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RUBBER SOLE

with
**Brian
O'Meara**
Sports Editor



**English-style
sportsmanship**

It was a few years back and yours truly was feeling his oats.

I had entered the Central Ontario Squash Championships being held at the Harbour Club - there were about 70 of us involved in all divisions.

Entered in two divisions, I was competing as a 'C' player and as a veteran, noting of course, that if I was eliminated early, I would have played at least four matches.

Along the way, after perusing the draw sheets, I noticed another player doing the same - David Morgan was indeed playing as a veteran (just over 50 at the time) and was also entered in the 'B' division as well.

There was a possibility that David, a good friend, and I would meet eventually, providing everything fell into place i.e., he would lose when I would lose or win when I would win, etc.

As it happened, we would meet - I had already played a couple of Saturday matches, was feeling my age and waiting for my third match of the day.

That would come against Morgan, who would be playing his fourth of the day, having just lost a five-set heartbreaker to a young and robust RMC student.

He was out of breath, asthma always a problem with David, and asked for a few minutes rest before taking me on.

I was supremely confident - after all, David was playing his fourth of the day, looked spent and was using his asthmatic inhaler frequently.

This was my chance to beat him.

Well, let's put it this way, the old master not only won, he humiliated me, lobbing, dropping, boasting and generally running me every which way throughout about 30 minutes of play.

I earned approximately 10 points in three games and was thoroughly exhausted, confused and taught a lesson by one of the best.

David, in his English-style sportsmanship, congratulated me on a well-played match, took another whiff from the inhaler and listened intently as I described how I was GOING to win the match because of...

"Ah, yes," David would say. "But you did play well it's just that the fastidious O'Meara was present today."

That's the way he talked - it was his way.

David Morgan died Saturday afternoon.



DAVID MORGAN

My final conversation with David was Saturday morning - he had been quite ill lately, a pneumonia problem coupled with an intravenous feeding mixup, which left him 30 pounds lighter and a great deal weaker than his most recent playing days.

But he was on the mend - Saturday morning he arrived at the Belleville Fitness and Squash Club, his favorite home away from home, rode the stationary bicycle for a few minutes, kibitzed with the aerobics girls, and showered.

He called it 'humanizing' - that quiet, pensive time at the club when he would lounge in the whirlpool, contemplate new compositions, dally long enough to chat with almost everyone in the place and generally recharge his batteries.

"I put a bit of weight on last week," he told me. "But the doctor won't let me return to squash just yet."

He seemed pleased that his recent illness was behind him and was looking forward to his first match back on court.

Just about five hours later he was dead.