

CHRIS GAMBINO

2016 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

Scott Bondurant's Introduction Speech (Edited version)

Known in Chicago as The Great Gambino, Chris has had quite an impact on the game. His record is incredible—three Nationals, one Mixed Nationals title. He has clearly established himself as one of the greats of the game. As notable are the other qualities that he brings to the table, especially his sportsmanship. He is highly respected by everybody—and has great loyalty to his friends and partners. On the court, he blends his incredible talent, fierce competitive streak, and a highly intelligent approach to the game.

Acceptance Speech (Edited version)

I am incredibly humbled and very proud to be inducted into APTA HOF. I was really nervous this week—I started a new job on Monday, and was trying to figure out how to tell my new boss that I would be out all of Wednesday through Friday for a paddle tennis tournament and to explain that it was a real sport.

The great thing about paddle is that everyone stays in the game somehow. This nomination has given me time to reflect on my 20 years or so of paddle. John Millbank brought me into the game. I remember hitting 20 volleys in a row and still not winning the point. It was really frustrating and I couldn't sleep at night. I started playing with a guy named Dave Ohlmuller, in my second year. We finished the year ranked one. We had great results and developed a great friendship. He ended up being the best man at my wedding.

The one year I played Mixed Nationals, I was lucky enough to pair up with Gerri Viant. She is considered one of the best teachers of the game. She had an incredible game plan for us at the matches, and we won. In 2011, Drew Broderick and I played together. He has every shot in the book. I have played full tournaments where he has missed five lobs the entire tournament.

As far as the present, I'm thrilled to be playing with Marek Czerwinski. Hopefully this is the first year of many to come. He's very health conscious and likes to get a good night sleep. I definitely play better now at 8:00 AM matches. God knows I would not be in the Hall of Fame if all my matches were at 8:00 AM.

Paddle has given me many great memories and many great friendships. I will always think back to how special was the special rivalry with Flip Goodspeed and Scott Mansager. As far as friendships go, there are too many to count—they are all quality people.

To my parents and sister, without their love and guidance, I could never have achieved this honor. I am so happy to share this award with my wife, Elizabeth.