ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF SPORTS AND GAMES

(In 5 Vol.)

Arun Kumar Tyagi
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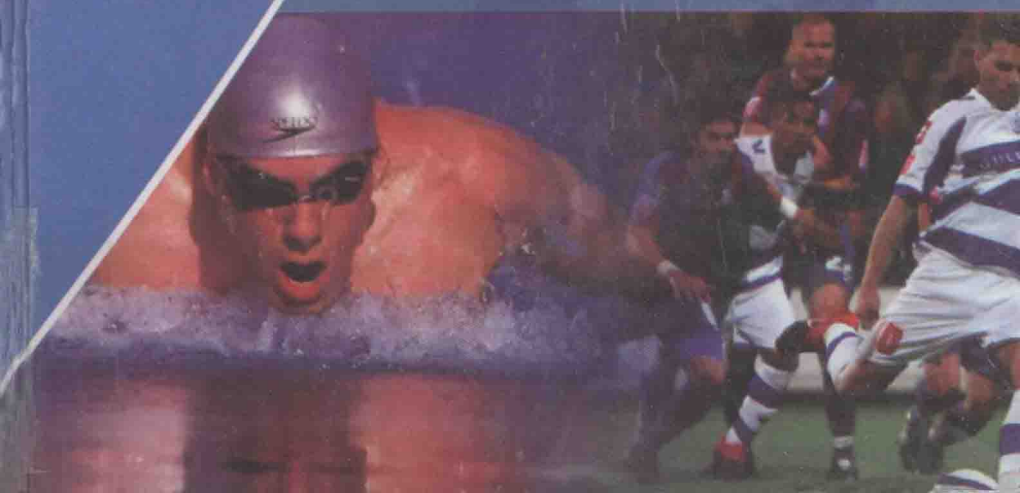

Encyclopaedia of Sports and Games

(IN 5 VOLS.)

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TENNIS

VOL. II

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INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY OF TENNIS

The history of tennis dates back several thousand years. The game was first created by European monks to be played for entertainment purposes during religious ceremonies. To begin with, the ball was hit with the hand. Soon the leather glove came into existence. This was soon replaced with an adaptive handle for effective hitting and serving of the ball.

Tennis is a sport played between two players (singles) or between two teams of two players each (doubles). Each player uses a strung racquet to strike a hollow rubber ball covered with felt over a net into the opponent's court.

The modern game of tennis originated in the United Kingdom in the late 19th century as "lawn tennis" which has heavy connections to various field/lawn games as well as to the ancient game of real tennis. After its creation, tennis spread throughout the upper-class English-speaking population before spreading around the world. Tennis is an Olympic sport and is played at all levels of society at all ages. The sport can be played by anyone who can hold a racket, including people in wheelchairs. In the United States, there is a collegiate circuit organized by the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

The rules of tennis have changed very little since the 1890s. Two exceptions are that from 1908 to 1960 the server had to keep one foot on the ground at all times, and then the adoption of the tie-break in the 1970s. A recent addition to professional tennis has been the adoption of electronic review technology coupled with a point challenge system, which allows a player to challenge the line (or chair) umpire's call of a point.

Tennis enjoys millions of recreational players and is also a hugely popular worldwide spectator sport, especially the four Grand Slam tournaments (sometimes referred to as the "majors"): the Australian Open, the French Open, Wimbledon, and the US Open.

Tennis as the modern sport can be dated to two separate roots. Between 1859 and 1863, Major Harry Gem and his friend Augurio Perera developed a game that combined elements of rackets and the Basque ball game pelota, which they played on Perera's croquet lawn in Birmingham, United Kingdom. In 1872, along with two local doctors, they founded the world's first tennis club in Leamington Spa. The Courier of July 23, 1884 recorded one of the first tennis tournaments, held in the grounds of Shrubland Hall.

In December 1873, Major Walter Clopton Wingfield designed and patented a similar game — which he called sphairistike, from ancient Greek meaning "skill at playing at ball"), and was soon known simply as "sticky" — for the amusement of his guests at a garden party on his estate of Nantclwyd, in Llanelidan, Wales. He likely based his game on the evolving sport of outdoor tennis including real tennis. According to some tennis historians, modern tennis terminology also derives from this period, as Wingfield borrowed both the name and

much of the French vocabulary of real tennis and applied them to his new game.

Lawn tennis in the U.S., 1887The first championships at Wimbledon in London were played in 1877. The first Championships culminated a significant debate on how to standardize the rules.

In America in 1874 Mary Ewing Outerbridge, a young socialite, returned from Bermuda where she met Major Wingfield. She laid out a tennis court at the Staten Island Cricket Club in New Brighton Staten Island, New York. The exact location of the club was under what is now the Staten Island Ferry terminal. The first American National tournament in 1880 was played there. An Englishman named O.E Woodhouse won the singles match. There was also a doubles match which was won by a local pair. There were different rules at each club. The ball in Boston was larger than the one normally used in NY. On May 21, 1881, the United States National Lawn Tennis Association (now the United States Tennis Association) was formed to standardize the rules and organize competitions. The U.S. National Men's Singles Championship, now the US Open, was first held in 1881 at Newport, Rhode Island. The U.S. National Women's Singles Championships were first held in 1887. Tennis was also popular in France, where the French Open dates to 1891. Thus, Wimbledon, the US Open, the French Open, and the Australian Open (dating to 1905) became and have remained the most prestigious events in tennis. Together these four events are called the Majors or Slams (a term borrowed from bridge rather than baseball).

The comprehensive International Lawn Tennis Federation, now known as the International Tennis

Federation, rules promulgated in 1924 have remained remarkably stable in the ensuing eighty years, the one major change being the addition of the tie-break system designed by James Van Alen. That same year, tennis withdrew from the Olympics after the 1924 Games but returned 60 years later as a 21-and-under demonstration event in 1984. This reinstatement was credited by the efforts by the then ITF President Philippe Chatrier, ITF General Secretary David Gray and ITF Vice President Pablo Llorens, and support from IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch. The success of the event was overwhelming and the IOC decided to reintroduce tennis as a full medal sport at Seoul in 1988.

The Davis Cup, an annual competition between men's national teams, dates to 1900. The analogous competition for women's national teams, the Fed Cup, was founded as the Federation Cup in 1963 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the ITF.

In 1926, promoter C.C. Pyle established the first professional tennis tour with a group of American and French tennis players playing exhibition matches to paying audiences. The most notable of these early professionals were the American Vinnie Richards and the Frenchwoman Suzanne Lenglen. Once a player turned pro he or she could not compete in the major (amateur) tournaments.

In 1968, commercial pressures and rumors of some amateurs taking money under the table led to the abandonment of this distinction, inaugurating the open era, in which all players could compete in all tournaments, and top players were able to make their living from tennis. With the beginning of the open era,

the establishment of an international professional tennis circuit, and revenues from the sale of television rights, tennis's popularity has spread worldwide, and the sport has shed its upper/middle-class English-speaking image (although it is acknowledged that this stereotype still exists).

In 1954, Van Alen founded the International Tennis Hall of Fame, a non-profit museum in Newport, Rhode Island. The building contains a large collection of tennis memorabilia as well as a hall of fame honoring prominent members and tennis players from all over the world. Each year, a grass-court tournament and an induction ceremony honoring new Hall of Fame members are hosted on its grounds.

Equipment

Tennis Technology

Part of the appeal of tennis stems from the simplicity of equipment required for play. Beginners need only a racquet and balls.

Racquets

The tennis racquet comprises a handle and neck joining a roughly circular frame that holds an array of tightly pulled strings. For the first century of the modern game, racquets were of wood and of standard size, and strings were of animal gut. Laminated wood construction yielded more strength in rackets used through most of the 20th century until first metal and then composites of carbon graphite, ceramics, and lighter metals such as titanium were introduced. These stronger materials enabled the production of oversized rackets that yielded yet more power. Meanwhile technology led

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