

## **EARL BALL CD HALL OF FAME PLAYER AWARD, BETMAR 2006 03 18**

My name is Stan McCormack and it is my privilege to present Earl Ball for induction into the Central District Hall of Fame (Player Category).

Earl began shuffling in 1995. He started in Betmar; he has remained in Betmar, and it is entirely fitting and appropriate that this Induction is taking place right here in Betmar!! Upon retirement in 1997 Earl took up the game of Shuffling in earnest. Each of us has seen Earl in action at our Central District Masters events over the years! During the 1999/200 Season, Earl made Instant Pro, and went on to qualify for the FSA State Masters ~~ competed in the Masters, an event he has repeated on a regular basis. His accomplishments at the State Level culminated with his induction into the State Hall of Fame in 2005.

To-day however; we would like to speak about Earl's accomplishments as a Player in the Central District, and about his contribution to the sport. Earl does not just play the game; Earl makes every game an opportunity to send a message to others that "This Game is exciting; this game is challenging; and it is a game requiring skill and ability!! Just listen to the comments of a reporter of the Tampa Tribune: *" Take all those images of shuffleboard that might lurk in your conscience, wad them up with the stereotypes and opinions that seem to smudge the sport's validity - at least with younger audiences - and present them to Earl Ball.*

*The 60-year-old Betmar Acres resident will gladly pound those prejudices into fine granules with a conversational flurry - plaudits, terminology, even strategy - about the sport he has come to embrace. "It's highly competitive", said Ball, [In] golf, you're playing against the course and yourself. But in this game, I expect you to knock me off and you expect me to knock you off, so it takes you back to the days of sticks and bats and balls - all those types of things."*

Now there is a statement of strength, of someone who believes in his sport, someone who is not shy about saying so!! And Earl goes on ENTHUIASTICALLY, *"Location is essential, but so is foresight and a cold willingness to `hammer" a foe into the `kitchen". `It's a physical chess match, `To be a champion at this game is all in your head," Ball said. `Physically, there's a lot of people capable of being champions. But mentally, if you don't know what to do and can't pick out the correct situations according to the scoreboard ... you are not going to win."*

I offer an observation by others regarding Earl's participation at the International level: It is indicative of the high regard that Earl is held at the International level. Roy Norman in his capacity as Canadian Team Captain remarked at the banquet in Clearwater in 2002, and I quote:

"I have just received a message from the Prime Minister of Canada. The Prime Minister requested that the Canadian Team accept an application for Canadian citizenship from one of the American players!!! The particular player the P.M. was courting was of course "Earl the Pearl".

Earl was the only player on any team to end the ISA (Clearwater) tournament undefeated. I might add that Earl was the very 1<sup>st</sup> player to formally congratulate the Canadians on their victory. I reported it then as a CLASS ACT, and I repeat it to-day!!

Earl and Vivian have traveled extensively on the INAUGURALS ~~ To IRELAND, to BRAZIL and to DENMARK, always taking the opportunity to present the sport in a favourable light. Earl also played on the US ISA team in Brazil in 2005. He was one of only 4 players who finished the Games with only 1 loss.

The exploits above may be new to some and I have offered them to give you a pix of what Earl is all about!! All of us gathered here to-day are well aware of Earl's success in the Central District, not only that, we are reminded of those attributes each time we come up against him on the Courts!! He is the third player to qualify for the Central District HOF and holds two Central District Pro "Masters" Championships as well as one Reiny Schleier Championship. Earl; Congratulation on your Induction into the CENTRAL DISTRICT HALL OF FAME!!

**Stan McCormack 2006 03 18.**

