

Untouchable McBride dominates 15s

By Matt Krueger

While Carrickmore Handball Club's Lorcan McBride has made his mark and earned accolades throughout the junior ranks in Ireland, he had yet to compete in the USHA national juniors. But by the time the tournament was over, he left little doubt that he was the top player in his field by a large margin.

McBride was honored with the Tom Lynch Newcomer Award and left the U.S. as the most decorated player after he won three events in one tournament — a record that will never be broken.

The 15-and-under small-ball final was his most impressive performance. McBride dominated the draw by playing head and shoulders above his competition. McBride played flawlessly against Lattof YMCA's Ray Ure in the final, cruising 21-5, 21-3.

While Ure rolled to the 13-and-under title last year, there wasn't much he could do against the older and taller McBride. The result left even Ure impressed, and he used few words to describe his opponent's play.

"Wow. Just wow," he said. "It's not like I played that bad."

McBride seemed to be everywhere, forcing Ure to try to execute perfect shots just to gain a chance to serve, let alone convert scoring opportunities. Ure did end some rallies with impressive shots, but not with the frequency to match McBride's or enough to stay in the service box.

McBride surrendered only six points



McBride lines up a shot in the final against Ure.

over three matches leading up to the final, and his smooth two-handed stroke was merciless. Armed with a great service game and sound defense, McBride's arsenal left his opponents little margin for error.

Ure delivered impressive wins as well, and his points in the final were the most McBride surrendered.

Ure defeated McBride's doubles partner, Michael Kiely, in a two-game semifinal, and

McBride stopped Tucson's Jorge Pimentel.

Canada's Guillaume Chouinard beat Illinois' Collin Peters for the A title. Northern California's Jessie Davis edged Irishman Jamie Moylan in a tiebreaker for the B crown. Tucsonan John Franks tipped teammate Josh Webster to win the consolation.

First round: Carter Rakochev (Calgary, Canada) d. Jessie Davis (Modesto, Calif.) 18, 9; Michael Kiely (Waterford, Ireland) d. Josh Webster (Tucson) 2, 1; Guillaume Chouinard (Quebec, Canada) d. Isac Rios (Tucson) 4, 8; Lorcan McBride (Carrickmore, Ireland) d. Jamie Moylan (Waterford, Ireland) 1, 1; Collin Peters (Des Plaines, Ill.) d. John Franks (Tucson) 13, 14; Oison Hallahan (Waterford, Ireland) d. Johnny Cooke (Oak Forest, Ill.) 0, 2; Jorge Pimentel (Tucson) d. Diego Hernandez (El Paso, Texas) 0, 0.

Quarters: Ray Ure (Des Plaines, Ill.) d. Rakochev 0, 2; Kiely d. Chouinard 15, 6; McBride d. Peters 1, 1; Pimentel d. Hallahan (10), 10, 7.

Semis: Ure d. Kiely 10, 4; McBride d. Pimentel 2, 0.

Final: McBride d. Ure 5, 3.

A

Semis: Chouinard d. Rakochev 8, 1; Peters d. Hallahan 17, (7), 10.

Final: Chouinard d. Peters 14, 9.

B

First round: Webster d. Hernandez; Rios d. Cooke 16, 2; Davis d. Franks 6, (5), 5.

Semis: Moylan d. Webster 9, 3; Davis d. Rios 10, 7.

Final: Davis d. Moylan (15), 18, 8.

Consolation

Semis: Webster d. Hernandez 2, 2;

Franks d. Cooke 11, 11.

Final: Franks d. Webster 7, (14), 5.



Runner-up Peters with A champion Chouinard.



B division winner Davis with finalist Moylan.



Consolation finalists Webster and Franks.

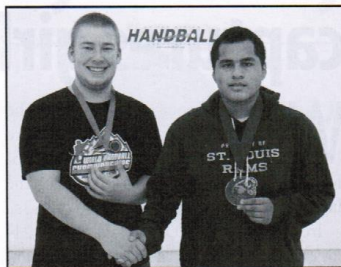
Rakochey pushes Garcia to big-ball crown

This marked the fourth year since big ball was introduced at the national juniors. Andrew Garcia of Los Angeles made the semifinals of the 15-and-under singles the first year, giving the eventual champion his toughest test of the tournament.

The last time Garcia was in Tucson, for the four-wall juniors in 2014, he won his first title. In the same bracket that year, Canada's Rory Rakochey lost in the first round.

And this time, Rakochey narrowly lost the 19-and-under big-ball singles title match to Garcia 8-21, 21-15, 11-10.

While Garcia has improved his overall game and added national titles over the last two years, Rakochey made an impressive



Rakochey and Garcia, the 19-and-under finalists.

leap in his game.

Garcia has improved steadily and trains with pro qualifier Vic Perez. He seemed an

easy pick to win his second big-ball title, but Rakochey threw the outcome in doubt by making incredible shots and pushing Garcia to the brink.

"Rory was making good shots," Garcia said. "He just played really well."

The matchup may make for an interesting final next year as both have one more year of eligibility remaining.

- 1: Andrew Garcia (Glassell Park, Calif.)
- d. Rory Rakochey (Calgary, Canada) (8), 15, 10;
- d. Samuel Richer (Quebec, Canada) 11, 2;
- d. Nicholas Roberts (Evanston, Ill.) 7, 0.
- 2: Rakochey d. Richer 8, 5; d. Roberts 10, 11.
- 3: Richer d. Roberts 17, 17.

3's a crowd: 15-under star McBride sets mark

Lorcan McBride was the class of the 15-and-under this year while setting a mark that can't be broken.

McBride is the first and only player to win three events at the juniors: the 15-and-under small-ball singles and doubles and the 15-and-under big-ball singles.

Big ball was added in 2013, so there have been only four years of opportunity, but to win all three requires a lot of handball.

Most of the juniors were rubbing their arms by the time the finals rolled around, and McBride was no different. But he did make quick work of his opponents, dominating the international field with players from the U.S., Canada, Mexico and Ireland.

Four-wall big ball is a new effort for

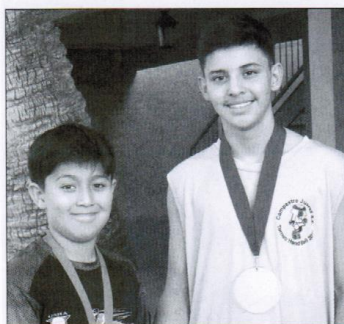
many of the juniors. The big ball is used for one-wall in Ireland and Canada, and the indoor four-wall game with the big ball is almost always the short-court version played with two bounces and from side wall to side wall.

Canadians Guillaume Chouinard and Carter Rakochey finished second and third.

- 1: Lorcan McBride (Carrickmore, Ireland)
- d. Guillaume Chouinard (Quebec, Canada) 1, 2;
- d. Carter Rakochey (Calgary, Canada) 0, 2;
- d. Josh Webster (Tucson) 0, 0;
- d. Diego Hernandez (El Paso, Texas) 0, 0.
- 2: Chouinard d. Rakochey 9, 9; d. Webster 4, 10;
- d. Hernandez 3, 0.
- 3: Rakochey d. Webster 12, 11; d. Hernandez 1, 7.



McBride, with runner-up Chouinard, became the first player to win three events at the juniors.



Finalist Renteria with Sanchez, won two 13-and-under titles and didn't lose a game in big ball.

Sanchez cruises to both 13-under singles titles

David Sanchez III was still going strong on the final day of play after advancing to the finals of three events.

Sanchez won both 13-and-under singles events, including the big-ball round robin without the loss of a game.

He plays three-wall big ball back home in California as well as four-wall, and his experience with the ball and court showed.

Through four rounds of round-robin play, the defending 13-and-under big-ball champ allowed barely three points a game.

The battle for second place was decided

in a thriller when Eder Renteria of Juarez, Mexico, outlasted Abraham Sanchez of Lafayette, Colo., in three games.

- 1: David Sanchez III (Stockton, Calif.)
- d. Eder Renteria (Juarez, Mexico) 1, 5;
- d. Abraham Sanchez (Lafayette, Colo.) 1, 5;
- d. Jensen Payton (Tucson) 3, 7;
- d. Colton Stout (Tucson) 2, 2.
- 2: Renteria d. A. Sanchez 17, (12), 1; d. Payton 4, 4;
- d. Stout 0, 5.
- 3: A. Sanchez d. Payton 7, 0; d. Stout 8, 2.
- 4: Payton d. Stout 17, 0.



First Ace Committee chair Ken Starcher and USHA President LeaAnn Martin flank the alumni awards winners — Austin Biddle, Pedro Murillo and Carlos Espinoza — during the national juniors banquet.

3 graduate from ranks of juniors

The annual four-wall juniors tournament brings youngsters together from around the country and the world. It's always great to watch them grow and mature, especially those who make the effort to attend each year.

The USHA honors and thanks those who attend at least four events, and we look forward to watching them compete in collegiate and adult events in the future.

The "graduating" players this year with four tournaments having been attended were Pedro Murillo, Austin Biddle and Carlos Espinoza.

Avila/Camacho keep 17 doubles title in Arizona

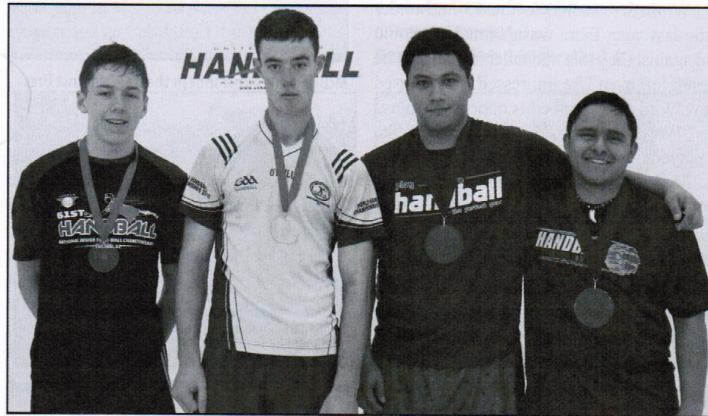
With his players winning the boys 17-and-under and 13-and-under as well as the girls 19-and-under doubles events, Fred Lewis said, "Maybe we'll be known as the doubles junior program."

The Tucson players, coached by Lewis and Abraham Montijo, are good at doubles since there are so many of them that they play a lot of doubles. It's a great advantage for the program to have large turnouts and great for handball to have so many youngsters playing good handball.

Doubles certainly extends the playing age for most and can increase the enjoyment and camaraderie as well.

Jesus Avila/Esteban Camacho have played together before, and that experience made a big difference in their two tiebreaker wins in the 17-and-under semis and final.

In the semifinals, they turned back last year's 15-and-under champs, Ivan Burgos/Sam Richer, in an 11-9 decision in which



The 17-and-under doubles finalists, Clarke and O'Keeffe, with champions Camacho and Avila.

all four players were scrambling to keep the ball in play

In the final, Avila/Camacho took the title in an 11-5 decision over Ireland's Kavan O'Keeffe/Adam Clarke. All four players were tired from their singles and doubles efforts, especially after competing in the age group with the most players.

First round: Ben Flynn/Daithi Brunnock (Ireland) d. John Silva/Carlos Castillo (Calif.) 15, 10; Jon Gutierrez/Noe Rios (Colo./Ariz.) d. Ruairi Cusack/Jake Moore

(Ireland) 4, 3; Patrick Cooke/Devin Peters (Ill.) d. Alejandro Sandoval/Angel Mariscal (Ariz.) 1, 2; Jake Cervantes/Jessie Davis (Calif.) d. Nicholas Roberts/Sam Ure (Ill.) 18, (17), 4.

Quarters: Ivan Burgos/Sam Richer (Canada) d. Flynn/Brunnock 4, 3; Jesus Avila/Esteban Camacho (Ariz.) d. Gutierrez/Rios 10, 14; Cooke/Peters d. Cervantes/Davis 11, 7; Kavan O'Keeffe/Adam Clarke (Ireland) d. Sammy Brekke/Vince Ford (Calif.) 2, 10.

Semis: Avila/Camacho d. Burgos/Richer (14), 18, 9; O'Keeffe/Clarke d. Cooke/Peters 9, 6.

Final: Avila/Camacho d. O'Keeffe/Clarke 7, (16), 5.