

SHELL SHOCKED

Doctor Racquet

By Art Stevens

Do you have a sixth sense about when someone in your family doesn't feel quite right? I know I do. I just knew instinctively that my tennis racquet was sick.

I took it over to Dr. Racquet at the Dunes tennis clinic. I knew it was going to be a long wait, but he's the best. A real specialist in sick racquets.

Finally, it was my turn. "What seems to be the problem?" he asked me in a gentle professional voice.

I said, "The racquet has no life, Doc. Its sweet spot has turned sour on me. It seems listless, out of control and totally non-responsive."

Dr. Racquet looked over the ailing tennis racquet on the examination table and said: "Hmm, this sounds serious. Would you mind stepping into the other room while I give the racquet a thorough physical and take some tests. I'll do a string biopsy and check the frame for possible stress fracture"

Well, folks, the wait seemed interminable. I paced back and forth like any other concerned tennis racquet owner. A few people in the waiting room tried to comfort me, but I was too distraught. The tennis racquet was like a son to me. We'd been together through thick and thin - clay, har-tru, grass, cement, tar.

I couldn't bear the possibility that the end might be in sight. Just then Dr. Racquet came out. He had a smile on his face. "Good news," he said. "It was low string tension. We caught it just in time. One more week and who knows? It could have been a forehand stroke."

I was flooded with a sense of joy and relief. One trip to the tennis doctor and my racquet was well again. I no longer had to worry about a mid-court crisis.