georgia).

The professional tour managed by the USHA ([www.ushandball.org](http://www.ushandball.org)) ended its activities in 2005 but a new professional association the WPH ([WPHLiveTV](http://WPHLiveTV)) took over by offering a quality circuit to the handball fans, the Race4Eight Pro Handball Tour. Among the big innovations are the matches presented on the ESPN network and the presence of the Irish elite which added quality to the competition. Canadians Michael Gaulton, Ryan

Bowler, Yvan Burgos and Jérôme Santerre regularly try to qualify on the circuit. The USHA, meanwhile, continues its mandate to organize numerous tournaments across the United States and maintain its activities such as technical support, magazine, Hall of Fame in Tucson, etc. These two organizations are working together to develop and promote handball.

On the women's side, Pete Tyson of the University of Texas at Austin has initiated a women pro player circuit. Lee-Ann Martin and Rosemary Bellini helped set it up, but it unfortunately only lasted a few years.

Regarding exhibitions, an initiative of Stan Fisher of Alberta, in the early 1970s, allowed Gordie Pfeifer and Fred Lewis to tour (exhibitions and clinics) in several Canadian cities: Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal, Moncton, and Halifax.

Outside the official professional circuit, over the years, exhibitions have been organized alongside various tournaments in clubs in Quebec and Montreal. The Poncho Monreal, John Sabo, Vern Roberts, Jerry Fagundes, Jack Roberts and Charlie Kalil competed with our players. For example, an excellent mixed doubles performance was put on between Team Kathleen Bédard (Quebec) and Vern Roberts (Tucson) against Team John Sabo (New York) and Nancy Molter (Boston).

We would like to acknowledge the support of the USHA through Vern Roberts, permanent member of this organization, and Bob Peters in organizing these demonstrations in Canada.

We have seen that the Canadian Championships have often served as a stage for visiting professionals. In fact, with the organization of 13 Canadian championships, the Quebecers have had the opportunity to show the quality of their play to a large number of local spectators and outsiders.

Among the visitors who have been the winners of the Canadian Open Championships we have: Joey Maher, Paul Haber, Stuffy Singer, Gordie Pfeiffer, Terry Muck, Pat Kirby, Fred Lewis, Scott Kapus, John Bike, Eoin Kennedy, Sayers Miller, Joe Hagen, Dan Armijo, Paul Brady, Emmett Peixoto, Tony Healy, David Chapman, Dave Fink, Luis Moreno, Killian Carroll, Daniel Cordova, David Munson and John Bike.

As for the champions coming from all the Canadian provinces, we have: Ernie Meunier, Bernie Pritchard, Barrie Leech, Mel Brown, Don Warnholtz, Mickey Unroth, Graig Kulch, John Philips, Jeff Wilson, Tyler Hamel, Roberto Meneses and many titles harvested by Merv Deckert and Danny Bell.

Another prestigious organization that has benefited from the expertise of the Canadians is the World Handball Championships. Indeed, it has been presented five times in Canada so far: Toronto (Ont.) 1967, Kelowna (BC) 1986, Winnipeg (Man.) 1997, Edmonton (Alta.) 2006 and Calgary (Alta.) 2015.

In conclusion, we can say that for several years Quebecers and Canadians have worked to welcome the world elite to Canada. The consequence of these efforts was that the caliber of the local players increased at a point that, in the 2000s, it was the return of the pendulum: in 2002 the Japanese association invited Danny Bell and Tyler Hamel to go and play exhibition matches in Tokyo. (see Handball In Japan at the end of this text).

## PICTURES SECTION



Doubles Invitationnal Tournament, Lebourgneuf Club, Ken Ayube,  
John Sabo, Vern Roberts, Jack Roberts



Pro Stop, Neufchatel Club (1980), Naty Alvarado Sr. vs Vern Roberts



Canadian National Championships Men Open Singles Final (1998), Danny Bell vs Peter Service (Club Nautilus Plus)



World Open Doubles Final (Winnipeg, 1997), John Bike, David Chapman, Merv and Jesse Deckert, Danny Bell

**Handball**  
 April 1991 \$4.00

The Official Voice of the United States Handball Association

**Membership Drive**

USHA Board Meeting Minutes  
 Lactic Acid's Influence  
 Win a Trip to Nationals  
 Change the Pace and Fundamentals Instructionals  
 World Championships, Atlanta Pro and Vermont Open Results

**Monreal Wins World for Mexico**  
 Bell Wins First Pro Stop in Atlanta

Front page Handball Magazine, April 1991

## VIDEOS SECTION

**Pro Stop 1980, Neufchatel Club, Quebec City-** Naty Alavarado Sr., Luc Gosselin, Gérard Caya, John Sabo, Denis Hofflander, Vern Roberts (starts at :50 seconds)

<https://youtu.be/Lu4w4XDaHA4>

**Pro Stop 1984, Lebourgneuf Club, Quebec City-** Danny Bell vs John Sabo

<https://youtu.be/7WKL-VAjnIU>

**Pro Stop 1998, Nautilus Plus Club, Quebec City -** Danny Bell vs John Bike

<https://youtu.be/D8Ldz9N9Z9M>

## USHA HANDBALL MAGAZINE - ARTICLES

Many thanks to Matthew Krueger (USHA) who found and provided us with all the articles from the Handball Magazine covering the 3 Pro Stops of the Spalding-Gatorade Tour held in the Province of Quebec plus the article on Danny Bell's win in Atlanta (Georgia). Only beautiful souvenirs.

<http://balleaumur.qc.ca/others-results/?lang=en>

## ADD-ONS TO THEME #3 IRELAND AND ENGLAND

**Pat Brennan's souvenirs** (ex-president of the CHA and the World Handball Council)

*I was born and raised in Ireland and have been playing handball since I was old enough to throw a ball against a wall. I might also add that I grew up in a village that had an alley that was no longer in use, right next to a house where my family lived in County Wicklow. My father was from the village of Castlebridge in County Wexford and he was also an excellent handball player. This village has been linked to the game for centuries and the covered court used is as old as the village itself, the center of handball.*

*I also have in my possession a copy of a painting by John Nixon dated 1785: this painting is the oldest known representation of a handball match. The original of the painting is in the County Monaghan Museum in Ireland (see photograph below). Two players can be seen and playing with a ball, in the presence of an observer or referee, on the wall of an old ruined castle.*

*I also have in my possession the answer to one of the great historical mysteries connected with handball. The question is, how was a bouncing ball created before the arrival of Indian rubber. Well the answer is the "Alley Cracker". The ball I have is still new and is over a hundred years old. I did some research to find out how it was made and the materials used. It's a fascinating story in itself but too complicated to tell here (see photograph below).*

*My father's teacher at Castlebridge School became president of the GAA and was responsible for recognizing the sport as a national sport; he personally crafted the complex rules and regulations that made this possible. It also brought together many opposing factions and got them to agree on a uniform set of rules for the sport.*

*Edmonton, May 2021*



Castle Blaney 1785, John Nixon



The "Alley Cracker" ball

### **HANDBALL IN JAPAN by John Dolan**

Handball was first introduced to Japan in 1927, with the establishment of the first court at the Tokyo YMCA, located in Kanda. Ever since, a small nucleus of dedicated players has managed to keep the sport alive at the Y and elsewhere. The sport was given a boost in 2000, when the JWHA invited Danny Bell and Tyler Hamel to play an exhibition match and give clinics in 2008. Eoin Kennedy of Ireland and Emmett Peixoto of the USA were invited for the 80th anniversary of handball in Japan and played several exhibition matches which were well received by many even outside the sport. The next ten years saw several appearances by Team Japan at the World Championships and an increase in visitors to our courts from those traveling or stationed in Japan. In 2017, we resumed our exhibitions by star players from abroad when we invited Luis Moreno and Jonathan Iglesias.

Another step forward has been the development of the 1-wall game in Japan. After a fund-raising drive and cooperation from the YMCA, in 2018 we built 2 regulation sized indoor one-wall courts at the YMCA International Youth Center Tozanso in the Hakone resort area near Mt. Fuji. We have held 2-day tournaments there with participants from as far away as Australia and Ecuador, which we hope to resume soon. We are also currently in discussions with government officials about building one-wall courts in a park under development in the Haneda airport area, which would be especially convenient for our international visitors.



Danny Bell and Tyler Hamel, Tokyo (Japan) 2002



**Thanks to :** Maxime Pélissier, Pat Brennan and John Dolan (special collaborations), Kathleen Bédard and Marie-Michèle Trudel.

**NEXT THEME: THE NEW MILLENIUM AND 1-WALL**