

[Kansas City](#)

Kansas Finals: #1 Kane Waselenchuk d. #2 Rocky Carson 7, (9), 9, 7

by IRT Intern Kathy Geels

OVERLAND PARK, Kan., (Sept. 15, 2012) -- As expected, the finals of the IRT's season-opener went to Kane Waselenchuk, who has totally dominated the men's racquetball tour for the past four seasons. However, an upset by the number-two seed Rocky Carson appeared possible until late into the match. Game one was tightly contested until about mid-point when Waselenchuk was able to break free of Carson, who then rebounded to take game two, 11-9. Game three went back to Waselenchuk, with another 11-9 score, who then finished game four fairly quickly, 11-7.

Carson, who has held the number two ranking for four seasons and is Waselenchuk's closest rival on tour, has been in the top ten for more than thirteen years. In the nearly two-hour long match his conditioning and craftsmanship showed he is still ready for younger threats, but his renowned control of tempo only managed to needle Waselenchuk, not disrupt his rhythm. Waselenchuk is also a tour veteran who took over the number-one spot in 2003. His offensive risk and execution - which seem to continually improve - were nearly flawless by the fourth game, implying another undefeated record-breaking season is within his reach.

Kansas Semi-finals: #1 Kane Waselenchuk d. #5 Alvaro Beltran

by IRT Intern Kathy Geels

OVERLAND PARK, Kan., (Sept. 14, 2012) -- Kane Waselenchuk won by a forfeit from Alvaro Beltran, who appeared on the court and attempted to warm up, but cited back spasms in a follow-up interview. Waselenchuk advances to play the winner between Rocky Carson and Jose Rojas.

Kansas Semi-finals: #2 Rocky Carson d. #3 Jose Rojas - 8, (7), 6, 5

OVERLAND PARK, Kan., (Sept. 14, 2012) -- With ten years difference in age, 33-year-old veteran Rocky Carson and Jose Rojas, 22, looked equally fresh coming into the bottom semis of the season opener. Carson captured an early five point lead in game one before Rojas narrowed the gap to a single point, but Carson recaptured the serve and finished off the win. Rojas seemed less restless in game two, but after a few scoreless turnovers Carson was first on the board, as both players warily changed up serves and seemed to search for vulnerabilities. Rojas eventually inched his way to a 5-2 lead, called a time-out when Carson tied it up 5-5, and made a final lunge to close game two, 11- 6. Carson started game three by attacking Rojas' left side with a fierce drive-serve for three early points, while Rojas continued to mix up his service game. The score stayed close until 6-6, at which point Carson's tactic seem to give him an edge. In spite of numerous fault serves, he powered his way to a final score of 11-6. In game four, Rojas' showed a dwindling sense of offensive purpose and despite incredible marksmanship (including a winner from between the legs) he contested only the early points of the game. As Carson's momentum increased, he seemed to manage Rojas in subsequent rallies, positioning him around the court off the serve-reply, and keeping him off his lethal shooting rhythm. At 4-4, Carson broke away for good, allowing Rojas to score only once more before ending the game and match at 11-5 (on two skipped return of serves). The win put Carson into the finals against Kane Waselenchuk.

[US Open](#)

US Open Semifinals: #1 Kane Waselenchuk d. #4 Alvaro Beltran 5, 9, 8

by IRT Intern Kathy Geels

MINNEAPOLIS, (Sept. 16, 2012) -- After an intense three games of shooting and diving, Waselenchuk defeated Alvaro Beltran to advance to the finals. First to get on the board then gain an early lead and close game one 11-5, he and Beltran both seemed to need time to settle into a rapid-fire shooting pace. Beltran still struggled in game two, this time with service faults, but eventually came up with an effective drive to the right. With highly offensive replies to Waselenchuk's serve, some diving re-kills, and strategic ceiling shots, Beltran's arsenal seemed to position him for a win right up until he lost game two, 9-11. Game three, however, momentum was with Waselenchuk, who seemed to have clocked Beltran's drive-serve, and kept him scoreless for the first 15 minutes, while hurtling to a 7-0 lead before Beltran was able to counter. Relocating his serve and using a high level of intensity to contest every rally, Beltran worked himself back into the game to a score of 8-8 before Waselenchuk cut him off for good. Waselenchuk got back into the box by flat-rolling a return of serve,

then smartly played the last three points and finished the game and match with a pass that tangled Beltran up in the back court. The win puts Waselenchuk into the finals against Rocky Carson.

US Open Semifinals: #2 Rocky Carson d. #6 Chris Crowther 1, 4, 4

MINNEAPOLIS, (Sept. 16, 2012) -- It was almost painful to watch the players grind out the points leading to Rocky Carson's win over Chris Crowther. Although Crowther's execution was neat and his demeanor relaxed, with no clear signs of the back-pain that forced multiple time-outs the day before, he seemed to lack both energy and explosiveness. With a few exceptions, (including the ace to the right side that won the match), Carson's strategy seemed to be to engage Crowther using lower-risk serves (often a mid-height z), then wear him down with extended shooting matches from deep court. Crowther's court-coverage, power, and tenacity were all barriers to a quick loss, but he seemed unable to gain an offensive foothold, and the final scores imply Carson comfortably controlled the entire match. The win advances Carson to the finals to play Kane Waselenchuk.

Reseda, CA

California Semi-finals: #1 Kane Waselenchuk d. #13 Alex Landa 2, 8, (7), 3

by IRT Intern Kathy Geels

RESEDA, Calif., (Jan. 5, 2013) -- Returning from a two-month injury layoff, Kane Waselenchuk did not appear taxed during his run to a semi-finals defeat of Alex Landa. In his debut appearance in a T1 semi-final, Landa took a game off of Waselenchuk while putting on an impressive display of speed, agility, and execution. Waselenchuk advances to the finals against Rocky Carson.

California Semi-finals: #2 Rocky Carson d. #3 Alvaro Beltran (5), 4, (5), 10, 5

RESEDA, Calif., (Jan. 5, 2013) -- Rocky Carson defeated Alvaro Beltran in a five-game match, reminiscent of their three-hour meeting for the New Jersey Open title. The players started warily, breaking the conservative tempo only on low-to-moderate risk setups. At around 2-3, Carson broke away and began shooting more aggressively, but Beltran responded with a drive-service game that left Carson on his heels. Game two, Carson kept up the aggressive tempo, leaving Beltran a little slow off the blocks, but Beltran rallied in game three, keeping the momentum early in game four, until Carson took a critical timeout. Although Beltran remained close on his heels, Carson never truly looked back, going on to handily win the fifth game, which edged him closer in their lifetime head-to-head record of 14 wins to Beltran's 15 (bossconsulting.com/irt). He proceeds to the finals to play the winner of Waselenchuk v. Landa.

NY

New York Semi-finals: #2 Rocky Carson d. #5 Chris Crowther (8), 2, (7), 10, 6

by IRT Intern, Kathy Geels

NEW YORK, (Jan. 12, 2013) -- Rocky Carson defeated Chris Crowther in a tense display that appeared undecided until late in the fifth game. Combining the pressure of steady drive serves, along with angles and passes, Carson kept Crowther on the move and forced mainly defensive returns throughout the match. In return, Crowther gave Carson everything he could handle, effectively using time-outs to push Carson to the limit. On match point in game four he was denied a would-be ace for the match win but rebounded well in order to closely contest the first half of game five. After jumping to a five zero lead, however, he eventually lost his foothold to Carson's gritty, methodical play. Carson moves on to play Jose Rojas in the finals.

New York Semi-finals: #5 Jose Rojas d. #3 Alvaro Beltran 6, 8, (1), 5

NEW YORK, (Jan. 12, 2013) -- With measured decision-making and precise shooting, Jose Rojas defeated Alvaro Beltran in the first semi-final match of the day. Both players started with tentative serving, Rojas steadily outscoring Beltran until 7-3 when he broke tempo with his drive-service game to finish it, 11-6. Game two was more of the same, with Beltran finally switching to his drive-serves about mid-way through. The change seemed to keep him in the hunt as the game see-sawed back and forth, until 6-8, advantage Beltran, when Rojas took a time-out, came in, and finished that one off. Game three, Rojas' game seemed slightly out of focus, and Beltran left him on 1, but he appeared to have collected himself in game four,

confidently beating Beltran 11-5. He advances to the finals to play the winner of Carson v. Crowther.

Florida Spring Break

Florida Semi-finals: #1 Kane Waselenchuk d. #5 Jose Rojas 6, 2, 3

by IRT Intern Kathy Geels

TAMPA, Fla., (March 9, 2013) -- Kane Waselenchuk defeated Jose Rojas in a decisive three game match. Rojas appeared unexpectedly lacking in offensive mind-set, compared to other late-draw performances this season. Waselenchuk relied mainly on an almost nonchalant lob-serve, with Rojas coming across as nearly helpless in the face of such a mild-mannered tempo, and unable to create his own aggressive momentum. Waselenchuk moves on to play Ben Croft in the finals.

Florida Semi-finals: #8 Ben Croft d. #2 Rocky Carson 5, 7, (1), (4), 4

TAMPA, Fla., (March 9, 2013) -- Ben Croft unexpectedly upset the master craftsman, Rocky Carson in an extended (two-plus hours) five-game match. Croft ripped through games one and two, playing things his way with drive serves, low side to side rallies, and flat kills. Carson appeared to match him in fitness and acrobatic finesse but coming up slightly short. By game three, Carson changed to an almost plodding tempo, using lobs and methodical angles before his finishing kills, as Croft's serves drive serves seemed to fail him and his shots stayed consistently higher. Game five had the potential to go either way, but Croft seemed to regain his effective drive-serve to the right side, and along with a few uncharacteristic but crucial skips by Carson, Croft moves on to the finals to play the winner of Kane Waselenchuk v. Jose Rojas.

Denver, Colorado - Mile High

Colorado Semi-finals: #1 Kane Waselenchuk d. #5 Jose Rojas 0, 1, 7

by IRT Intern Kathy Geels

DENVER, *March 23, 2013* -- Kane Waselenchuk defeated Jose Rojas in three games. Rojas showed fortitude, rebounding from low-scoring losses to grapple with Waselenchuk in game three. Waselenchuk used relentless consistency in games one and two to make simple work out of Rojas' straight drives, before Rojas made an adjustment to angled serves in game three, giving him his first advantage, 4-3. The two grappled back and forth until 7-7 before Waselenchuk broke free to finish off the match. He moves on to play Rocky Carson in the finals.

Colorado Semi-finals: #2 Rocky Carson d. #6 Ben Croft (2), 9, 3, 1

DENVER, *March 23, 2013* -- In a surprising come-back, Rocky Carson defeated Ben Croft in spite of a blitzkrieg by Croft in the first game. Carson remained calm in the face of Croft's combination of execution and fury, and switched over to his own drive-serve and re-kill strategy, taking an early 5-0 lead in game two before Croft was able to pull himself back into the game. Too little, too late, however, as the two wrestled back and forth until Carson closed it, 11-9. Game three, Carson again got an early lead to 4-0 before Croft was able to challenge him, but could not recapture the intensity of coming out of the blocks. He came into the service box showing plenty of energy in the fourth game, but Carson successfully maintained his drive-serve and kills, while Croft's drives were less effective, and prone to double-faulting. Another technical foul may have done him the favor quickening the loss, 11-1 to give Carson the match. Carson goes on to play the winner of the second semi-final between Kane Waselenchuk and Jose Rojas.

St. Louis, MO - Party with the Pros

Portland, OR - Tournament of Champions

Stockton, CA - Pro Am

Fullerton, CA - Nationals