

## Some reflections on the startup of the PCI Tournament

Steve....this is some PCI history....

Emery Neale's two suggestions:

- Changing the name of the tournament from the Oregon State Indoor to Pacific Coast Indoor
- Contacting UCLA's Glenn Bassett, USC's George Toley, Stanford's, [Dick Gould](#), and Cal Berkley's Coach to offer to fly their top two players.....was brilliant.
- Emery's third idea....a playoff for losing semifinalists...not so much.

We had six weeks to 'improve the field' if possible, and I had never run a tournament before. As the 'just-hired' Head Tennis Professional at the Historic Irvington Club, Oregon's oldest tennis club, I was game for the challenge.

Glenn Bassett's distinctive verbal cadence is still in my ear...."well actually, I have FOUR players I like to send up there" said the legendary UCLA coach, "we have Haroon Rahim (of Pakistan Davis Cup) at #1, Jeff Borowiak (the '69 and reigning NCAA Champion) at #2" Coach Bassett explained. "...and we have a freshman from Illinois at #3 whose name is Jimmy Connors and then Jeff Austin (oldest brother of the fabled Austin Family) at #4. Would that be alright?"

Emery's idea had struck gold.

Then George Toley....who sent Mike Machette and it might have been [George Taylor](#)....the relatively new Stanford Coach (and as I write now in 2016, perhaps the greatest college coach in US History with an incredible 17 NCAA Titles) Dick Gould...sent a freshman Sandy Mayer and Paul Sidone), and I'd have to check with Historian [Steve Hall](#), who the Cal Berkley players were.

On the women's side, my father had told me about an amazing 14 year old girl in San Diego...Marita Redondo, older sister to [Walter Redondo](#), so we invited Marita to join a field which included Valarie Zigenfuss, another top player from Southern California. Janet Hopps Adkisson came down from Seattle, Janet was a former #4 in the USA and older sister to my college teammate and great friend Steve Hopps. Oregon's #1 woman was Hedy Jackson.

I called Tom Gorman, who in January of '71 was beginning to move up the US Rankings...later that year Tom upset Rod Laver at Queens and then beat "The Rocket" again, in straight sets, in the quarterfinals of '71 Wimbledon. We offered \$1500 to Alan Fox, who had, in the Pacific Southwest, knocked off some very big names. (Alan Fox was seeded second, but ran into Sandy Mayer in the first round)

Tom only wanted to play doubles, with PNW #1 Dick Knight of Seattle, the University of Washington star, who was mentored by Seattle's great Bill Quillian.

We had indeed "Upgraded the field" as the Irvington Board had requested.

Irvington had great members, knowledgeable tennis people. Joanne Bonime, (mother of

[Todd Bonime](#) and

[Bart Bonime](#) who I was 'coach') handled the housing, lining up the homes for the players.  
Bill

[William Brown](#)

of Notre Dame and Army #1 after Arthur Ashe, stayed with

[Jon Hermanson](#)'s family. Jon was one my first star pupils, a strapping 11 year old whose goal in life was "To beat Tim Carr" who was the PNW #1 12 and under. I wound up coaching both those boys.

Roy Tokerud was Textronic's engineer, meticulous man, who handled the scheduling beautifully...and the volunteers from Irvington were fabulous setting up 'crowd control' and the snack bar and concessions.

We rented a 10 row bleacher for court #2...bringing our spectator capacity up to about 800...and we played matches on courts three and four. We had some solid umpires in members like Sam Lee, who was the NCAA Doubles Champion at Stanford in '33, a great doubles player/partner to Emery Neale and the driving force for the first public indoor courts West of the Mississippi in the Portland Tennis Center.

Ross Hughes and Art Fish, both fine players and Stanford men, were solid umpires, along with Don Tisdell, Oregon Bank President and currently on the USTA Board of Directors today, having served six terms as Secretary Treasurer for the USTA's many millions.

Another great member was Bubby Cronin (father of

[Marty Cronin](#)) who owned Electrical Distributing, the Zenith Dealership, and Bubby agreed to put up all the prizes....Clock Radios and Television sets. There was no \$ in the tournament...just expense money and what we gave to Alan Fox.

I was smart to invite Emery to be Co-Tournament Director...everyone in town knew Emery, and loved him as a genuine tennis enthusiast who was eight times the Oregon State Singles Champion. Emery grew up on the clay at Irvington, was about 6'2" guy with massive wrists...and big groundstrokes. He was one of the PNW 'Trap door Spiders', like Jack Neer, who visiting Californians would be surprised to run into in the 'rainy' Northwest. Along with Bill Quillian of Seattle, Tom Gorman and a man like Jim Brink of Seattle...they were some of the best tennis players in the USA.

So how do we 'promote' the tournament now...the key way was telling the morning paper, The Oregonian, and the afternoon paper, The Oregon Journal. The Journal had a GREAT man in George Pasero (father of

[Jim Pasero](#) and

[Mark Pasero](#)), more on George later.

The Oregonian's Sports Editor was an 80 year old legend L.H. Gregory. Emery took me in to meet Mr. Gregory. He was a very nice man, however his office was the most cluttered desk I had ever seen, probably press releases from the Tall Firs of Oregon...in the '30's. And everything he had eaten in the last week...was on his shirt.

"Emery, it's January!...where are you going to play this tournament?" said Mr. Gregory. Emery told him we had four indoor courts at Irvington ...since '66...this was January of '71.

"Well I'll be damned!! Indoor courts!!" Mr. Gregory said. Tennis was not exactly on the front burner of the Big O. Then the fabled Sports Editor then introduced the #2 in command, Don MacLeod. I would guess Mr. MacLeod was close to 70...and as I stood there I watched him

try to hold his balance...his eyes were glassy...and I thought he might have had what my Dad had told me some sportswriters called a 'two martini lunch'. As the former Sports Editor of the Seattle University Spectator, twice weekly, I wondered to myself..."How does this newspaper ever get out"...was just a thought.

So we gave the seeds and the draws to press, Rahim of UCLA was the #1 seed, Fox was #2, Borowiak was #3...and they did a nice story. Things were in place for the first event I had ever run...the Pacific Coast Indoors.

...then back at the Irvington Club, I get a phone call. "Mr. Parrott?"..."Yes" I said. "This is Haroon Rahim...I am sorry, but I am flunking a class here and can't get out of a test...I can't come up to your tournament"...said Haroon. I told him I understood...but now we have tell the press, we just lost our #1 seed.

In about two hours...another call comes into the office. "Mr. Parrott, this is Jimmy Connors..."

His phone call had me going for a moment...

Brian Parrott 2021

Brian and Emery were co-directors of the first tournament