

### ***“Kansas City, Here I Come!”***

After a summer hiatus from professional competition, the world's best racquetball players will arrive in Kansas City to launch the 2010/2011 [International Racquetball Tour](#) (IRT) season. The kick-off event will take place at Overland Park's posh social club, “[The Athletic Club](#)”. This is the 11th ongoing year of the “The Ghost of Georgetown” tournament, which started as a local amateur event and developed into a full IRT pro stop in 2006. Hosting the pros at the season's kick-off Tier 1 (T1) event this year is a double bonus for area racquetball enthusiasts; it brings the prestige and excitement of a much-anticipated season opener, and also - due to the successful business efforts of local organizers, - restores the tournament to a T1 from its T4 status last year - meaning after a year's absence, and the end of a summer away from pro ball, at least the top eight pros will be returning to this warm and enthusiastic racquetball community.

The “tier” level of an IRT stop describes the amount of prize money, which in turn drives pro participation. “Tier 1” indicates more money than a “Tier 4”, and is based on a purse sufficient to attract all of the top eight-ranked pros, most of whom typically do not appear for the lower tiered events. It takes a lot of community cooperation and effort to put together a Tier 1 event, but maintaining the live connection between local players and the IRT is according to most accounts, well worth the effort.

The [entry-deadline](#) for the “Ghost of Georgetown” tournament is September 3rd, and round trip tickets to Kansas City can be had from most major airports for less than \$250 round-trip. Book a last minute flight to play or just be a part of the excitement of the first tournament of the year. If you can't make it this year, consider penciling it in as a late-summer get-away in 2011.

### ***On Court***

While the outcome of Waselenchuk as champion may be predictable in the minds of most fans, whether you are a purist, a fan of the sport in general, or an avid supporter of a specific pro player, this event should be well-worth the price of admission. Among other things, it offers a first take on off-season efforts, and material for informed speculation on how the season may progress.

It will also provide conversational material for other topics of interest, such as potential benchmarks for players at this event, compared to past years. Due to shifts in the top ranks, several players in the middle ranks have greatly increased chances of making the semis for the first time. Tournament results such as those listed below, as well as a fascinating array of player statistics, comparisons, and trivia, have been meticulously archived in a statistical database located at the website [www.bossconsulting.com/irt](http://www.bossconsulting.com/irt).

### **Tournament History:**

#### **September 2006**

Q Huczek d. Williams  
Q Carson d. Mannino  
Q Beltran d. Vanderson  
Q Swain d. Crowther  
S Huczek d. Carson  
S Beltran d. Swain  
F Huczek d. Beltran

#### **September 2007**

Q Huczek d. Croft  
Q Vanderson d. Beltran  
Q Mannino d. Williams  
Q Carson d. Crowther  
S Huczek d. Vanderson  
S Mannino d. Carson  
F Mannino d. Huczek

#### **September 2008**

Q Waselenchuk d. Thoerner  
Q Beltran d. Vanderson  
Q Mannino d. Williams  
Q Huczek d. Croft  
S Waselenchuk d. Beltran  
S Huczek d. Mannino  
F Waselenchuk d. Huczek

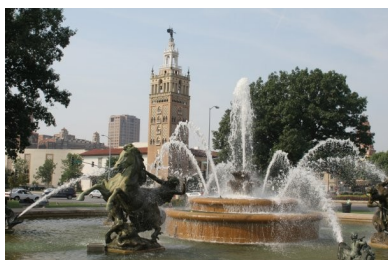
The tournament might also offer the season's first glimpse of the athletes' work-ethic, motivation, and how they have prepared for this season through independent effort, and aside from their ability to make

adjustments on the fly throughout the year. Also to watch for, Croft and Crowther may give early clues as to their potential for this season, Crowther having demonstrated notable success last year fairly late in his career, biologically speaking. Although he is one of the oldest players currently touring full-time, he is among the least experienced playing among the top eight. As it may for a recovering Alvaro Beltran, this tournament could reveal signs of Crowther's potential for upward mobility this season, and whether the accomplished veterans still have the stamina and intensity to compete through multiple rounds against other more youthful contenders such as Croft.

Fans might also look to Croft for early signs of whether he has again achieved dramatic psychological gains, or if his game has somewhat leveled off for the time-being. With breakthrough wins against Carson, currently one of the most dominating players on tour, Croft demonstrated he is top four material, possibly top two material, and conceivably a number one player in the long-run. Kansas City is an exciting opportunity to look for more indicators. It will also provide some forecast material for the ongoing Huzcek/Carson rivalry - Huzcek having nudged Carson down to start the season at #3, and Carson coming off an August victory over Huzcek at the 2010 World Games in Seoul. Carson has whittled down the gap in his career head to head against Huzcek from 13-20 down to 8-9 in the past three years, however, the finals regular has not yet made it to Sunday in Kansas City. Meanwhile, Huzcek has made the finals all three years, but has only one win so far. Although Waselenchuk's presence makes it unlikely that these two meet each other in this event, their finishes here may or may not be an indication of their intensity coming into the season.

Other than that, and in addition to the fascinating talent and skill these players bring to the court, the presence of the top eight pros creates a unique and exciting celebrity atmosphere, and also brings out an invigorating passion and intensity in many fans. It's also a rare promotional opportunity upon which local racquetball professionals - such as instructors and programmers - can build. Hosting the season-opener in Kansas City also provides a special opportunity for enthusiasts to combine their hobby with an inexpensive and exciting getaway weekend. It's a clean, placid city that also offers a wide variety of activities which can be enjoyed by singles and/or families if one seeks an occasional diversion from the tournament scene.

### ***Kansas City Pleasures...***



For shopping, walking, or enjoying the beautiful fountains and view, the [Country Club Plaza](#) is an impressive fifteen-block shopping district of fine dining and upscale establishments. It's also a simple, convenient, and extremely pleasant twenty-minute winding drive from the Athletic Club, through the scenic mansions of [Mission Hills](#).

If you happen to also have miniature racquetball fans in tow, [Worlds of Fun](#) is an accessible theme park even the grumpiest enthusiast would enjoy, located close by, and also directly next to it's shriek-filled counter-part, Oceans of Fun. Half day pricing is available at a discount for the racquetballers that wants to break away as a unit for some boisterous family-time outside the courts.



Meanwhile, whether you are single or encumbered, if you are one of those rare individuals that needs

to eat, you would be remiss if you do not sample Kansas City's world-class pit barbeque. Fortunately, even if you are a hard-core racquetball fan that cannot bear the idea of breaking away from the event for more than a few hours, one of the country's most delicious barbeque restaurants, [Hayward's Pit BBQ](#), is almost within walking distance of the Athletic Club. Even if you cannot sit down for a meal, you should at least take the time to circle within 1000 yards of the restaurant, a sufficient distance from which to smell the overwhelming tempting aroma of this unique barbeque blend, which should in turn convince you to at least order carry-out. And don't worry; at Hayward's, everybody gets a bib.



A final recommendation, if you are interested in sampling more culture which is singularly that of Kansas City, and also can be enjoyed with minimal logistical effort, consider the world-class [Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art](#).

With its uniquely sprawling and midwestern twenty-two acre estate, it's

an inexpensive, enriching way to spend some well-deserved luxury time. Could help you score better on Jeopardy, too.

These are just the possible highlights of the Kansas City event, which offers fans and amateur players an affordable opportunity to enjoy the highest level of the sport while creating a highly-charged atmosphere in which to compete, enjoy event hospitality, parties, and local attractions in this understated gem in the heart of the mid-west. If you can get buy-in, it's potentially a fun, low-effort racquetball getaway.



Whether you are a hard-core fan focussed geared on the thrills and anticipation of the season's first event, or a more casual enthusiast looking for a way to combine some time at an exciting pro-stop with a weekend family vacation, the “Ghost of Georgetown” season opener tournament could be a good choice for you and or your family.