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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

PANCHO'S RACKET  
AND THE LONG ROAD TO PROFESSIONAL TENNIS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN HISTORY

BY

GREGORY ISAAC RUTH

CHICAGO, IL

DECEMBER 2017

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Three historians helped to make this study possible. Timothy Gilfoyle supervised my work with great skill. He gave me breathing room to research, write, and rewrite. When he finally received a completed draft, he turned that writing around with the speed and thoroughness of a seasoned editor. Tim's own hunger for scholarship also served as a model for how a historian should act. I'll always cherish the conversations we shared over Metropolis coffee—topics that ranged far and wide across historical subjects and contemporary happenings.

I came to Loyola University Chicago to study the environmental history of cities with the best urban historians in the country. That changed when I took Elliott Gorn's seminar where I wrote the first part of this project. From the beginning, Elliott discouraged me from studying sports. Given how long it took to assemble enough archival material to write this project, he made his point. His guidance for what makes a good story and how to tell it nonetheless helped me conceptualize this project.

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many requests. The rest of the history faculty, many of whom I took courses from and most of whom I learned from, showed what a department rich in scholarship and committed to teaching looks like. Much the same can be said for my graduate student colleagues, whose own projects and teaching encouraged me throughout our time together.

Original research at more than three dozen archives and records centers meant that I spent a great deal of time outside of Chicago and a great deal of time with archivists. Most of them ably facilitated my research, but Kristin Kay and her staff at UMass Amherst Libraries deserve special recognition for going above and beyond during my many days there. Research libraries and repositories seldom support work on sports, and those few that do deserve a share of credit for this project.

The biggest share of credit for this project, though, rests with my family. My parents, Harry and Jenny Ruth, read to me as a kid, supported my switch of majors in college, and encouraged me to leave a good paying job in order to attend graduate school. They are wonderful people, and I am very fortunate to be their son.

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For Courtney.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAGBL	All American Girl's Baseball League
ALETC	All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club
ABA	American Basketball Association
AFL	American Football League
ATA	American Tennis Association
ATP	Association of Tennis Professionals
ALTA	Australian Lawn Tennis Association
BLTA	British Lawn Tennis Association
CYA	California Youth Authority
CDA	Community Development Association
GGOH	Greg Gonzales Oral History
ILTF	International Lawn Tennis Federation
IMG	International Management Group
IOC	International Olympic Committee
IPTA	International Professional Tennis Association
ITF	International Tennis Federation
ITHF	International Tennis Hall of Fame
JCRS	Joint Committee on Recreational Survey of Federal Lands
LCA	Licensing Corporation of America



LATC	Los Angeles Tennis Club
MLBPA	Major Leagues Baseball Players Association
MCA	Music Corporation of America
NBA	National Basketball Association
NCAA	National Collegiate Athletic Association
NFL	National Football League
OEO	Office of Economic Opportunity
PGOH	Pancho Gonzales Oral History
PSLTA	Pacific States Lawn Tennis Association
PAL	Police Athletic League
PLTA	Professional Lawn Tennis Association
RFC	Reconstruction Finance Corporation
SCTA	Southern California Tennis Association
TVA	Tennessee Valley Authority
USLTA	United States Lawn Tennis Association
USTA	United States Tennis Association
UFA	Universum Film AG
WITA	Women's International Tennis Association
WITF	Women's International Tennis Federation
WTA	Women's Tennis Association
WCT	World Championship Tennis Tour

## ABSTRACT

Historians have written little on sports in the United States compared to other topics. They have had even less to say about tennis than other popular sports in large part because the original research necessary to complete a full treatment of the history of the game appeared too daunting to undertake. By contrast, this study has made use of over a dozen archival collections around the country, many of which researchers have never used before, to tell the story of how tennis went from an amateur sport closely guarded by economic elitists and cultural purists to a professional sport thoroughly democratized and inclusive of individuals regardless of their financial standing or social position. That change connects a variety of heretofore unconnected developments beginning in the French Revolution and ending in the present: European aristocracy and Continental cultural exports; amateur athletic associations in cities and suburban country clubs; New Deal programs and urban recreational reform; the impact of World War II on the careers of global athletes; postwar prosperity in the United States and the growth of America's entertainment economy; race, ethnicity, and class in twentieth century athletics; cultural competition during the Cold War; tax policy and the globalization of professional sports; the cultural production of celebrity athletes; professional sports touring and stadium construction; as well as masculinity, femininity and gay and transgender athletes. Dozens of characters, both notorious and obscure, make this story as much about people as about social processes and places. Many of the important stops along the way from amateur to professional tennis took place in the United States, but given the global popularity of the game, this study takes a transnational perspective to analyze the professionalization of this world sport.

## INTRODUCTION

### THE LONG ROAD TO PROFESSIONAL TENNIS

The scoreboard at the U.S. National Championships in August 1949 read 16-18, 2-6, 6-1, 6-2, 5-4. After more than four sets and more than four hours of grueling play at the West Side Tennis Club in Forest Hills, New York, veteran Ted Schroeder and the twenty-one-year-old Richard “Pancho” Gonzales were locked in a winner-take-all fifth set to decide the best amateur tennis player in the world. While the youthful Gonzales reigned as the current U.S. champion—owning the title after his breakout victory the previous year—Schroeder remained the favorite in this clash. He had dominated Gonzales in their previous head-to-head matches. He was fresh off a recent Wimbledon title won in England a month earlier. He hungered for the crown after he had skipped the U.S. Championship the previous year. The work he did at his refrigerator business and the time he wanted to spend with his family took precedence. Schroeder was the ideal amateur.

The combatants were a contrast in style off and on the court. Schroeder lived the life of an all-American hero. He hailed from the California coast, where his middle-class family ran a local refrigerator business. He looked like the veterans on morale posters from World War II. His blond hair sat tightly cropped against his angular jaw and high cheekbones. Tanned from the sun but not too dark, he possessed naturally lean and muscled limbs without giving the impression of having worked at it. In fact, he emphasized how little time he spent on the court. He was a small business owner and a family man, after all. He and his lovely wife Brenda had two young

children, whom both parents hoped would carry on the family business when they were old enough. Their attractive two-bedroom house sat on a modest suburban street. Schroeder spent most of his time at work or at home. He played tennis well, but just for fun.

Gonzales, by contrast, was just barely older than a teenager. He literally carried the scars from a troubled urban adolescence on his face. His Mexican parents had fled revolutionary Mexico separately and met in the barrios of East Los Angeles. There they worked hard as farmers, seamstresses, and hired hands in the fledgling Hollywood movie studios. They raised four children in different apartments throughout the ethnic communities of Southern California. They knew the intolerances their children would face from neighbors and municipal authorities because they lived and continued to live a life of struggle. They were not surprised when their oldest son Richard, whom everyone called Pancho after the machismo Mexican-American “Pachuco” youths, encountered trouble with the truant officer at his junior high school. They were surprised and troubled when he came home one day with a gash across his face that resembled a knife wound. A string of burglaries put the teenaged Gonzales before a local delinquency court, where the presiding judge removed him from parent custody and placed him in a notorious youth prison hundreds of miles away. Released only to serve in World War II, how could this juvenile delinquent become the standard bearer for U.S. tennis?

Back on the manicured lawns of the Forest Hills Tennis Club, Gonzales knuckled down and began to fight out of a two sets to love deficit. Only four players in the sixty-year history of tennis in America had made such a comeback. None ever did it as a defending titleholder of a major amateur championship. This particular tournament, the U.S. Nationals, made the pressure even more palpable. The fifty thousand spectators far exceeded that of most of the other summer

tennis tournaments combined. Unlike the baseball bleachers, the football stands, or coliseum seats of America's major cities, viewers at Forest Hills sat and walked around the grass courts right next to the competing players. Journalists too fluttered around the edges of the court in numbers not seen at any other tennis match.

The architecture and very history of the Forest Hills Tennis Club added to the millstone on the players' shoulders. Built in the 1881, this New York mainstay was the cradle of tennis in the United States. The normal exclusivity of Forest Hills put the class differences between the players on the court and the members in the clubhouse into sharpest relief. Players like Gonzales could not afford to stay in a hotel; they relied on patronage to eat and sleep near the Forest Hills courts. Officials from the International Lawn Tennis Federation, the United States Lawn Tennis Association (USLTA), and the sixteen geographic sections of the USLTA all watched the matches, ready to decide which players they would continue to sponsor and which players would be put out to pasture. To hold both the trophy and the respect of the United States Lawn Tennis Association, Gonzales needed to overcome youth, self-doubts, sports history, as well as the expectations of failure from fans and the tennis establishment. He needed to serve out the match.<sup>1</sup>

His own body's ability to move in the patterns of play that made up the game of tennis was the only thing Gonzales ever relied upon. As an adolescent, other boys mocked him for his size, another reason for the Pancho nickname he carried with him from youth. In adolescence, his

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<sup>1</sup> Steve Snyder, "Gonzales Proves He Is Top Net Amateur," *Olean Times Herald*, September 6, 1949, p. 10; Pancho Gonzales and Cy Rice, *Man With a Racket: The Autobiography of Pancho Gonzales* (New York: A.S. Barnes and Co., 1959), 90-92. Gonzales preferred ending his name with an s rather than the z favored by Chicano activists who also called him Ricardo and used his middle name of Alonso rather than Pancho, as he was popularly called. The spelling used here will reflect the time and tenor of the source.

210 pounds of weight filled out across a six-foot four-inch frame. His arms were long, his quadriceps, hamstrings, and glutes taut, his calves like the trunks of a hardwood, his hair black and wavy, and his skin dark. He moved quickly across the court with a surprisingly low center of gravity. He could change directions in a split-second after returning a shot by driving the ball of one of his size-twelve feet against the surface of the court, rotating his hips, planting his opposite foot, and pushing off with explosive force to recover to the middle hash-mark of the court. His quick movement often surprised spectators and opponents. The ferocity of the pace of the ball moving from one of Gonzales's serves, however, filled opponents with dread and spectators with awe. He was ready should his opponent return the serve.

Most of this happened in too short a time for the gallery to see. Their view of Gonzales was obscured.<sup>2</sup> Gonzales broke Schroeder's serve at 4-4 in the fifth set, raising the stakes for the longest championship match in United States tennis history. A tense game ensued. A far cry from a stoic competition, 13,000 mostly East Coast fans chattered loudly between points. A routine hold for the strongest server in the game turned into an opportunity to look past the points at hand and to the significance riding on the match. As amateurs, neither player would receive any prize money for the victory; however, the chance for tennis to become the livelihood of one of the two players did rest on the server's shoulders. Bobby Riggs, the promoter of the professional tennis tour, waited in the wings to sign Schroeder to a \$75,000 contract to play the reigning professional champion, Jack Kramer, in a one-hundred plus match barnstorming circuit across the U.S. and the rest of the world. Trailing early in the game through a double-fault, an

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<sup>2</sup> Gayle Talbot, "Pancho Gonzales Defeats Schroeder for Net Title," *Hagerstown Morning Herald*, September 6, 1949, p. 11.

unforced error, and striking a shot that would have fallen out, Gonzales leveled the game at deuce through a combination of big serves and Schroeder errors. Another winner, and Gonzales stood at match point. With his opponent in deep concentration across the net, Gonzales kissed his racquet before delivering one final serve and charging to the net. Schroeder swung for a down-the-line forehand that at first appeared in as a puff of chalk-dust floated into the air. A linesman called the shot out, however, and the young Mexican-American had upset the best laid plans of the amateur and professional tennis promoters. Even commentator Vin Scully could hardly believe his eyes, speaking in a surprised and slightly derogatory tone: “If you’re still not sure, we thought we’d show you the shot over again...Keep your eyes on the right side-line. Convinced? Can’t believe that call, can you?” The excuses to justify Gonzales’s victory began before the players reached the locker room.<sup>3</sup>

Half a century after Gonzales played Forest Hills as an amateur tennis player for the last time, more spectators attend the United States Tennis Championships held at Flushing Meadows, New York, than any other annually contested sporting event in the world.<sup>4</sup> The tournament is the high-water mark on the entertainment calendar of the world’s most cosmopolitan city. Despite the unrivaled popularity of the two-week-long tournament, few of the hundreds of thousands of fans who crowd the United States Tennis Association (USTA) Billie Jean King National Tennis

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<sup>3</sup> Pancho Gonzales Interview, Oral History Collection, International Tennis Hall of Fame (ITHF), Newport, Rhode Island; Bud Collins, *History of Tennis: An Authoritative Encyclopedia and Record Book* (Chicago: New Chapter Press, 2010), 454-64; Oscar Fraley, “Kramer Professes Sorrow at Schroeder’s Setback, though He Gains \$50,000,” *Reno News*, September 11, 1949, p. 15; Gonzales *Man With a Racket*, 93-97; *The Big Moment*, “Sports Newsreel from Hearst Metrotone—with Bug Palmer,” Metrotone Collection, Movies and Television Division, Library of Congress.

<sup>4</sup> Rob Steen, *Floodlights and Touchlines: A History of Spectator Sport* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 33-37.

Center know anything about the history of the sport in America. And why should they? Those whose job it is to write that story have largely missed the major points or have chosen simply to focus on other subjects.

The standard accounts of the professionalization of tennis are those written by sports journalists filled with rich detail on the years immediately leading up to the summer tournaments of 1968 when amateur players and professional players first competed openly in famous events like Wimbledon. These accounts then go on to follow important moments over the next decade or two, where “Open Tennis” worked out the difficulties that went along with becoming the last of the world’s major sports to allow unfettered competition between amateurs and professionals.<sup>5</sup> Some sports writers tend to focus on a particular match or particular player—often times with great perception but without a view to how and why tennis moved from an amateur to a professional sport.<sup>6</sup> Others tend to look at tennis from a literary point of view and thus forgo archival research in favor of published fiction and nonfiction accounts that shed light on the meaning of the sport.<sup>7</sup> In a similar vein, great novelists have made the sport of tennis a setting to explore broader themes such as entertainment and capitalist competition—the best recent

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<sup>5</sup> Richard Evans, *Open Tennis, 1968-1988: The Players, the Politics, the Pressure, the Passions, and the Great Matches* (New York: Viking, 1989); Herbert Warren Wind, *Game, Set, and Match: The Tennis Boom of the 1960s and 70s* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1969).

<sup>6</sup> John McPhee, *Levels of the Game* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1969); Marshall Jon Fischer, *A Terrible Splendor: Three Extraordinary Men, A World Poised for War, and the Greatest Tennis Match Ever Played* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2009); Frank Deford, *Big Bill Tilden: The Triumphs and the Tragedy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976).

<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth Wilson, *Love Game: A History of Tennis from Victorian Pastime to Global Phenomenon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).



example being David Foster Wallace's magnum opus *Infinite Jest*.<sup>8</sup> The few professional historians who have studied tennis have tended to publish work with relatively narrow focus: the European origins of the game; the celebration of amateurism in the elite clubs and associations on the American Eastern Seaboard; the events that immediately led up to the first "Open" Wimbledon Championship in 1968; the impact that the Billie Jean King versus Bobby Riggs 1973 Battle of the Sexes match had on women's sports in late twentieth-century America; how Arthur Ashe used his status as a tennis champion to become a civil rights leader.<sup>9</sup>

By contrast, "Pancho's Racket" is a historian's view with a wider and a longer look at the professionalization of tennis. It is not the biography of a particular player; it is the narrated analysis of how tennis went from a cloistered amateur game to a more inclusive and thoroughly professionalized international sport. Explaining that means telling the individual yet interlocking stories of dozens of players, promoters, associations, agents, social policies, and sporting venues across the twentieth century and around the world.

In his masterful three-volume social history of African American athletes, the late tennis champion and world humanitarian Arthur Ashe used the symbol of the "road" to explain the struggles African Americans endured as part of the sporting tradition of the United States.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> David Foster Wallace, *Infinite Jest* (Boston: Back Bay Books, 2006), 3-4, passim.

<sup>9</sup> Heiner Gillmeister, *Tennis: A Cultural History* (London: Leicester University Press, 1998); E. Digby Baltzell, *Sporting Gentlemen: Men's Tennis from the Age of Honor to the Cult of the Superstar* (New York: The Free Press, 1995); Kevin Jeffreys, "The Triumph of Professionalism: The Road to 1968," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 26, no. 15 (2009): 2253-69; Susan Ware, *Game, Set, Match: Billie Jean King and the Revolution in Women's Sports* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Eric Allen Hall, *Arthur Ashe: Tennis and Justice in the Civil Rights Era* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> Arthur Ashe, *A Hard Road to Glory: A History of the African American Athlete, 1619-1918* (New York: Amistad Press, 1993); Arthur Ashe, *A Hard Road to Glory: A History of the African American Athlete, 1919-1945* (New

Ashe's road is an apt metaphor for understanding the interplay of race and sport in America, but it is also more than that. The touring professionals who drove the most to arrive at Open Tennis literally spent most of their careers on the road because amateur officials barred them from playing the courts that hosted the sport's most prestigious tournaments. "Pancho's Racket" follows the important stops they took to get to the professional game as it is played today.

The genesis of lawn tennis as a sport first and foremost for women is the subject of chapter one of this study. The large number of women who played tennis when compared to other sports meant that, statistically speaking, the first professional tennis player of any influence stood a good chance of being a woman. In her 1926 American tour, the Frenchwoman Suzanne Lenglen set a pattern for barnstorming professional tennis that continued until the game fully opened to amateur and professional players in 1968.

The movement of tennis from East Coast clubs to Southern California is the topic addressed in chapter two. Hailing from genteel and wealthy backgrounds, the men who founded the early tennis clubs that formed the United States Lawn Tennis Association believed in absolute amateurism within the sport they sought to control. At the same time, they enforced their code of amateurism selectively across the country. This allowed affiliated tennis clubs in different areas of the country freedom to promulgate their own junior development programs outside of the control of the national office. The best of these juniors turned professional in the late 1930s and 1940s. .

Chapter three places the evolution of professional tennis firmly in the twentieth-century American city and moves alongside the work of urban historians and sports historians who describe popular amusements, urban recreation, and athletics as primarily an urban phenomenon.<sup>11</sup> The New Deal transformed tennis at its grassroots. City space was reorganized during the 1930s when broad-based efforts to manage urban youth aided in the evolution and partial democratization of elite amateur sports to classes and ethnic groups who previously thought little about such competitions. Tennis players of that generation benefited from a recreational revolution that swept America during the first half of the twentieth century. Taken together, these first three chapters form a sort of prequel to professional tennis whereby the amateur origins of the game remained but were eroded through a combination of popular individual players, specious administration on the part of the game's amateur associations, and an influx of new people to the game thanks to infrastructure spending on urban recreation.

Part II of "Pancho's Racket" is a close examination of professional tennis from World War II into the fifties and sixties. Chapter four traces the effects of the recreational revolution on American and international tennis from the late thirties through to the war's conclusion. A whole new generation of American tennis players with names like Bobby Riggs appeared with a view to challenge the amateur rules of the game. The war modified the careers of these players just as the construction of public park courts gave them the opportunity to play the game in the first place, and tennis players, like athletes across the country, joined the American war effort as soldier-entertainers both on the home front and overseas. The increased mobility of people

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<sup>11</sup> Frederic L. Paxson, "The Rise of Sport," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 4 (1917): 143-68; Melvin Adelman, *A Sporting Time: New York City and the Rise of Modern Athletics, 1820-70* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 2; Steven Riess, *City Games: The Evolution of American Urban Society and the Rise of Sports* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 2.

spurred by the war thus created conditions that better suited professional tennis tours than amateur tournaments held in elite private country clubs.

Chapter five picks up that theme of mobility and money in tennis by recounting the barnstorming tennis tours of the fifties. The postwar years saw remarkable changes in living standards, spending habits, family life, gender relations, transportation, housing, race relations, and leisure time, and savvy tennis player-promoters like Jack Kramer recognized that professional tennis could earn a tidy profit if managed correctly. At the same time the nation's economy and infrastructure boomed, a half-dozen tennis professionals led by Kramer drove around the country playing for a new crowd night after night. In so doing, they further popularized the idea of professional tennis players competing openly with amateur tennis players in the minds of people across the United States and around the world.

Much of the burden of the barnstorming tour fell on the World Champion who year after year lived the peripatetic lifestyle of the barnstorming professional. Pancho Gonzales's heritage, if not his personality, made him an enigmatic standard-bearer for professional tennis before 1968. Class background and ethnic identity guided much of Gonzales's life whether he wanted it to or not. His perch at the top of the professional game for a decade also warrants a closer look at his life than that afforded to other characters in these pages. The sixth chapter of this study shows how Gonzales's childhood in Depression-era Los Angeles gave him both opportunities to play tennis not available elsewhere in the country while at the same time his adolescence there branded him as an irascible individual—a stereotype that existed for the entirety of his amateur and professional tennis career. At the same time he solidified his position as the most visible

representative of his sport, Gonzales remained beholden to his tour promoter, his fellow players, and the reality of professional tennis before the sport opened to full competition in 1968.

The final third of this study recounts how professional tennis exploded in commercial popularity right at the moment when the barnstorming professionals of the postwar period could no longer compete at the highest level. Well past his playing prime, Gonzales missed taking advantage of the regular tournament schedule, higher prize money, product sponsorships, and player unions that set professional tennis on the path to becoming a world sport in the seventies. Sports journalists have given a preliminary sketch of the after-effects of Open Tennis beginning in the summer of 1968, but have said little about the long-term and proximate causes of the International Lawn Tennis Federation vote authorizing that change in the spring of 1968.<sup>12</sup> Chapter seven uses well known and untapped sources to go behind the scenes of that important year in sports history. The rest of the chapter examines how old and new stakeholders such as World Championship Tennis owner Lamar Hunt both built upon and departed from the barnstorming tours from the past to adapt to the expanded economic outlook for the sport.

Beginning in the 1960s, a new breed of sports agents led by Mark McCormack and his International Management Group (IMG) made individual athletes into commercial celebrities without rival. The pioneering sports marketing firms such as IMG and Donald Dell's ProServ began with athletes from individual sports such as golf and tennis who made sports into the moneymaking enterprise that is ubiquitous today. That is the subject of chapter eight, which explains how and why they created the most visible of sporting spectacles.

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<sup>12</sup> Evans, *Open Tennis, 1968-1988*, passim.

The most striking of developments actually took place in the most personal of places. With a few important exceptions, commercial sports had long belonged almost exclusively to men until women professionals began playing tennis for money in significant numbers in 1968. Over the next half-decade, women such as Gladys Heldman and Billie Jean King created a tour of their own that rivaled the men's game in popularity and prize money while differing in substance and style. Whereas historians of women's tennis in the seventies emphasize change, the final chapter of this study suggests more continuity than change and more compromise than courage on the part of these women's sports player-promoters.

Tennis, which originated in Britain, grew first on the American Atlantic Coast before moving west, where it found a home along the Pacific. All the while it remained a sport that separated amateur and professional players—at least in the minds of the clubs and associations who ran the game for the first half century of its existence. Government and individual responses to the major upheavals of the Great Depression and World War II greatly undermined the authority of those associations by creating conditions in which a whole new generation of players with social backgrounds different than the men who ran the amateur associations could take up the game. The best of those players held far more liberal views when it came to money in their sport and they shared those views across the country and throughout the world year after year on professional barnstorming tours in the late forties through mid-sixties. The visibility and viability of those tours eventually coaxed reluctant amateur association members to vote to allow the opening of tennis's major tournament venues to professional players in 1968. Almost simultaneously, sports marketers, professional promoters, and sports publishers popularized the game into much the same form that it retains today.

Twenty years after his five-set victory over Schroeder at Forest Hills, Gonzales played an even more grueling match. The All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, which hosted the Wimbledon Championships, had begun allowing professional players such as Gonzales into Wimbledon the year before. In the 1969 Championships, Gonzales made the most of that opportunity. On opening day the veteran professional met the talented Puerto Rican player Charlie Pasarell, fifteen years his junior. Pasarell won the first set 24-22, more games than most matches. The second set went fast to Pasarell. Gonzales refused to quit. He knew how to fight because circumstances had forced him to fight his entire career.<sup>13</sup>

Facing match points, Gonzales managed to break Pasarell's serve and win the third set 16-14. Darkness descended on the court, and the umpire halted play until the next morning. "I went home and I immediately flashed back to Forest Hills and the finals against Ted Schroeder when I lost the first two sets and I tried to say to myself, well if I wasn't nervous then why should I be nervous now," said Gonzales. As the oldest player in the tournament Gonzales certainly had experience, but much of his career was filled with bitter experience. He "enjoyed the competition" but he also continued to play because professional tennis "was still a source of income" much needed.<sup>14</sup>

His effort in the final two sets against Pasarell showed just how much of that history he actually lived. After 111 games and two days of play, Gonzales won his eleventh game in the fifth set to Pasarell's nine games. That two-game margin gave Gonzales the final set 11-9 and the match three sets to two. Five hours of play, 112 games for a first round match, one of 64 first

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<sup>13</sup> Pancho Gonzales Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

round matches, six more rounds to go if Gonzales was to win the Wimbledon Championships.

“I’m one of the fortunate ones to know what a Bill Tilden was like, to know what a Don Budge played like, to know what it was like on the early days of the pro grind, to know what it was like at the beginning of the Open tournaments and to know what it’s like today,” said Gonzales.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.



## CHAPTER ONE

### LAWN TENNIS AND THE LADY SUZANNE LENGLEN

European kings popularized the progenitor of the modern sport of tennis. Court tennis began in continental Europe in the fourteenth century. Sometime before 1400, the game crossed the channel from France to England and grew into a favorite pastime of English aristocrats in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The game spread in popularity as the nobility from emerging nation-states aligned through marriages, treaties, and cultural missions. Nobles would square off on either side of a three-foot-high net that divided a rectangular court seventy feet long by thirty feet wide. The court sat indoors with walls on all sides. A wood paneled floor made for a soft surface for the round felt-covered ball, roughly the size of a plum. Players swung racquets, which were between three and four feet long and woven with string made of cat guts, to generate the force that propelled the ball over the net and against the back or side-walls, or onto the floor on the opponent's side of the court. Before the ball bounced twice on their side of the net, a player would redirect the ball with their oak or maple racquet back over onto the opponent's side of the net. A player earned a point for every failure of his opponent to hit the ball from their side of the net before a second bounce. A stroke into the net would also result in a point for the opposing player.

The nobility and their courtiers referred to court tennis as the "sport of kings" because of the game's popularity with the Bourbon dynasty in wealthy France. That popularity extended beyond aristocrats so that by the early seventeenth century, an estimated 18,000 courts dotted the

French nation. In their love for the game the French stood apart from other countries only in the early date at which they embraced the game. By the second half of the sixteenth century, Italy boasted courts of their own along with professional guilds to instruct the wealthy leaders of Italian city states. Fifty years earlier, France's first well known tennis professional, Pierre Gentil, gave the same sort of instruction to Louis XIII in exchange for annual payment of 500 francs. Gentil belonged to a court tennis professional's guild that by the 1600s stretched back a full two centuries—close to the recorded beginning of the game. The French King Charles IX gave royal blessing to those guilds in 1571 when he issued monopoly protection to the Corporation of Tennis Professionals who, over the following two decades, standardized the game's rules.<sup>1</sup> Since near its inception, then, court tennis played by aristocratic amateurs grew up with professional players willing to share and exhibit their own talents for payment.

The blurred lines between amateurism, professionalism, and aristocracy in the formative years of court tennis gave the game an illicit underground and criminal element. Royals such as Duke of Lorraine, Henry VIII, and the Earl of Essex would strike their lesser or even their equals with palm, ball, or racquet. Verbal abuse proliferated. On rare occasion, disputes on the court led to death. The Italian artist Caravaggio, for example, recreated the violence of his Biblical paintings when he murdered a court tennis partner over an on-court dispute.<sup>2</sup> The tennis court thus became a mock royal court, where aristocrats could mete out rewards and punishments

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<sup>1</sup> Gillmeister, *Tennis: A Cultural History*, 34-38; François Alexandre, "Art du paumier-racquetier et de la paume" in *Les Arts des instruments* (Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1984 [1767-1780]), 34, plate 1-5, Call#f T44.D37, Rare Book Collection, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Delaware; Steen, *Floodlights and Touchlines*, 81-83. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of foreign language sources are by the author.

<sup>2</sup> Steen, *Floodlights and Touchlines*, 83.

while minimizing the political repercussions that accompanied the real day-to-day decisions they made for their realms.

Not surprisingly, European nobility created and kept for themselves most sports prior to the nineteenth century. England famously executed peasants who hunted game on the lord's lands. The means and rights to race horses and chase foxes belonged exclusively to the wealthy and landed. When the everyday people of the seventeenth century threw quoits, hurled weights, or batted and fielded rounders, they did so under the watchful eye of the gentry who understood the cathartic role leisure played in forming social cohesion and avoiding societal anomie. Up until around 1900, sports could not survive without the financial sponsorship of elites because rural people lived too far apart to congregate in numbers substantial enough to stage contests funded by attendee admissions. In London and the few other cities sprinkled throughout England and the European continent, the landed gentry's grip on the leisure activities of the common people loosened. The urban working class wagered on racehorses and fighting cocks, picked champion pugilists in contests of brawn, and washed it all down with ales from local taverns. Away from their social betters, working-class men cherished their amusements and forged a masculine solidarity apart from and over their families.<sup>3</sup>

The new and radical perspectives in the Enlightenment that swept through Europe did not directly break down class barriers in recreation and sport. In fact, as European powers expanded their colonial holdings in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, settlers strove to recreate the social structure they were familiar with by using leisure and games to reinforce the hierarchy in

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<sup>3</sup> Elliott Gorn and Warren Goldstein. *A Brief History of American Sports* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 6-8, 13-17.

much the same way that they had back in Europe.<sup>4</sup> In the seventeenth-century Chesapeake, for example, a rigid class divide between a small number of wealthy tobacco planters and a growing number of indentured servants prompted social unrest that culminated in the class uprising known as Bacon's Rebellion in 1676. In the aftermath of the Rebellion, the tidewater gentry understood that sharing a passion for horse racing and wagering could help them perpetuate their class position and stave off further civil unrest. Their gamble paid off in spades, as they enjoyed a remarkable degree of social stability and consolidation of power during much of the eighteenth century.<sup>5</sup>

In the eighteenth century Atlantic world, where people's leisure time was largely shaped by patriarchy and aristocracy, one of the most serious challenges to these old orders literally played out on the court tennis court. The calls for liberty, equality, and fraternity that swept revolutionary France in 1789 found clear expression on the very tennis court where Louis XVI and the leading nobility of the First Estates swung their racquets. After having found the doors barred to their entry by the king and his noble allies, members of the Third Estate representing nearly the entire population of France took over the king's court on July 20, 1789, where they drafted The Tennis Court Oath, the manifesto outlining the political principles of what became the French Revolution.<sup>6</sup> In a profound moment of historical irony, the sport most associated with

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 21-23.

<sup>5</sup> T.H. Breen, "Horses and Gentlemen: The Cultural Significance of Gambling among the Gentry of Virginia," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (April, 1977): 239-57.

<sup>6</sup> *Assemblée Nationale Constituante, Extrait du Procès-verbal de l'Assemblée nationale: Du Samedi 20 Juin 1789* (Paris: Baudouin, 1789), no pagination, no Call#, Rare Book Room, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Delaware.

monarchical and aristocratic power and privilege served as the setting for the radicalism that most undermined the power and privilege of monarchies throughout the Atlantic world.

A second and in many ways more epochal revolution further eroded the aristocratic stranglehold that gripped court tennis and other sports in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Industrialization, taking root first in eighteenth-century Britain, and then in America and continental Europe, catalyzed the popularity of sports with a growing suburban and urban working class. The specialization of labor, a hallmark of the industrial revolution, bled into athletics where just as workers became increasingly skilled in fewer and fewer tasks, so too athletes became more and more skilled in the rather limited skills of the one game they chose to play.<sup>7</sup> For aristocrats whose wide-sampling of leisure activities marked their elite social status, the focus on one sporting activity to the exclusion of all others smacked of class heresy. That reluctance on the part of elites thus allowed some working-class men with far less time to spare for training to become widely regarded champions in sports such as boxing, running, and football in the first half of the nineteenth century. Class conflict continued to underpin sports throughout the nineteenth century, however, and with the diffusion of Victorian culture throughout the British Empire and America during the second half of the nineteenth century, a whole host of new sports developed by and reserved for elites arose. Croquet, polo, and lawn tennis were three sports that began on the private leisure grounds of British lords and ladies.<sup>8</sup> Of the three, only lawn tennis became available to the middle and working classes—and then only after three-

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<sup>7</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 305-6.

<sup>8</sup> Steen, *Floodlights and Touchlines*, 79-81, 90.

quarters of a century and a third revolution—the subject of a later chapter. In the interim, the sport of tennis went green.

The first game of lawn tennis took place on the expansive green lawns of a Welsh country estate in the late summer months of 1873. Major Walter Clopton Wingfield patented his game in February 1874 with a rhomboidal rather than rectangular court demarcated by taped lines and a triangular net strung between two posts hammered into the ground at a distance of twenty-one feet apart. His patent proposed the spread of the game throughout the British Isles, and he purported that his new design took tennis outdoors for the first time and thus “placed within the reach of all” a game that only Europe’s wealthiest had previously enjoyed. His patent approved, Wingfield wrote the earliest tennis rulebook, where in that pamphlet’s second and third editions, he changed the name of the game to “sphairistikè” before he finally settled on calling it lawn tennis in the fourth edition. In addition to patenting, writing the first rules, and titling the game, Wingfield produced the first pieces of tennis equipment for commercial consumption. His kits came in a wooden box large enough to fit four racquets, a net, two net posts, two tennis balls, and a rule book. Favorable press coverage helped Wingfield sell over a thousand of his tennis sets in the first year.<sup>9</sup> Britain’s colonial possessions meant the game, like cricket, would spread quickly to most of the globe.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Walter Clopton Wingfield, A Portable Tennis Court for Playing Tennis, British Patent No. 685 filed February 23, 1874, and provisionally issued February 24, 1874, Series 3, Subject Files, Oversize 6, Folder Patent: “A new and Improved Portable Court for Plying the Ancient Game of Tennis,” William T. Fischer Collection, St. John’s College, Queens Campus; Selden Cale, “A Short History of Tennis in America and England,” typescript, p. 1-2, Works Progress Administration Collection, Box A125, Folder Illinois Sports, Library of Congress (LOC) Manuscripts Division.

<sup>10</sup> C.R.L. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (Raleigh-Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 153; “Lawn Tennis in the Bahamas,” *American Lawn Tennis* 2, no. 1 (April 15, 1908), 5.

The ways the game's early players interacted with their racquets revealed the earlier roots of lawn tennis and its subsequent spread after 1874. During the first few years of the sport, most lawn tennis players held their racquets with a continental grip, which allowed for both forehand and backhand strokes without moving the hand position of the index-finger knuckle-pad on the second bevel of the racquet's handle.<sup>11</sup> The grip's name reflects the antecedents to the British lawn tennis found in the games of racquets and court tennis originating on the European continent. Played mainly in France, these games required participants to execute strokes off a wall or close to the ground, therefore necessitating a grip that positioned the racquet at such an angle so as to not scrape the ground.<sup>12</sup>

Like the physical racquet, the early manufacture of tennis balls made plain the origins of the global spread of tennis in British colonialism. The felt and stitching of the ball were all white. The cost of the balls prohibited all but the ruling class from purchasing them. The balls even carried names like the "Hard Court" ball that signified where a player should play and the "Demon Ball" that signified what kind of player should hit with them. The manufacturers made those linkages between British colonialism and British sports explicit in an advertisement for Slazenger's "Colonial Ball" made specifically for humid conditions in places such as "India, Australasia, Africa, and South America, and indeed all Countries situated at a great distance from where the Ball is made, and where extremes of temperature have to be contended with....Its reputation, however, is world-wide, and it is an admitted fact that our Colonial Ball will retain its

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<sup>11</sup> The discussion of grips and the analysis of tennis mechanics, stroke production, play, and strategy comes from the author's dozen years of experience teaching tennis.

<sup>12</sup> Gillmeister, *Tennis: A Cultural History*, 34-38.

resiliency and wear longer than any other Ball produced.”<sup>13</sup> The players themselves hoped the same could be said for their colonies.

The British Empire did not include the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century, but during those decades cultural exchange remained strong. As the ranks of the middle class swelled in Victorian America, a tension between a belief in personal industriousness and the desire of members of the middle class to define their identities as separate from the growing urban working class became more pronounced. Urban and rural recreation, restorative practices, and leisure were major avenues in which people could promote their class distinctiveness. Prior to the Civil War, most Americans never ventured much beyond their local county seat. The improved transportation network and homestead legislation passed during the war stimulated settlement west of the Mississippi River. More importantly, travelers west brought back fantastic stories of the wonders of the frontier to share with people living in the Midwest and the East. These stories in turn encouraged the growing middle class to travel on the developed rail-lines to sites of natural beauty and a burgeoning network of camps and resorts in scenic locales. The American vacation was born.<sup>14</sup>

In the cities, the Gilded Age and Progressive Era were moments for the first massive reorientation of the nation’s recreation space by newly trained planning experts. Frederick Law Olmsted, the era’s foremost landscape architect, designed America’s most famous urban leisure ground in New York City. Occupying 843 acres of Manhattan real estate, Central Park embodied

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<sup>13</sup> Advertisement for Slazengers Tennis Balls, *Slazengers Catalogue* (London: Slazengers Ltd., 1914), 19. Available at <http://jimstennis.com/contextRoot/html/bookMagCollection5/bookMag.html> (accessed September 18, 2015).

<sup>14</sup> Cindy Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 9-10, 67.



the growing importance urban planners, municipal reformers, and city residents alike assigned to restorative and open space in ever more crowded cities. Moreover, urban parks could mirror class relationships found in neighborhoods, the workplace, and all walks of life. Central Park itself featured no fewer than four separate entrances, each for a different rank of person entering the park. In Chicago special promenading thoroughfares and private beaches were designated for the city's elites, while the city did not have a public swimming area along the lake until Lincoln Park opened one in 1895. The city center of Denver, the boomtown of the mountains, featured wide walking paths for the conspicuous walking of the city's new money merchants. In the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century, cities from Boston to Cleveland, and Kansas City to Los Angeles increased their park land by up to 600 percent, a massive reorientation of space catalyzed by a burgeoning middle class interested in assuming some of the authority to plan and the pleasures to play previously enjoyed only by elites.<sup>15</sup> Within the cities themselves, parks simultaneously met the leisure needs of everyone and also reminded everyone of their particular position in society.

In a far more discreet way, urban elites had long hidden themselves away in private men's clubs. In the first third of the nineteenth century, private men's clubs usually took the form of militia companies. Some exceptions, such as New York City's Union Club, were more social in nature. Beginning in the 1840s and 1850s, cricket clubs sprouted along major thoroughfares

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<sup>15</sup> Burton Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1978), 59-60; Roy Rosenzweig, *The Park and the People: New York's Central Park* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 196, 199; Perry Duis, *Challenging Chicago: Coping with Everyday Life, 1837-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 15, 177; William Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 248-49, 252; Peter Schmitt, *Back to Nature: The Arcadian Myth in Urban America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 4, 70.

and in wealthy pockets of cities such as Boston, Philadelphia, and New York. In these cities and secondary cities such as Chicago, baseball also grew in popularity, especially with the cadres of clerks and manual laborers who formed clubs and leagues comprised wholly of white-collar workers and mechanics.<sup>16</sup> Shooting and hunting clubs such as the New York Sporting Association had origins in the antebellum years, but by the late nineteenth century, game was increasingly scarce in all but the farthest afield areas of the country, leaving wealthy men with little alternative but to seek other recreational outlets.<sup>17</sup> These clubs shared a fondness for sport, they helped to reinforce male solidarity, and they expressed the awareness of class boundaries within urbanizing America. They also exposed the physical limits of recreation in the city.

Genteel resorts such as White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, and Newport, Rhode Island, recreated and even enhanced class solidarity among the wealthy and socially connected when these people traveled away from home. Moreover, while most of the social clubs and workplaces in Eastern cities practiced rigid gender segregation, resorts brought women and men into daily contact on the croquet pitch, in the mineral spring, and on the dance floor. Starting around the turn of the century and continuing through to the Great Depression, many members of the urban working class increasingly looked to recreation outside the city in addition to the amusements they enjoyed within. Recent immigrants and African Americans also considered rural vacations viable, either by camping or renting a room in an inexpensive boarding house. The oldest and most established resorts remained firmly in the hands of the upper and middle-

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<sup>16</sup> Stuart Blumin, *The Emergence of the Middle Class Social Experience in the American City, 1760-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 207-8, 213-4.

<sup>17</sup> Howard Mumford Jones, *The Age of Energy: Varieties of American Experience, 1865-1915* (New York: The Viking Press, 1971), 319.

class elites, a grip that tightened when the Depression eliminated the little extra income most Americans relied upon to visit an attraction.<sup>18</sup>

The same decades that witnessed the growth of scenic urban parks, secluded elite resorts, and middle-class vacations also saw a remarkable upswing in betting and games of chance. The Gilded Age gambler shot pool, rolled roulette, blew dice, and flipped cards, all the while pursuing a pay-off through what historian Jackson Lears identified “providential arrangements of rewards and punishments” not unlike the creed espoused by the era’s most notorious robber barons.<sup>19</sup> In growing cities, gambling dens catered to men of all classes. Blueblood resorts also indulged this ethos by building casinos and race tracks that catered to the wealthy people’s appetites for cash and chance. In the millionaire’s playground of Newport, Rhode Island, for example, craftsmen laid the last shingle on the magnificent Newport Casino in the summer of 1880, with the gaming tables opening to immediate acclaim. There the country’s wealthiest men and women threw money hand over fist decade after decade until the music finally slowed with the onset of the Great Depression.<sup>20</sup>

At the same time that games of chance proliferated, a countervailing trend that championed games of skill took shape. Mastery of mind and body through vigorous exercise had origins in religious convictions such as the “muscular Christian” tradition that began in England during the first decades of the nineteenth century before making it to America during the Civil

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<sup>18</sup> Aron, *Working at Play*, 91, 206-7, 221-3, 238-40.

<sup>19</sup> Jackson Lears, *Something for Nothing: Luck in America* (New York: Penguin, 2003), 156-8.

<sup>20</sup> *1880 Annual Report*, Untitled Cart Box, Folder 1.1, Newport Casino Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; *1929 Annual Report*, Untitled Cart Box, Folder 1.1, Newport Casino Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

War and in the post-bellum years. No reformer espoused exercise for everyone more vigorously than Diclesian Lewis, who, during the 1860s and 1870s, championed a “New Gymnastics” with men and women alike stretching limbs, grasping rings, lifting wooden dumbbells, and swinging Indian clubs. Exercise advocates suggested that team sports such as football instilled young white-collar workers with industrious habits that led to a more productive workplace. Children too were encouraged to participate in structured play so that they could learn what it meant to be an American. Living in squalid tenements, recent immigrants and many in the working class felt the ability for self-betterment through athletics even more strongly. For these young men, individual accomplishment in team sports such as baseball and individual sports such as boxing served as a way to earn respect in a highly localized ethnic community, and, in rare cases, a means of financial improvement for the most talented athletes. Throughout American cities, ethnic athletic clubs proliferated. The farthest reaching consequences of the trend for masculine martialism came in the realm of foreign policy, where leaders of the United States believed outdoor exercise connected to the expansion of an American Empire.<sup>21</sup> Tennis stood within all of these broader contexts of class, gentility, and leisure with one important exception. Women had played the game of lawn tennis from the beginning, and they would continue to play as the game grew in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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<sup>21</sup> Harvey Green, *Fit for America: Health, Fitness, Sport, and American Society* (New York: Pantheon, 1986), 182-91; Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: AntiModernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 108-9; Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2009), 270; Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migration that Made the American People* (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1973), 223-4; Elliott Gorn, *The Manly Art: Bareknuckle Prize Fighting in Urban America* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2010), 108; Thomas Schlereth, *Victorian America: Transformations in Everyday Life, 1876-1915* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991), 220-1; Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 15.

The conventional story of the spread of lawn tennis to America credits a woman. In under a year Major Walter Wingfield's *sphairistikè* had gone out from his Welsh garden party to the British Caribbean with British military officers and colonial officials. In April of 1874, Mary Ewing Outerbridge left Bermuda to return to the United States with a lawn tennis kit that included racquets, balls, net posts, and a net. Stateside, she introduced the game to her brother, A. Emilius Outerbridge, who directed the Staten Island Cricket and Baseball Club and arranged for the marking of a section of the club's grounds for a lawn tennis court. Over the next two decades, the club grew from a dozen or so founders to six hundred members, many of whom competed in the yearly handicapped tennis tournament that compensated for differences in player skills by gifting weaker players a score advantage at the beginning of every game against stronger players. Much like getting strokes in match-play golf based on players' eighteen-hole handicap, handicapped tennis tournaments were the norm rather than the exception in the late nineteenth century because grinding players' ability to the lowest common denominator rather than forcing players to play up to the skills of the best player in their group encouraged the growth of the game during its infancy. Over those same years, America's well-to-do continued to bring back lawn tennis kits from their transatlantic travels and mark off courts on the grounds of their sporting clubs like the Germantown Cricket Club of Philadelphia, while in other instances they built private courts on their private estates.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> R. St. G. Walker, *Annual Reports of the Staten Island Cricket and Base Ball Club for the Year 1882* (New York: Michael & Strauss Printers, February 6, 1893), 1-3, in Series 3, Subject Files, Staten Island Cricket and Base Ball Club, no folder, William T. Fischer Collection, St. John's College, Queens Campus; United States Lawn Tennis Association, *Fifty Years of Lawn Tennis in the United States* (Norwood, MA.: Plimpton Press, 1931), 13, 15.

By 1880 the popularity of the game with the leisure class had risen to a degree that private courts and cricket clubs with a single lawn tennis court could no longer accommodate demand. Tennis-specific clubs began to proliferate in American cities where a great density of wealthy citizens with the disposable capital necessary to purchase and hold large swaths of real estate in the quickly urbanizing United States could be found. This meant most lawn tennis clubs concentrated along the Eastern seaboard of the Mid-Atlantic and New England. The West Side Tennis Club was one of the first and most prominent clubs in the country. Founded in 1882, the Club had expanded to two locations by 1904. The clubhouse was located in the Bronx at 238th Street and Broadway where members could also play on several courts. Lady members had first claim on the courts at 117th Street and Amsterdam Avenue on Morningside Heights. Men were allowed to play there only through a formal petition to and with the approval from the clubs governing board. Victorian women generally had more opportunities to play tennis than other games offered by athletic clubs in America.<sup>23</sup>

The Club capped total membership at 550, with the only stated requirements that a potential member be older than sixteen and that two or more current members vouch for her. While not overtly stated, in practice this application process effectively barred African Americans from joining the Club, as the all-white membership listed on the club's membership rolls perpetuated year after year until at least the eve of World War I. A similar class barrier was also in place, albeit with a little more malleability as players who proved themselves talented in the many sanctioned tournaments held under the auspices of the Eastern Lawn Tennis Association and Metropolitan Association sometimes found their names listed on the

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.; Ibid.

membership rolls regardless of their personal equity. The wrong color skin or the wrong family kept someone out of the tennis club, but being a woman did not.<sup>24</sup>

Women members were in fact a draw to elite tennis clubs. In August of 1890, along with benches full of male and female spectators, an elderly woman sat on a porch and watched four ladies play a doubles match on the lawn tennis court. The venue was the Brighton Beach Hotel, a popular spot with the Manhattan Park Avenue crowd. The woman grew frustrated with the women's poor play and divided attention. She believed the players were too interested in the glances of the young beaus watching the game; however, her scorn centered less on the "attention" they sought and more on the cumbersome outfits that hamstrung their tennis strokes. Their Victorian outfits fit so inappropriately that the servers used underhanded strokes as the tight-fitting sleeves restrained the extension and pronation of the arm necessary for an overhand service. "Hampered by graceful, but far too heavy skirts, big knotted sash, jaunty jacket, and a hat which will not sit just exactly straight if the head is moved violently," she wrote, how could these ladies play any better? Her observations revealed the competing ideologies of style and success in the sport of tennis.<sup>25</sup>

Grace did not equal performance, but measures of both categories depended on whether the players were women or men. F. A. Kellogg, a leading writer on recreation and editor of

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<sup>24</sup> *Officers, Members, Constitution Rules and Reports of the West Side Tennis Club 1910 Organized 1882*, Series 3, Subject Files, Cabinet File, 9-1, Folder West Side Tennis Club 1903-1910, William T. Fischer Collection, St. John's College, Queens Campus; *Schedule of Sanctioned Tournaments of the Lawn Tennis and Metropolitan Association* (New York: n.p., 1925) in Folder New York Lawn Tennis Association Metropolitan LTA, 1925, Series 3, Subject Files, Cabinet File, 9-1, Folder West Side Tennis Club 1903-1910, William T. Fischer Collection, St. John's College, Queens Campus.

<sup>25</sup> "Tennis—Playing for Admiration," *The Sporting Life*, August 30, 1917, p. 16.

*Outing Magazine*, considered tennis an exceptional sport in three ways: first and foremost, tennis was the “youngest of athletic” sports popularized by the British that had spread to much of the world by the late nineteenth century; second, more than most sports, tennis espoused refinement in the people who played the game and deserved to be played by the refined themselves—the lawyer, the doctor, the university student, the clergyman, and the college professor; third and most uniquely, the pioneers of tennis had from the beginning stressed the suitability of the game for “the gentler sex” and had worked tirelessly to make sure women participated.<sup>26</sup> Thus, from the earliest days of the sport as a game for ladies, play, fashion, and gender fused, and the evolution of this relationship revealed the increased sexualization of women in the American public sphere during the decades that birthed mass culture. That 1920s sexualization did not establish professional tennis in its present form, but it did nudge the sport in that direction. Forty years later, a new group of women players would complete the professionalization of the game. What mattered in the meantime to tennis followers was that the game had always welcomed women at the same time that it shunned playing the game for money. A woman disrupted that balance and thus brought the innocent infancy of the game to an end.

Tennis player Suzanne Lenglen became a worldwide sensation during the first half of the twentieth century. Through her style of play, choices of fashion, and indelible charisma, the French champion was the game’s first sex symbol. Other women athletes such as the Texan Babe Didrikson Zaharias and the Czech Eliška Junková competed hard as athletes in the twenties:

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<sup>26</sup> N.A., *Outdoors: A Book of Pleasure* (Boston: MFG. Co, 1894), 4-10, Call# RBR TL435 P82a T.C., Collection of Printed Books and Periodicals, The Winterthur Library, Wilmington, Delaware.



Didrikson in track and field and seemingly every other sport; Junková in Grand Prix racing.<sup>27</sup> Yet neither held quite the charm and force of personality that Lenglen emanated to audiences. Lenglen garnered a transnational following by winning five consecutive Wimbledon titles between 1919 and 1924. Despite dominating the amateur game, Lenglen cared little for the all-male officials of the French Tennis Federation and International Lawn Tennis Federation, headquartered in London, who dictated who could play and when, and even went so far as to equate her newly realized freedom as a professional with “an escape from bondage and slavery.” Her European reputation informed her 1926 American tour—the first professional tennis tour—where fans and the press alike welcomed her as the most cosmopolitan of athletes. Such a high profile lent special weight to Lenglen’s every word and deed. In an interview with the *New York Times*, Lenglen stressed the importance of “control” if a young tennis player were to succeed in the increasingly competitive game.<sup>28</sup> Her intended emphasis was on a player’s shot selection; however, her remarks implied a broader definition of the individual’s command of self constitutive with the groundswell of social and cultural changes associated with the “new woman.”<sup>29</sup> As the first tennis player and the first woman to unashamedly make money off the game in the most public of ways, Lenglen’s decision to turn professional symbolized the greater role women assumed in the public sphere.

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<sup>27</sup> Susan Cayleff, “The ‘Texas Tomboy’: The Life and Legend of Babe Didrikson Zaharias,” *OAH Magazine of History* 7 (Summer 1992): 28-33. As yet, no scholarship on Junková’s remarkable career behind the wheel of her Bugatti Type 30, and later behind the Iron Curtain, exists. The author has taken the first step in this direction by assembling and editing a collection of Junková’s surviving letters.

<sup>28</sup> “Suzanne Lenglen Feels Free as a Pro,” *New York Times*, August 11, 1926, p. 18; “Suzanne Lenglen Tells of Kings and Queens She Meets,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 11, 1926, p. 12.

<sup>29</sup> “Suzanne Lenglen Feels Free as a Pro,” p. 18; Lynn Dumenil, *The Modern Temper: American Culture and Society in the 1920s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), 98-144; Joshua Zeitz, *Flapper: A Madcap Story of Sex, Style, Celebrity, and the Women Who Made America Modern* (New York: Crown Pub., 2006), 8-9, 135-45.

Lenglen was born on May 24, 1899, the only child of a cycling-crazed French father and an un-athletic French mother. While accounts differ in designating her birthplace—Paris or Compiègne, France—Lenglen’s real home was the French Riviera, where she lived for much of her childhood and teenage years. Her family had money, but not the kind of money gambled every evening at the fashionable Casino de Monte-Carlo, where the wealthiest of Europe’s wealthy gathered every winter and early spring during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Charles (Papa) Lenglen both doted on and drove his daughter to live an active lifestyle with gymnastics, outdoor play, bicycling, and dance. Living in Nice, Lenglen drew crowds of tourists and passers-by who watched her play the juggling game diablo along the Promenade des Anglais—performances her father encouraged. She enrolled in the Institute Massena to study classical languages and dance. In 1910 Papa gave his daughter a toy tennis racquet that she batted about with in the family backyard. The father wanted to see great potential in his eleven-year-old, however, and he soon gave her a full-sized racquet that she swung with such great fluidity that by her third month of playing she earned second prize the Chantilly Lady’s Singles Championship.<sup>30</sup>

Most tournaments during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provided a tournament umpire who handicapped different players based on their records, experience, and a quick observation of their play in order to facilitate greater competitiveness between two unequally matched players. For example, in playing against women over twice her age, the

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<sup>30</sup> Charles Lenglen, “A Brief Biography of Suzanne Lenglen,” pp. 1-4, 11-13, *Suzanne Lenglen: North American Tour Souvenir Program*, 1926, Folder Suzanne Lenglen North American Tour Souvenir Program, no box number, William T Fischer Collection, St. John’s College Special Collections, Queens Campus; “A Brief Biography of Suzanne Lenglen Written by Charles (Papa) Lenglen in 1926,” reprinted as “Appendix” in Ted Tinling, *Tinling: Sixty Years in Tennis* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1983), 220-2.

young Lenglen might begin a match with a 30-Love advantage in every game against her more seasoned opponent. Within two years, the handicapping swung in the opposite direction with the now fourteen-year-old Lenglen beginning most of her matches down Love-30 each and every game, after having assembled an impressive spate of wins that included the Picardy Regional Championships and the Nice Lawn Tennis Championships. On the insistence of her father, the Nice Lawn Tennis Club granted Lenglen an exception to the no-children rule, which then allowed Lenglen to practice on courts frequented by many of the world's best players who wintered in the Riviera.<sup>31</sup>

All the top tennis players in the late nineteenth century played on the French Riviera because all players of any standing at that time came from enough wealth to make the trip to France's Mediterranean Coast in order to live the lifestyle of the world's elite. The French Riviera ran from Cannes east to the Italian border and included Cannes, Nice, Monaco, Monte Carlo, and Menton. Prince Rainier and Princess Grace of Monaco took the first step in making this area into a gaming destination, and François Blanc, the man responsible for building Hamburg's gambling reputation, planned and built the Casino on the Monte Carlo plateau that opened June 1, 1866. This spurred other Riviera cities such as Cannes and Nice to build their own casinos. Luxury hotels sprang up with the casinos along the Riviera coastline, making the Riviera into the highest concentration of exclusive accommodations and playgrounds for the wealthy in the world. Not known as a gambler, Britain's Queen Victoria also helped to popularize the French Riviera as a destination with British elite and with royals across Europe. Those same English and Continental

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<sup>31</sup> Charles Lenglen, "A Brief Biography of Suzanne Lenglen," pp. 1-4, 11-13; "A Brief Biography of Suzanne Lenglen Written by Charles (Papa Lenglen) in 1926," *TinlingTinlingTinlingTinling* 220-2.

Europeans of aristocratic backgrounds also enjoyed lawn tennis in the same years in the late nineteenth century, but the strongly seasonal and wet weather in their home countries meant that they could only play the game with any regularity for at most three months out of the year.<sup>32</sup>

English revelers built the first French lawn tennis courts in the South of France at the Beau Site Hotel of Cannes in the mid-1880s. Within the decade the popular Renshaw brothers, Ernest and William, who had done so much to popularize lawn tennis in the United Kingdom, had traveled regularly to Southern France to show spectators there what the pinnacle of tennis play looked like. Around 1890, those in the American monied class would travel to the French Riviera to mingle with European aristocrats, and top American tennis talent, names such as the Doherty brothers, would accompany this migration. Both the good and the bad played on manicured courts baked year-round by the warm Mediterranean sun, situated in groves of trees and flowers, and scented by the mistral winds that blew herbs and lavender across Provence.<sup>33</sup>

In 1912 many of those talented players took a train to Paris to compete in the first World Hard Court Championships under the auspices of the embryonic International Lawn Tennis Federation (ILTF). Representatives from twelve founding nations waited to meet at the Union des Sociétés Françaises des Sports Athlétiques to officially form the first international governing body of the sport of lawn tennis in March 1, 1913. The communication among different national tennis societies and the exploratory committee for the first World Hard Court Championships in 1912 led directly to the formation of the ILTF. The French Championships had existed for men since 1891 and for women since 1896, with matches played at either the Club Stade Français, the

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<sup>32</sup> Ted Tinling, *Love and Faults: Personalities Who Have Changed the History of Tennis in my Lifetime* (New York: Crown, 1979), 2-5.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-9.

Cercle des Sports de l’Ile de Puteaux, or the Racing Club. From the 1880s through the 1900s, the All England Championships, the French Championships, and the United States Championships were, as their titles implied, tournaments for the best players within a particular nation. While lax enforcement of the rule barring competitors with outside citizenship may have allowed the occasional foreign national to compete in a country’s championships, the 1912 World Hard Court Championships—played, confusingly given the Hard (asphalt) Court title, on the red clay courts of the Stade Français in Saint-Cloud, Paris—was the first grand tournament that encouraged international competition among the best amateur players throughout the world. The World Championship series took place on grass, clay, and covered (indoor) courts. Alternating the location and the surface of the tournaments fostered a feeling of congenial competition and internationalism among amateurs. The rotation continued until 1923, when, in a successful effort to attract the United States Lawn Tennis Association to join their organization, the ITHF made the U.S. Championships a “major” tennis tournament.<sup>34</sup> With the acceptance of the Australasian Championships as the fourth Major tournament in 1924, the ITHF had established the prime amateur competitions in the sport—competitions whose specifics changed but whose fundamentals did not until 1968.

From its first years, however, the World Hard Court Championships invited women to compete against their peers from across the globe. At age fifteen, Lenglen entered the 1914 tournament and won handily over her twenty-seven-year-old countrywoman, Germaine Golding. She seemed primed to rise, but the coming of the Great War halted tournament play in Western Europe and put tennis far from most people’s minds. Top male amateurs entered military service,

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<sup>34</sup> Gillmeister, *Tennis*, 191-5, 211, 225

and top female amateurs assumed jobs that aided in their respective nations' war efforts—though Lenglen spent her War years practicing on the Riviera's courts.<sup>35</sup> Wimbledon, meanwhile, went uncontested for five summers. Ironically, one of the few people with tennis on their mind in 1918 and 1919 was one of the people most responsible for the outcome of the war. Vice-Admiral Sir David Beatty of the Grand Fleet and the second-in-command of the British ships in their defeat of the German navy at the Battle of Jutland—the largest naval battle as measured by vessel tonnage in world history—was a major tennis enthusiast who did not let time on the high seas or war prevent him from practicing. With the fleet stationed at Scapa Flow and the Firth of the Forth in Scotland, Beatty constructed lawn courts for himself. When American sailors joined the Grand Fleet in 1918, Beatty sought out American shipmen with tennis talent, eschewing the traditional boundaries between officers and enlistees. Ensign Francis Townshend Hunter, fresh from a successful tennis career at Cornell University, thus found himself taking a water taxi from his battleship to the admiral's tennis court for daily doubles matches.<sup>36</sup>

For practically everyone besides the ensign and the admiral, play resumed after a five-year pause. In the first Wimbledon after the War, the defending Champion Dorothea Lambert Chambers faced off against the young Lenglen, twenty-one years her junior. The two were a study in contrasts. Chambers had won Wimbledon a handful of times; Lenglen was competing in her first Championships. Chambers also held the Olympic gold medal, while Lenglen had never played a match outside of France. Lambert was married with a family; Lenglen was essentially still a teenager. These differences were not lost on fans and fellow competitors alike, but simply

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<sup>35</sup> Lenglen, "A Brief Biography of Suzanne Lenglen," 15.

<sup>36</sup> Francis Townshend Hunter Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF.

noting obvious differences belied the very real overlaps between the experienced Chambers and the youthful Lenglen.<sup>37</sup> Chambers herself developed these linkages in her best-selling 1910 book *Lawn Tennis for Ladies*, in which she skewered claims that young women should avoid athletics. Chambers flatly dismissed the first argument—that women need pass on athletics as a health precaution—as nonsense without merit. Addressing the claim that athletic participation made a woman less of a woman, Chambers admitted that may be so if frailty constituted the essence of “womanliness.” Citing a heroic example of the participation of women in battle, Chambers threw out the simple gender binary of strong men and weak women in favor of a simpler complementary relationship rooted not in fundamental difference but in what she saw as, at least, a kernel of equality. With this belief in mind, Chambers brushed away the last major claim against lawn tennis for women—that is, that athletics made women less sexually attractive. The instant of a camera flash often caught both male and female athletes in a moment of unflattering concentration, yet attendees in sporting events seemed to enjoy the play of women as much as the play of men. Rather than shying away from competing hard, Chambers emphasized that viewers might find “real pleasure” in watching women play not a dainty game but with “signs of excitement,” lean “muscles,” and “her face set.”<sup>38</sup>

The riveting 1919 final match certainly gave spectators much to feel good about. Chambers held two match points which the youthful Lenglen fought off, eventually overcoming Chambers 8-10, 6-4, 7-9 in the longest Wimbledon title match in the tournament’s history. The

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<sup>37</sup> Kathleen McKane Godfree Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF.

<sup>38</sup> Mrs. Lambert Chambers, *Lawn Tennis for Ladies* (New York: Outing Publishing Company, 1910), 1-18, quotations on 3, 18.

back and forth of the match was only part of the drama, however, as Lenglen's bold fashion departure turned heads and moved sports fashion in a bold new direction in line with that of the new woman.<sup>39</sup> For her part, Chambers bristled at primed outfits that restricted movement, instead stressing modesty and functionality in dress. Lenglen, by contrast, preferred outfits that accentuated the movement of her body on the court rather than cloaking it. The debut of her "half-calf" dress at Wimbledon tolled the death knell of the traditional ankle-length tennis dress. And like her career itself, the ability to push sartorial boundaries arose from the European-wide reorientation of gender boundaries following World War I. With the major European nations mustering between 15.4 percent and 22 percent of their male populations, millions of women took up war industries work in factories. Such labor required that many women literally wear pants for the first time. The trouser became a legacy of the war for women who entered the postwar period with a new horizon for work, in no small part due to the roughly 9.3 million soldiers killed during the War (or between 20 percent and 40 percent of the military-eligible male population killed, leaving roughly a third of Western European women widows), and a new fusion of form and functionality in their dress.<sup>40</sup>

Over the next seven years, Lenglen dominated tennis in Europe and carved a name for herself as the first continental superstar in women's sports. Spectators, the media, and fellow competitors often likened her movement on the court to that of a ballerina. In so doing, they projected their own assumptions of French national identity onto the Frenchwoman Lenglen.

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<sup>39</sup> H.B.L. Hart, "Winning the English Championships," *American Lawn Tennis* (August 1, 1919): 252; Zeitz, *Flapper*, 23-24, 135-45.

<sup>40</sup> Chambers, *Lawn Tennis for Ladies*, 9, 60-69; John Morrow Jr., *The Great War: An Imperial History* (London: Routledge, 2004), 284-5; Kathleen McKane Godfree Interview, ITHF.



Fellow players like Kathleen McKane Godfree, comparing her to other ladies on the tour, noted Lenglen's "nice figure" accentuated by her revealing mid-calf dresses. Her focused grey eyes were said to haunt opponents and bedazzle fans close to the courts where she strode. She always wore white dresses and tops, occasionally a cardigan sweater, and the vibrant blue, orange, or red chiffon scarf which held back her hair and punctuated her otherwise white attire became her fashion staple. Remarkably, her popularity and sex appeal existed in spite of her widely discussed plainness in terms of facial features. What actually enhanced her charm was the combination of her athletic movement and her confident personality. Technically, she could play every shot in what decades later professionals came to call an all-court game. "You never knew what's coming next," remarked one opponent, discussing a match against Lenglen. This variety of shot-making enthralled spectators, who felt they were watching a graceful and new creation every time Lenglen stepped on the court and moved to hit the ball. But that same thrill of the new also cut in a different direction as American audiences were quick to accuse Lenglen of French-fickleness. In 1921 the French Tennis Federation pressured Lenglen to travel to the United States to compete against Molla Mallory in the American Championships.<sup>41</sup>

Mallory, born Anna Margrethe Bjurstedt in Mosvik, Norway, on March 6, 1884, took up tennis on the indoor but poorly lit courts of Christiania (Oslo). During her teenage years she quickly established herself as the best player in Norway, woman or man, and Mallory played regularly throughout Scandinavia including with the dignitary and tennis enthusiast Crown Prince of Sweden Gustav Adolf. Like many women in the Nordic countries, Mallory trained "as

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<sup>41</sup> Kathleen McKane Godfree Interview, ITHF; Tinling, *Love and Faults*, 24.

a masseuse,” after which she went to London to give massages at private lawn tennis clubs and at the same time work on her game. She also played tournaments in Germany before moving back to Norway and competing as that country’s lone entry in the 1912 Olympics. In October of 1914 Mallory immigrated to the United States and worked as a masseuse. Living in New York City, Mallory watched the players compete in the Men’s National Tennis Indoor Championships held at the Seventh Regiment Armory and told herself that she belonged on the tennis court again. She entered the 1915 Women’s National Tennis Championships, the most important women’s tournament in the United States, hosted every year since the event’s inception in 1887 by the Philadelphia Cricket Club. In the finals, Mallory defeated Hazel Hotchkiss Wightman—a three-time event champion, the most dominant American player up to that point, and an outspoken advocate for the presence of women in competitive public sports. Mallory built on her national title in the coming years by winning tournament after tournament across the United States.<sup>42</sup> Since she had not played in Europe since 1914, though, questions remained on both sides of the Atlantic who the best player in the world was following the end of World War I.

Having won Wimbledon in 1919, 1920, and 1921, and the Olympics held in Antwerp in 1920, Lenglen still had not answered that question to the satisfaction of American spectators when she undertook her first trip to play tennis in the United States in the late summer of 1921. Her visit caused more confusion for herself and for tennis enthusiasts than it clarified, because the seemingly unbeatable champion in London, in Paris, and on the Riviera lost in the most embarrassing of ways to Mallory. With 8,000 New Yorkers filling the West Side Tennis Club stadium court beyond capacity on August 13, 1921, for the Frenchwoman’s second-round match

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<sup>42</sup> Molla Bjurstedt, *Tennis for Women* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1916), 164-75.

against Mallory, Lenglen quit not long into the match as the disgusted crowd howled “cough and quit” to the shocked champion. Lenglen’s refusal to play on fit with an American stereotype of French athletes and by extension French people who surrendered to defeat when confronted with the slightest challenge rather than persevere in the face of adversity. British audiences likewise struggled to move past hackneyed opinions of the Frenchwoman Lenglen. In a particularly galling case, a Wimbledon referee scheduled Lenglen to play a cakewalk singles match in the 1926 Championships immediately before a competitive doubles match. Lenglen messaged from the locker room that she would play the doubles first and the singles after, or would need more rest in between the matches. When she arrived early for her doubles match she found an irate official, an angry crowd, and a disappointed monarch in Queen Mary, who had not received Lenglen’s request for a postponement of her singles match. The hissing crowd forced Lenglen to retreat to the locker room, where she broke down in tears and decided not to play Wimbledon ever again.<sup>43</sup> As an international amateur champion, Lenglen still answered to the nationalistic perceptions people expected her fulfill.

Lenglen proved far more successful in challenging the prevailing parameters of the female breadwinner in the West during the 1920s. Her 1926 American tour marked a turning point in both professional tennis and the history of women in sports. The tour opened on Saturday October 9, 1926, at 8:30 p.m. at New York City’s Madison Square Gardens—just three short months after Lenglen had sworn off the grandest amateur tournament, Wimbledon. People thought she was a beauty, aside from her buckteeth. Photographs of Lenglen had long found their

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<sup>43</sup> Tinling, *Love and Faults*, 24-26; Kathleen McKane Godfree Interview, ITHF.

way to America, to the delight of fans in the United States. Seeing her live, with her body in motion, was even better. While Lenglen's talent made sure people paid for a ticket, Charles C. Pyle made sure that Lenglen and her five fellow players had a stadium to fill.<sup>44</sup>

Working in the entertainment business as a theatre proprietor in the teens and twenties in Champaign, Illinois, Pyle used his connections at the University of Illinois to convince the standout running-back Harold "Red" Grange of his earnings potential in professional football. In 1925 Pyle steered Grange into a lucrative contract with the Chicago Bears that earned the "Galloping Ghost" and his manager Pyle \$100,000 between the two of them in only four months of professional football. At the same time Grange's career took off, Pyle also experienced financial troubles in founding the New York Yankees football team, his unsuccessful bid to bring his franchise into the National Football League, and his subsequent founding of the American Football League that floundered in its first and only season in 1926.<sup>45</sup>

Pyle's move to professional tennis in the summer of 1926 was an attempt to regain momentum after his football franchise failure. His tennis venture succeeded in that it secured his public perception as a visionary sports promoter willing to take on and defeat conservative elements in America's athletic associations. As he had with his Red Grange California Tour, Pyle relied on the Hollywood entertainment promoter William "Champ" Pickens to convince

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<sup>44</sup>Charles C. Pyle, *World's Premiere: International Professional Tennis Matches*, Official Program, p. 1, Folder [no number] Suzanne Lenglen North American Tour Souvenir Program, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John's University Special Collections, Queens Campus; Lenglen photograph, *American Lawn Tennis* 18, no. 4 (July 1, 1924), 181; Stephen Wallis Merrihew, "Organized Professional Lawn Tennis Has Its Inaugural," *American Lawn Tennis* (October 15, 1926): 507-8; Joseph Clairice, "4,500 Baltimoreans Watch Professionals," *American Lawn Tennis* (October 15, 1926): 507.

<sup>45</sup> "C.C. Pyle Dies; Ex-Manager of Red Grange," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 4, 1939, p. 17.

Lenglen to agree to tour the United States as a professional. Pickens met with Pyle in Chicago to make clear that they better have at least \$15,000— unheard of pay for a single athlete at the time— to persuade Lenglen to turn professional, which Pyle readily accepted. Pickens apprised officials of the United States Lawn Tennis Association of his and Pyle’s plans, only to face a stiff rebuke from secretary Edward Moss, who explained that the Association would do what they could to undermine any efforts by anyone outside the USLTA for Lenglen to play tennis in America. Threats only emboldened Pyle, Pickens, and the press with newspaper editorials stoking excitement among the American and European public by suggesting that Pyle would pay Lenglen a quarter of a million dollars for her tennis and Pickens would produce another \$100,000 for movie contracts. In France Pickens promised Lenglen Broadway roles, ghostwritten newspaper columns, readings for her novel *The Love Game*, and his best efforts for a Hollywood studio contract. The two settled on \$200,000 for the United States tennis tour with any additional money Lenglen earned from outside entertainments going directly to her. Then the back-and-forth with Lenglen’s entourage began, and Pickens needed Pyle to finalize the arrangement.<sup>46</sup>

Pyle quickly regained his reputation for flair that he had lost during the failed American Football League plan by pioneering the public contract signing of star athletes. He did this by personally traveling to France in July 1926 where he dotted the agreement with Lenglen. Newsreel crews and print journalists surrounded Lenglen and Pyle sitting in a Pourville, France, garden as the athlete and her new promoter painstakingly read over the contract point by point. For Pyle, the signing presented him to the world as the diligent manager more akin to a business

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<sup>46</sup> Jim Reisler, *Cash and Carry: The Spectacular Rise and Hard Fall of C.C. Pyle, America’s First Sports Agent* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Co., 2009), 111-15, 124-5.

executive than the less scrupulous entertainment promoters associated with prizefight gambling, seedy theatre reviews, and jazz nightclubs. As a player forsaking the popular amateur tournaments for an upstart professional circuit, Lenglen's image did not come across as well during the signing, foremost because many people thought that with her turn to the heretofore unknown professional competition, they would not get to see her perform on the court. Pyle's outsider status as an American who planned for most of the tennis to take place in the United States further stoked the anxieties of Europe's tennis society. On an unspoken level, Lenglen's paragraph-by-paragraph study of her professional contract projected an image of her as a capable breadwinner more than able to earn a living from her trade and look after her own finances rather than relying on the patronage of wealthy tennis fans. By signing the contract, Lenglen announced in the most public of ways her willingness to play tennis not on someone else's terms but on her own.<sup>47</sup>

Lenglen opined forcefully that financial remuneration primarily motivated her to forsake amateur competition for Pyle's professional tour. She complained that having dominated her fellow opponents while at the same time having commanded the public's attention when it came to tennis for the last dozen years, she deserved some of the "millions of francs" that French Tennis Federation, the International Tennis Federation, the British Lawn Tennis Association, and the United States Lawn Tennis Association all collected off the sweat of her back. That labor helped Wimbledon bring in \$150,000 in gate receipts alone for the 1926 Championships while the Riviera tournaments that Lenglen headlined leaned on her star appeal even more heavily to

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<sup>47</sup> British Pathé, "Suzanne Signs On 1926," newsreel, digitized at <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/suzanne-signs-on/query/lenglen> (accessed June 1, 2016).

get people into the stands. She also paid fees to play tournaments for which she received no prize-winning compensation. While she had certainly accepted more money by covert means than the \$5,000 lifetime earnings she admitted, Lenglen would undoubtedly have earned a great deal more had amateurism not prohibited competitive tennis from meeting a player's fiduciary duty to themselves. Lenglen argued that tournament and association officials were the ones who broke their responsibility to tennis by charging high ticket prices for tournaments in order to subsidize their private clubs. She suggested they put the money back into growing the game for everyone rather than for a select few who had the money or the connections to belong to those clubs. With Pyle's help, the Frenchwoman appealed to Americans' deep-seated distrust of inherited wealth, a shared heritage of democratic "revolution," and a belief in the "equality" of opportunity in order to justify professional tennis where it had previously not existed. Spurned by the European tennis establishment at the 1926 Wimbledon Championships, Lenglen expected America to reward her talent and industriousness as Europe had not.<sup>48</sup>

The reality of the professional tour quickly confronted her with the challenges of holding a primary stake in a fledgling sports enterprise. As the headliner of the event, her performance mattered more for the bottom line of the tour than that of her fellow professionals Mary Browne, Vincent Richards, Paul Feret, Harvey Snodgrass, and Howard Kinsey—who rounded out the tour. The match format varied slightly across the dozen cities the troupe barnstormed across, but the general program pattern featured Richards versus Feret in an opening singles match, followed

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<sup>48</sup> Suzanne Lenglen, "Why I Became a Professional," in Charles C. Pyle, *World's Premiere: International Professional Tennis Matches*, Official Program, pp. 14-5, Folder [no number] Suzanne Lenglen North American Tour Souvenir Program, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John's University Special Collections, Queens Campus.

by Lenglen versus Browne in the main event singles match, next a men's doubles of Richards and Snodgrass vs. Kinsey and Feret, and a mixed doubles finale pairing Lenglen and Richards vs. Browne and Kinsey. Such a schedule, if the matches went to a third set of play, could mean more than four hours of tennis for spectators who paid between \$2.00 and \$5.50 to watch the professionals compete in an indoor and rowdy environment far removed from the gentility of the private clubs that hosted the U.S.L.T.A's amateur lawn tennis tournaments. Association officials would not countenance Pyle's tour and did what they could to hamstring it by encouraging their members not to attend and by forbidding their own chair umpires and linesmen from calling the matches. Pyle solved the logistical problem of finding venues that allowed his group to play by an inventive homemade transportable tennis court that workers could lay on the floor of any municipal auditorium or city armory; nevertheless, he often had to scramble at the last minute to find officials capable of keeping the tennis on track.<sup>49</sup>

Lenglen's talent and temperament posed the bigger problem for the tour promoter Pyle. Night after night she simply proved not just better than but much better than Mary Brown. With steady and sensationalized coverage from the newspaper sportswriters, the professionals moved from New York, to Toronto, back stateside to Baltimore, then to Boston, Philadelphia, Montreal, Buffalo, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Columbus, Chicago, Denver, Victoria, Vancouver, Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Oakland, Los Angeles, Houston, New Orleans, Havana, Miami,

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<sup>49</sup> Official Program unpaginated scorecard insert, Folder [no number] Suzanne Lenglen North American Tour Souvenir Program, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John's University Special Collections, Queens Campus; "Organized Professional Lawn Tennis Has Its Inaugural," *American Lawn Tennis* 20, no. 10 (October 14, 1926): 507-9; Joseph Clairice, "4,500 Baltimoreans Watch Professionals," *American Lawn Tennis*, 20, no. 10 (October 14, 1926): 509; "Professionals and Reinstatement" *American Lawn Tennis* 20, no. 10 (October 14, 1926): 515; "Professional Lawn Tennis," *American Lawn Tennis* 20, no. 10 (October 14, 1926): 538; "The Pyle Troupe of Professionals," *American Lawn Tennis* 20, no. 11 (November 15, 1926): 558-9; "Amateurs Versus Professionals," *American Lawn Tennis* 20, no. 11 (November 15, 1926): 560-2.



Hartford, Newark, and New Haven, with the tour's final engagement at Providence, Rhode Island, on February 14, 1927. But that same coverage meant that as Lenglen won every single match against Browne—thirty-eight in total by the end of the tour—and with notable exceptions, such as Los Angeles, where around 7,000 fans crowded the Olympic Auditorium for the December 28th match—Lenglen's brutalizing of Browne contributed to the steady decline of attendance and gate receipts as the tour progressed. As the tour began in the South and Florida, Richards, the second draw-card for the tour, fell ill and began sitting out most of his matches, while Lenglen followed suit as the barnstormers entered their final Mid-Atlantic and Northeast leg. While past champions helped fill the seats in tournaments, a professional tour that paired the same players against one another night after night meant less drama than the more wide-open tournament draws. That fans continued to show up in the thousands even though the results of the night's matches had become a forgone conclusion exemplified that people agreed to pay not to see competitive tennis but to be entertained by the bodies on what amounted to a stage. In giving that sort of performance, Lenglen was truly unrivaled.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> "Suzanne Lenglen and Pyle's Stars in Cincinnati," *American Lawn Tennis* 20, no. 11 (November 15, 1926): 559; "Mlle. Lenglen Sees Chicago," *American Lawn Tennis* 20, no. 11 (November 15, 1926): 559; "Professionals are Interested," *American Lawn Tennis* 20, no. 11 (November 15, 1926): 578; "A Pro Championship for the U.S.?" *American Lawn Tennis* 20, no. 11 (November 15, 1926): 591; "Dates for Mlle. Lenglen's Tour," *American Lawn Tennis*, no. 11 (November 15, 1926): 591; "Professionals are Barred from U.S. Ranking," *American Lawn Tennis* 20, no. 12 (December 15, 1926): 603; Leo J. Lunn, "Pyle Professionals in Chicago," *American Lawn Tennis* 20, no. 12 (December 15, 1926): 606; Blanche K. Ashbaugh, "Professionals in Northern California," *American Lawn Tennis* 20, no. 12 (December 15, 1926): 607; "The Professionals in Denver," *American Lawn Tennis* 20, no. 12 (December 15, 1926): 606; "50,000 for a Professional Tournament," *American Lawn Tennis* 20, no. 12 (December 15, 1926): 611; "The Professionals in Montreal," *American Lawn Tennis* 20, no. 12 (December 15, 1926): 613; John Tunis, "The Professional Championship of France," *American Lawn Tennis* 20, no. 13 (January 15, 1927): 655-7; "End of the Pyle Exhibitions," *American Lawn Tennis* 20, no. 14 (February 15, 1927): 710; "Professional Association Forming," *American Lawn Tennis* 20, no. 14 (February 15, 1927): 716; "Professionals' Winter Engagements," *American Lawn Tennis* 20, no. 14 (February 15, 1927): 735; "The Pyle Delbers Disband," *American Lawn Tennis* 20, no. 15 (March 15, 1927): 756; "An English Professional Tournament," *American Lawn Tennis* 21, no. 1 (April 20, 1927): 59; "Professional Tournament for New York," *American Lawn Tennis* 21, no. 7 (August 25, 1927): 366; "New York is Scene of Professional Tournament," *American Lawn Tennis* 21, no. 8 (September 5, 1927): 420;

Newsreels showed Lenglen moving like a dancer when she played on the tennis court. A BBC newsreel put Lenglen's accomplishments as a sportswoman and sports-growing impact in society on a par with the work done by women reforming gender practices in work, healthcare, education, and politics. One spectator at Lenglen's matches also hinted that fans enjoyed seeing Lenglen's body in movement because her strides often produced unclothed views of her *je ne sais quoi*, to the delight of those seated courtside. Having observed most of Lenglen's matches, Ted Tinling recalled that Lenglen's breasts appeared outside her dress with such regularity that male spectators had given them the nicknames of "Mary" and "Jane."<sup>51</sup>

Lenglen's cavalier approach to a predominantly conservative sport and her blasé attitude toward conventional dress and codes of conduct on and off the court set an example few of her contemporary competitors emulated. Far less flashy but a far better embodiment of the prevailing notion of amateurism was the famed American Champion May Sutton Bundy, who won her first

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"Professional Association is Formed," *American Lawn Tennis* 21, no. 10 (October 20, 1927): 498; "How Pyle Secured Mlle Lenglen," *American Lawn Tennis* 21, no. 13 (January 20, 1928): 666-7; "Professional Market is Active," *American Lawn Tennis* 21, no. 14 (February 20, 1928): 710; "First Professional Championship of the U.S.," *American Lawn Tennis* 22, no. 10 (October 20, 1928): 523-5.

<sup>51</sup> British Pathé, "Suzanne Lenglen Aka Mlle. Suzanne Lenglen 1926," newsreel; British Pathé, "Suzanne Lenglen – Tennis 1930-1939," newsreel; British Pathé, "Sportshots No. 18 – Suzanne Lenglen 1933," newsreel; British Pathé, "How I Play tennis – by Mlle. Suzanne Lenglen (1925)," newsreel; British Pathé, "Fit As a Fiddle aka Fit as a Fiddle (1925)," newsreel; British Pathé, "Suzanne Meets Helen (1926)," newsreel; British Pathé, "Suzanne Wins Shorts Version on Sleeve as Celebrates the Advent (1926)," newsreel; British Pathé, "Suzanne Wins Long Version on Sleeve as Celebrates the Advent (1926)," newsreel; British Pathé, "Where the Sun is Shining (1924)," newsreel; British Pathé, "Suzanne Lenglen Breaks Wimbledon Record (1925)," newsreel; "Suzanne the Magnet," newsreel; "Out Takes / Cuts for Incomparable Suzanne In G 1302 (1926)," newsreel; "Tennis 1924," newsreel; "Suzanne Lenglen Beats Wimbledon Record (1925)," newsreel; "Suzanne the Magnet (1925)," newsreel; "Tennis (1924)," newsreel; "World's Tennis Rivals (1924)," newsreel; "Tennis (1921)," newsreel; "Incomparable Suzanne (1926)," newsreel; "Next Year – Joan" (1925), newsreel; "Suzanne Signs On" (1926), newsreel; "Incomparable Suzanne" (1925), newsreel; "Versatile Susanne" (1925), newsreel; "Tennis Film" (1920-1929), newsreel; "On Suzanne's Own Ground Too!" (1927), newsreel; "Tennis 'Greats'" (1900-1952), newsreel; "Junior Lawn Tennis Champs" (1921), newsreel; "Wimbledon's Jubilee" (1926), newsreel; British Pathé, "Five Reigns Reel 3" (1919-1929), newsreel; British Pathé, "Peaceful Years Reel 3 1919-1938," newsreel; British Pathé, "Here's to Memory – Part 3 1920-1939," newsreel; British Pathé, "Emancipation of Women 1890-1930," newsreel. All newsreels are digitized and archived by British Pathé and available at <http://www.britishpathe.com/search/query/lenglen> (accessed August 16, 2016). Alison Muscatine, "Tennis Dress, Anyone?" *The Washington Post*, September 5, 1989, p. C01.

Southern California Championship in 1900 at the age of fourteen. Twenty-eight years later at the age of forty-two, Sutton won her last Southern California Championship. Over the course of her three-decade-long career, she won the United States Championship in singles and doubles as well as lifting the Wimbledon singles trophy twice. She never thought about turning professional, and outside of a little teaching that she despised, Sutton never accepted any direct money for her tennis skills. With financial support from her family, a career as an amateur worked fine. Moreover, Sutton, as did all the very top American amateurs, accepted the USLTA's travel funding for competition in Wimbledon and on the Wightman and Davis Cup teams. In the USLTA, experience meant as much as or more than compensation because it offered cultural vistas otherwise closed to teenagers or players in their early twenties. Sutton recalled, all with fondness, the ocean liner cabin for the Atlantic crossing, a hotel room for several weeks in London, meals covered, and the possibility for additional European destinations if the match schedule aligned—on balance, a real degree of encouragement for women athletes not found in other sports at the time. In 1905, that seemed a pretty sweet deal for the teenager from Southern California. In a related vein, Sutton agreed that the ankle-length dresses worn by the ladies into the twenties seemed a bit silly but were not worth fussing over because they did not affect her ability to move on the court. This more traditional approach to women in tennis and tennis in general would encounter resistance from those that followed Lenglen's example, but would remain more or less intact for the next two decades.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> May Sutton Bundy Oral History, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island. For a brief overview of the historical literature that argues that for the late nineteenth century and first two decades of the twentieth century women sports were primarily associational and centered on physical education, see Linda J. Borish, "Women in American Sport History," in Steven Reiss ed., *A Companion to American Sports History* (New York: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 503-5.

Thanks to Lenglen, elements of the stodgy paternalism in the administration of the game came under increasing fire in the early thirties while traditionalists tried with greater difficulty to remain resolute. Women and on-court fashion again became one of the chief areas of contention when reports came from across Europe in 1930 that Lenglen had designed what the newspapers called “Suzanne Shorts” that sat about an inch higher than the kneecap.<sup>53</sup> American National Champion Helen Hull Jacobs abandoned the tennis dress and courted controversy when she embraced these Bermuda shorts in the 1933 United States Championship at Forest Hills. Played in close proximity to the 1933 Wightman Cup match contested in New York, the English team captain Tim Horn refused to allow his players to wear shorts despite Jacobs’s insistence that “they’re so comfortable” and eliminated the not-infrequent occurrence of skirts blown up head-high on windy days. If modesty mattered, shorts proved the preferred sartorial statement. That reasoning did not persuade the English Wightman Cup handlers, and the British ladies wore dresses in 1933. A year later, though, this time playing in London, the English team wore shorts. Needless to say, these shorts were far from the Lycra form-fitting styles popularized in the 1970s and worn by female athletes the world over since then. What came later, however, in no way diminishes the sex appeal of the Wightman Cup players’ Bermuda-style shorts to contemporary audiences in the mid-thirties and forties. From then on, women players from across the world often opted for comfortable shorts over the more restrictive dresses.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Larry Engelmann, *The Goddess and the American Girl: The Story of Suzanne Lenglen and Helen Wills* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 426.

<sup>54</sup> Helen Hull Jacobs Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, RI.

Pushing fashion boundaries was just one of the ways women players expressed their solidarity across national and against the traditional paternalistic elements of the national tennis establishments. Another important way were informal mentor and mentee relationships outside of official tennis federation channels. Here as elsewhere, Lenglen set the trend. During her years of competitive play, Lenglen pummeled players so mercilessly that her opponents bragged among themselves about how many points rather than how many games, sets, or matches they had won against the Frenchwoman. But after her retirement from professional tennis, Lenglen proved far less self-absorbed and more nurturing of fellow tennis players than sportswriters and spectators had given her credit for. Helen Hull Jacobs recalled with fondness hours after hours of rallying in Paris with a retired Lenglen, who helped Jacobs reach top form. Even in practice, Lenglen “was really an experience,” Jacobs said. In the minds of International Tennis Federation, French Tennis Federation, and United States Lawn Tennis Association officials, once a professional always a professional, meaning these practices flagrantly violated their rules prohibiting the mixing of amateurs and professionals. For Lenglen and Jacobs, these practices were nothing of the kind; rather, they were the sharing of wisdom from the revered retired champion to the heir apparent—sisterhood and solidarity among sportswomen.<sup>55</sup>

Lenglen looked to share her tennis expertise with an even wider audience when she partnered with the print division of the world’s leading sporting goods manufacture—A. G. Spalding & Bros. In 1920, American Sports Publishing Company distributed *Lawn Tennis for Girls*, featuring an inside cover photo of Lenglen dressed glamorously and provocatively with

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

her bandeau and wrapped in a fur cloak with jewelry and piercing eyes. The firm Albert Goodwill Spalding was founded in Chicago in 1876 and continued to grow after his 1915 death by extending their women's athletic market share by converting sections of their flagship department store on Fifth Avenue in New York City into lady's athletics. They also built "beautiful women's sports specialty" stores on 211 South State Street in Chicago as well as throughout the Midwest, mid-Atlantic, New England, and Pacific Coast. Lenglen became an important poster child for Spalding's push into women's sports, although when it came to athletic wear, the company recommended ladies dress more conservatively than what Lenglen actually wore on the court. Women should follow her advice, though, on the game itself, urged Spalding. In fact, the preface to the American edition of *Lawn Tennis for Girls* claimed that Lenglen knew more about tennis than any man, praise supported by the convenient omission—from the book's introductory biography—of the male teaching pros Lenglen regularly trained with on the Riviera courts. Her dad taught her a little tennis, and she taught herself the rest, the personal history read. The remainder of the book described Lenglen's playing philosophy, stroke mechanics, and match strategy. All of that was orthodox for the time except for the particular stress Lenglen placed on movement—a far more forward looking emphasis that future champions took to heart.<sup>56</sup>

Lenglen also conveyed her accumulated tennis wisdom to men. The subordination of the conventional male realm of athletics by a woman champion elucidated the femininity of tennis in reciprocity to the genesis of most other organized sports. Widely considered the greatest student

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<sup>56</sup> Suzanne Lenglen, *Lawn Tennis for Girls* (New York: American Sports Publishing Co., 1920), frontispiece, 4-15, 17-96, 98-100, esp. 98.

of top players' technique and tactics, the French champion René Lacoste warmly recollected that he in fact benefited from the tutelage of Lenglen when it came to confronting challenging opponents. Lacoste enjoyed a storied transatlantic rivalry with the American Bill Tilden throughout the twenties in part because Lenglen herself had grown familiar with Tilden's game from her professional tour through the States in 1926. Afterwards she shared ways to exploit Tilden's weaknesses with her compatriot. Lacoste took her advice to heart and gained better results against the American before the Musketeer retired from competitive play in 1930 following his French Championship victory. He went on to control a sportswear multinational after having created the iconic alligator logo that adorned the ubiquitous polos bearing his name.<sup>57</sup>

Male players even decided to forsake their own amateur careers in favor of professional tennis because they believed that their own financial situations could benefit from Lenglen's appeal, which was raising the profile of professional tennis. Vincent Richards, Paul Feret, Harvey Snodgrass, and Howard Kinsey all felt that way enough to tour with her, but in that decision they failed to calculate what would happen to them when Lenglen decided she did not want to travel across America anymore. From the beginning of the tour in October 1926, Pyle had promised his players would travel across the Atlantic to bring professional tennis to Europeans. By the start of 1927 that pledge had become impossible to fulfill because of mistrust between Pyle and Lenglen. For her part, Lenglen was more than ready to return to Europe, but not necessarily to play tennis for Pyle. For his part, Pyle had grown tired of Lenglen's personal

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<sup>57</sup> René Lacoste Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, RI.

demands and the growing number of followers drawn into her inner circle, each with an opinion on what was best for Lenglen. So on February 16, 1927, Pyle simply announced he would not take his players for a European tour and that he would no longer promote professional tennis in any capacity. Whether or not he had taken any concrete steps to make a European tour a reality did not seem to matter to Lenglen, who took the \$100,000 she had made on the tour and left for France less than a week after the conclusion of the tour. Richards earned around \$35,000, Browne around \$30,000, Snodgrass, and Kinsey likely much less—at least certainly when compared to the \$100,000 Pyle cleared for himself on the tour. The first professional tennis tour in the world had grossed around \$500,000, but that came at a big cost for all the players who could never go back and play the amateur tournaments or compete for their country in the Davis Cup. Lenglen's departure left Vincent Richards to lead the few professionals into the early 1930s. He did what he could in founding an association of professional players in the fall of 1927 to organize the few tennis players unable to abide by the USLTA's strict amateur code, and he organized America's first professional tennis tournament. Yet more or less by himself, Richards did not have the ability to more than annoy the USLTA officials, who knew that without a Lenglen, amateur tournaments would continue to attract more spectators than the upstart professional events.<sup>58</sup>

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, a New York City-based coffee company published a series of trade cards that looked at the sporting traditions of fifty different nations.

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<sup>58</sup> Engelmann, *The Goddess* 282-3; Arthur Daley, "Vincent Richards, The First Boy Wonder," reprinted in Allison Danzig and Peter Schwed eds., *The Fireside Book of Tennis* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972), 187-9; "Professional Association is Formed," *American Lawn Tennis* 21, no. 10 (October 20, 1927): 498; "First Professional Championship of the U.S.," *American Lawn Tennis* 22, no. 10 (October 20, 1928): 523-5.



France received the credit on the cards for popularizing tennis, even though the story of the early years of tennis was more complicated: French developed the progenitor of lawn tennis in court tennis; the British transformed lawn tennis into a recognizable form that then spread across the Crown's colonial possessions; the first professional tennis tour of any consequence took place in the United States with a Frenchwoman as the headliner. What the card got right was that the sporting history of France, at least as the rest of the world viewed it, had an element of "pleasure" constitutive of that broader French cultural characteristic.<sup>59</sup> Lenglen appeared to take pleasure in playing tennis, and the people that watched her took pleasure in her play. Her game, her fashion, her personality, her willingness to perform in the most public of ways, Lenglen masculinized the feminine sport of tennis in the twenties and set the stage for the development of the modern sport in the next several decades. Tennis began as a sport that welcomed women, and it was a woman who did more than anyone else to bring the unwelcome professionalism into the sport.

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<sup>59</sup> Pictorial History of the and Pastimes of All Nations, trade cards made by Arbuckle Brothers of New York City, 1889-1893, Trade Card Collection 124, Winterthur Library, Wilmington, Delaware.

## CHAPTER TWO

### TENNIS AMATEUR ASSOCIATIONS ON AMERICAN SHORES

From the 1880s through the 1920s women played tennis in numbers that rivaled men and surpassed female participation in any other spectator sport. Women headlined the most publicized competitive matches in the world during the same decades, but men ran the private clubs and tennis associations that controlled the game. In America the exercise of that control formed what amounted to a tennis establishment guided by an absolute commitment to a precept of amateurism in the game that prohibited money in any form from finding its way to the players—be they women or, increasingly, men.<sup>1</sup> These dyed-in-the-wool men of various genteel tennis clubs could not separate their love of the game from their love of near total control over the game. They were the principal foes of Suzanne Lenglen, C.C. Pyle, and Vincent Richards, all of whom had and continued to push for professional tennis. These men outlasted those challenges and kept firm control of the game through the 1930s. Maintenance of that control came at the cost of willfully allowing more money into the amateur sport at the same time that they attacked professionalism of the game in all its guises.

Lawn tennis competition at and between urban athletic clubs and suburban country clubs was less well organized than cricket and baseball competitions because of the comparative novelty of the game compared to those older sports. That changed on May 21, 1881, when

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<sup>1</sup> “Peggy Writes to Polly,” *American Lawn Tennis* 2, no. 1 (April 15, 1908): 7; “Philadelphia Women Start Inter-Club Play,” *American Lawn Tennis* 2, no. 2 (May 15, 1908): 28-29; “Metropolitan League Adopts Schedule,” *American Lawn Tennis* 2, no. 1, April 15, 1908, p. 6; “From District Association,” *American Lawn Tennis* 2, no. 1 (April 15, 1908): 8.

representatives from prominent athletic and country clubs sat in the Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York City and chartered the United States Lawn Tennis Association.<sup>2</sup> The principal reason those thirty-four East Coast and mid-Atlantic clubs agreed to meet in 1881 owed to a tennis match, or rather lack of a match, the year before. After visiting the Staten Island Cricket and Baseball Club for an interclub meet, Bostonians James Dwight and R.D. Sears refused to compete in singles when they found the balls the New Yorkers proposed to play with were far short of what they played with in New England. Other equipment differences concerned the nets, which varied in height, and the shape of the court, which varied in size. Different clubs even counted score in different ways. Staten Island Cricket and Baseball Club secretary Outerbridge realized that without a codification of rules and equipment, interclub matches would suffer, and without

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<sup>2</sup> Participating clubs and their representatives included: Staten Island Cricket and Base Ball Club represented by George Scofield, Jr., William Donald, and E.H. Outerbridge; Athletic Department of Niantic Club represented by Walter B. Lawrence and Ernest Mitchell; St. George's Club; Merion Cricket Club; Beacon Park Athletic Association represented by James Dwight; Mont Clair Athletic Club represented by Frederick Van Lenneys; Albany Tennis Club represented by William Gould, Jr., H.C. Littlefield, and Robert Oliver; Jersey City Lawn Tennis Club represented by George Miller and H.E. Hart; Powelton Lawn Tennis Club represented H. Stockbridge Ramsdell; Philadelphia Cricket Club represented by Richard Clay; Yale University Tennis Club represented by W.H. Wood and E. Thorn; Franklin Archery Club represented by W.H. Boardman and J. Fischer Satterthwaite; Elizabeth Lawn Tennis Club represented by W. Hull Wickham, Edward Haines, and Edward Day; Short Hills Club represented by Charles Henry and George Campbell, Jr.; Germantown Cricket Club represented by A.W. H. Powell and Alfred Cope; Orange Lawn Tennis Club represented by Henry F. Hatch; Pioneer Tennis Club represented by Berkeley Hostyn and Colles Johnston; Young America Cricket Club represented by E.E. Denniston, Clarence Clark, and E.M. Wright, Jr.; Knickerbocker Base Ball Club represented H.P. Rogers and H.C. Bowers. The following clubs participated in the meeting via proxy representation: Johnstown Croquet, Archery, and Tennis Club, the Nahant Sporting Club, the Providence Lawn Tennis Club, the Athletic Association of the University of Pennsylvania, the Hawthorne Archery and Lawn Tennis Club, the Myopia Club, the Longman Cricket Club, the Institute Lawn Tennis Club, the Philadelphia Lawn Tennis Club, the Amateur Lawn Tennis Club, the Germantown Tennis "C" Club, the Newark Cricket Club, the Harrisburg Out-door Club, the Pittsburgh Cricket Club, and the Belmont Cricket Club. For participating clubs and proxy representation, see *Annals of the United States Lawn Tennis Association*, typescript, n.d., Folder [no number] USLTA Development, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John's University Special Collections, Queens Campus.

interclub matches, the game had little chance of growing as it had in England and throughout the British Empire.<sup>3</sup>

Outerbridge actually found the garnering of support from different clubs easy. Their boards of directors shared membership rolls that resembled one another's in terms of wealth and community standing. "I knew many of the members and some of the officers and directors of most of the clubs where lawn tennis was then being played, as most of them were cricket clubs, and I had been playing matches on their grounds as a member of the Staten Island Cricket Club, which practically every year visited Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore to play such matches," said Outerbridge. Urban elites along the Eastern Seaboard showed that shared leisure time reinforced their social and commercial networks when they quickly replied that they would attend Outerbridge's Fifth Avenue Hotel meeting. Chaired by the Staten Island Cricket and Baseball Club's George Scofield, the attendees ratified the constitution that created the United States Lawn Tennis Association in under half an hour. Most of the rest of the meeting then addressed the standardization of equipment and rules: the ball would now weigh between 1.87 and 2 ounces and have a diameter between 2.5 inch and 2.56 inches; all clubs would use the rules developed by the All-England Club at Wimbledon village that the USLTA would distribute in pamphlet form; and the USLTA Executive Committee would decide further tournament policy as the association grew. Fifteen additional clubs joined the association via proxy.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Annals of the United States Lawn Tennis Association, typescript, n.d., Folder [no number] USLTA Development, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John's University Special Collections, Queens Campus.

<sup>4</sup> Annals of the United States Lawn Tennis Association, typescript, n.d., Folder [no number] USLTA Development, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John's University Special Collections, Queens Campus; Allison Danzig, "Spahiristike, History of the United States Lawn Tennis Association," in Allison Danzig and Peter Schwed

Four years later the Association had grown to include fifty-one member clubs who competed in association-sanctioned tournaments and a yearend Championship. By 1893, 107 clubs belonged to the Association with each and every one of them subscribing to the amateur ideal first discussed at the Fifth Avenue Hotel first annual meeting. At the same time the Executive Committee made *Music and Drama: A Journal Devoted to Sport, Music, the Drama, and Other Things* the official publication of the Association. While that publication never really covered tennis, resulting in the Association quickly finding another publication to serve as the USLTA's official organ, such short-lived action nonetheless revealed the degree to which the society types who ran the USLTA thought of tennis not so much as a competitive sport but as just one other leisure activity on their social calendars.<sup>5</sup>

In May 1882, at their first annual meeting, association members concerned themselves with the boundaries of amateurism and professionalism in the fledgling sport of lawn tennis. "None but amateurs shall be allowed to enter for any match played by this Association," members voted emphatically. Such a ruling positioned who and who was not an amateur in the early moments of the organization, both a symbolic and practical measure of the seriousness with which USLTA officials meant to patrol the social boundaries of the sport. The top of the organization, the Executive Committee of which Dr. James Dwight was elected president, reserved for themselves the ability to rule on the issue of amateur status. Throughout the end of

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eds., *The Fireside Book of Tennis: A Complete History of the Game and Its Great Players and Matches* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972 ), 15-16.

<sup>5</sup> Annals of the United States Lawn Tennis Association, typescript, n.d., Folder [no number] USLTA Development, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John's University Special Collections, Queens Campus; Allison Danzig, "Spahiristike, History of the United States Lawn Tennis Association," 15-16; "A Summer Transformation," *Music and Drama* 8, no. 205 (July 29, 1893): 4.

the nineteenth century and much of the twentieth, the most senior members in the association would use their changing definition of amateurism as the gatekeeper that opened the sport of tennis to some and kept it closed to others.<sup>6</sup>

In their first decade of existence, the USLTA laid out five basic provisions that if violated forfeited a player's amateur status and therefore removed the guilty member from the association. First, the guidelines prohibited a member from accepting any money in exchange for playing tennis for the enjoyment of others. Second, a member could not compete against a professional in any sort of public match that involved any recognition of a winner and a loser even without the involvement of money. Third, the teaching of tennis, or any other sport, fitness, or health routine for that matter, was prohibited. Fourth, a player associated with a tennis club, as all players were in the 1890s, could not remain a member of a club if the player's association at the respective club benefited the club or the player financially in any way. Fifth, a player could not work for a sporting goods company because of his or her skills in tennis or any other sport. Immediately members challenged the amateur requirements with questions such as whether or not a sports writer, employed by a newspaper but participating as a player in an association tournament, violated provisions against material "gain" from tennis, and in their replies, Association leaders such as James Dwight set the precedent of a hard-line policy against money in tennis with the flexibility on the Association's part to enforce that prohibition selectively.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Annals of the United States Lawn Tennis Association, typescript, p. 10, n.d., Folder [no number] USLTA Development, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John's University Special Collections, Queens Campus.

<sup>7</sup> F.D.T. to James Dwight, April 6, 1898, reprinted in "Questions and Answers," *American Lawn Tennis* 1, no. 3 (March 10, 1898): 43-4.

Criticism of the USLTA's draconian stance against any money in the sport grew as the game grew. The most effective critique labeled the association as classist, a claim that prompted defensiveness from Executive Committee members. In 1899, Valentine Hall, the USLTA secretary, addressed that criticism on behalf of the Association, when he published *Lawn Tennis in America*, whose central section not only defended the amateurism of the game but celebrated the aristocratic "parentage" that lawn tennis in the United States enjoyed from European court tennis. Hall went beyond royalty to draw connections between Greek and Roman Republican virtues and the character of the USLTA player-leadership who had popularized the game in America: Richard Sears, a Boston Brahmin and 1880 Newport Champion; Henry Warner Slocum, Jr., son of a Union General of the same name and reigning national champion; Robert Livingston, born into a dynasty of political leaders and financiers, himself an active member of the New York Stock Exchange at the same time he served the USLTA; Dr. James Dwight, a scion of the game both in America and during his lengthy holidays in England; Howard Taylor, Harvard graduate and distinguished lawyer; and a dozen other players of tennis talent and equally high social standing who ran the Association. Taylor's legal background prompted Hall to solicit a treatise on amateurism from the lawyer reprinted in full in the book. Taylor reminded readers that tennis had grown as a sport with laws against professionalism on the books, and that to loosen the amateur codes by obfuscation or by outright elimination would dilute the purity of tennis to the level of some other sport in the eyes of the public both at home and abroad. If people from his own privileged status faced the temptation of accepting free balls, racquets, or hotel rooms, how then could people from middle-class or working-class backgrounds resist such temptations? Keeping tennis reserved for "gentlemen," Taylor suggested, would actually protect

“the growing hybrid class” from the corrupting nature of money in sports. The amateur rules, in the eyes of the Executive Committee at least, expressed the benevolent paternalism USLTA officials believed they exhibited. These men wished to extend the social and class positions they learned and practiced in the business world to that of the tennis world.<sup>8</sup> But conflict was inevitable; this was the Gilded Age, after all.

Conflict between the United States and Spain almost killed tennis in America before it began. While the growing popularity of golf had taken some of the wind out of tennis’s sails in the mid-1890s, the war fever that followed the sinking of the Maine on February 15, 1898, led association membership to shrink from 106 clubs to 44 clubs. Just as internationalism in the form of conflict negatively affected tennis in the United States, so too did internationalism in the form of cooperation positively affect tennis at the beginning of the twentieth century. The first internationalism in tennis came back in 1885 after the USLTA leadership approved allowing foreign players to participate in the United States National tournament, yet the important moment did not come until 1897 when the St. Louisan turned Harvard tennis player Dwight Davis first voiced willingness to financially sponsor a visit from England’s top players to the United States to compete against America’s best. That offer went unaccepted on the part of the British Lawn Tennis Association, although three British players did travel to the United States on their own after they received an offer to play not in a team match but in the United States Championship at Newport, Rhode Island. The international players finished third, fourth, and fifth.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Valentine Hall, *Lawn Tennis in America* (New York: D.W. Granbery & Co., 1889), vii, 1-8, 67-69.

<sup>9</sup> Annals of the United States Lawn Tennis Association, typescript, n.d., Folder [no number] USLTA Development, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John’s University Special Collections, Queens Campus.



The excitement that private visit caused convinced Davis to redouble his efforts to inaugurate an international team competition between the British and American players. Davis further realized that such private tours would continue by foreign players unabated; better for the Association to sponsor them so that they could control the game and keep hold of what would likely prove a revenue source for the USLTA. To accomplish that objective, in 1900 Davis donated a silver trophy first called the “International Challenge Cup” but later named after its bequest the Davis Cup. The hardware incentivized the British Lawn Tennis Association to send Arthur Gore, Ernst Black, and Roper Barrett to play the one-time Harvard players Holcombe Ward, Malcolm Whitman, and Davis for the Cup. Contested on the lawns of the Longwood Cricket Club in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, the Americans swept the British. The real test came not on the court but in the second match between the British Isles and the United States. That tie took place in 1902 at the Crescent Athletic Club in Brooklyn, New York, with the Americans again victorious. Attendance was excellent at both matches, and the second Challenge could have gone either way. A rivalry blossomed, with the British winning their first Davis Cup in 1903—a victory that solidified the longevity of the competition. The Cup single-handedly enlarged the USLTA’s treasury from \$271.04 in February of 1900 to \$2,458.48 in 1904. Association membership likewise climbed to eighty-three clubs and twelve sub-associations by 1900. Attendees at the USLTA’s 1901 Annual Meeting reached the consensus that the Davis Cup “put lawn tennis on a higher plane and assured its permanency as a sport.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

That elevated position seemed constantly under threat with no foe scarier than the fledgling sporting goods industry. The explosive growth of the first truly national market for consumer goods in the final two decades of the nineteenth century left the USLTA fearing that “dealers” might get their “crack” players addicted to money in the game. From the colonial period, up through the young republic, one made, shared, or bartered for recreational equipment. In the 1850s, for the first time, cricket bats and hunting equipment went on sale in numbers noticeable enough for historians to date the beginnings of a market for sporting goods. In the 1880s and piggybacking off of the growth in baseball after the founding of the National League in 1876, major sporting goods firms such as Albert G. Spaulding’s company began to make and market bats, gloves, and all sorts of equipment in quantities big enough to help make baseball a \$10 million business in 1890. The 1890s also marked the appearance of the nation’s first truly mass manufactured good in the bicycle through its complete interchangeability of parts, that in turn propelled a bicycle bonanza that lasted until about 1900 and netted the sporting goods industry \$100 million.<sup>11</sup> Though never approaching the production levels and the payoff of baseball or bicycling, the game of tennis required equipment of just the right size and the right pricing-point for the fledgling sporting goods industry. All that was needed were contacts familiar with this new and relatively unfamiliar game, but the USLTA took steps to prevent such a partnership between its members and for-profit companies from becoming too strong. While not banning players from working for a sporting goods company, the USLTA did cap a

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<sup>11</sup> Hall, *Lawn Tennis in America*, 69; Gorn and Goldstein. *A Brief History* 45, 68, 107, 109-10; David A. Hounshell, *From the American System to Mass Production, 1800-1932: The Development of Manufacturing Technology in the United States* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 189-214; Evan Friss, *The Cycling City: Bicycles and Urban America in the 1890s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 202-4.

member's tennis goods sales at half or more of his total accounts. Likewise, tournaments could receive no sponsorship from sporting goods firms.<sup>12</sup>

Such a strong-handed move into the livelihoods of association members, not to mention the material growth of the game itself, was a bold attempt on the part of the USLTA to regain control over the explosive growth of the game in the first two decades of the twentieth century. For example, the USLTA stood alone among national tennis associations and apart from the International Lawn Tennis Federation in its prohibitions against members working for sporting goods firms. The effectiveness of such rules was another matter, however. In 1919, a full third of the thirty highest ranked male players worked for sporting goods companies. Sporting goods companies would, more often than not, grant employee-players long vacations with pay during tournament times, while the amateur rules did little to dissuade sporting goods companies who actively sought the best players to work for them.<sup>13</sup>

Ineffective rules prompted the USLTA to devise narrower restrictions. Players soon faced an age restriction of thirty-five and a minimum employment period of ten years at a sporting goods firm if they wanted to maintain USLTA tournament eligibility. A member could also lose USLTA eligibility if he or she availed themselves of any article of sportswear, shoes, or tennis gear outside of racquets and strings. Furthermore, racquets could only find their way into an Association member's hands if the member's sectional association certified the racquets direct

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<sup>12</sup> William Henry Wright, "Making Tennis Play," *Outing* 70 (April, 1917): 61-62, 64; Annals of the United States Lawn Tennis Association, typescript, n.d., Folder [no number] USLTA Development, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John's University Special Collections, Queens Campus.

<sup>13</sup> "Vincent Richards is Suspended," *American Lawn Tennis* 13, no. 2 (May 15, 1919): 43-4; Holcombe Ward to The Executive Committee, January 23, 1948, Folder [no number] USTA Amateur Rule Committee 1948, Box 14, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

from the manufacturer and restricted the amount of string the player received. The Association certified a maximum number of only six racquets when these rules came into effect after World War II, even though a top caliber player might go through a half-dozen racquets during a single match. Instead of taking the view that the growth of the American sporting goods industry could promote the growth of tennis by making sure the best American amateur players came outfitted for every match with new equipment and clothes, USLTA officials prioritized their own control over the marketing opportunities accruable by their sport's biggest personalities.<sup>14</sup>

USLTA national officials, committed to amateurism in every aspect of tennis, also balked at the rise of the sports press. The penny press papers of the antebellum and postbellum decades made a point to cover contests such as boxing popular with the working classes, thus helping to create spectator sports in the fastest growing cities of the North. The scale and the scope of spectatorship grew dramatically in the 1880s with sporting male weeklies such as Richard Fox's *National Police Gazette* selling into the hundreds of thousands of copies for issues that covered highly anticipated fights. On the other side of the class divide, magazines such as *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*, *Outing*, and *North American Review* ran articles on sports that catered to wealthy and middle-class men. For their part, city newspapers reported the latest schedules and scores on special pages dedicated exclusively to sports.<sup>15</sup> On the pages and behind the lines of these newspapers and magazines, the most prominent American tennis player of the twenties, William "Big Bill" Tilden, challenged the USLTA's amateur by-laws that barred association members from tennis journalism.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.; Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Gorn and Goldstein, *A Brief History of American Sports*, 68, 70, 109, 115, 120-1.

Tilden played a great game of tennis and wrote prose about the matches he played in the pages of glossy magazines. In 1925 the USLA threatened to ban Tilden from tennis if he refused to stop writing about his matches. The opposing sides reached an uneasy compromise not long after, in which a player could receive some monetary compensation for an article so long as he or she did not play in the tournament they planned to report on and did not promote their own tennis skills in their journalism and media productions. Despite his apology letter kowtowing to the Association, Tilden had no intention of giving up his syndicated columns in outlets such as the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *New York World*.<sup>16</sup> The Executive Committee continued to warn Tilden until his match reporting as player-captain of the 1928 Davis Cup Team embarrassed the USLTA to the degree they felt they had no recourse but to suspend Tilden on July 19th, just days before the upcoming semi-final tie against Italy “because of [Tilden] having exploited for pecuniary gain his position as a tennis player, or because of having acted in a way detrimental to the welfare of the game.” The USLTA Amateur Rule Committee and Executive Committee may have congratulated themselves on the fairness of their ruling, but the fact they issued a six-page press release that detailed the string of events leading up to Tilden’s Davis Cup suspension revealed just how much they realized a significant number of American sports fans might find the Association’s amateur principle absurd if its enforcement actually meant sidelining the

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<sup>16</sup> William Tilden to the Members of the Executive Committee of the United States Tennis Association, August 1, 1925, Folder [no number] Tilden Controversy, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John’s University Special Collections, Queens Campus; Tilden Articles Appeared in the N.Y. World on the Following Dates, typescript, n.d., Folder [no number] Tilden Controversy, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John’s University Special Collections, Queens Campus; Wireless Messages Between [unintelligible, but presumably Holcombe] Ward, President Collom and Advisory Committee, July 9, 1928, Folder [no number] Tilden Controversy, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John’s University Special Collections, Queens Campus.

country's top tennis talent from the most important international competition. The USLTA viewed Tilden's defiance as an internal membership issue. The outcry raised by sportswriters made the issue much more public than the USLTA wanted.<sup>17</sup>

The rising popularity of tennis quickly escalated Tilden's case from an internal issue to a national and international brouhaha. After defeating Italy on July 22, 1928, the United States Davis Cup team prepared to face off against the French champions in the Davis Cup Final beginning on the 29th. The French Tennis Federation knew Tilden's popularity and lobbied Myron T. Herrick, the U.S. Ambassador to France, to confront the USLTA about Tilden's ban. Herrick agreed with the French Tennis Federation's argument that the USLTA's ban on players as paid writers—a strict rule the ILTF had not adopted—amounted to a “selfish” position apart from the thirty-two other nations that played in the Davis Cup. Herrick worked to convince USLTA President Collom to permit Tilden to participate in the match against France. With such controversy swirling, the United States lost pathetically to France, and the USLTA promptly re-suspended Tilden from Association-sanctioned tournaments. Howls of protests from within USLTA member clubs and from sports fans reached the Association's national offices in the form of letters supporting Tilden and urging the USLTA to reconsider their ban. For his part, Tilden appealed his suspension while he served it, returned to amateur tennis in February of

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<sup>17</sup> Edward Moss to Samuel Collom, July 19, 1928, Folder [no number] Tilden Controversy, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John's University Special Collections, Queens Campus; Myrick Herrick to Joseph Wear, July 23, 1928, Folder [no number] Tilden Controversy, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John's University Special Collections, Queens Campus; Myrick Herrick to Joseph Wear, July 28, 1928, Folder [no number] Tilden Controversy, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John's University Special Collections, Queens Campus; United States Lawn Tennis Association, Press Release Tilden USLATA, dated August 24, 1928, Folder [no number] Tilden Controversy, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John's University Special Collections, Queens Campus.

1929, and continued to write and spar with the USLTA before turning professional at the end of 1930. In a later irony indicative of the 1928 suspension and the sources of the support he did and did not receive, Tilden continued to garner more support from the tennis federations of other nations than from his own country's association.<sup>18</sup>

The significance of the 1928 Tilden controversy was twofold. Concretely, the USLTA wanted financial control over the tennis talent in America, but the 1928 Davis Cup ban also highlighted another serious threat to amateur standards in a sport whose international footprint had grown to the point that the best players spent much of their years not only playing tennis but competing in other countries. USLTA officials could not regulate players representing the Association abroad to the degree that they could in the United States, because in America all of the clubs that hosted tournaments belonged to the USLTA. That belonging gave the Amateur Rule Committee and the National Executive Committee eyes and ears at every match. Understanding the impossibility of enforcing a ban against accepting money in other countries governed by different tennis associations, the USLTA enacted an "eight tournament rule" in which a player would have to pay their own way in all but eight tennis events a year. Given that the United States tournament calendar alone totaled dozens of matches, that rule essentially meant that any foreign tournament a player traveled to could not provide the player with travel, lodging, or meal expenses because the player would have already exhausted his or her tournament expense quota domestically. The Amateur Rule Committee and Executive

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<sup>18</sup> Edward Moss to Members of the Executive Committee, July 26, 1928, Folder [no number] Tilden Controversy, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John's University Special Collections, Queens Campus; William Tilden to Samuel Collum, August 17, 1928, Folder [no number] Tilden Reinstatement Correspondence, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John's University Special Collections, Queens Campus; George Lott, "William Tatum Tilden," *World Tennis* 13 (December 1956): 17.

Committee members congratulated themselves on another compromise between the pecuniary temptations facing players and the necessity of maintaining the integrity of amateur sports. USLTA officers suggested that the absence of specific penalties and the discretion the Executive Committee could exercise in not punishing certain players from extending their season at certain tournaments would stave off flagrant violations of the Amateur by-laws; but in reality, violations proliferated with such selective enforcement. For example, in 1948 the United States' best doubles team of William "Billy" Talbert and Gardner Mulloy asked the USLTA to grant special permission for the payment of expenses related to the *Rio Plata* Tournament in Buenos Aires, despite the fact that the tournament both took place outside the normal tournament calendar for which the USLTA authorized expenses and exceeded the number of eight events for which Talbert and Mulloy had already received expenses paid. Members of the Amateur Rule Committee griped about Talbert and Mulloy "living off the game" but allowed the players to take the money.<sup>19</sup>

One of the principal ways tournament players "lived off the game" was by instructing less capable players. Teaching and coaching could keep a top player on the court in order to keep their own game in shape while at the same time creating relationships with wealthy members of private clubs all too eager to hit a few balls with the country's best racketeers. The USLTA did not allow members to earn income from teaching tennis—be it at a university, in a physical education class, park district, or private club—until the 1950s. Officially, there were no paid tennis teachers in America before 1910. Through the teens and mid-twenties, some players

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<sup>19</sup> Minutes of Amateur Rule Committee Meeting, February 16, 1948, Folder [no number] USTA Amateur Rule Committee 1948, Box 14, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.



accepted money, club dues, and travel expenses under the table in exchange for teaching wealthy club members. That pay for instruction arrangement became official in 1927, when the Professional Lawn Tennis Association (PLTA) formed after a meeting in New York.<sup>20</sup> USLTA officials so abhorred the idea that anyone should get paid to play tennis, even if payment was made to members of a different organization whose sole purpose existed to promote the livelihood of tennis instructors and thus grow the game, that the Association Executive Committee banned any competition between USLTA amateurs and PLTA teaching professionals. As with all of their “no money in the game” rules, the Amateur Rules Committee enforced the disassociation between PLTA and USLTA members selectively so that when the United States Military asked the Association President Lawrence Baker for his approval of inter-service matches that involved both professionals and amateurs, the Amateur Rule Committee gave the military the Association’s blessing.<sup>21</sup>

That lax enforcement had less to do with USLTA benevolence and more to do with the reality of how tennis had worked in America from the very beginning. Many clubs essentially sponsored top players whose association with the club brought prestige and potentially new members. Since the turn of the century, many clubs had ignored a player’s class background so long as he or she delivered on the courts. Local clubs preferred flexibility; the national

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<sup>20</sup> “An Interview with Colonel James H. Bishop,” *World Tennis* 3 (October, 1955): 16; Edward B. Dewhurst, *The Science of Lawn Tennis* (Philadelphia: Innes and Sons, 1910), 4.; Charles M. Wood, “Professional Progress,” in William P. Jacobs ed., *Tennis: Builder of Citizenship* (South Carolina: Jacobs Press, 1943), 200-204.

<sup>21</sup> Maj. Thomas Cassady to Lawrence Baker, February 19, 1948, Folder [no number] USTA Amateur Rule Committee 1948, Box 14, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Holcombe War to Maj. Thomas Cassady, March 11, 1948, Folder [no number] USTA Amateur Rule Committee 1948, Box 14, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

association preferred policy. As the profile of the game increased, clubs poured more resources into the practice time and travel expenses of their top players while forgetting to mention this support to the USLTA. These omissions flew in the face of USLTA rules that since the 1880s had strived for a complete accounting of players' tournament expenses. USLTA officials had floated a ban against all player expenses without success, and thus found themselves constantly checking in with private clubs about members' expense accounts. Unreliable assistance in enforcing player expense accounts exemplified the Executive Committee's and the USLTA's Amateur Rule Committee's heavy reliance upon private sports clubs enforcing rules that often hurt the member clubs' bottom lines despite the national office's claims to the contrary. Counting a famous player as a club member was more important to most club managers than keeping a USLTA official in the national New York offices happy. The Association's top amateur tennis talent felt the game "owed them a living," and all but the most genteel of club members were prepared to provide them with that living, albeit with a nod and a wink, while simultaneously espousing the "high ideals of sportsmanship and amateurism" the Association stood for, wrote Holcombe Ward at the conclusion of his decade as USLTA President.<sup>22</sup>

The USLTA's commitment to amateurism created more opportunities for tennis players willing to play by the Association's rules. By 1908 the USLTA sanctioned ninety tournaments in the summer season alone. Leaders in the USLTA national office formed a committee that strenuously advocated junior development by pressuring reluctant private clubs to host junior tournaments and matches. The Association also advocated for the creation of an intercollegiate

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<sup>22</sup> Holcombe Ward to Tournament Committee Chairman, January 8, 1948, Folder [no number] USTA Amateur Rule Committee 1948, Box 14, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

tennis league that many universities embraced. For instances, by 1908 Harvard claimed a forty-court facility at Soldiers Field in Boston. A dozen years later, Charles S. Garland of Yale won the first Intercollegiate Championship endorsed by the Association. The USLTA also encouraged new players both abroad and at home. On May 1, 1908, the Mexico City Country Club hosted the first Lawn Tennis Championship in Mexican history with a dozen or so of America's best players traveling south of the border for the tournament—thanks in large part to the USLTA's encouragement and financial assistance. Unlike opportunities found in many team sports, women could find tennis matches and tournaments endorsed by the Association and covered by the USLTA's official publication. "These women can play tennis, tennis such as the novice would marvel at, swift and accurate and, indeed, far superior to the game that the ordinary man who thinks that he can play some, is capable of," said one such report on a 1908 women's indoor tournament in New York City. Players in most parts of the country could also find a tournament to test themselves from rural California to the Northeast.<sup>23</sup>

Such opportunities came with a cost for participants. Players needed to submit to the Association's desire for control over every aspect of tennis. Nowhere did that exercise of control appear in starker terms than within the Eastern Lawn Tennis Association that dominated the national course of amateur tennis from the start. While the ELTA officially formed in 1922,

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<sup>23</sup> "List of Tournaments," *American Lawn Tennis* 2, no. 1 (April 15, 1908): 19-20; F. Dean McClusky, "The E.L.T.A. Junior Development Program," typescript, n.d., Folder [no number] ELTA – History including Constitution, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John's University Special Collections, Queens Campus; "Harvard and Princeton Interscholastic," *American Lawn Tennis* 2, no. 2 (May 15, 1908): 30; Julian S. Myrick to E. L. Lounsbery, June 6, 1941, Folder [no number] ELTA – History including Constitution, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John's University Special Collections, Queens Campus; "Home Players Win in Mexico," *American Lawn Tennis* 2, no. 2 (May 15, 1908): 36-39; "Indoor Tournament Ends Brilliantly," *American Lawn Tennis* 2, no. 2 (May 15, 1908): 35; "Ojai Valley Tournament," *American Lawn Tennis* 2, no. 2 (May 15, 1908) 40-41.

tennis officials from around New York City first organized themselves in the Metropolitan Lawn Tennis League on March 15, 1904. That organization consisted of the West Side Tennis Club, the New York Lawn Tennis Club, Kings County Tennis Club, Montclair Athletic Club, New York Athletic Club, Crescent Athletic Club, and the Englewood Field, with the League functioning until 1912 as an arbiter of tournaments and matches between the clubs' teams and players. A similar league appeared four years later in the Metropolitan Association that organized a Round Robin Tournament among Metropolitan tennis clubs. In 1914, the West Side Tennis Club found a "permanent home" in Forest Hills, New York, and that same year the Club hosted the Davis Cup Challenge Round between the United States and Australia. The financial success of that match prompted the relocation of the National Championships from the Newport Casino to Forest Hills for the 1915 tournament.<sup>24</sup>

The money made at popular events seldom reached far beyond a narrow orbit of clubs clustered along the Atlantic Seaboard. The few officers and permanent employees such as Field Secretary Paul B. Williams originated from those parts of the country and preferred to funnel dollars back to the clubs to which they belonged. At about the time of the 1915 Forest Hills Championship, the ELTA began a junior development program for players within their section funded by a combination of national and sectional monies. The advantage of hosting the big tournaments and running the Association's day-to-day business mattered a great deal when combined with the Association's refusal to grant proxy voters from clubs who—because of their

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<sup>24</sup> William M. Fischer, "History of the Eastern Lawn Tennis Association and Previous Metropolitan Organizations," typescript, n.d., Folder [no number] ELTA – History including Constitution, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John's University Special Collections, Queens Campus; "Eastern Lawn Tennis Association," typescript, January 11, 1947, Folder [no number] ELTA – History including Constitution, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John's University Special Collections, Queens Campus.

location far afield from New York City (the Midwest, for example)—could not send representatives to Association meetings. A general pattern of setting agenda business at the Annual meeting itself rather than informing member clubs ahead of time via the organization's official publication became commonplace. Those policies allowed New York City clubs to exercise disproportional control over the national organization and ensured that the tournaments that offered the highest rating points, and thus attracted the best players, who in turn brought in the most paying spectators, stayed in the New York metropolitan area and kept the coffers of the host clubs full when compared with clubs in other regions of the country.<sup>25</sup>

World War I disrupted that pattern. The Association's "Patriotic Tournaments" earned money that did not go directly to the host clubs but went to a general fund for the War Department. Nonetheless, at the end of World War I, the USLTA Eastern Section regained more than its former strength by meeting on March 12, 1921, where thirty-four clubs passed a Constitution and By-Laws that chartered the New York Lawn Tennis Association. Less than a year later, on February 4, 1922, the USLTA's membership accepted that body into the national association at the annual meeting. While not officially called the "Eastern" Lawn Tennis Association until February 5, 1927, the New York clubs effectively controlled their sectional association, the national association, and by extension the game of tennis for the entire nation

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<sup>25</sup> Julian S. Myrick to E. L. Lounsbery, June 6, 1941, Folder [no number] ELTA – History including Constitution, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John's University Special Collections, Queens Campus; Dean McClusky, "The E.L.T.A. Junior Development Program," typescript, n.d., Folder [no number] ELTA – History including Constitution, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John's University Special Collections, Queens Campus.

through the 1920s.<sup>26</sup> At the same time, the game was going in a different direction across the country.

Since the 1880s, wealth and youth had moved into California. Tennis grew alongside this migration of people with capital. The game first came to Southern California around 1880 when the Canadian William H. Young settled in Santa Monica after having attended Oxford University. Young befriended the Allen family who—on their own holiday travels—returned to their home with one of Major Walter Wingfield’s lawn tennis kits. Two years after Young and the Allen’s first match, tennis enthusiasts started the San Gabriel Lawn Tennis Club, the earliest effort to organize California tennis along the lines of the East Coast Cricket Clubs. Mainly women, the club sponsored their first tournament in June of 1882. Over the next five years, several other clubs sprouted, including the Boyle Heights Club, the first tennis facility in urban Los Angeles. The three most important of clubs in the area, Casa Blanca Club of Riverside, the San Gabriel Club, and the Pasadena Club, chartered the Southern California Tennis Association in March of 1887. The following year, the California Lawn Tennis Club of San Francisco put on the Pacific Coast Championship tournament on the grounds of the Hotel Del Monte in Monterey, California, marking the first time local tennis clubs hosted a tournament sanctioned by the USLTA. The California Clubs mirrored their East Coast contemporaries by hosting more small

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<sup>26</sup> “Eastern Lawn Tennis Association,” typescript, January 11, 1947, Folder [no number] ELTA – History including Constitution, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John’s University Special Collections, Queens Campus; Clarence Hobart to Stephen Wallis Merrihew, “The Basis of Representation,” *American Lawn Tennis* 2, no. 1 (April 15, 1908): 18.

tournaments and standardizing play on their uniquely year round courts. In the words of the Association's annals, "tennis had officially crossed the continent."<sup>27</sup>

One of the earliest organizations for lawn tennis on the West Coast began July 3, 1890, when a group of Bay Area tennis clubs formed the Pacific States Lawn Tennis Association (PSLTA). Much like on the East Coast, the PSLTA formed with a primary purpose of standardizing the rules of the game among different member clubs, but the PSLTA differed in the geographic scope in which it sought to standardize the game. "Any Lawn Tennis Club in the States of California, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, the Territories of Utah and Arizona and British Columbia, shall be considered eligible to membership," read the PSLTA's Constitution. The Association's treasurer collected \$5 in dues for clubs whose membership fell below fifty players and an additional \$5 in dues for each additional fifty members of a club's membership. Monies collected supplemented the various clubs' hosting of tournaments and interclub matches like on the East Coast.<sup>28</sup>

The PSLTA's by-laws detailed essentially the same definition of amateurism in force on the other side of the country. A player could not compete in a PSLTA-sponsored event unless he or

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<sup>27</sup> Carey McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books, 1983), 150; "California Tennis," *American Lawn Tennis* (January 12, 1889): 46; H. Archie Richardson, "California Tennis Dates Back to 1870's," *Christian Science Monitor*, April 28, 1948, un-paginated; "Championship of the Pacific Coast," Lawn Tennis Tournament Entry Form, July 4, 1888, scrapbook, LA Tennis Club Archive; C.R. Yates, "Lawn Tennis on the Pacific Coast," *Outing* (July 1890): 271-9; Annals of the United States Lawn Tennis Association, typescript, n.d., Folder [no number] USLTA Development, William M. Fisher Lawn Tennis Collection, St. John's University Special Collections, Queens Campus.

<sup>28</sup> Pacific States Lawn Tennis Association, *Constitution and Bylaws* (San Francisco: F.M.L. Peters & Co, 1890), Folder Pacific States Lawn Tennis Association, Box Pacific S-Pan, San Francisco Ephemera Collection, California Historical Society, San Francisco, California. PSLTA founding clubs included: the California Lawn Tennis Club of San Francisco, the Lakeside Lawn Tennis Club of Oakland, the East Oakland Lawn Tennis of East Oakland, the University Lawn Tennis Club of Berkeley, the Sausalito Lawn Tennis Club of Sausalito, the Belle Vue Lawn Tennis Club of Alameda, the Versailles Lawn Tennis Club of Alameda, the Alameda Lawn Tennis Club of Alameda, the San Rafael Lawn Tennis Club of San Rafael, and the San Jose Lawn Tennis Club of San Jose.

she belonged to a PSLTA Club, and he or she could not belong to a PSLTA Club if the player had ever “taught any sport as one of his ordinary means of livelihood.” Following much the same rules as clubs on the East Coast did not stop clubs in the American West from expressing pride in their region in other ways. They held an annual championship attended by hundreds who paid 50 cents for day pass admittance. PSLTA member clubs partnered with local sporting good firms such as F.M.L. Peters & Co. of San Francisco to manufacture racquets “expressly for the Pacific Coast trade.” Racquets with names such as the “Pacific” featured “Oriental Gut” strings touted as the best string for both playability and the economy of Pacific Rim Trade. Taken as a whole, throughout the first two decades of the game, California tennis associations exercised a far greater tolerance of money in tennis in their game than did the associations on the other coast, even going so far as to allow some competition between teaching professionals and amateur champions, such as when professional Joe Daily defeated Summer Hardy 7-5, 8-6 on the courts of San Francisco’s California Club. Growth of the game of tennis on the West Coast went hand in hand with the economic growth of places like the Bay Area.<sup>29</sup>

The westward migration of the sport of tennis gained further momentum around 1900 and reflected larger social migrations of people to places such as Southern California. During the first decade of the twentieth century, Los Angeles’ population tripled from 102,479 to just over

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<sup>29</sup> Pacific States Lawn Tennis Association, *Constitution and Bylaws* (San Francisco: F.M.L. Peters & Co, 1890), Folder Pacific States Lawn Tennis Association, Box Pacific S-Pan, San Francisco Ephemera Collection, California Historical Society, San Francisco, California; Stephen S.B. to G S. Smith, postcard, Folder Tennis 1, Box73, C.S. Recreation – Tennis Collection, California Historical Society, San Francisco, California; John James Smith postal card, Folder Pastime Tennis Club, Box San Diego Co., California Ephemera Collection, California Historical Society, San Francisco, California; Pacific States Lawn Tennis Association Championship Men’s Doubles ticket, Folder 200, Box 275, California Ephemera Collection, Alfred Young Research Library, University of California Los Angeles, California; “California Tennis,” *American Lawn Tennis* 2, no. 1 (January 12, 1899): 14.



300,000. The beautiful climate, an agriculturally productive landscape, and a budding urban economy provided city boosters with plenty of enticements to dangle in front of potential settlers.<sup>30</sup> The physical environment in particular impacted the materiality of the tennis courts in the West, where a Mediterranean climate made smooth lawns of green grass scarce. After the first games on dirt lots, private clubs and later municipalities built courts with a concrete surface because year-round warm weather prohibited lawn courts.<sup>31</sup> Beyond the steeper upfront cost, hard-courts were a better investment because they required less maintenance, lasted longer, and could be built on ground unsuitable for grass-courts. The materiality of the concrete courts produced a higher bounce of the ball, allowing players to adopt a different style of play than what worked on the lawns of the East Coast. Rather than the popular under-spin shots common on grass, hard-court players favored flat or topspin shots—that is, shots that either moved the ball across the net relatively parallel to the ground or lifted the ball high over the net before the spin brought it quickly down on the opponent’s side of the court. To best accomplish the desired ball-flight, players shifted their grip over to the fourth, fifth, or even sixth racquet bevel. The revolutionary hand placement became so popular with the hard-court players of Southern California that champions and tennis writers such as Bill Tilden came to call it the “western grip.” A Philadelphia native, Tilden advocated the Eastern grip because of his own success in winning the East Coast lawn court tournaments with a grip better suited to low skidding shots

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<sup>30</sup> Federal Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration, *Los Angeles in the 1930s: The WPA Guide to the City of Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 49-50, 74; Kevin Starr, *Material Dreams: Southern California through the 1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 133.

<sup>31</sup> Richardson, “California Tennis Dates Back”; Yates, “Lawn Tennis on the Pacific Coast,” 271-9; “A Program of Recreation the Whole Year Through,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 3, 1928, p. C18.

common on grass courts.<sup>32</sup> In short, the material conditions of the court established the styles of players hailing from different regions of the country.

What Tilden failed to note was that Eastern USLTA sections tried to hold on to their control over the game through the surface of their courts. Through a stranglehold on the grass-court summer tournament schedule where players earned the most ranking points, the USLTA leadership kept themselves relevant long after the rise of California tennis as the world's epicenter of competitive players, thanks primarily to the year-round competition afforded by the weather.<sup>33</sup>

California also held an abundance of open space for the construction of parks and tennis courts when compared with the more densely populated Eastern Seaboard. While San Francisco likely suffered the same parsimoniousness on some public improvements and wastefulness on others that characterized the budgets of cities in Progressive Era America, the Bay Area nonetheless got big parks built for their citizenry that afforded recreation for everyone who visited. In the late nineteenth century the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department operated a dozen or more courts in Golden Gate Park alone that allowed players of any income level to hit a tennis ball. By the 1910s, tennis courts even appeared 4,213 feet up the side of Mount Hamilton near San Jose in Santa Clara County, where astronomers played the sport when not gazing at the stars through their telescopes at the Lick Observatory. Far from widespread when compared to the tennis court building boom of the late 1930s, the comparative abundance

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<sup>32</sup> William T. Tilden, *The Art of Lawn Tennis* (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1921), 29-30.

<sup>33</sup> "Tournament Schedule," *American Lawn Tennis* (May 1950): 25, 27-28; "Tennis Factory: Perry Jones is Champion Producer of Champions," *Life Magazine*, August 7, 1950, pp. 98-102, 105.

of California courts prior to the Great Depression nonetheless set the West Coast apart from the East Coast and the Midwest in the first few decades of the game of tennis in America.<sup>34</sup>

Similar to the evolution of the game on the East Coast, private universities played a role in growing tennis in Southern California. One such institution was the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, whose most famous early twentieth-century tennis star was Ellsworth Vines. Vines was born in Los Angeles in September of 1911 to tennis parents who enjoyed both the readily available courts in Southern California and the blissful weather as compared to the East Coast. Between 1877, the first year the U.S. Weather Bureau measured annual temperature and seasonal rainfall, and 1930, the average daily temperature in Los Angeles hovered between sixty and sixty-five degrees. In the same fifty-year period, rainfall exceeded twenty inches of rain only five times. This remarkable weather made Southern California a veritable Eden for outdoor activity, of which the Vineses and thousands of others took full advantage. Ellsworth's father gave the boy his first racquet at the age of five. Over the next dozen years Vines played in many of the local tournaments for students in Southland. His success in high school tennis secured him an offer to play for the Trojans, where he excelled during his freshmen and sophomore seasons. Toward the end of his second year, Vines had played so dominantly that he attracted the backing of the Southern California Tennis Association Director, Perry T. Jones, who endorsed Vines for

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<sup>34</sup> Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement*, 83, 175, 205, 304; Terrence McDonald, *The Parameters of Urban Fiscal Policy: Socioeconomic Change and Political Culture in San Francisco, 1860-1906* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 47-48, 138, 146, 174-75, 178-9, 208, 216, 219, 221; "Lawn Tennis at G.G. Park," postcard, Folder Golden Gate Park, Box SC, San Francisco Photo Collection, California Historical Society, San Francisco, California; "Playing Tennis in Winter Time," postcard, Folder Golden Gate Park, Box SC, San Francisco Photo Collection, California Historical Society, San Francisco, California; "2085 – Tennis Court," postcard, Folder Golden Gate Park, Box SC, San Francisco Photo Collection, California Historical Society, San Francisco, California; Mary Lea Heger Shane Interview, July 18, 1968, Oral History Collection, Special Collections University of California Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, California.

a spot on the roster of the 1932 Davis Cup team. Vines accepted. He left the collegiate tennis that had helped make him match-tough in order to begin international competition.<sup>35</sup>

Another important institution that developed tennis players in California was Occidental College, which produced later California singles champion and millionaire Bel Air East Los Angeles real estate mogul Alphonzo E. Bell.<sup>36</sup> While exceptional male champions like Bell existed and went out East to play in the major grass court events, most Californians and Americans still considered tennis “a woman’s game” before the turn of the century.<sup>37</sup> The gendering of the sport began to change with cross-continental competition between Eastern Ivy League men and their hosts on the Pacific Coast. Dwight F. Davis, one the Harvard University players who made the California trip, was particularly impressed with the stimulating competition between players from different sectionals. Returning East during the middle of the America’s Cup sailing races, Davis realized the potential for starting a transnational tennis competition along the same lines as the sectional matches in which he had participated. Back in Boston, he met with USLTA President Dr. James Dwight. His interest piqued, Dwight contacted his British counterpart. A year later in 1900, an American and English team played one another for the claim to a sterling silver cup Davis had commissioned for the match. The personal and national pride of the male-dominated USLTA executive board soon elevated the Davis Cup to

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<sup>35</sup> Ellsworth Vines Oral History, Oral History Collection, ITHF; Dr. Ford A. Carpenter, Consulting Meteorologist for the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, “Temperature and Rainfall at Los Angeles, California,” (Wolfer Prg., Co., Inc., Los Angeles), n.p., reprinted in Program to the 1932 Olympic Games titled *Olympic Games, July 30 to August 14, 1932, Los Angeles County, California*, California History Section, California State Library, Sacramento, call #cF868.L804.

<sup>36</sup> John O. Pohlmann, “Alphonzo E. Bell: A Biography: Part I,” *Southern California Quarterly* 46, no. 3 (September 1964): 198. Bell was also one of the half-dozen founders of the Los Angeles Tennis Club two decades later.

<sup>37</sup> James. F. J. Archibald, “Lawn Tennis in California,” *The Overland Monthly* (October 1892): 363-76.

the pedestal of primary focus for the organization's competitive player development efforts. More than two decades passed before the dominant ladies champion, Hazel Hotchkiss Whitman, convinced the USLTA and British Lawn Tennis Association (BLTA) leadership of the need for an International match for women. In 1923, British and American players competed for bragging rights and Wightman's sterling vase.<sup>38</sup> While the Wightman Cup resembled the Davis Cup in almost every way, the twenty-three years separating the start of the two competitions shifted the USLTA's earliest focus away from growing tennis as a leisurely game equally enjoyed by women and men toward a new and more masculine sport defined by increasingly structured competition.

Competition often took the form of city versus city in events such as the inter-city Church Cup. Victories on the tennis court for teams made up of hometown champions were a way for local business elites—who supported the teams financially, often captained the teams, and sometimes played on the squads—to mimic victories in the capital markets. First founded in 1918, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston fielded teams that competed for the Church Cup in a multiday contest. Teams traveled with substantial entourages, and the contests became opportunities for visitors to the host club to critique and measure the local hospitality and, by extension, the economic growth of the host city. While the courts on which the matches took place were privately owned by the members of the host club, the all-hometown composition of the squads and the fact that they were amateur players not beholden to play for whatever side

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<sup>38</sup> "Lawn Tennis in the Bahamas," *American Lawn Tennis* 2, no. 1 (April 15, 1908): 12-13; Dwight F. Davis, "The Establishment of an International Trophy: A Step Toward Placing Tennis Competition on a Universal Basis," in *Fifty Years of Lawn Tennis in the United States* (New York: USLTA, 1931), 22; Biographical entry for inductee Hazel Hotchkiss Wightman, Biographical Files Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

paid them the most money gave these matches higher status than many professional contests during the twenties—more on par with university football during this halcyon decade of amateur athletics.<sup>39</sup>

Nowhere was intercity and intra-regional rivalry more explicit than in fights over Davis Cup hosting rights. As the oldest section with the greatest percentage of wealthy members, the USLTA's East Coast section controlled American tennis before 1941. Officials from the Northeast and the Mid-Atlantic wanted tennis's largest international competition played at clubs to which they belonged for reasons of both pride and the publicity their clubs garnered by playing host to such a high profile sporting event. Club members looked forward to the inquiries made by potential new members after they saw, heard, or read about the Davis Cup matches. Many of the USLTA's East Coast Sections most senior members belonged to the West Side Tennis Club, making it no coincidence that those courts traditionally hosted the Davis Cup Challenge Round when the matches took place in the United States. These same officials staunchly opposed letting another club host the tie (match) even when that club made a significantly better financial offer to the Association for the rights to hold the competition on their courts. Onetime USLTA President, Slew Hester, then a USLTA delegate from the Southern Section, remembered casting the tiebreaking vote to accept a \$100,000 offer from a Cleveland Tennis Club to host the Davis Cup—\$25,000 more than the best deal the Westside Club offered. Eastern USLTA delegates and Westside Tennis Club members did not forget Hester's vote.

“You have pulled the ivy off of Westside walls,” they remarked, not long before they informed

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<sup>39</sup> “Fourth Annual Church Cup Contest: New York Overwhelms both Boston and Philadelphia—Kumagae Beats Williams and Wallace Johnson Downs Kumagae,” *American Lawn Tennis* (June 15, 1921): 106-7; Francis Townshend Hunter Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, RI.

Hester that he was not welcome to make use of their locker room facilities during a tournament.<sup>40</sup>

By the second decade of the twentieth century, California made a strong claim as the producer of the greatest number of talented tennis players in the country. Whereas in the late 1880s through the mid-1890s, tennis in the American West had suffered from geography that placed lawn tennis clubs too far apart for the best players from different cities to compete against one another on a regular basis, by 1900 improvement in transportation infrastructure allowed for not just greater competition among players in the West but yearly trips between “Pacific Coast stars” and their peers along the Atlantic Coast. By 1908, the USLTA national office and Eastern Sections sent their best players to compete in the Pacific Championship only to lose in the early rounds to middling players by California’s standards. Lady players from California fared even better overall than their male counterparts. In 1899 Marion Jones won the National Championship and retained her singles title in 1902. After having won all the major tournaments in the United States, in 1905 May Sutton, who had learned tennis on a court built by her father on their Pasadena Ranch, traveled to England and became the first American to win Wimbledon—man or woman. California women dominated the next decade of American tennis with Hazel Hotchkiss of San Francisco, Florence Sutton of Pasadena, and Mary Browne of Los Angeles beating all comers. Champions certainly came from other USLTA sections, but by the

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<sup>40</sup> Slew Hester Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, RI.

early 1920s the most competitive tennis matches in America often involved players from Southern California versus players from the Bay Area.<sup>41</sup>

Those players both benefited from the organization of the California Tennis Associations and improved the ability of those associations to function by enhancing the prestige of the clubs that made up those associations. The most important of these associations in terms of money, players, and power was the Southern California Tennis Association (SCTA). A weak version of the SCTA had existed in an unincorporated form since 1887, but the SCTA came into its own as an influential tennis body on May 14, 1919, when tennis enthusiasts from Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Riverside, San Diego, Imperial, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Kern, and Ventura Counties met to elect directors for their newly incorporated nonprofit. These men had found relying on numerous tennis clubs and local groups unwieldy in scheduling tournaments and matches; avoiding “conflicting dates” thus proved a primary impetus in the formation of the SCTA.<sup>42</sup>

A more important reason soon became apparent with the shifting character of social clubs in America. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, private groups such as the Pacific Coast Sportsman’s Club featured a full spectrum of athletics, games, and hobbies to attract members of high social standing regardless of their personal interests. By the early 1910s, and even more so thanks to antebellum economic prosperity, there existed a class of *nouveau*

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<sup>41</sup> *Growth of Lawn Tennis in California* (San Francisco: Wright & Dixon, 1918), no pagination; “Stage Finals in Tennis Tourney,” *Los Angeles Herald*, July 30, 1921, p. A14; “Another California Prodigy,” *American Lawn Tennis* 18, no. 3 (June 15, 1924): 14.

<sup>42</sup> Articles of Incorporation of the Southern California Tennis Association, GC1145 #22140, Seaver Center for Western History Research, Los Angeles County Natural History Museum, Los Angeles, California.



*riche* without the same degree of deference to genteel tradition associated with older sports clubs. Clubs no longer operated simply as a place for the leisured to meet and develop solidarity among their class because, just like in the economy as a whole, competition had grown fierce between different clubs competing for members and their money. Newer clubs thus tended to offer a more limited range of athletics and activities—albeit in a more specialized and focused way so as to attract people passionate about one certain activity. That focus meant tennis-specific clubs—rather than sporting clubs that happened to offer tennis—sprouted all over the country. For example, tennis clubs formed from Azusa to Balboa to Santa Monica in Southern California. Even with clubs that primarily focused on offering tennis to their members, a degree of diversity of purpose existed. Whereas the Azusa Tennis Association helped members organize social tennis matches, the Santa Monica Club Company tried to operate as a for-profit real estate development corporation whose subscribers wanted to see the game of tennis grow in Southern California for the mixed reasons of pecuniary gain and the pleasures found in playing the game. In either case, older clubs such as the Pacific Sportsmen’s Club that did not adapt to the new needs of newer potential members closed their doors by the mid-1920s.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Articles of Incorporation of Pacific Coast Sportsmen’s Club, GC1145.1 #31970, Seaver Center for Western History Research, Los Angeles County Natural History Museum, Los Angeles, California; Warren Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2003), 78, 112; Sven Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850-1896* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 130-1, 238-9, 247, 299; Articles of Incorporation of the Azusa Tennis Association, GC1145 #10896, Seaver Center for Western History Research, Los Angeles County Natural History Museum, Los Angeles, California; Articles of Incorporation of the Santa Monica Tennis Club Company, GC1145 #16140, Seaver Center for Western History Research, Los Angeles County Natural History Museum, Los Angeles, California; Articles of Incorporation of the Balboa Palisades Club, GC11415.1 #31981, Seaver Center for Western History Research, Los Angeles County Natural History Museum, Los Angeles, California; Application for Dissolution of Pacific Coast Sportsmen’s Club, , GC1145.1 #31970, Seaver Center for Western History Research, Los Angeles County Natural History Museum, Los Angeles, California.

The Southern California Tennis Association succeeded in growing their memberships where many other sporting and tennis clubs failed because of the overlap in that organization and the Los Angeles Tennis Club (LATC) founded by some of the leaders of the SCTA. A.C. Way, who helped start the Los Angeles Tennis Club, chaired the meeting that formed the Southern California Tennis Association. Roland Reinke likewise served as a founding director of both organizations, and the rest of the SCTA's nine founding directors all frequented the LATC's courts. The Los Angeles Tennis Club got its start in October of 1920 when, with eyes toward attracting the Davis Cup tie to Southern California, a half dozen community leaders and past tennis champions purchased five and a half square acres of unsurveyed land just south of what would become Santa Monica Boulevard. The Club's first directors—Thomas Bundy, Nat Browne, Trowbridge Hendrick, Chester Lyday, Roland Reinke, Simpson Sinsabaugh, and Claude Wayne—were moneyed men of great influence in the national tennis scene. Bundy, for example, had made the finals of the United States Singles Championship in 1910, won the United States National Doubles Title in 1912, 1913, and 1914, competed in the Davis Cup, and married May Sutton—the most successful player of her cohort. Nat Browne, himself a fine player, and Mary Browne, America's first real professional player who lost to Suzanne Lenglen in the first professional tennis tour in 1926 and 1927, were siblings. As the president of the SCTA in 1920, Browne saw the necessity for a grand tennis club rather than several smaller ones, so he coaxed his six fellow investors into paying \$11,000 for the land out of which they, three years later, sold a third for \$70,000. With those earnings the group built two courts along Melrose and invited roughly forty local players in chartering the Club in 1925. From the beginning, members envisioned the Los Angeles Tennis Club as a place where the game's best

would compete. Before they built a clubhouse, locker rooms, or more courts, the Club constructed bleachers capable of seating 530 people along Melrose Avenue. That was the intention of the Club's founding directors, who all thought of the LATC as both a place for themselves and their friends to play tennis but also as a place to enhance their social reputation and conduct business deals.<sup>44</sup>

Mixing pleasure, work, and profitable entertainment created the problem of money and taxes, which explained why the LATC affiliated with the SCTA. In 1926 the LATC lost an average of more than \$500 a month in addition to carrying a \$30,000 mortgage, a \$3,100 bank note, and \$1,500 in renovation costs. The Club opened itself to new members to address these financial liabilities, and the increased revenue that came from 96 new members in 1927 stopped the Club from losing money—although the large debt remained. Hosting tennis tournaments was one strategy the LATC board took to service that debt, and in 1927 the Club's seven-court expansion, donated lighting system, improved heating and plumbing systems, Panatrope radio system, expanded locker room, and wood-fenced perimeter all helped to hold tennis tournaments that made rather than lost money. The LATC directors had incorporated their club as a non-profit, but in beginning to operate very popular tennis and social events they in fact began to turn a "pecuniary profit." The money that they collected that went beyond what they could use for improving their property could thus move into the SCTA's coffers. That organization kept some

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<sup>44</sup> Articles of Incorporation of the Southern California Tennis Association, GC1145 #22140, Seaver Center for Western History Research, Los Angeles County Natural History Museum, Los Angeles, California; Articles of Incorporation of the Los Angeles Tennis Club, GC1145 #23321, Seaver Center for Western History Research, Los Angeles County Natural History Museum, Los Angeles, California; "Nat Browne a President," *American Lawn Tennis* 14, no. 3 (June 15, 1920): 127; A.C.B. Gray, "Highlights of the Los Angeles Tennis Club," *Pacific Southwest Program*, 1930, Los Angeles Tennis Club Archive.

and filtered the rest back into the LATC bearing the more secure not-for-profit imprimatur of the SCTA whose charter explicitly championed the growth of tennis in Southern California independent of the movement of money into the game in that part of the country. That arrangement gave the leaders of tennis in Southern California secure finances and a great degree of flexibility in moving money around to do the maximum amount of good for the game in their territory. The LATC could stay a “social club” and avoid California franchise tax, while the SCTA had a sugar-tree to shake any time their funds ran low.<sup>45</sup>

SCTA directors did not personally profit from money in the game of tennis, but they did want their tournaments to turn profits at the same time they railed against the touring professionals Suzanne Lenglen, Vincent Richards, Bill Tilden, and later Donald Budge. In a quorum held at the California Club in Los Angeles, board members explicitly reaffirmed their commitment to amateur tennis by way of controlling the sport in ten Southern California counties. That amendment only expanded their official influence over tennis by one county from their initial chartering fifteen years earlier; however, the effect would prove far greater, because, with the forthcoming construction of so many courts in Southern California, the supervision they asserted essentially amounted to “control of the game of tennis” not just up the West Coast but to a growing degree the county as a whole. SCTA Directors reinforced their regulatory capacity by lobbying the USLTA national office for not only district but sectional status by which the SCTA

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<sup>45</sup> Board of Directors to Los Angeles Tennis Club Members, February 1, 1928, Folder 7, Box 17, Collection 662, Edward D. Dickson Papers, Alfred Young Research Library, University of California at Los Angeles, California; Articles of Incorporation, Los Angeles Tennis Club, Folder 93306, State of California Business Incorporation Records Collection, California State Archives, Sacramento, California; John Campbell to Los Angeles Tennis Club, May 27, 1952, Los Angeles Tennis Club, Folder 93306, State of California Business Incorporation Records Collection, California State Archives, Sacramento, California.

could exercise greater autonomy throughout the year and marshal more votes for the national Association's annual meeting. By the mid-1930s the SCTA had grown into the most robust tennis corporation—either for profit or non-profit—in the country short of the national office of the USLTA.<sup>46</sup>

That growth did not mean that everyone was welcome. Patricia Henry Yeoman, a longtime LATC and SCTA member, noted that G. Allan Hancock, Thomas Bundy, Alphonzo Bell, Harold Braly, William Garland, and Simpson Sinsabaugh—all important early members of the LATC and SCTA—developed some of the most important real estate throughout Los Angeles County, places like the “Miracle Mile” and Bel-Air Estates. These men thus well understood that exclusivity and status made money in both real estate and in social club memberships. They made sure only the right kind of people played on the LATC's courts. Members barred Jews from joining and ostracized Jewish players who occasionally competed in SCTA tournaments hosted by the Club. The courts and especially the reputation of the Club's prestigious tournaments—which attracted important players, officials, and promoters from the East Coast—could not be sullied by people from outside the proper sort, maintained the 260 voting members in 1929 who were all wealthy, white, male, and Protestants or Catholic.<sup>47</sup>

Members and Club policies across the country discriminated against African Americans in even more explicit ways. A case garnering international press coverage came in 1929 when

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<sup>46</sup> Articles of Incorporation of the Southern California Tennis Association, GC1145 #22140, Seaver Center for Western History Research, Los Angeles County Natural History Museum, Los Angeles, California; Members' Resolution Approved Directors' Resolution for Amendment of Articles of Incorporation, Southern California Tennis Association, Folder 90460, State of California Business Incorporation Records Collection, California State Archives, Sacramento, California.

<sup>47</sup> Patricia Yeomans, *History and Heritage of the Los Angeles Tennis Club 1920-1995* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Tennis Club, 1995), 3, 12; Tinling, *Love and Faults*, 161-3; Gonzales, *Man with a Racket*, 47.

USLTA officials barred Gerald L. Norman, Jr. and the African American junior champion Reginald Weir from participating in the National Junior Indoor Championships held at the New York City Seventh Armory. Under pressure from Arthur E. Francis of the New York Tennis Association, the USLTA revealed they excluded the two players because of race, citing a need for separate tournaments administered by the USLTA for white players and the American Tennis Association for African American competitors. At first, the response left NAACP directors confused as both Weir and Norman had competed in USLTA-sanctioned matches before. What they quickly realized was that the December tournament the players tried to enter had national visibility at a time when the USLTA looked to increase the popularity of the game in the South. “Jim Crow Tournaments are not National,” the NAACP stated in a press release that essentially called the USLTA un-American, class snobs, and scared that an African American player might win the tournament. In spite of the protests, the USLTA continued to rely upon their by-laws only allowing players belonging to designated clubs to enter the national tournaments. The local enforcement of race and class kept African Americans out of the biggest tournaments during the twenties, thirties, and forties at the very same time that women continued to participate fully as tennis players if not as the directors of the amateur associations and private clubs.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Robert W. Bagnall, NAACP to Edward B. Moss, Executive Sec. USLTA, Dec. 24, 1929, NAACP Administrative Files, Reel 1, Frame 455; Arthur E. Francis Edward B. Mose, Dec. 26, 1929, Frame 459; “U.S. Lawn Tennis Association Admits Color Discrimination,” Dec. 27 Press Release, Frame 467; Albert E. Mac Dowell, Assistant Executive Secretary, American Tennis Association, to Robert W. Bagnall, NAACP Dir. of Branches, Dec. 28, 1929, Frame 473; Arthur E. Francis to Bagnall, Dec. 28, 1929, Frame 475; Dir. of Branches, NAACP to Arthur E. Francis, Dec. 31, 1929, Frame 481; “National Negro Aid Body Answers Lawn Tennis Association,” Dec. 30 Press Release, Frame 477; Holcombe Ward to Lloyd W. Brooke, August 3, 1943, Box 8, Folder 4.14.1, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; “Memorandum for us at Conference with Alastair B. Martin,” Box 8, Folder 4.14.1, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Yeomans, *History and Heritage*, 13.

Just as Suzanne Lenglen pioneered professional tennis, so too was a woman behind the first true commercial tennis tournament. Elizabeth “Bunny” Ryan grew up in Anaheim, California, but spent most of her playing career living in England, where she partnered with Suzanne Lenglen for five Wimbledon doubles titles between 1919 and 1925. Visiting her Southern California home in 1925, Ryan met with *Los Angeles Express* publisher Edward Dickson about organizing a tennis tournament in the area to rival that of the major championships in Europe and the east coast of the United States. Dickson thought the idea could boost the reputation of Los Angeles both in America and abroad if he convinced top international talent to attend. A dozen men agreed with him. Thus was born the Tennis Patrons Association of Southern California, whose purpose was “to bring Southern California national recognition as a tennis center.” The Association’s directors explicitly saw the running of a highly profitable tennis tournament with international caliber players as the means to achieve that end. The money such an event earned would then go entirely back into Southern California tennis rather than get spread around to other parts of the country, and that focusing of funds on junior development in and around Los Angeles would repay the initial investment of their own money and their own time by increasing the number of talented players in the area and thus give the Southern California Tennis Association more pull at the national level. With the help of the top player in the country and the bane of existence for the USLTA National Office, Bill Tilden, who attended the Tennis Patrons Association’s first formal meeting at the Los Angeles Tennis Club in late 1926, the directors planned the first Pacific-Southwest Tournament.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> “The Pacific Southwest Story,” loose Pacific Southwest Tournament Program page, no date, Folder 7, Box 17, Collection 662, Edward D. Dickson Papers, Alfred Young Research Library, University of California at Los

In designing their stadium, the LATC had one model example. In August 1923, the West Side Tennis Club in Forest Hills, New York, completed their horseshoe-shaped stadium court designed to host the United States National Singles Championship. That event had moved from its first venue at the Newport Hotel and Casino to the West Side Tennis Club in 1915. Even with World War I, the thousands who attended the tournament far outstripped available seating and required the construction of temporary bleachers for every year's event. By 1920 the event had proven successful enough to require either a change of venue or an expansion. Club directors and USLTA officials chose the latter course of action and temporarily moved the national championships while construction of the 14,000-seat stadium and renovation of the West Side Tennis grounds took place until completed in 1924. The Club sold five- to ten-year subscriptions priced at \$110 per seat with a goal of filling 1,500 of the stadium's box seats on a pre-sale basis. The USLTA and the West Side Tennis Club entered into an agreement that designated the Club as the host for the Men's National Singles Championship, the Men's National Doubles Championships, and the Davis Cup Final Matches. That contract facilitated the West Side Tennis Club's successful capital campaign to raise \$150,000 for improving their facility's amenities.

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Angeles, California; Isaac Jones to Chester Johnson, May 24, 1948, Folder 7, Box 17, Collection 662, Edward D. Dickson Papers, Alfred Young Research Library, University of California at Los Angeles, California; Minutes of the Organization Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Tennis Patrons Association of Southern California, March 2, 1928, Folder 7, Box 17, Collection 662, Edward D. Dickson Papers, Alfred Young Research Library, University of California at Los Angeles, California; Articles of Association of the Tennis Patrons Association of Southern California, September 4, 1927, Folder 7, Box 17, Collection 662, Edward D. Dickson Papers, Alfred Young Research Library, University of California at Los Angeles, California; William Erie Fowler, "Tennis Patrons Association of Southern California," typescript, Folder 7, Box 17, Collection 662, Edward D. Dickson Papers, Alfred Young Research Library, University of California at Los Angeles, California.



West Side became the first tennis club in the United States to earn a profit from a two-week tournament alone rather than an auditorium filled with activities the rest of the year.<sup>50</sup>

The same directors in the Southern California Tennis Association served as officers in the Tennis Patrons Association of Southern California in addition to belonging to the Los Angeles Tennis Club. Those intersecting relationships meant that the Pacific-Southwest Championship got both the royal treatment from the host venue but also remained insulated from the direction of the USLTA national office, which looked to secure a sizable portion of the tournament revenue for themselves. Autonomy came with the cost of less financial support from other parts of the country when raising capital to get the tournament off the ground, but the LATC members and their partners solved that problem by selling box seats as the West Side Tennis Club had done. Given that the incentive for people to buy tickets in advance at Forest Hills existed because patrons knew they were guaranteed to see the top events on the tennis calendar there, what could the Pacific-Southwest offer that no other tournament could? LATC President William Henry decided that people would buy expensive tournament boxes if he attracted the top players in the world. He suspected correctly that a combination of Southern California's beautiful weather and beautiful people could convince the international stars to travel if they received free travel. Henry personally visited France to gain assurance from the French Tennis Federation that three of the famous "four musketeers"—Jacques Brugnon, Henri Cochet, Jean Borotra, and Rene Lacoste—would play the Pacific-Southwest. The LATC president also brought top international players from England, Italy, and Australia in addition to America's best. To lure all these

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<sup>50</sup> Robert Minton, *Forest Hills: An Illustrated History* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1975), 81, 105, 108-9; "In a Short Time it Will be Too Late," *American Lawn Tennis* 18, no. 6 (July 15, 1924): 321; "Refreshment Charges at Forest Hills," *American Lawn Tennis* 18, no. 8 (September 1, 1924): 410.

players, the Tennis Patrons Association agreed to spare no expense during the players' stay in Los Angeles. Members housed some players in their own homes, they hired cars to drive players around Hollywood, they bestowed lavish banquets and dances, and they put some players and their families up in fine accommodations such as the Ambassador Hotel. The hospitality blatantly violated the USLTA's amateur by-laws and stance against money in the game.<sup>51</sup>

Keeping top players happy helped fill the stands, however. More importantly, it made for a successful tournament. The pricey Championship Court renovation that expanded the Grandstand to "800 seats with backs" came off well thanks to the pre-sale of the courtside boxes. Standard bleacher seats sold out at \$2.20 for weekdays and \$3.30 for the weekend matches. The Club's proximity to Hollywood Studios added a further element of glamour because the Tennis Patrons Association went above and beyond to make sure top movie talent attended. What better place to put the stars than in the dozen or so private boxes LATC directors shared courtside. In the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s anyone who came to the grounds of the Los Angeles Tennis Club during the last week in September would find the best tennis players in the world watched by the biggest movie stars in the world. British champion Fred Perry fondly recalled

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<sup>51</sup> Sydney Wailes to Edward Dickson, August 4, 1928, Folder 18, Box 5, Collection 662, Edward D. Dickson Papers, Alfred Young Research Library, University of California at Los Angeles, California; E. Avery McCarthy to David Blankenhorn, September 18, 1928, Folder 18, Box 5, Collection 662, Edward D. Dickson Papers, Alfred Young Research Library, University of California at Los Angeles, California; E. Avery McCarthy to Edward Dickinson, September 19, 1928, Folder 18, Box 5, Collection 662, Edward D. Dickson Papers, Alfred Young Research Library, University of California at Los Angeles, California; E. Avery McCarthy to Edward Dickinson, September 20, 1928, Folder 18, Box 5, Collection 662, Edward D. Dickson Papers, Alfred Young Research Library, University of California at Los Angeles, California.

watching actors and actresses show up in the stands at the Beverley Hills located courts wearing set makeup before returning to the nearby studios to shoot a new scene.<sup>52</sup>

The movie and sports entertainment worlds blended further when film stars reciprocated the favor. They often brought tennis players to backstage sets and glamorous post-production parties. Top players such as Perry played social matches with top actors such as Ben Lyon, Charlie Farrell, Fredric March, and Robert Montgomery. On occasion Hollywood talent such as Theodore Von Eltz even entered the Pacific-Southwest Championships. All of that intermingling of entertainment talent further enhanced the regional, national, and international reputation of the West Coast's great tennis venue.<sup>53</sup>

Tennis fun in the California sun made a lot of money for the Los Angeles Tennis Club, the Tennis Patron's Association of Southern California, and the Southern California Tennis Association. Perry Jones and Edward Dickinson, variously the treasurers and secretaries of all three of those organizations at different times, kept meticulous notes on the interaction between these organizations. Some of the records that survive are a complete accounting of the Tennis Patrons Association and the Pacific-Southwest Tournament interspersed with partial records for both the Southern California Tennis Association and the Los Angeles Tennis Club between

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<sup>52</sup> New Seating Diagram for the Los Angeles Tennis Club, 1928., Folder 18, Box 5, Collection 662, Edward D. Dickson Papers, Alfred Young Research Library, University of California at Los Angeles, California; Pacific-Southwest Championships Ticket Order Form, 1928, Folder 18, Box 5, Collection 662, Edward D. Dickson Papers, Alfred Young Research Library, University of California at Los Angeles, California; Fred Perry, *My Story* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1934), 208-11. Kay Francis, Gloria Swanson, Joan Bennett, Lilian Tashman, Bette Davis, Helen Twelvetrees, Lupe Velez, Norma Shearer, Constance Bennett, Carole Lombard, Madge Evans, Mary Pickford, Charles Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, William Powell, Ben Lyon, Charlie Farrell, Edmund Lowe, Theodore Von Eltz, the Marx Brothers, Frederic March, Walter Huston, Robert Montgomery, Richard Barthelmess, Douglas Fairbanks, and Ralph Graves all made the tournament memorable to American and international players and fans alike.

<sup>53</sup> Perry, *My Story*, 208-11.

January 19, 1931, to December 21, 1937: disbursements routinely found their way to top players such as Don Budge and Gene Mako; accounts receivable revealed the tens of thousands of dollars in profit the Pacific-Southwest made even during the Great Depression; and audits proportioned half of those profits to the Southern California Tennis Association, a quarter to the Tennis Patrons of Southern California, and a quarter to the Los Angeles Tennis Club with nothing left over for the USLTA national office. Just as if not more important than the total amount of money raised by the Pacific-Southwest Tournament was the amount of that money that remained in Southern California to develop tennis players there. The coordination among these different organizations shielded most of that money from finding its way back to the USLTA in the form of assessments the national office required of district and sectional associations. Tennis in Southern California during the thirties thus undercut the authority of the USLTA national office in terms of making amateur policy and functioning as the central banker of tennis in the United States.<sup>54</sup>

Without access to the USLTA national office financial records, the exact amount of those actions is hard to measure. But suffice to say for poorer district and sectional associations, particularly in the South, Midwest, and West, the money sent to New York every year was not insignificant. Pointing that out is not to suggest that the USLTA national office squandered all the money they received from district and sectional associations; however, a close look at the historical record, at least in the case of Southern California, produced dollar for dollar better

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<sup>54</sup> Minutes and Financial Statements of the Tennis Patrons Association of Southern California and Pacific Southwest Sectional Tennis Championships, bound in large red volume, no folder number, Box 35, Collection 662, Edward D. Dickson Papers, Alfred Young Research Library, University of California at Los Angeles, California.

results in terms of the total number of new players to the game and the total number of top performing tournament players than a more centralized pooling of resources.<sup>55</sup>

The success of the Southern California Tennis Association and the Southern California Tennis Patrons Association sparked imitators across the state and the nation. In addition to the names of the directors, the Incorporation Records of the Tennis Patrons Association of San Diego and the Tennis Patrons Association of Santa Monica shared the same desire to “promote tennis” and much of the same language with the SCTA’s, TPASCTA, and LATC’s articles. What these other organizations lacked was the coordination between the amateur association and a host club, and that separation initially cost the Tennis Patrons Association of San Diego the California tax exempt status they wanted. The State of California based their tax policy rulings in part on the Federal Tax Code that differentiated between “activities more recreational than educational” when a corporation sought non-profit status as an educational institution. More specifically, a prior tax law case had ruled against the West Side Tennis Club of Forest Hills, New York, who sought tax exemption without success because in hosting the U.S. National Championship, the Club made a great deal more income from non-members than from assessments and monthly dues from members. With a few changes in language and accounting but without any substantive changes to their incorporation records, the State of California’s Tax

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<sup>55</sup> As a fifteen-year member of the United States Tennis Association (formerly the USLTA), I made an appointment to view these and other historic records—Executive Committee meeting minutes, for example—of the USLTA currently held at the USTA national headquarters in White Plains, New York. A lawyer turned me away in the parking lot without seeing any of these records, despite asking the archivist for an appointment. At the time of this writing, one scholar has seen these records as part of writing an internal history of the USTA for an Association anniversary. Half a century ago, one other scholar writing a dissertation in physical education was granted a few days access to some USTA committee meeting minutes—though seemingly not association finances. See Joanna Davenport, “The History and Interpretation of Amateurism in the United States Lawn Tennis Association,” PhD Diss., Ohio State University, 1966.

Board reversed their earlier decision and classed the Tennis Patrons Association of San Diego “exclusively as a recreational club” and thus qualified for tax exemptions. The willingness of the State of California to forego taxing tennis clubs compared to States such as New York who did, created a climate for tennis in Southern California better than the sunny weather. Tennis clubs that did not have a special tax arrangement faced a far greater chance of financial ruin than those that did.<sup>56</sup>

Previous work examining the amateur and professional tennis in the first half of the twentieth century celebrated the “Code of Honor” that led these men under the direction of their national association to create a “Golden Age” for lawn tennis.<sup>57</sup> In reality, competition among rather than harmony between the USLTA sections and regional associations attracted large sums of money into the game at the same time these same groups claimed loyalty to amateurism. Opening that spigot watered seeds that later sprouted into a robust crop of professional players who tipped the balance away from amateurism and toward professionalism. Tennis officials and tennis amateur associations from California stimulated that process in that they presented the strongest challenge to the Northeast and mid-Atlantic tennis establishment. By synergizing the nonprofit organizations of the Southern California Tennis Association, the Southern California

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<sup>56</sup> Articles of Incorporation, Tennis Patrons of Santa Monica, Folder 237442, State of California Business Incorporation Records Collection, California State Archives, Sacramento, California; Articles of Incorporation, Tennis Patrons Association of San Diego, Folder 281433, State of California Business Incorporation Records Collection, California State Archives, Sacramento, California; John Campbell to Tennis Patrons Association of San Diego, August 4, 1953, Tennis Patrons Association of San Diego, Folder 281433, State of California Business Incorporation Records Collection, California State Archives, Sacramento, California; John Campbell to Tennis Patrons Association of San Diego, December 23, 1953, Tennis Patrons Association of San Diego, Folder 281433, State of California Business Incorporation Records Collection, California State Archives, Sacramento, California; Donald Pond to Bondholders, March 15, 1947, Folder 4, Box 34, MSS-30, Daniel Cowan Jackling Papers, Stanford University Library and Special Collections, Palo Alto.

<sup>57</sup> E. Digby Baltzell, *Sporting Gentlemen*, 34-35, 139, 152, 166, 221, 311, 392.

Tennis Patrons Association, and the Los Angeles Tennis Club, men such as Perry Jones laid the groundwork for what would become the most important place for tennis excellence in the world by 1940. Ironically, to make that happen, men who preached amateurism through and through practiced professionalism in their tennis dealings when they effectively paid top players to attend the Pacific-Southwest Tournament. The big crowds those players drew made that event into a highly profitable venture whose funds Jones, in his positions as the treasurer-secretary-tournament-director of the SCTA, SCTPA, and LATC, disbursed throughout the interlocked organizations. Southern California thus developed the most robust player development program in the world, thanks in no small part to monetizing the amateur game.

An even larger movement of largess into the amateur game of tennis came at about the same time when the federal government built thousands of public tennis courts across the country as one part of a broad initiative to develop the nation's recreational infrastructure. Again, Southern California was the epicenter.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE RECREATIONAL REVOLUTION

Historians have written more on the New Deal than on any other subject in the history of the twentieth-century United States. Their scholarship has generally addressed one of the three Rs: relief, recovery, or reform.<sup>1</sup> Those formulations go far to explain Franklin Delano Roosevelt's (FDR) ambitious programs to revive and reshape the nation faced with unprecedented economic and social challenges; but in some ways and with some projects, revolution is the R that more accurately analyzes what New Deal money and work actually did. Nowhere did that appear in starker terms than in the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), where a congressionally created corporation electrified and industrialized an entire region and brought millions of Americans out of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. The scale, the creativity, and the longevity of the TVA has prompted historians to consider the public and private cooperation that electrified much of Appalachia and the upper-South the best and the boldest of what the New Deal did in America. The same grandness and uniqueness, however, also makes the TVA a suspect revolution in that similar public and private ventures did not spread widely across the country, and where such joint ventures did take place, their scales did not approach that of the TVA.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Alan Brinkley, "Prosperity, Depression, and War, 1920-1945," in Eric Foner ed., *The New American History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), 143; Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: Vintage, 1955), 308.

<sup>2</sup> David Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 148-9.



Revolutions that stick tend more often to take place in quieter ways and in subtler places. Contemporary scholars understand in great detail the policies of New Deal agency leaders and the big projects those agencies produced, but the processes of smaller projects remain comparatively unexamined. One largely ignored project addressed athletics and sports in cities rather than in the better understood state parks, national monuments, rural recreation, or cultural leisure initiatives historians have noted.<sup>3</sup>

During the thirties city dwellers in the United States exercised their voting strength over the rest of the nation for really the first time.<sup>4</sup> One of the forms that political power took was that of play. In cities across the country, a recreational revolution swept the nation between 1933 and 1941. The athletic fields, courts, pools, and playgrounds built in American cities permanently altered the sporting opportunities of tens of millions of underprivileged youths and working class adults. Unlike rural areas with relatively weak governments and comparatively few active reformers, cities already housed dozens of reform activists, civic organizations, municipal departments, county officials, and state agencies working to build new athletic infrastructures and launch new sports initiatives before federal money and federal labor began flowing into recreational projects in substantive quantities.<sup>5</sup> That movement of dollars and workers created conflict among different players in the field of recreation, but more lastingly, it democratized

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<sup>3</sup> Phoebe Cutler, *The Public Landscape of the New Deal* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 10-12; Douglas Brinkley, *Rightful Heritage: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Land of America* (New York: HarperCollins, 2016), 217, 222-3, 589-626, 628.

<sup>4</sup> Samuel P. Hays, "From the History of the City to the History of Urbanized Society," *Journal of Urban History* 19, no. 4 (August 1993): 3-24.

<sup>5</sup> Susan Currell, *The March of Spare Time: The Problem and Promise of Leisure in the Great Depression* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 15, 50-51.

sports to people who previously had been shut out. In the sport of tennis that democratization undermined the authority that United States Lawn Tennis Officials and private lawn tennis club members exercised over the game by allowing both more people to adopt the sport and more competitors from diverse backgrounds to play tennis than during the previous half-century of the game's existence. Those new players in turn spurred the further erosion of amateurism in the sport.

The recreational revolution took place nationwide and built new or repurposed old facilities for every major sport in America. Each game mattered to the participants of each particular pastime, but the sport of tennis was the most transformed. No other game so exemplified how the recreational revolution opened a sport to individuals so clearly interdicted from it before. Furthermore, the sheer scale of this revolution means analysis of the nation as a whole and an accounting of every sport would necessitate a focus on the policy of agency leadership rather than the actual projects and the everyday people those projects impacted. Nowhere did the recreational revolution appear more conspicuous than in Los Angeles.<sup>6</sup> That acuteness in the minds of recreational reformers owed to Southern California's burgeoning population that led up to and extended through World War II, along with the great diversity of those new to the Los Angeles County, and, most importantly, the high number of unsupervised youth who needed positive and controlled recreational outlets for their delinquent and potentially dangerous energies.

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<sup>6</sup> The only city by which comparison is really possible is New York City: first, because that was the only city whose Federal and State sponsored funding matched (and actually exceeded) Los Angeles; second, because New York City is the only other city for which a work of detailed scholarship exists, facilitating comparison. See Robert Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (New York: Vintage, 1975), 453, 455-6, 508-9, 512-3, 828-9.

The revolution in recreation was one of the ways in which New Dealers looked to channel the energy of frustrated youths and young adults away from unrest and violence. Whether philosophers and social scientists today can agree to disagree about the catharsis of sports did not matter to policy makers in the 1930s because they believed—a view that stretched to some degree all the way back to colonial Anglo-North America—that athletics and fun functioned as a safety valve for societal conflict.<sup>7</sup> In presidential politics, however, the recreational revolution FDR initiated saw first iteration in Roosevelt's cousin, the former President Theodore Roosevelt (TR), whose signage of the Antiquities Act of 1906 capped a career of devotion to the conservation of American land, albeit primarily rural land, for recreational purposes. His son, Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., inherited his father's commitment and put that into practice by chairing the Joint Committee on Recreational Survey of Federal Lands (JCRS), presenting ongoing findings at the National Conference on Outdoor Recreation that first met in 1924.<sup>8</sup>

Under President Calvin Coolidge, the JCRS recruited organizations such as the Amateur Athletic Association to membership in order to coordinate the nation's recreation activities. JCRS also mailed surveys, collected research, and issued reports on the extent of government land ownership and the public's use of that land for recreation. In 1926 that land amounted to

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<sup>7</sup> David Vanderwerken and Spencer Wertz eds., *Sport Inside Out: Readings in Literature and Philosophy* (Fort Worth, TX: Texas Christian University Press, 1987), 6; Nancy Struna, *People of Prowess: Sport, Leisure, and Labor in Early Anglo-America* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 16, 31.

<sup>8</sup> Meeting Program 1924, Folder, Project Programs, Statement of Objectives, Etc., Box1, General Files of the Executive Secretary, 1924-29, Records of the National Conference on Outdoor Recreation, 1924-1929, RG220 Records of Temporary Committees, Commissions, and Boards, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland (NARA-II).

183 million acres in the public domain, of which National Forests constituted 160 million acres, National Parks ten million acres, with the remainder game preserves and Indian reservations. Committee members channeled the spirit of Hot Springs, Arkansas in 1832 and the Forest Reserve Act of 1891 that the threat of private interests required that the “Government should be a permanent lawn owner for public benefit.” They reported that by 1925 California saw the greatest number of people by state using public recreation land—six million a year.<sup>9</sup>

Throughout its lifespan the JCRS prioritized recreation in the countryside over recreation in the city. Committee members saw city parks and playgrounds as a municipal matter rather than a federal one. Likewise, bigger parks and forest preserves needed county and state efforts so that the Federal land ownership and development efforts could concentrate on “the remaining wilderness of America.” In 1924 more than twelve million Americans had visited their country’s federally protected wilderness land. Conference attendees recognized that number was a pittance compared to the tens of millions more urban dwellers who needed recreation lands within and close to their cities. But the fractured nature of city governance, political machinery, and competing private interests frustrated the Municipal Committee, which could issue no concrete policies for urban recreation compared to committees such as that addressing Federal Land Policy, which put together a set of clear guidelines for the safekeeping of land for public

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<sup>9</sup> AAU Application, Folder, Questionnaires Executed by Member Organizations, Box 2, General Files of the Executive Secretary, 1924-29, Records of the National Conference on Outdoor Recreation, 1924-1929, RG220, Records of Temporary Committees, Commissions, and Boards, NARA-II; Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Committee on Recreational Survey of Federal Land, April 28, 1926, no folder number, Box 38, Records of the National Conference on Outdoor Recreation, 1924-1929, RG220, Records of Temporary Committees, Commissions, and Boards, NARA-II; The Recreational Resources of the Federal Lands (draft Report) by the Joint Committee Representing the American Forestry Association and the National Parks Association at the Request of the National Conference on Outdoor Recreation..., p. 139, No Folder Number, Box 39, Records of the National Conference on Outdoor Recreation, 1924-1929, RG220, Records of Temporary Committees, Commissions, and Boards, NARA-II.

recreation. In the mid-twenties Federal government coordination of urban recreation proved so unworkable that, unlike other efforts undertaken by recreational reformers, JCRS members felt they had no choice but to discharge their efforts at recreational expansion within cities by delegating future coordination to the Playground and Recreation Association of the National Recreation Congress.<sup>10</sup>

On May 8, 1929, the Executive Committee of the National Conference on Outdoor Recreation held their twenty-fourth meeting and dissolved the agency. Members congratulated themselves on the ten major recreational and land use studies they had undertaken, but they noted that four years of work had proven that top-down coordination of recreational planning proved unworkable given the strong influence private associations such as the Playground and Recreation Association exercised on local policies, where reports actually became recreational facilities. The inventorying of the nation's recreational infrastructure had found both deficiencies in that infrastructure and no way to proceed with actual reform on the ground.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Recreation Use (typescript), p. 195, No Folder Number, Box 39, Records of the National Conference on Outdoor Recreation, 1924-1929, RG220, Records of Temporary Committees, Commissions, and Boards, NARA-II; Field Secretary Philip R. Hough to Arthur C. Ringland, November 4, 1925, Folder, Act of June 14, 1926, Federal Land Folders, Box 23, Records of the Joint Committee on Recreational Survey of Federal Lands, 1924-26, Records of the National Conference on Outdoor Recreation, 1924-1929, RG220, Records of Temporary Committees, Commissions, and Boards, NARA-II; "National Conference on Outdoor Recreation, Report of the Committee on Federal Land Policy, May 1924," Folder, First Conference Committee Report on Federal Land Policy, Folder, Act of June 14, 1926, Federal Land Folders, Box 23, Records of the Joint Committee on Recreational Survey of Federal Lands, 1924-26, Records of the National Conference on Outdoor Recreation, 1924-1929, RG220, Records of Temporary Committees, Commissions, and Boards, NARA-II; Memorandum for the Committee on the Organization of the National Conference on Outdoor Recreation, Unlabeled Folder [fifth in box], Box 10, Records of the Joint Committee on Recreational Survey of Federal Lands, 1924-26, Records of the National Conference on Outdoor Recreation, 1924-1929, RG220, Records of Temporary Committees, Commissions, and Boards, NARA-II.

<sup>11</sup> Extract from the Minutes of the Twenty-fourth Meeting of the Executive Committee, May 8, 1929, unlabeled folder [fifth in box], Box 10, Records of the Joint Committee on Recreational Survey of Federal Lands, 1924-26, Records of the National Conference on Outdoor Recreation, 1924-1929, RG220, Records of Temporary Committees, Commissions, and Boards, NARA-II.

The nationwide pattern of studying recreation without actually building new facilities for urban recreation continued under President Herbert Hoover, whose administration further bureaucratized the study of recreation spearheaded by the JCRS. Hoover is seldom remembered as a proponent of national infrastructure when compared to the achievements of either his Roosevelt predecessor or his Roosevelt successor, but that comparison overshadows the reality that Hoover helped build major projects such as the Boulder Dam and the Los Angeles Aqueduct. His even more obscure recreational reform legacy owes to the fact that he did little to actually act on the recreational studies he commissioned when economic collapse forced his hand to more pressing priorities. That said, mere weeks before the market plummeted on Black Tuesday, top social policy researchers from across the country met under Hoover's direction to sketch out the findings they would publish four years later titled *Recent Social Trends in the United States*.<sup>12</sup>

In the report's second volume, J. F. Steiner authored an influential essay titled "Recreation and Leisure Time Activities." Steiner opened with a frank acknowledgement that the public's burgeoning interest in "competitive sport" previously enjoyed by only the leisured class posed a particular challenge from a recreational planning point of view because there simply were not enough facilities near population centers to meet that need. Where there were facilities for sports in cities, coordination among private associations, civic organizations, public schools, municipal government departments, state bureaucracies, and ultimately the federal government

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<sup>12</sup> White House Remarks at Boulder Dam, November 12, 1932, Press Release 719, Box 1186, Presidential Papers Press Relations Series, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa; Joan Hoff Wilson, *Herbert Hoover: Forgotten Progressive* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 1992), 214; Report of the President's Research Committee on Social Trends, *Recent Social Trends in the United States*, vol. 1 (York, PA: The Maple Press, 1933), v.

lacked optimal cooperation. Imperfect coordination certainly seemed unavoidable because of the change in belief among urban planners and landscape architects from the “horticultural” woods and promenades of the nineteenth-century city parks to the “recreational” or “parks as public playgrounds” of the first two decades of the twentieth century. Put into practice, that change in mindset created a huge upswing in playground and recreational park construction across the country with towns whose population exceeded 30,000 people raising their park land from 76,566 acres in 1907 by nearly two-and-a-half times to 258,697 acres in 1930. That rise outpaced nationwide urbanization during the same years by roughly 65 percent, but the construction of parks and playgrounds between 1900 and the 1930 still underserved the recreational needs of the country’s urban dwellers in large part because those needs had long gone unmet before 1900 and by the twenties, demand had simply spilled over. By the start of the Great Depression, three out of four cities in America did not claim a single playground. When averaged across the country’s population, those findings meant there were three thousand city children per playground.<sup>13</sup>

The paucity of adequate recreation space across the nation’s cities owed first and foremost to a host of specific political and commercial complications similar in character but unique in kind to each municipality and not to the lack of ideas from recreational reformers. The most important group of these reformers had first organized in April of 1906 in Washington D.C to lobby President Theodore Roosevelt and Congress to give them space to build safe and supervised playgrounds for children in order to keep the kids off the capital’s streets. Their success in those efforts led to the formation of the organization most responsible for public

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<sup>13</sup> Report of the President’s Research Committee on Social Trends, *Recent Social Trends in the United States*, vol. 2 (York, PA: The Maple Press, 1933), 912-7.

athletics and leisure activities in cities across America prior to the WPA—the Playground and Recreation Association of America.<sup>14</sup> The association’s officers included Progressive Era reformers Luther Gulick of New York City, Henry B. F. MacFarland of Washington, D.C., Jane Addams of Chicago, and Joseph Lee of Boston, along with honorary members Theodore Roosevelt, Jacob Riis, and Baron E. Von Schenkendorff from Germany. With the nation’s major cities represented and connections to both the White House—President Roosevelt wrote an introduction to the group’s inaugural issue—and across the Atlantic, the Playground Association enjoyed an auspicious beginning. From the start the Association argued that playgrounds forced children to learn “self-government” and therefore sustained democracy from generation to generation. To create citizens, reformers such as Joseph Lee believed in a high degree of paternalism where on the playgrounds, at-risk youths could learn from and imitate adults of the highest moral caliber. The organization’s early actions focused on the “study” of and advocacy for urban recreation rather than actually politicking to create new recreational spaces in cities. A consultancy capacity therefore let the association solicit donations with a modest budget of \$20,000 a year in mind.<sup>15</sup> That budget rose steadily over the coming years, totaling \$380,358 in 1928. New initiatives such as the National Recreation School, opened in 1927, secured sizable portions of the budget, but the primary functions of the organization remained fundamentally

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<sup>14</sup> Playground Association of America Executive Committee, *The Playground* 1, no. 1 (April 1907): 5. For more on the transatlantic exchange of recreational ideas and actions as part broader progressive era reform networks, see Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 135, 137, 206, 274, 369, 380, 383, 455, 506.

<sup>15</sup> Playground Association of America Executive Committee, 5-10.



unchanged after two decades; research, publishing, advocacy, and consulting were where the association spent its resources.<sup>16</sup>

Research gave recreational reformers across the country a very clear view of what municipal recreation systems should resemble. First and foremost, gone was the City Beautiful Movement dichotomy of “passive recreation” versus “active recreation,” because parks were places for any form of recreation so long as supervision existed. Second, every citywide recreation system needed three essential ingredients: playgrounds for young children close to schools; parks with athletic fields for communities throughout the city; larger landscaped preserves linked together across the metropolis by parkways. Third, population density determined the recreational needs of a community down to the square foot. For example, blocks of bungalows needed 3 percent of land area devoted to playgrounds, while rows of duplexes required 5 percent of land area for playgrounds. Every one-mile neighborhood also needed athletic fields of between twenty and thirty acres. Zooming from the neighborhood to the city level, such plans equated to one acre of park and playground space for every one hundred residential acres. Except for Minneapolis, major population centers did not meet those standards. The densest neighborhoods also tended to have the fewest park and playgrounds acres per person; yet, as reformers pointed out, land in those neighborhoods also tended to cost too much to secure enough for a playground, let alone a park.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Playground and Recreation Association of America, Incorporated Comparative Statement – General Budget and Expenditures, Folder [no number] Playground and Recreation Association, Box 6, John Winant Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York.

<sup>17</sup> J. B. Williams, “Recreation and City Planning,” [reprint] *Southern City*, December, 1931, [no page numbers], Folder no number] National Recreation Association, Box 51, John G. Winant Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York.

Reformers thus wanted to focus on partnering with real estate developers to bring parks and playgrounds, either through the donation of land outright or for a no-cost rental arrangement that allowed for play supervision by a third party on land owned by the developer, to the explosion of new low-density subdivisions on the edges of cities. The National Playground and Recreation Association and like-minded groups wrote off entire older urban core neighborhoods whose density—by the reformers’ own standards—demanded more recreation space, in favor of advocating for playgrounds and parks in new low-density places. They reached that decision because they believed private developers would deliver on promises to build scores of parks and playgrounds in places with few spaces dedicated to recreation. The results were modest: 134 recreational spaces donated by developers to municipal governments; 72 recreational spaces owned by developers on which third-party recreation programs could take place; and eight recreation spaces kept in trust for the public’s use. Recreational reformers had proven themselves fully capable of identifying a lack of recreational spaces and advocating for new parks and playgrounds, but during the first three decades of the twentieth century, studies went only so far in moving city governments to action.<sup>18</sup>

The stock market crash of 1929 further undermined the effectiveness of advocacy for recreational reform—at least until the end of the Hoover administration. President Hoover struggled to fully grasp the degree of the country’s economic downturn, not to mention the bold strokes of policy needed to slow the collapse. His best attempt came with legislative action in 1932, which created the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) that, among other purposes,

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

tried to bolster the building of public works. In what would turn out to be the last months of his office, President Hoover's RFC built few of the public works promised. Under his successor, Franklin D. Roosevelt, the RFC became a giant piggybank for loans taken out by public works-minded New Deal agencies such as the Federal Public Works Administration.<sup>19</sup>

Roosevelt won the presidency on November 8, 1932. Democrats controlled both Houses of Congress. Together they wasted no time resuscitating the nation. While the president did not put recreation near the top of his priorities during his famed "first hundred days," six months into his first term he had initiated and ushered through the legislature some of the law that laid the foundation for the recreational revolution: Congress passed the act that created the Civilian Conservation Corps on March 31; on May 12 the Federal Emergency Relief Act passed; and on June 16 the Public Works Administration and the National Recovery Administration became realities with the passage of the National Industry Recovery Act. Most of these agencies as Roosevelt's advisers and Congressional staffers conceived them afforded little in the way of recreation because the concern centered on the employment generated by large infrastructure projects such as dams and bridges.<sup>20</sup> That began to change first in 1933 and 1934 with the short-lived Civil Works Administration and more thoroughly beginning in 1935, when the Works Progress Administration came into existence. Together these two agencies claimed credit for the construction of 30,000 parks, playgrounds, sports fields, and swimming pools.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: The Great Depression, 1929-1941* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1952), 98, 107, 154, 162, 467.

<sup>20</sup> Anthony Badger, *FDR: The First Hundred Days* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2008), ix-x, xvii, 84-85.

<sup>21</sup> Michael Hiltzik, *The New Deal: A Modern History* (New York: The Free Press, 2011), 164, 421.

A look through Roosevelt's personal files shows that while in office Roosevelt preferred to delegate recreational reform to trusted subordinates so that he could focus on more pressing economic issues affecting the country. Nevertheless, the flood of letters and cables the President received asking him to attend athletic events that ranged from National Indoor Junior Track and Field Championships to Dixie League Softball, as well as inquiries for the President to name his favorite sports and answer various recreation queries, all showed Roosevelt just how much a nation gripped in depression still cared about sports.<sup>22</sup> For major international contests with national pride at stake, such as the U.S. Davis Cup tie against Great Britain's squad in July 1933, the President might telegraph the team a message of encouragement, but on the whole Roosevelt did not attend or personally respond to messages from sporting associations or private citizens regarding athletics, despite his secretary's assuring the interlocutors of both the President's longstanding passion for athletics and his belief that sportsmanship in international competitions such as the Olympics was an essential ingredient of "American character."<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, the National Recreation Association and other such national organizations interested in the

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<sup>22</sup> Robert Dallas to Franklin Delano Roosevelt, February 5, 1936, Folder 468 Sports and Recreation, Files 460-470, President's Personal File, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York; Glen W. Leyde to President Roosevelt, April 26, 1939, Folder 468 Sports and Recreation, Files 460-470, President's Personal File, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York; John Vosbrugh to Stephen Early, April 14, 1937, Folder 468 Sports and Recreation, Files 460-470, President's Personal File, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York.

<sup>23</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt to Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., July 17, 1933, Folder 468 Sports and Recreation, Files 460-470, President's Personal File, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York; Franklin D. Roosevelt to Avery Brundage, September 25, 1933, Folder 468 Sports and Recreation, Files 460-470, President's Personal File, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York.

furthering of the nation's playgrounds and parks did have the ear of key Roosevelt subordinates who passed on the recreational reforms wanted by those associations to the White House.<sup>24</sup>

Republican politician-turned-New Dealer John Gilbert Winant provided a crucial link between recreational reformers and President Roosevelt. Throughout his two terms (1927-1935) as the Governor of New Hampshire, Winant remained an active officer in the National Recreation Association at the same time that he supported the various social policy programs the Roosevelt administration put forward. Winant kept abreast of the latest scholarly literature on parks and recreation and how best to use leisure time during the 1930s. With titles such as "Character Last?," "Recreation and Civic Progress," "Playground and Child Life," and "Don't Quit Recreation," the essays Winant read connected a healthy citizenry to robust recreation in the nation's cities.<sup>25</sup>

The economic challenges confronting every level of municipal spending called the robustness of that recreation into question. To a nationwide audience reached by the NBC radio network on August 15, 1933, three recreational reformers spoke of a rise in mental illness and crime when an underemployed population did not have wholesome recreational activities in which to spend their increasing free time. Even before the Depression set in, the parks and recreation department budgets of many cities were comparatively small when compared with the

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<sup>24</sup> Howard Bracher to Stephen Early, May 25, 1938, Folder 2919 National Recreation Association, Files 2912-2936, Sports and Recreation, President's Personal File, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York.

<sup>25</sup> A Brief Bibliography for the Recreation Worker, Folder [no number] Recreation General, Part 2, Box 130, John Winant Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York. Typescripts or facsimiles of the articles that follow are all found in Folder [no number] National Recreation Association, Box 51, John G. Winant Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York: Robert Kelso, "Character Last?" (2) J. B. Williams, "Recreation and Civic Progress" (3) J. Paul Elliott "Shall the Municipal Recreation Department be Abolished?" (4) J. B. Williams, "Recreation and City Planning" (5) "Playground and Child Life" typescript (6) "Don't Quit Recreation" (7) "Can We Afford Recreation Now?"

entirety of the city budget. New York City, for example, spent around 1 percent of its entire budget on public recreation during the early 1930s. Percentages of city budgets spent on public recreation dropped as the Depression worsened. A thousand of the nation's largest cities spent a total of \$38.5 million on recreation in 1930, and that number fell 28 percent to \$28 million by 1932. Cash-strapped cities saw parks and recreation departments as one of the first budgets for the chopping block, but at the same time they moved incrementally to do so: salary reductions of 5 to 20 percent; the halt of capital projects; layoffs of specialized personnel; sporting goods inventory reductions; a reliance on hard-to-come-by volunteers. More specifically, between 1930 and 1932 the number of playgrounds across the nation fell from 7,685 to 6,990; sports fields fell from 1,834 to 1,629; and baseball diamonds fell from 4,396 to 4,151. Even the hours of indoor recreation facilities dropped, especially in the evening. These reductions took place at the same time that the public's attendance at recreational facilities grew: 159 million attendances of playgrounds in 1929 compared to 236 million attendances in 1932; a 41 percent increase in the number of visits people made to indoor recreation facilities over the same three-year period. Between 1931 and 1932, people swimming in city pools doubled.<sup>26</sup> What the numbers told politicians such as Governor Winant was that cities simply could not put their recreational houses in order without a major infusion of money from outside the city limits.

Winant also found that recreational planning for the improvement of citizenship was not a top priority many other seated governors shared in the early 1930s. But the New Hampshire

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<sup>26</sup> John Finley, H. Edmund Bullis, and Roy Smith Wallace, "Constructive Economy in Government: Reducing the Recreation Budget," *The National Municipal Review* [preprint], Series V., Lecture No. 9, August 15, 1933, pp. 1-7, in Folder [no number] Recreation (General), Part I, Box 130, John Winant Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York.

governor's unique access to top Roosevelt subordinates, along with his seat on the board of directors of the National Recreation and Playground Association allowed him to leverage the federal government to pay for swimming and recreational facilities within the Granite State in 1933 and 1934—before the WPA came into existence the following year.<sup>27</sup> Outside of New Hampshire itself, he should not get too much credit for recreational reform that New Deal agencies headed by more familiar names such as Harry L. Hopkins actually ran; nonetheless, Winant served as a conduit between private recreation association reformers and the directors of federal agencies who had the money to make the reformers' dreams for recreational reform a reality.

Prior to 1935 the federal government's partnerships with municipal governments in improving the recreational infrastructure of cities consisted of stop-gap work and disorganized efforts. All told, twenty-one temporary and permanent federal agencies had discretion to spend part of their budgets under the broad rubric of recreation during the New Deal. At least eighty nationally prominent non-governmental associations also exercised prerogatives over recreational planning across the nation.<sup>28</sup> Throughout the Great Depression, competition and

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<sup>27</sup> Herbert Carleton Mayer to John Winant, February 11, 1933, Folder [no number] Recreation (General), Pt. II, Box 130, John Winant Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York; Recreational Program, Concord, N.H. Swimming Facilities, Memorandum, October 24, 1933, Folder [no number] Recreation Projects, Box 131, John Winant Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York.

<sup>28</sup> Emergency Agencies to be Interviewed Concerning Recreation, n.d., Folder A.1, Alpha Numeric Subject Files, Box 1, Works Projects Administration Recreation Division, RG69, Records of the Work Projects Administration, NARA-II; Organizations Giving Leisure Time Activities, n.d., Folder A.1, Alpha Numeric Subject Files, Box 1, Works Projects Administration Recreation Division, RG69, Records of the Work Projects Administration, NARA-II. The Board of Surveys and Maps of the Federal Government, the National Park and Planning Commission, the Commission of Fine Arts, the Smithsonian Institution, the Library of Congress, the National Archives, and even the U.S. Government Printing Office were independent offices that claimed part of their activities facilitated public recreation. The same was true of a host of Emergency Agencies the New Deal created to manage the Depression: the Emergency Conservation Work division of the Civilian Conservation Corp overseen by the Department of

confusion between different governmental entities, let alone private associations, remained to a not inconsiderable degree, yet the creation of and the powers the WPA would exercise made for a revolution in recreation all the same.<sup>29</sup>

Congress passed the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act on April 8, 1935. That legislation paved the way for the revolution in recreation because even if only a small portion of the \$4.88 billion dollars Congress authorized found its way into recreation, that number would still amount to more money for actually building parks and playgrounds than the country had heretofore mustered for those purposes.<sup>30</sup> Envisioning the wide powers the WPA would yield under the Emergency Relief Act, Roosevelt reassigned one of his most trusted subordinates, Harry Hopkins, from the now defunct Civilian Works Administration—which had actually built a significant number of schools and playgrounds during the late 1933 through early 1934 months of the temporary agency’s existence—to lead the WPA.<sup>31</sup> Historians tend to look back fondly at the Federal Writers’, Drama, Music, Arts, and Education Projects of the WPA, not least because such comparative support today lags so far behind a time when the economy could not have been

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Agriculture, the Department of Interior, and the War Department; the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works (PWA), tasked by the Department of the Interior with conserving forests and building recreational facilities and housing mostly in rural areas; the Federal Housing Administration for developing residential neighborhoods; the National Resources Committee under the Department of Interior for researching and acquiring land for the government; the Resettlement Administration for improving homesteads; and the Tennessee Valley Authority for surveying and plotting land for recreation.

<sup>29</sup> Relationships Between State Divisions of Recreation of the Works Progress Administration and State Planning Boards, typescript dated January 10, 1939, Folder A.3. State Planning Boards, Box 3, Works Projects Administration Recreation Division, RG69, Records of the Work Projects Administration, NARA-II.

<sup>30</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Letter on Allocation of Work Relief Funds,” August 26, 1935. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=14926>.

<sup>31</sup> William Bremer, “Along the ‘American Way’: The New Deal’s Work Relief Programs for the Unemployed,” *Journal of American History* 62, no. 3 (Dec., 1975): 636-52.



worse.<sup>32</sup> They tend to not even recognize that the impact of the supervised play and recreation component of the WPA's Service division actually mattered more to people living in the Depression because of the sheer numbers that division employed for recreational purposes and the number of people those employed served.

The WPA was first and foremost a program to put unemployed people to work. Thus, Hopkins tapped Eduard C. Lindeman to direct the WPA's early efforts in recreation in the form of a grand "demonstration program" that employed many people and put them in contact with many others to gin-up support for the agency. Called the Community Organization for Leisure Program, WPA recreation department personnel approached local governments with the offer to train the unemployed or underemployed in recreational supervision and building trades. More than 75,800 men and women availed themselves of this training during the first years of its offering—though those actually working for the WPA as recreation workers probably hovered closer to a third of that total for any given time. Nine out of ten of those recreational workers had at least a high-school education, while a little under half had attended college. Many had some worked in recreation before the Depression forced cities to lay off employees. Thirty-eight percent of WPA recreational workers were women—two percent of whom had played professional sports. Together, these recreation workers and the young people and adults they served spent 16,394,300 hours per week by August of 1937 in recreation; 70 percent of those hours were spent on games and sports, with the rest of hours evenly divided between social and cultural projects. From the WPA's point of view, an initial recreation jobs program created good

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<sup>32</sup> Sharon Ann Musher, *Democratic Art: The New Deal's Influence on American Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 2, 213-6.

will between the agency and local community associations and elected officials. Cooperation could lead to public works projects built for and paid by partnerships between the WPA and local project sponsors like community Recreation Councils. Nonetheless, the agency's initial foray into municipal public recreation acted as a stopgap to strained city budgets rather than a wholesale revolution in urban recreation. An emphasis on jobs rather than public works was the reason for that.<sup>33</sup>

At first glance the statistical portrait of the nation's recreational infrastructure, reported by the National Recreation Association at the same time the United States' economy dipped with the recession of 1937, might have suggested to WPA policymakers that the nation had plenty of places for youth sports and activities. In 1937, 1,280 American cities owned supervised play facilities of some kind. In the same year, 1,204 new places for play opened, which brought the nation's total recreational spaces to 17,745. A staff of 10,878 volunteers, 37,346 seasonal or part-time workers, and 3,067 fulltime employees worked at those recreational facilities with \$47,933,781.21 in annual nationwide public recreational expenditures.<sup>34</sup> The numbers alone, however, belied the unequal distribution of those recreational facilities and those recreational workers. Nowhere in the country did those inequalities appear in sharper relief than in

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<sup>33</sup> Harry Hopkins, Planning for Leisure, typescript, distributed to State Works Progress Administrators, June 1, 1938, Folder [no number] WPA Recreation Programs, Box 23, Presidential Interdepartmental Committee to Coordinate Health and Welfare Activities, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York.

<sup>34</sup> "The Service of the National Recreation Movement in 1937," Folder [no number] National Recreation Association 1935, Box 162, John G. Winant Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York. Administrators classed the recreational facilities as follows: 9,618 outdoor playgrounds; 1,380 recreation buildings; 3,845 indoor recreation centers; 413 play streets; 326 archery ranges; 1,445 athletic fields; 3,923 baseball diamonds; 569 bathing beaches; 165 bowling greens; 377 golf courses; 1,600 handball courts; 8,482 horseshoe courts; 2,535 ice skating rinks; 2,808 picnic areas; 1,541 shuffleboard courts; 122 ski jumps; 8,384 softball diamonds; 191 stadiums; 88 day camps; 1,163 swimming pools; 11,031 tennis courts; 235 toboggan slides; and 1,402 wading pools.

Los Angeles, and WPA administrator Harry Hopkins thus chose to hold Southern California up as an archetype for the rest of the country to see the impact the WPA could make on a city.<sup>35</sup>

In the 1920s two million Americans left their home regions and moved to California. Three out of four of those migrants made Southern California their new home; 1.2 million of them lived in the Los Angeles County, and half of them settled in the city itself.<sup>36</sup> The Great Depression further spurred migrations en masse to California as a whole and Southern California in particular—though in the eyes of government officials and boosters, they were migrations of a totally different character. From 1930 to 1934, more than 300,000 people, most of whom were displaced central plains farm families, drove their Ford Model Ts to California. Roughly the same number of “Okies” followed to California over the next five years. The families of the famous Dust Bowl migration alarmed those already settled in California a great deal, but not to the degree of those who came unattached. Between 1,000 and 4,000 jobless and single men per month moved into Los Angeles during the mid-1930s, along with between 200 and 400 boys per month who might, reformers feared, turn into delinquents. After a ten-week attempt in early 1936 to ban unemployed young men from entering Los Angeles County failed, government officials soon resigned themselves to the reality that with the infeasibility of keeping people out, resources would need to be devoted to improving life for those already there and those on their way there. In total, about 1.2 million migrants entered California between 1930 and 1940, with the majority settling in Los Angeles County. As the Republican-controlled statehouse battled

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<sup>35</sup> Harry L. Hopkins, Speech given at the WPA National Conference of Education and Recreation Divisions, November 17, 1938, typescript, in Folder A.1 WPA; Recreation Program, Box 1, Works Projects Administration Recreation Division, RG69, Records of the Work Projects Administration, NARA-II.

<sup>36</sup> Starr, *Material Dreams*, 69.

New Deal-inspired reformers on fronts such as the Ham and Eggs Pension Plan, many everyday Californians themselves held New Deal initiatives at arm's length. But the demographic change in the state simply could not go unaddressed by officials at every level of government. Public works projects administered by the PWA and WPA but with local sponsorship thus made California as a whole and Southern California in particular a focal point of New Deal infrastructure improvement and employment initiatives.<sup>37</sup>

Workers finished the WPA's first building project in Los Angeles County on October 5, 1935. Two months later, the agency employed 37,000 people in construction work. The number of Los Angeles County residents who worked for the WPA dipped and grew depending on the number of plans for shovel-ready projects local sponsors had locked and loaded for federal approval. That turned out to be so many that Los Angeles County-based officials took over unified command and control over planning for most of Southern California—Santa Barbara County, Ventura County, San Bernardino County, Riverside County, Imperial County, Orange County, and San Diego County.<sup>38</sup> Whereas New York City received the largest single portion of WPA money (one out of every seven agency dollars), by incorporating the entirety of the fastest growing region of in the country into their planning purview, Los Angeles-based planners and sponsoring committees assumed control of more projects (1,406 building initiatives between October 5, 1935 and December 31, 1938), spent more WPA dollars (\$75,496,456 federal, added

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<sup>37</sup> Kevin Starr, *Endangered Dream: The Great Depression in California* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 155, 176-7, 205-6, 222-4, 239-40, 243, 309, 319-20, 339.

<sup>38</sup> Donald Connolly and G.I. Farman, *Report of Accomplishments of the Operations Division: Works Progress Administration Southern California, January 1, 1939* (no place of publication, publisher, or date of publication listed), p. 2, Call# R6205.U59002, Department of Science, Technology & Patents, Los Angeles Public Library Local History Collection, Los Angeles, California.

together with an additional 18.2 percent of matching state and local funds between October 5, 1935 and December 31, 1938), and employed more people (1,001,692 man-months of work between October 5, 1935 and December 31, 1938) than anywhere else in the country.<sup>39</sup> That money mattered a great deal, because among the cities who reported their recreational spending to the federal government during the late 1930s, none could claim their municipal expenditures rivaled what the WPA was willing to spend on each city throughout the nine regions into which the agency had divided the country.<sup>40</sup> All a municipality needed was a local sponsor, a state-level

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<sup>39</sup> Caro, *The Power Broker*, 453; Donald Connolly and G.I. Farman, *Report of Accomplishments of the Operations Division: Works Progress Administration Southern California, January 1, 1939* (no place of publication, publisher, or date of publication listed), pp. 2-3, Call# R6205.U59002, Department of Science, Technology & Patents, Los Angeles Public Library Local History Collection, Los Angeles, California.

<sup>40</sup> This point along with the comparison made in the preceding sentence is supported by a selection of the surviving nine region and state by state WPA recreation division reports. While these reports vary to a degree in substance, in date, and by creator, taken together they evidence the arguments advanced. The differing nature of the style of the reports have necessitated the temporary suspension of citation style consistency in favor of accurately directing an interested researcher to these reports, all of which are found in RG69, Records of the Work Projects Administration, Recreation Division, NARA-II: The Recreation Program in Region I, typescript n.d., Folder A.2 Regional Agencies, Box 1; The Recreation Program in Region II, typescript n.d., Folder A.2 Regional Agencies, Box 1; The Recreation Program in Region III, typescript n.d., Folder A.2 Regional Agencies, Box 1; The Recreation Program in Region IV, typescript n.d., Folder A.2 Regional Agencies, Box 1; The Recreation Program in Region V, typescript n.d., Folder A.2 Regional Agencies, Box 1; The Recreation Program in Region VI, typescript n.d., Folder A.2 Regional Agencies, Box 1; The Recreation Program in Region VII, typescript n.d., Folder A.2 Regional Agencies, Box 1; The Recreation Program in Region VIII, typescript n.d., Folder A.2 Regional Agencies, Box 1; The Recreation Program in Region IX, typescript n.d., Folder A.2 Regional Agencies, Box 1; Victor Cutter, *Recreation in New England* (Boston: National Resource Committee, September, 1938), 1-20, Folder A.2 Regional Agencies, Box 1; "A Manual of Recreation: Prepared by Division of Education and Recreation of the Works Progress Administration of Arkansas, November, 1936, Folder A.3. Arkansas, Box 1; Accomplishments: Works Progress Administration Northern California, 1936-1938, Folder A.3. California, Box 2; Directory and Annual Report: Communities Served and Agencies Assisted, Works Progress Administration Colorado, 1939-1940, Folder A.3. Colorado, Box 2; WPA Recreation in Florida, May 5, 1938, typescript, Folder A.3. Florida, Box 2; State of Indiana Governor's Commission on Unemployment Relief: Federal Emergency Education Division: Recreation Manual and Suggestions for Recreation Programs, n.d., Folder A.3. Indiana, Box 2; Folder A.3. The WPA Recreation Program in Iowa, May, 1939, Folder A.3. Iowa, Box 2; Works Progress Administration, Topeka, Kansas: Manual for Recreation Supervisors, October 15, 1939, Folder A.3. Kansas, Box 2; Harry Hopkins, *Leisure-Time Leadership WPA Recreation Projects* (Washington, D.C.: Works Progress Administration, March, 1938), 1-23, Folder A.3. Minnesota, Box 2; Works Progress Administration, *Community Recreation Programs: A Study of WPA Recreation Projects* (Washington, D.C.: Federal Works Agency, February, 1940), 5-46, Folder A.3. Minnesota, Box 2; A.3. Montana Works Progress Administration: Education – Recreation, State-Wide Semi-Annual Report, July 1-Dec. 31, 1938, Folder A.3., Montana, Box 2; Report on Recreation Program 1938-1939 of Nebraska Works Progress Administration, Folder A.3., Nebraska, Box 3; Recreation: WPA Nevada, n.d., Folder A.3. Nevada, Box 3;

partner, and the approval of the WPA regional administrator for federal money to move into the city limits for recreational services and broader public works projects. In Southern California, that approval came time and again.

Los Angeles was through and through a Western city in that the management of water trumped all other planning priorities. Whereas environmental activist scholarship might characterize government-directed hydraulic policy in the West as “creative vandalism,” the builders of public works in Southern California saw \$92 million in money in under three years as a means to hold back the river.<sup>41</sup> They spent about 30 percent of that money on flood control measures and storm drains and another 20 percent on sewers and water supply. They also put Los Angeles on the path to the auto-metropolis it became by spending more than \$15 million on parkways and arterial highways linking different neighborhoods and cities. After water and highways, recreation comprised the third largest category of WPA project expenditures in Southern California—just under \$14 million and 15 percent of total costs.<sup>42</sup>

Los Angeles became the test case for the nation in terms of measuring the impact federal intervention could make on urban recreational reform for reasons that counted more than dollars

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Recreation Manual: Works Projects Administration North Dakota, October, 1941. Folder A.3. North Dakota, Box 3; 1941 Report of the Oklahoma City Park and Recreation Department, Folder A.3., Box 3; Summary Report on the Emergency Recreation Program in Oregon, 1935, Folder A.3. Oregon, Box 3; Recreation Program of Works Projects Administration in South Carolina, Folder A.3. South Carolina, Box 3; Folder A.3. Work Pays: South Dakota WPA, ca. 1939, Folder A.3. South Dakota, Box 3; State of Wyoming: Report of Accomplishments of State Recreation Council, January 31, 1935, Folder A.3. Wyoming, Box 3.

<sup>41</sup> Marc Reisner, *Cadillac Desert: The American West and Its Disappearing Water* (New York: Viking Press, 1986), 501.

<sup>42</sup> Donald Connolly and G.I. Farman, *Report of Accomplishments of the Operations Division: Works Progress Administration Southern California, January 1, 1939* (no place of publication, publisher, or date of publication listed), pp. 5-6, Call# R6205.U59002, Department of Science, Technology & Patents, Los Angeles Public Library Local History Collection, Los Angeles, California; Tom Lewis, *Divided Highways: Building the Interstate Highways, Transforming American Life* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 38, 71, 73, 184.

spent. Unlike most cities that had a short history of and small commitment of municipal resources to parks and recreation, Los Angeles actually had a rich tradition of and strong commitment of municipal resources to parks and recreation. Especially robust recreational heritage was the exception that proved the rule of the recreational revolution.

Los Angeles' 1889 City Charter established the city's first Park Commission, and over the next decade that commission added parks such as Hollenbeck, Eastlake, Westlake, Echo, and Exposition in what historian Kevin Starr has called "an excellent network of open spaces" very much in the Progressive tradition of that time.<sup>43</sup> In 1904 the city took public recreation a step further than any other municipality in the country when the City Council created a Playground and Recreation Department separate from the Los Angeles Parks Department. The Parks Department's mandate allowed for the stewardship of park landscapes, while the Playground and Recreation Department fulfilled its task of directing all athletic, educational, and cultural activities on the schools parks and playgrounds. The 1925 Charter of the City of Los Angeles reaffirmed the independence of those two departments, and between 1925 and 1932 the Playground and Recreation department grew into the largest organizer of urban recreational spaces in the world. By 1925 that department controlled nine playgrounds, four swimming pools, four city mountain camps, and a budget of \$5 million, whereas in 1932 those numbers rose to forty-eight playgrounds, sixteen swimming pools, six mountain camps, and \$23 million spent on the 23,000 people who made use of the city's parks every day.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Kevin Starr, *Inventing the Dream: California Through the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 65.

<sup>44</sup> Playground and Recreation Commission, "Annual Report of the Department of Playground and Recreation of the City of Los Angeles for Year Ending June 30, 1926," pp. 5-9, no Folder, Box A-2060, LA City Archives and

Beaches opened to the public proliferated to a degree and were enjoyed by more people than anywhere else in the United States. Traveling South along the Coast, a traveler would encounter beaches at Malibu, Santa Monica, Ocean Park, Venice, Playa del Rey, El Segundo Manhattan, Hermosa, Redondo, Palos Verdes, San Pedro-Wilmington, Long Beach, and the southernmost Seal Beach. The recreational wonderland of Catalina Island could be reached by a twenty-three-mile steamer line by the Channel Islands.<sup>45</sup>

Parks proliferated but varied a great deal in size, convenience, and recreational focus. Big Pine Recreational Camp was the largest in the area at 5,557 acres nestled up against the San Bernadino Mountains. The 3,751 acres of Griffith Park sat in Northwest Los Angeles—a popular place for tennis, golf, and swimming for the Hollywood crowd. Rowers and anglers enjoyed Los Angeles’ largest lake in Echo Park. Picnickers, hikers, and motorists found plenty of fun along 548 acres of trails in Elysian Park. The home park for most Angelinos from the east side of the city was Hollenback, which gave residents opportunities for tennis and boating. Lincoln Park, Luna Park, Lookout Mountain, and the Japanese Gardens were all popular places for reflection and communing with nature in botanic conservatories, mountain trails, and “one of the largest privately owned animal collections in the world.” The Los Angeles Park Board called

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Records Center, Los Angeles, California; John C. Porter, “Annual Message of the Mayor,” pp. 32-33, Mayor –1930 Annual Messages Folder [no number], Box A-2060, LA City Archives and Records Center, Los Angeles, California; Department of Playground and Recreation City of Los Angeles, “1930-1942 Report,” pp. 6-7, 9, 11 [no pagination], no Folder, Box A-2060, LA City Archives and Records Center, Los Angeles, California; J. Paul Elliot, “Shall The Municipal Recreation Department be Abolished?,” unsourced essay in Folder [no number] National Recreation Association, Box 51, John G. Winant Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York.

<sup>45</sup> Program to the 1932 Olympic Games titled *Olympic Games, July 30 to August 14, 1932, Los Angeles County, California*, California History Section, California State Library, Sacramento, call #cF868.L804, p. 14; Lawrence Culver, *The Frontier of Leisure: Southern California and the Shaping of Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 83-138; Program to the 1932 Olympic Games titled *Olympic Games, July 30 to August 14, 1932, Los Angeles County, California*, California History Section, California State Library, Sacramento, call #cF868.L804, pp. 14-15.



Westlake Park in the Wilshire district home, and newcomers to Los Angeles liked to congregate on the twenty-acre lawn of Sycamore Grove Park. Further afield, Pasadena's Brookside Park featured a popular bathing pool open to the public. Long Beach's Bixby Park routinely hosted the meetings of various civic and social associations. A drive or an electric rail trip brought a traveler to Eagle Rock Park, known for a stone formation of the nation's symbol. The crown jewel of the Los Angeles County park system, however, was Exposition Park. Comparatively small at 130 acres, Exposition Park's central location nonetheless made it an easy choice for headquarters of the 1932 Olympics. Olympic officials repurposed structures such as the Los Angeles County Museum and the National Guard armory, and enough undeveloped land existed for the construction of the Coliseum, where the opening and closing ceremonies of the games would be held. Most importantly, electric train lines, bus routes, and major auto avenues all fed to the park.<sup>46</sup>

The Los Angeles Coliseum was built by the post-World War I city boosters at the Community Development Association (CDA). Those men defied the public's unwillingness to pay for the stadium—opposition voiced by the Municipal League—by getting the city to agree to lease a sizable acreage of Exposition Park to the CDA, who would then build the Coliseum by charging \$500,000 worth of rents back to the city of Los Angeles and Los Angeles County to use parts of Exposition Park. That scheme, along with no-interest loans, meant the CDA had the Los Angeles Coliseum built in 1932, only three years after Southern California voters had said no thanks to the stadium. That construction showed the ability of Los Angeles Chamber of

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<sup>46</sup> Program to the 1932 Olympic Games titled *Olympic Games, July 30 to August 14, 1932, Los Angeles County, California*, California History Section, California State Library, Sacramento, call #cF868.L804, pp. 14-16.

Commerce members to make big projects happen in spite of opposition, a crucial demonstration of power that helped Los Angeles secure the 1932 Olympics from the International Olympic Committee (IOC). California state bonds totaling nearly \$2 million dollars and issued in 1928 made sure the Coliseum measured up to international standards by 1932.<sup>47</sup>

The ultimate sports spectacle was the way Los Angeles distinguished its economic ascendance at a time when other municipalities were slashing their recreation budgets. In 1932 Los Angeles announced to the world that it had arrived as a global city when it hosted the Xth Olympiad. Begun by the Greeks in 776 B.C.E., ancients conceived of the games as a means for fostering mutual respect between competing polises and people. Having conquered the Greeks, the Romans continued the Olympic tradition until the Western Empire's rapid decline in the fourth century stopped what had become a only a husk of the Greek games from before the Common Era. Eastern and Western Europeans revived the Games in the mid-nineteenth century with the first Games sanctioned by the IOC taking place in Athens in 1896. St. Louis became the first city in the United States to host the games in 1904, and seven Olympiads later, Los Angeles became the second. The significance of St. Louis as the "Gateway to the West" and Los Angeles' status as the "Entertainment Capital of the World" were not lost on the city boosters who lobbied the IOC for the chance to host the games.<sup>48</sup>

The 1932 Olympics also marked a remarkable moment for gender in world sports history. For the first time in the ancient or the modern games, a substantial number of women competed

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<sup>47</sup> James T. Bennett, *They Play, You Pay: Why Taxpayers Build Ballparks, Stadiums, and Arenas for Billionaire Owners and Millionaire Players* (New York: Copernicus Books, 2012), 68-69.

<sup>48</sup> John Gold and Margaret Gold, *Olympic Cities: City Agendas, Planning and the World's Games, 1896-2016* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 19-33.

in the games. While outnumbered by their male equals ten to one, the presence of dozens of women competitors posed a challenge for Olympic planners, given the paternalistic attitudes of the men who planned the Games at each and every level. The International Olympic Committee was made up of sixty-four men from forty-three separate countries. Fifty-two countries from around the world had National Olympic Committees, and every single named member on these committees was male. So too were the officers of the fourteen International Athletic Foundations responsible for the rules and regulations of individual sports at the games. The thirty-nine countries who sent attachés to the Olympics chose men for all of their attaché positions. In the United States, the honorary members of the 1932 National Olympic Committee included such dignified men as President of the United States Herbert Hoover, Vice-President Charles Curtis, Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court Charles Evans Hughes, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives John Garner, Governor of California James Rolph, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors for the County of Los Angeles Henry Wright, and the one non-American as Life Honorary President, the Founder of the modern Olympic games Baron Pierre de Coubertin.<sup>49</sup>

The twenty-nine men most responsible for the details and execution of the 1932 Olympics, members of the Organizing Committee of the Xth Olympic Games, were mostly leaders in industry, law, and real estate throughout the greater Southern California area. A quick glance at the official portraits included in the self-congratulatory materials related to the Games reveals just how traditional most of these men were. Dressed in their country's stodgiest formal

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<sup>49</sup>*The Official Report of the Xth Olympiad, Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: Wolfer Printing Co., 1933), 16-29.

wear to the man, many carried noble titles and preferred to don armed service uniforms if their military rank warranted such a sartorial choice. The only women to be found were the athletes from one of the forty countries who sent competitors to the Games, along with the members of Women's Clubs who served as the games the "Hostesses of the Olympic Games."<sup>50</sup>

Nowhere did the traditional city boosters exercise their authority more strictly than in the building of athletic facilities for the 1932 Games. A list of those venues included: the Olympic auditorium was a new construction that sat 12,000 people (about six blocks Northeast of the Olympic Coliseum); along Grand Avenue was where boxers bouted, wrestlers grappled, and weightlifters cleaned; polo and other equestrian sports took place at the Riviera Country Club by Santa Monica, roughly a half an hour away from the Coliseum; fencers crossed swords at a pavilion next to the Olympic Stadium in the Northeast corner of Exposition Park; a Fine Arts Building exhibited old masters and the best contemporary art in the Palatial Los Angeles County Museum of Arts and Sciences right next to the Olympic Coliseum; farther South, Los Angeles County's harbor entrance played host to the yachting course; aquatic events took place in the 10,000-seat Swimming Stadium next to the Olympic Coliseum; Long Beach, California, hosted the rowing events with special electric rail lines and five new boulevards built to bring the trip from the Olympic stadium to the rowing course down to under three-quarters of an hour; the Rose Bowl Stadium, a little further afield in Pasadena, also hosted events and up to 80,000 spectators, and connected to the downtown Los Angeles by trolley and bus lines.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 213, 216.

<sup>51</sup> Program to the 1932 Olympic Games titled *Olympic Games, July 30 to August 14, 1932, Los Angeles County, California*, California History Section, California State Library, Sacramento, call #cF868.L804, pp. 2-7, 12-13.

Organizers prepared for 1.3 million spectators. Planners revamped the city's Agricultural Park into the centerpiece Exposition Park, where both major ceremonies and signature field events were held. Noting the lack of public transportation compared to other cities the size of Los Angeles, the one million cars driven within a one-hundred-mile radius of the city, and the expected increased traffic burden the Olympiad would place on the city's already stressed boulevards, Olympic organizers planned to move large crowds swiftly to and from the Olympic Park grounds. With easy access via streetcar lines built to funnel spectators to the competitions, Los Angeles residents took advantage of newfound mobility to the improved recreational facilities long after the Games left town.<sup>52</sup>

An ideology of social control over Los Angeles' booming population underlay the physical reorientation of city space. Local boosters—charged by the Olympic Committee with drumming up Los Angeles residents' support for the games—emphasized the amateur ideal of “international goodwill,” “sportsmanship,” and most emphatically, “clean living and proper training of youth.”<sup>53</sup> The day of the Opening Ceremony, July 28, 1932, the President of the International Olympic Committee addressed a gathering at City Hall and made the connection between unwholesome play and productive youth quite clear: “It is also liable to give him a false standard of values...In the great majority of instances the net result is that the young man, on the very threshold of life, gets a wrong start and is led to adopt false standards which permanently

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<sup>52</sup> *The Official Report of the Xth Olympiad*, 60, 64, 78-9, 106, 149, 777. Tennis players first competed for medals in the 1896 Athens Olympics and in each subsequent Games until the 1924 Paris Games. The 1988 Games in Seoul marked the return of tennis to the Olympics. For a list of medalists in each Olympiad, see Bud Collins, *History of Tennis*, 520-7.

<sup>53</sup> *The Official Report of the Xth Olympiad*, 217.

interfere with his own fundamental interests in later life.” At the start of international competition, the top Olympic official wanted to reassure a local government that what the Games brought to Los Angeles was the exact opposite of the scenario he just described. Instead, a zeitgeist of amateurism shot through the game, extending down to the youth of the city. According to officials, the spirit of Olympic competition infused young men with the awareness of “natural and wholesome” amateur recreation capable of lasting a “lifetime.”<sup>54</sup>

The very system of recreational facilities built by Los Angeles city boosters was supposed to provide that recreation for city residents when, after the competition of the Games on August 14, 1932, the Commissioners of the Los Angeles Board of Playgrounds and Recreation assumed authority over the Coliseum and most of the athletic venues built for the games.<sup>55</sup> Ironically, that very action put the rich tradition of recreation in Los Angeles in jeopardy. In September of that year, budget-hawk civic leaders pushed for a voter referendum and City Charter amendment to dissolve the Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation as a separate entity. The City Council defeated those efforts, and the City’s Park Department absorbed the separate Playground and Recreation Department, but the message of austerity rang loud and clear. The percentage of the city’s budget spent on public recreation now fell to only .04 percent, essentially to zero, in late 1932—and at the very moment when double the number of people had availed themselves of the city’s parks and playgrounds over the previous year. The partnerships the Playground and Recreation Department maintained with recreationally minded organizations such as the YMCA, the YWCA., the Boy Scouts, the Friendly Indians, the

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 321-3.

<sup>55</sup> James T. Bennett, *They Play, You Pay*, 68-69.

Campfire Girls, the Industrial Recreation Groups, and various Parent-Teacher Associations were not enough to salvage the city's recreation agenda. Likewise, hosting both the International Recreation Congress and the Summer Olympics in 1932 obscured the reality of the city's budget shortfall for recreation with spectacles of world-class athletics. Study and spectacle aside, without an infusion of money from outside the city, Los Angeles' proud past of urban public recreation would suffer during the first years of the Depression.<sup>56</sup>

Despite the budget shortfall, Los Angeles County Recreation and Social Workers tried to maintain spaces for organized play. Only a fourth of the County's 268 playgrounds operated at capacity just prior to July of 1933. A month later, all old facilities increased the number of youth served while the recreation commission opened 85 new centers with roughly 50,000 people using the facilities every week. A promotional campaign and four hundred new staff members reached out to young people over the next months, raising the average weekly attendance to 240,000. These staffers worked so diligently because of the widespread belief that supervised recreation could curb the youth delinquency crisis affecting the nation as a whole and Southern California in particular. The Juvenile Court of Los Angeles processed more than six thousand delinquents a year in the early 1930s, with two out of three of those youths remaining supervised wards. The number of those cases that actually came up for hearings before the Juvenile Court fell from 5,371 in 1929 to 3,546 in 1932—a total decrease of two-thirds of cases in only a four-year

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<sup>56</sup> J. Paul Elliot, "Shall The Municipal Recreation Department be Abolished?," unsourced essay in Folder [no number] National Recreation Association, Box 51, John G. Winant Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York; Department of Playground and Recreation of the City of Los Angeles, *1930-1932 Report*, LA City Archives and Records Center, Los Angeles, California.

period. Nevertheless, Los Angeles County recreation workers remained steadfast in their belief that supervised “Playgrounds Prevent Delinquency.”<sup>57</sup>

Fortunately for the cash-strapped City and County of Los Angeles, the federal government agreed that youth delinquency was a disease curable by the expansion of supervised recreation. At the end of 1932, the Chief of the Washington D.C.-based Children’s Bureau, Grace Abbott, sounded the alarm when she shared that across the eighteen U.S. cities that reported back to her agency, the number of children who had to look outside their household for food, clothing, and shelter had risen by 25 percent since May of that same year. In the same article, the Child Welfare League reported that the number of youths they now provided for had spiked by almost 50 percent in under half a year. A continuation of the trend of family breakdown seemed unthinkable, in part because there was not much reformers could do to change that.<sup>58</sup>

Improving conditions community-wide made more sense. At the same time as these fire bells in the night clanged, the Coordinating Council of Los Angeles—which was essentially a fusion organization made up of leaders of law enforcement agencies such as city police departments, County Sheriff’s Departments, and County Probation Departments; legal entities such as the Juvenile Court of Los Angeles County; educational bodies such as the Board of Education; and various other groups that ranged from the Safety Department of the Automobile

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<sup>57</sup> “A Brief History of the Delinquency Prevention and Recreation Project in Los Angeles County,” typescript report, p. 5, 8, 11-12, 19, 22, 35, January 1932 to June 1934, Fol. A Brief History, Box C6, Works Progress Administration Collection, LOC; Kenyon J. Scudder and Kenneth S. Beam, *Why Have Delinquents?* (Los Angeles: Rotary Club of Los Angeles, 1933), 8-9, 39; Departments of Playgrounds and Recreation of Los Angeles, “Today’s Leisure,” parks report for 1938, p. 16, no Folder, Box A-2060, LA City Archives and Records Center, Los Angeles, California.

<sup>58</sup> Scudder and Beam, *Why Have Delinquents?* 31, 34, 46.



Club of California, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, and the Council of Social Agencies—all in collaboration with the Rotary Club of Los Angeles—issued an optimistic assessment of Los Angeles County’s early efforts and future initiatives to combat the threat the Depression posed to young men in particular. The report opened with former president Hoover’s “Children’s Charter” which, among other claims, argued that individual communities needed to look after “every child regardless of race or color or wherever he may live” and that “provides him with safe and wholesome places for play and recreation.” In his foreword to *Why Have Delinquents?*, presiding Los Angeles Juvenile Court Judge Samuel R. Blake riffed off of Hoover’s manifesto and argued the fault of a delinquent youth lay not with the individual but with the neighborhoods and cities that failed to provide for the young man’s energies. The voices of the youths themselves, though filtered through the reformers’ report, said, “there’s no other place to go and nothing else to do in our neighborhood” other than the “pool hall” and “street corner” for young men and the dance halls for young women.<sup>59</sup> By 1935 the Federal government was prepared to make sure the youths in America’s cities had their choice of places to go play.

The WPA revived Los Angeles’ recreational heritage by building 183 separate parks and recreation projects in and around the city. Prior to the WPA, the city’s poorest neighborhoods had little in the way of publicly accessible athletic parks and fieldhouses because the private money and civic association volunteerism needed to bring those facilities into existence put their resources into places where their leisure class members lived. That began to change in late 1935 and continued to the end of 1938, during which time the WPA secured and improved 3,000 acres of land in Southern California on which WPA workers poured 37,000 cubic yards of concrete for

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

recreational structures. Some of that concrete went into Arcadia Regional Park, which before 1940 was the sole recreational space for the quarter of a million residents of the Arcadia community just east of Pasadena. Having completed their work on a state-of-the-art tennis complex, Olympic length swimming pool for international competitions, and a 135-acre, 18-hole links, WPA administrators could not contain the pride they took in their project, calling Arcadia “one of the most beautiful and modern [parks] in the country,” well worth the million-dollar taxpayer price tag.<sup>60</sup>

If a driver today left San Marino’s Huntington Library and Gardens and drove four miles east along Huntington Drive, his route would bisect one legatee of the recreational revolution in Southland. In between Huntington Drive East and Huntington Drive West sits Civic Center Athletic Field and Recreation Area right next to the municipal building and City Hall of Arcadia—an affluent commuter town fifteen miles northeast of downtown Los Angeles. Running diagonally along the west side of Huntington Drive sits the Santa Anita Park racetrack, where more than 60,000 spectators wagered on thoroughbred racing under the backdrop of the San Gabriel Mountains. For those more interested in flora than fauna, the Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Garden abuts the track. Along the east side of Huntington Drive and just north of Campus Drive, directly north of Arcadia High School sits the Arcadia Community Center, the eighteen-hole championship Santa Anita Golf Course, the sixteen-court Arcadia Tennis Center, the Arcadia aquatics center, and a lawn bowling club, all in the wooded Arcadia

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<sup>60</sup> Donald Connolly and G.I. Farman, *Report of Accomplishments of the Operations Division: Works Progress Administration Southern California, January 1, 1939* (no place of publication, publisher, or date of publication listed), pp. 196-198, Call# R6205.U59002, Department of Science, Technology & Patents, Los Angeles Public Library Local History Collection, Los Angeles, California.

Park.<sup>61</sup> More than three-quarters of a century after it was built, the park's recreational facilities remain fundamentally unchanged in serving the residents of Arcadia.

Some parks kept much of the same character they had before WPA money modernized them. The difference the New Deal made was great in degree but small in kind. At over 4,000 acres in size, Griffith Park had stood since City Beautiful proponent and local booster Griffith J. Griffith gave around five square miles of land to the city just before the start of the twentieth century. The mitigation of class and ethnic conflict through scenic reflection motivated Griffith's decision to donate the land, but Griffith also saw in the park the potential for educating the public in the dramatic arts through the construction of an amphitheater, in the planetary sciences through the construction of a celestial observatory, and in aviation through the construction of the Griffith Park Aerodrome. With the exception of the planes, Griffith realized none of his dreams for the park before his death in 1919; however, over the period of a decade and a half, the city of Los Angeles funded construction of the Greek Theatre and Griffith Observatory completed the same year the WPA came into existence. Five years earlier, in 1930, the venerable landscape design firms of Olmsted Brothers and Harland Bartholomew completed a report for the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce that argued when compared to other cities, Los Angeles' Progressive Era parks under-delivered on both the means for the city's booming population to get to the few number of parks that existed. *Parks, Playgrounds, and Beaches for the Los Angeles Region* presented the firms as the ones to plan for the recreational future of the metropolis, but the City's Chamber of Commerce ultimately decided otherwise by not offering their support, without which the plan arrived stillborn. In 1931, Los Angeles residents did vote

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<sup>61</sup> These are firsthand observations made by the author during his time in the area.

for \$172 million worth of bonds to acquire and improve city land, but that proved not nearly enough for a city's population that had doubled to 2.2 million people between 1920 and 1930 and was expected to double again over the next two decades. Two of the best historians who have studied city planning in Los Angeles call what followed in the decade after the *Parks, Playgrounds, and Beaches* report failed to become policy a "time of limited growth." Actually, what the WPA did suggested a path through the competing interests that had hamstrung attempts at recreational redevelopment found in purportedly comprehensive plans like that of Olmsted and Bartholomew.<sup>62</sup>

Rather than counting on coordination among different civic associations, municipal government departments, and private interests, the WPA took the more straightforward action of looking for one local partner in improvement projects. In the case of Griffith Park, the city itself sponsored a "comprehensive plan for the development of this park," while the WPA provided \$3,556,190 of the \$3,847,570 that went into overhauling the park. Administrators spent a good deal of that money on manpower and material to turn the park's scenic spaces into places for leisure games—principally golf. By 1939, Griffith Park spotlighted three courses complete with clubhouses and timed sprinkler systems for fairways and greens. Workers built ballfields and tennis courts too, but the park's biggest improvement was a free zoo erected on the former grounds of the runways from which World War I aviators had practiced their takeoffs and landings. The hilly topography and sheer size of Griffith Park led the City of Los Angeles and WPA to agree to keep the park focused mainly on outdoor hiking rather than team sports. This

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<sup>62</sup> Greg Hise and William Deverell, eds., *Eden by Design: The 1930 Olmsted-Bartholomew Plan for the Los Angeles Region* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), vii, 8, 16-18, 29, 42-45.

made the most sense, given the logistical challenges faced by the many people who lived below the park's perch atop the east side of the Santa Monica Mountains in actually getting to the park.<sup>63</sup> From the park's western edge marked by the conspicuous Hollywood sign to the Los Angeles Zoo at the Park's northeast corner, Griffith Park remains California's second largest urban park and one of the biggest city parks in the country at more than five times the size of New York City's Central Park.<sup>64</sup>

Griffith Park's size, hillside location, and transportation challenges made it an exception to the more common pattern of WPA parks and recreation projects in cities, emphasizing more active recreation in individual and team sports over older preferences for leisure recreation in the form of strolls and promenades. On occasion, those efforts manifested in major improvements to existing sport venues, as was the case between 1936 and 1938, when hundreds of thousands of federal dollars poured into the City of Pasadena's Rose Bowl as part of a larger effort to improve Brookside Park. Despite the silence on that topic in institutional histories and among contemporary historians alike, such arrangements amounted to the first nationwide subsidizing of stadium improvements in United States history. From the WPA's beginning to end in 1941, it improved 2,500 substantial sports venues across the country.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Donald Connolly and G.I. Farman, *Report of Accomplishments of the Operations Division: Works Progress Administration Southern California, January 1, 1939* (no place of publication, publisher, or date of publication listed), pp. 198-199, Call# R6205.U59002, Department of Science, Technology & Patents, Los Angeles Public Library Local History Collection, Los Angeles, California.

<sup>64</sup> Center for City Park Excellence, "The 150 Largest City Parks," *The Public Trust for Public Land*, December 10, 2010, pdf pp. 1-4, at <[www.tpl.org/ccpe](http://www.tpl.org/ccpe)> (accessed August 2, 2016).

<sup>65</sup> Donald Connolly and G.I. Farman, *Report of Accomplishments of the Operations Division: Works Progress Administration Southern California, January 1, 1939* (no place of publication, publisher, or date of publication listed), p. 201, Call# R6205.U59002, Department of Science, Technology & Patents, Los Angeles Public Library Local History Collection, Los Angeles, California; Marc Dellins, "The Rose Bowl," in *UCLA Football Media Guide*

Watching sports, even in grand venues, still qualified as passive recreation. Far more federal money and man-hours for a far greater number of projects prioritized active recreation in the form of the public's participation in athletics. As people began moving into the San Fernando Valley in greater numbers during the late 1920s and 1930s, they put heavy strains on the undeveloped recreational infrastructures of towns such as Glendale, which in turn reached out to the WPA to help build municipal recreation centers. In Glendale's case, city residents received \$650,732 in Federal money for 560,000 cubic feet for an indoor entertainment complex and Olympic-length natatorium. In the Gateway Cities such as Downy and Norwalk, encountered traveling south by rail from Glendale along the banks of the Los Angeles river, the WPA built basketball courts and horseshoe courts for suburbs with then comparatively dense populations. Not already having the land in hand did not necessarily forestall the WPA's willingness to work on a project. In 1935, for example, all of West Hollywood—an area including such famous thoroughfares as Sunset Blvd., Melrose Ave., and Santa Monica Blvd.—had no parks or playgrounds despite the area's wealthy and influential residents in the entertainment business. Los Angeles County demolished twenty-three building to make room for Plummer Park's seven tennis courts, various athletic fields, and the 10,000-square-foot Great Hall built by the WPA for indoor athletics and social gatherings. A line-by-line accounting by the WPA of their recreation projects in Southern California revealed that the agency thought parks, playgrounds, and pools the best use of federal dollars in fulfilling the desires of local project sponsors.<sup>66</sup>

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(Los Angeles: UCLA Sports Information Office, 1989), 254; *Final Report on the WPA Program, 1935-43* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943), 131.

<sup>66</sup> Donald Connolly and G.I. Farman, *Report of Accomplishments of the Operations Division: Works Progress Administration Southern California, January 1, 1939* (no place of publication, publisher, or date of publication)

From both the local sponsor's point of view and the federal government's point of view, Progressive Era places for scenic reflection were undesirable during a time of mass unemployment. People needed an environment adapted to the crisis of expanded leisure time the Great Depression had created. Supervised sports were the key to that.<sup>67</sup> In making supervised sports paramount to national recovery and reform, the recreational revolution catalyzed change in the most traditional of sports. In no popular sport did those changes arrive with so much intensity as in the sport of tennis. In no place were those changes focused in sharper relief than in Southern California.

The conventional wisdom held that Southern California produced the highest proportion of tennis players because of year-round warm temperatures and sunny weather. Favorable climate was a necessary precondition for topflight tennis, but the more unique factor that mattered in Southern California producing so much top tennis talent was the concentration of premiere tennis facilities that allowed more people to take up the game. Most cities across America counted a single grouping of public park courts along with one to two private tennis clubs. By contrast, Los Angeles had twenty first-class tennis facilities with a dozen or so more scattered throughout Southern California. Moreover, the focus of the New Deal's recreational revolution in Southland gave Los Angeles the highest concentration of municipal tennis courts in the country. Talented junior players eventually found their way to private clubs thanks to

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listed), pp. 201-205, 207, 219, Call# R6205.U59002, Department of Science, Technology & Patents, Los Angeles Public Library Local History Collection, Los Angeles, California.

<sup>67</sup> County of Los Angeles: Department of Recreation Annual Report, 1940-194, Folder A.4. County Agencies, Box 5, RG69, Records of the Work Projects Administration, NARA-II.

subsidies given by the Southern California Tennis Patrons Association, but the vast majority of players first learned the game on public park courts.<sup>68</sup>

Nationally ranked players such as Bob Rogers, Mike Franks, Noel Brown, Dick Skeen, and Carl Earn all trained and taught on the storied La Cienega courts, whose bucolic setting and locker room facilities rivaled that of any private club. Ellsworth Vines and Les Stofen learned their tennis at Griffith Park. Thanks to Pancho Gonzales's fame, the former black sheep of Los Angeles' tennis parks, Exposition Park, became the citywide focal point for municipal players with Willis Anderson, Jimmy McDaniels, Gilbert Shea, Herb Flam, Hugh Stewart, and Jacque Virgil forming a regular training group on those courts. A reputation as a fine player was enough to lead to invitations to play at private clubs throughout Southern California, whereas in other parts of the country, particularly the East Coast, a focus on enforcing club regulations on members and their guests acted as an impenetrable class barrier that never existed to the same degree in Southern California. Players generally expected invitations to play at the North Hollywood courts, the West Side Club, the Poinsettia's courts, the Beverley Wilshire, 25th and Santi Monica, the Hillcrest Club, the Altadena Club, and, the most important of them all, the Los Angeles Tennis Club. Ted Schroeder, Jack Kramer, Don Budge, Beverley Baker Fleitz, and

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<sup>68</sup> "Park Courts in 1907," *American Lawn Tennis* 29, no. 8 (September 5, 1935): 27; "Public Parks Paly in Greater New York," *American Lawn Tennis* 28, no. 5 (July 20, 1934): 36; "Public Parks Play in Springfield," *American Lawn Tennis* 28, no. 10 (October 20, 1934): 25; "Public Parks' Rating," *American Lawn Tennis* 28, no. 14 (February 20, 1935): 34-5; "Philadelphia's Public Park Courts," *American Lawn Tennis* 29, no. 2 (May 20, 1935): 47; Davison Obear, "Public Parks Play in St Louis," *American Lawn Tennis* 30, no. 8 (September 5, 1936): 26-7; "Margaret Osborne, "Golden Gate Park Tennis Courts," *American Lawn Tennis* 31, no. 11 (November 20, 1937): 9; Ned Wheldon, "Public Parks Championship," *American Lawn Tennis* 32, no. 8 (September 5, 1938): 16-17; "Florida Public Courts Tournament," *American Lawn Tennis* 32, no. 13 (January 20, 1939) 21; Californians in the East," *American Lawn Tennis* 29, no. 5 (July 20, 1935): 46; Jeane Hoffman, "Bouncing Around," *The Racquet*, 46, no. 5 (September 1952); 24-25; Alice Marble, "The State of the Tennis Union," *The Racquet*, 46, no. 11 (March 1953): 13, 32; Jeane Hoffman, "Bouncing Around," *The Racquet*, 47, no. 4 (August, 1953): 28-29.



scores of other topflight talent all played at the clubs in addition to occasional park play. Players-turned-administrators such as Perry Jones ran leagues such as the Perry Jones All-Stars, which pitted top junior talent against university players at the UCLA and USC tennis courts. During the year, Southern California held tournaments that amounted to fifty-two weeks of the calendar, including the famed Winter Tennis League that kept players competing when the rest of the country took the season off. Climate did allow for that league, but, again, without the players and the organization, Southern California would have had a lot of tennis players, not a lot of world class tennis players. The recreational revolution was the key to all of that.<sup>69</sup>

One further development completed the recreational revolution in the United States and gave professional tennis a gentle push from the touch-and-go tours of the prewar years to the more profitable tours of the postwar period. As the nation prepared for World War II, Southern California became the epicenter of wartime production for the massive Pacific theatre.<sup>70</sup> The scores of war industries workers and soldiers needed places to recreate when they were not in the factory or drilling for combat. With the U.S. Congress's formal declaration of war on Japan issued December 8, 1941, army camps in Southern California literally sprang "into being overnight," in the words of an exasperated WPA recreation administrator. In the final year and a half of its existence, the WPA public works building projects tapered as men joined the armed forces and unemployment numbers fell. Yet in areas of the country where populations increased,

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<sup>69</sup> Bob Perry, "Tennis in Southern California," *World Tennis* 1, no. 11 (April, 1954): 15; Jeane Hoffman, "Bouncing Around," *The Racquet* 46, no.5 (September, 1952): 24-25.

<sup>70</sup> Roger Lotchin, *The Bad City in the Good War: San Francisco, Los Angeles, Oakland, and San Diego* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 7, 9-11.

the WPA ratcheted up recreational commitments. The most dramatic increase occurred in the counties of Southern California.<sup>71</sup>

The degree to which the recreational revolution took place in different cities did not cause the population upswings in certain states any more than the population upswings in certain states caused the building of recreational spaces in the cities within those states. But in the middle of economic troubles and war, the coordination of local organizations along with municipal, county, state, and federal officials fundamentally redeveloped the recreational landscapes of the nation in a way that established the mass participation of any American who wanted to play individual or team sports. The population centers that desperately needed and received new recreational spaces became the epicenters for athletic excellence that increasingly took the form of professionalism over amateurism. American entry into World War II hastened that trend as amateur tennis players who grew up playing on recreational revolution public tennis courts turned professional to travel throughout the country to entertain troops and a war-burdened population hungry for the distraction offered by popular entertainment.

Modern tennis and modern sport began in Britain. By the 1930s, however, modern tennis and modern sport were made in America thanks to the federal government. With the New Deal, cities such as Chicago presented public parks and many small playgrounds with one if not multiple tennis courts. In 1935, estimates were that 115,000 people swung a racquet on the city's public courts, a roughly equal number competing at private clubs, and a substantial but undetermined number playing pickup matches on empty lots. Eager to spread the game, Park

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<sup>71</sup> Activities Being Promoted by the Certified Recreation Project, typescript, n.d., Folder A.3. California, Box 2; Recreation Program, Works Projects Administration Recreation Division, RG69, Records of the Work Projects Administration, NARA-II.

District officials and educators pitched tennis to the masses as “one of the most valuable sports in improving body and mind.”<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Harry Tilton, “How Chicago Creates Tennis Interests,” typescript, Box A125, Chicago Sports & Recreation—Tennis Folder, Works Progress Administration Collection, LOC; Daniel Abrahamson, “The Humboldt Park Tennis Club,” typescript, Box A125, Chicago Sports & Recreation—Tennis Folder, Works Progress Administration Collection, LOC.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### TENNIS MOBILIZES FOR WAR

Tennis mobilized for war in the late 1930s and the first half of the 1940s, first within itself and then as part of the great military and political conflict of the mid-twentieth century. Spurred by the recreational revolution of the New Deal but in different degrees in different locales, the USLTA regional and sectional associations competed among one another for control of the Association's national policies and treasuries. Hard economic times incentivized top amateur players who previously would likely have remained amateurs to look to tennis for a source of livelihood. That meant an increased number of professionals compared to the previous decade and heightened competition among these touring players for the limited dollars Depression-weary consumers had to spend on entertainments. Just at the time when the professionals had the numbers and prestige to further challenge the authority of the USLTA to bar money in the game, the professionals splintered apart rather than forming a solid front to advance their interests for open competition between themselves and amateurs at the Association's member clubs. World War II effectively ended international competition in Europe and throughout the British Commonwealth. The game fared better in the United States, as the most popular amateur and professional players found opportunities to play their sport as the fulfillment of their military duty. Despite the elimination of the formal professional tour, tennis amateur and professional champions spread the game widely from 1941 to 1945. In so doing, the

war years created public interest necessary for the popular barnstorming professional tours that followed in the late forties and fifties.

Before the recreational revolution, access to courts served as the primary barrier limiting who could and who could not succeed in tennis competition. Money allowed but did not guarantee access. Individual and largely idiosyncratic interest in tennis mattered a great deal too. Francis “Frank” Townsend Hunter, the 1924 Olympic Champion and one of the most accomplished players during the sporting heyday of the 1920s, spoke of how his father built and maintained the only private court in affluent Westchester County, New York—and one of only a handful of personal tennis courts in all of the country at the turn of the century. Most weekends and holidays Frank’s father hosted work associates and friends from New York City at his New Rochelle home, where the men played matches and discussed business decisions. Young Frank watched the men play and sprang onto the court to practice with friends the moment the adults vacated the premises. The fact young Frank often did not get on the court for days at a time when the men played made little difference on his training, because even a court with limited availability proved far better for developing a game than the commonplace situation of no court at all.<sup>1</sup>

Gardnar Mulloy, a future number-one U.S. men’s player during the 1940s, also learned to play tennis on a homemade court constructed by his father. Robert Barnum Mulloy, remembered as a “Miami pioneer,” built the court for him and his friends to play on; however, like in Townsend Hunter’s case, the eleven-year-old Gardnar often found himself playing the second half of a doubles team. Playing with the men put Gardnar on the fast track. Starting to play in

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Townsend Hunter Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

1924, Mulloy beat the best junior players in Dade County and in the Florida State Championships over the next few years. Such a quick rise to the top of junior tennis in the warm weather state of Florida was not testament to Mulloy's innate ability; rather, it was the reality that with few tennis courts around, those who had access to a private court held a big and rare advantage over their potential competition. Such advantages evaporated quickly for Mulloy, however, as the collapse of the Florida housing boom in 1926 served as a harbinger for the later and greater economic busts to come in the next several years. Robin Barnum Mulloy's Miami Lumber Company went belly-up when contractors' orders for Dade County pine trees ceased. Like other business owning families, the Mulloys lost much of their position and privileges, limping through the Depression and relying more heavily than ever before on federal government intervention in their everyday lives.<sup>2</sup>

Doris Hart, the number one ranked player in the world in 1951, had that very experience as a child. Born in St. Louis on June 20, 1925, Hart and her family moved to Miami in 1929. Six years later Hart underwent surgery at a Miami hospital where her doctor prescribed tennis at the newly built public courts next to the hospital as the key activity to recuperate her. Hart's parents bought her a \$2.98 racquet, and she went with one of her older brothers to play every day on the courts that were free and open to everyone which just a short time earlier had not existed. They rode the bus to the courts after school, trained until suppertime, and sometimes went back after dinner to play as a mixed doubles team in evening league competition on Miami's municipal courts. On weekends they played for six hours per day. Doris Hart developed further by traveling

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<sup>2</sup> Gardner Mulloy Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Gardner Mulloy, *As It Was: Reminiscences from a Man for All Seasons* (New York: Flexigroup, 2009), 21.

throughout the Southern states and competing on both private and public courts that held a few tournaments for juniors and frequent tournaments for adults in what competitors called the “Southern Circuit.” As a seventeen-year-old, she won the 1942 Junior National Championship in Philadelphia at the Longview Cricket Club. She defended her title the next year in her last match of junior competition. A career Grand Slam in singles, doubles, and mixed-doubles followed for Hart in the late 1940s and early 1950s. She received accolades from civic societies from Coral Gables to Los Angeles and honors from publications such as the *Woman’s Home Companion* and the *Los Angeles Times*. She earned her tennis titles at the grandest private clubs that hosted the biggest tournaments, but for Hart and other players of her generation, their tennis all started on democratic courts built with taxpayer funds.<sup>3</sup>

The United States Lawn Tennis Association echoed the Chicagoans’, the Floridians’, and the New Yorkers’ excitement with the growth of the game in the city. “The overwhelming majority of millions of players in this country first played the game on a public court,” opined USLTA official Howard Burser in 1950. A survey of municipal courts, however, found that six of the eight cities lagged far behind Chicago or Los Angeles’ 160 courts in playgrounds alone. Crucial to the upkeep and growth of the sport was “a constant stream of new players,” and the primary responsibility of introducing the country’s urban youth fell to local park districts and recreation commissions. The survey identified seven challenges most cities failed to meet: first, making courts accessible; second, charging reasonable court fees; third, providing instruction; fourth, opening locker rooms and showers for players; five, maintaining playable courts; six,

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<sup>3</sup> Doris Hart Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Doris Hart, *Tennis with Hart* (New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1955), 191-2.

operating a junior development program; seven, running tournaments so juniors could experience competition. Without providing specific assistance to any city, the USLTA nonetheless recommended local organizations address each of the seven issues.<sup>4</sup>

The fact the USLTA identified issues to address at all was a testament to how robust the recreational revolution in America was when compared to other nations that did not experience a similar building boom. In spite of obvious differences in population distribution, as well as political, economic, and social history, Australia and the United States had enough in common in the middle decades of the twentieth century to make comparisons in their production of world-class tennis talent instructive rather than inchoate. Shared and decades-long traditions in British sports, a public passionate about these sports, locations with year-round sunshine and warm weather, topflight coaching from former champions, and numerous private clubs for moneyed elites and their guests, all meant that both Australia and the United States produced a more or less equal number of world class players before the Open Era in 1968. Minor distinctions aside, the real difference between the two countries in terms of their tennis came not so much in the why or how but in the when. Collapsing the categories of tennis professionals and the top amateurs—an analytical move necessary for comparison but that gives short-shrift to very real differences between these two levels of play in the minds of historical actors—shows that on the whole America saw a bump in top tennis talent in the late 1930s, 1940s, and the first half of the

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<sup>4</sup> Howard E. Burser, “The Public Parks Survey—More Must be Done!” *American Lawn Tennis* (March 1950): 6; Jeane Hoffman, “West Coast Along,” *American Lawn Tennis* (March 1950): 14.



1950s, compared to Australia before the Australians effectively closed the gap by the mid-1950s.<sup>5</sup>

That the United States peaked earlier owed to the pioneering junior development program of the USLTA sectional associations such as the SCTA and to the recreational revolution that built so many accessible courts when compared to Australia of the pre-war years. When tennis came to the U.S. from Britain, it had been a game for the wealthy, but thanks to the recreational revolution, by the late 1930s it had become a game for the middle class and the most promising talent from the working class. The Australian amateur champion Fred Stolle noted that by contrast, Australian tennis did not boom until later into the 1940s and 1950s when enough courts became available. Unlike America, which by that time had a quarter-century of junior development programs run by administrators trained in urban recreation, tennis in Australia

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<sup>5</sup> I have drawn year-end ITF rankings from the complete run of *American Lawn Tennis* held by the ITHF in Newport, Rhode Island. I have supplemented these rankings with the rankings given in Bud Collins, *The Bud Collins History of Tennis: An Authoritative Encyclopedia and Record Book* (New York: New Chapter Press, 2nd ed., n.d.), 357-61, 386-9, 414-21, 454-61, 715-26, 752-5. It needs clarification that this comparison is far from analytically ideal. Most importantly, there are several different metrics for measuring international tennis talent. The most traditional method looks at the Davis Cup victories across different nations for a given time period, with the most years a particular nation held the Cup being the yardstick for success. The problem with this criterion for evaluation is that the United States offered a large enough market for the best players to turn professional and therefore forgo their eligibility for Davis Cup play. Turning professional also eliminated the player from participating in the major tournaments (until 1968), which functions as the second most common way to measure the playing strength of a particular nation. With that in mind, a workable way to evaluate comparative playing strength must take both professionals and amateurs into account and necessitates the collapsing of the two categories into one, which I name rather arbitrarily top tennis talent. While valid points about assigning an exponentially higher value for the number one ranked amateur player versus the number five ranked amateur player can be raised, my purpose is simply to show a basic measurement of an effect tied to its more structurally significant cause. With that goal in mind, simply counting the top ten internationally ranked amateur players gives a measure suitable to show the real impact more courts available to more people had on developing top tennis talent within particular places and nations. After 1968, the money incentives in the game changed this picture to a degree that is beyond the scope of this project. Needless to say, however, individuals from countries with comparatively small populations and comparatively small numbers of courts thought it worthwhile to pursue tennis fulltime. Switzerland's 2014 Davis Cup victory and the number two and number four world rankings of their two top players is just one example of how the post-1968 tennis world scarcely resembles that of the pre-Open Era.

during the country's first push to real international prominence began because of the game's popularity as a "local and family-oriented pastime" enjoyed "with your dad on some distant courts."<sup>6</sup>

The great Australian Champion Margaret Smith Court played tennis with family and friends about 1952 as a ten-year-old. That timing meant that young Court could take advantage of the postwar economic boom in Australia which saw the upswing in recreational building similar to what America had begun to experience almost two decades earlier. From a poor family in a small town named Aubrey that straddled Victoria and New South Wales, Court nonetheless had access to twenty-four grass courts, which effectively guaranteed she could play anytime she wanted to. Constant competition against teenage boys and men honed Court's skills to a point that she attracted the attention of tennis champion Frank Sedgman, who offered Court access to his gym and training facilities in Melbourne. Then fifteen years old, Margaret accepted and moved to Australia's sporting capital, where she lived and worked at a boarding school when she was not training. Two years later she won the Australian National Championships as a minor where she beat the world's number-one ranked player, Maria Bueno, in the finals in 1959. That victory launched Margaret into international orbit, where she stayed, spanning the globe's tournaments for the next decade.<sup>7</sup>

The career of a second and even more internationally visible Australian Champion also exemplified the transnational impact the 1930s American recreational revolution had on world sports after 1940. Frank Sedgman, a future finalist in or winner of all four Major Singles

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<sup>6</sup> Fred Stolle and Kenneth Wydro, *Tennis Down Under* (Bethesda, MD: National Press Inc., 1985), 9.

<sup>7</sup> Margaret Smith Court Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

Championships in addition to a topflight professional whose career began in 1953 and extended through the fifties, was born on October 27, 1937, in the Melbourne suburb of Mont Albert in Victoria, Australia. Sedgman candidly recalled that the world-class Americans who played Davis Cup in the 1940s personally “inspired” him and his entire generation of Australian players who then took it upon themselves to improve their own games to challenge the United States. For their part, the Australians competed well, winning the Davis Cup in 1950. Sedgman himself also enjoyed tremendous success in America but not without initial difficulty. “I found the Americans to be very tough on their home courts,” he said. By that Sedgman meant both the quality of competition, particularly in the big East Coast grass-court tournaments held at Orange, New Jersey, Newport, Rhode Island, West Chester, Forest Hills, New York, and Boston, Massachusetts, as well as the actual kind of courts he played on in the California tournaments. Unlike the older and mostly private grass courts of the East Coast, America’s West Coast featured cement courts built with public money during the thirties. Before coming to play in California in 1948, Sedgman had never played on hard courts. Along with several tournament titles, Sedgman brought back with him to Australia the positive impact that government spending, equality of opportunity, and concrete could have on a nation’s athletic achievements.<sup>8</sup>

Coaching was also a key ingredient to the development of topflight tennis talent. Here, as elsewhere, Australia followed the example of the United States, even improving upon it when the famous coach and Davis Cup captain Harry Hopman won the 1950 Davis Cup and successfully defended that title fifteen times over the next twenty years. But that consistent success came

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<sup>8</sup> Frank Sedgman Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

later, after coaches and teaching professionals in the United States had set the example. Dick Skeen was one of these early coaches. He grew up in Winnsboro, a little hamlet in East Texas, in the second decade of the twentieth century. His father was very prosperous by small town standards—owning a large share in the county bank, a small five-and-dime store, and various tenant farms. After Skeen’s mother’s death, his father remarried a woman who despised the young Skeen and physically abused him. Skeen spent his summers away from his stepmother’s beatings working on one of his father’s farms with little in the way of recreational sports prospects. Tennis certainly was too “sissy” of a sport for a Texas boy to take up. In 1918, however, Skeen’s father moved the family to Southern California, bought a large house and lot for \$14,500, and by 1919 had flipped the house for a \$100,000 profit. Skeen began school at the Selma Avenue Grammar School and failed miserably at physical education. Down the street from his school along Hollywood Boulevard sat the Hollywood Hotel where, before Beverly Hills grew into the home for the nation’s screen actors, the biggest names in silent film lived. Skeen bummed around the court behind the hotel more to catch sight of the stars than for the tennis. He would also collect tennis balls hit over the fence, and on one occasion was given a racquet by Bert Lytell after the comedian cracked the wood frame during play. Skeen liked swinging his broken racquet, and when he earned enough money from his *Los Angeles Times* paper route, he bought a new racquet and tennis shoes.<sup>9</sup>

Skeen had a difficult time finding a place to play, though. In the early 1920s, all of Los Angeles had only four courts open to anyone, and the town of Hollywood had only three.

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<sup>9</sup> Dick Skeen, *Tennis Champions are Made, Not Born* (Redwood City, CA: Cal-Pacific Color, 1976), 63-66.

Fortunately for Skeen, Hollywood High School, where he began attending made two of those courts available. Before school and during his lunch hour, Skeen hit on the school's court, hardly noticing the decrepit condition of the concrete he treaded over. What Skeen had noticed, however, was that next to no one in burgeoning Los Angeles County taught tennis for money. So in 1931 Skeen convinced the parents of thirteen pre-teen and teenagers to let him try teaching their children tennis lessons on the weekend. Skeen's success with those kids led him to a \$10-per-month salary as a tennis professional, instructing the five members of the Pasadena Tennis Club. While he helped grow the club's membership to fifty in short order, Skeen still faced the difficult reality that the metropolitan area had relatively few public or semi-public courts. He therefore spent most of his time teaching juniors at Bart Wade's private court and instructing Beverly Hills and Santa Monica resident movie stars—including Bing Crosby, Gary Cooper, Cary Grant, Fred Astaire, Joseph Cotton, Johnny Weismuller, Merle Oberon, Norma Shearer, Dolores del Rio, Hugh O'Brian, and Cornel Wilde—on the movie stars' private courts.<sup>10</sup>

By the late 1930s, with the proliferation of public tennis courts across the country, the popularity of the game had risen to the point that Skeen joined a tennis professional exhibition tour in 1939 across the United States and Canada. During the war years he taught for a time in Palm Beach, Florida, and with the conclusion of the fighting he went to France and Italy to teach, instructing the Mexican Davis Cup team in 1946 through 1948. He returned to teaching in

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Southern California that same year, and over the next two decades taught at and managed a variety of clubs up and down the Golden State.<sup>11</sup>

Mercer Beasley was an even more influential American tennis coach because of his ability to locate and develop juniors capable of promising professional careers. Beasley first played tennis in 1893 on a grasscourt built by his father at the family's New Jersey home. He struggled because his poor distance vision made spotting the ball difficult, but he seemed to grasp the technicalities of proper stroke production. Over the next few decades Beasley honed communicating the best way to hit the ball to college players at Princeton, Tulane, and the University of Miami. His real talent was spotting potential in young players that no one else saw, as was the case of the eleven-year-old Frank "Frankie" Parker, whom Beasley first noticed at Milwaukee Town Club in 1925 and, who, under Beasley's instruction, went on to win top junior tournaments, two major men's single titles, and join the professional tour in 1949. In 1925 Beasley happened across an even more promising talent in Southern California. Having assumed the coaching position at Pasadena High School, Beasley needed one more player to complete his squad. Someone mentioned he should go by the local bakery, where he found a long and limber teenager named Ellsworth Vines.<sup>12</sup>

Born in Los Angeles in 1911 meant that when Vines began playing tennis in the mid-1920s, courts were in far shorter supply than they would be a decade later. Fortunately for Vines, Beasley had some pull at the Los Angeles Tennis Club, which offered talented junior players like

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> No author named, "Mercer Beasley," *Sports Illustrated*, July 29, 1957, p. 64. In the interview for this article, Beasley counted having coached seventeen players who together combined for eighty-four National Championships.

Vines discounted junior or association memberships at \$2 or \$3 per month, sometimes without a \$25 joining fee. Such a subsidy put the Club's sixteen courts within reach for youngsters like Vines, who now had access to the best practice partners in the city along with the biggest tournaments in Southern California that the LATC routinely held. After only a few years of routine instruction from Beasley, weekly practice on the Club's courts, and periodic competition in smaller tournaments, Vines established himself as one of the top Southern California players. The USLTA national office even took notice in 1930 when Vines became the number-one player in Southern California and climbed into the top ten in the Association's national rankings. Over the next two years, Vines continued to dominate both Southern California tennis and tennis throughout the United States, winning all the big tournaments in his home state as well as the United States Nationals at Forest Hills in 1931 and 1932. After traveling to play tennis overseas for the first time in 1933, where he reached the quarter-finals of the Australian Championship and won the title at Wimbledon, Vines felt no one in the amateur ranks could rival him, so he accepted an offer to compete against Bill Tilden on the professional tour.<sup>13</sup>

Tilden remained a consummate entertainer who continued to draw fans to the tour's matches even though his game had declined since his 1931 World Professional Championship and his 1932 tour victory over the German professional Hans Nusslein and the New Yorker Vincent Richards. Nusslein defeated Tilden in the short 1933 tour, and Vines soundly beat Tilden 47 matches to 26 matches in their more robust 1934 encounter. Vines was simply younger, and thanks to the discipline he received from Beasley and Perry T. Jones in the junior

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<sup>13</sup> Yeomans, *History and Heritage*, 11, 13-14; Ellsworth Vines Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

development program in Southern California, he came to the professional tour with a great degree of personal discipline that had never existed in Tilden and certainly had faded a quarter of a century into Tilden's playing career. Vines did not drink or smoke, he socialized but did not chase the girls at the parties put on for the professional players, and he saved his money; while Tilden always seemed short on cash despite the adequacy of their gate receipts when divided among only four professionals. "I can remember traveling in the spring and the summer of 1934 when we played sixteen nights out of seventeen days, and must have covered two or three thousand miles," said Vines.<sup>14</sup>

Entering his prime, Vines was prepared for such a grueling schedule but the over-forty-year-old Tilden was not; nonetheless, Tilden both promoted the tour, along with his business partner Bill O'Brien, and helped draw the fans into the stands based on his historic reputation as an entertaining player. At the end of 1934 they modified the format into a national doubles exhibition with Tilden and Vines beating the Frenchmen Henri Cochet and Martin Plaa along with Lester Stoefen and Bruce Barnes. Without the return of the Frenchmen the following year, Tilden modified the tour into a more decentralized format that resembled short exhibition tours and round robin play. Separating Vines from Tilden made business sense for "Big Bill," who could pair himself with a capable but less strong player like George Lott. Vines toured separately

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<sup>14</sup> "Tilden Pro Champion of the World," *American Lawn Tennis* 25, no. 2 (May 20, 1931): 4-7; "Tilden Keeps World Professional Title," *American Lawn Tennis* 25, no. 15 (March 20, 1932): 8-9; "Kozeluh is Pro Champion," *American Lawn Tennis* 26, no. 7 (August 20, 1932): 36-39; "Martin Plaa Wins Professional Title," *American Lawn Tennis* 26, no. 10 (October 20, 1932): 11-12; "Tilden Beats Vines in their First Meeting," *American Lawn Tennis* 27, no. 13 (January 20, 1934): 4-5; "Vines Wins in Washington," *American Lawn Tennis* 27, no. 13 (January 20, 1934): 10-12; "Tilden is Pro Indoor Champion," *American Lawn Tennis* 27, no. 13 (January 20, 1934): 17-18; "American Pros Gain Sweep Against French," *American Lawn Tennis* 27, no. 14 (February 20, 1934) 4-7; "Vines and Tilden in Corn Belt," *American Lawn Tennis* 28, no. 2 (May 20, 1934): 32; "Pro Facts and Figures," *American Lawn Tennis* 28, no. 3 (June 20, 1934): 40-44; Ellsworth Vines Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.



against Lester Stofen and a few other professionals, and then the tour exhibitions would meet for a round robin event. Tilden won both of his individual tours in 1935 and 1936, as did Vines, the latter of whom won the final round robins for both those years. Clearly the better player, Vines relied on Tilden's promotional abilities until a player came along who could challenge the Californian on a competitive tour. At that point they would not need Tilden's organizational skills, reputation for theatrics, and pedigree as a past champion, but could draw a crowd on the quality of the tennis alone.<sup>15</sup>

The challenger that came along was Fred Perry, who remarked that "like most players" in England before 1935, he had grown up playing tennis in the private clubs with the "white company of tennis stars." Perry attended Ealing County School, where the boys played cricket and soccer but no tennis because the game did not arrive in British schools until around 1933. But Perry found an old racquet at around fourteen years of age that he took to play at the Brentham Garden Suburb Club, the Middlesex Championships contested at Herga Club at Harrow, and the United Kingdom's top junior tournament at Queen's Club. His big break came when the Herga Club began subsidizing their most promising youngsters. This assistance was far less formal than the better organized amateur sectional associations and patrons organizations like the Southern California Tennis and Association and Southern California Tennis Patrons Association in the United States. Perry in particular benefited from the help of Mr. A.R. "Pops"

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<sup>15</sup> "Helen Jacobs Not Even Considering Pro Offer," *St. Petersburg Independent*, January 4, 1935, p. 10. "When the Pros Were Amateurs," *American Lawn Tennis* 28, no. 11 (November 20, 1934): 35; "Pros at Loggerheads," *American Lawn Tennis* 28, no. 14 (February 20, 1935): 34; "Some Highlights on Tilden Troupers," *American Lawn Tennis* 28, no. 15 (March 20, 1935): 21; "Peace Among the Pros," *American Lawn Tennis* 29, no. 2 (May 20, 1935): 45; "Famous Tours of Tennis History," typescript, no date or author listed, Greg Gonzales private archive, Phoenix, Arizona; Ellsworth Vines Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

Summers, who helped the junior work his way into the Chiswick Park Club starting in 1928. There he played many of the best adults in England, and the quality of his game rose swiftly. The following year he qualified for Wimbledon—the draw still dominated by English club players—where he lost in the early rounds. He fared far better in his 1930 season, with late tournament finishes in both Wimbledon and the British Hard Court Championships played at Bournemouth, securing him the backing of the British Lawn Tennis Association, who sponsored him on a tour of the United States, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay.<sup>16</sup>

Perry excelled in this international competition and began a lifelong love affair with the United States. He traveled with fellow players Leslie Godfree, John Olliff, Harold Lee, Ermyntrude Harvey, and Phoebe Holcroft Watson on a coed team remarkable for its gender progressiveness when compared to tours other sports took in the 1930s. The players traveled aboard the finest ocean liners, stayed at some of the United States' finest homes such as the Beacon House owned by Commodore Arthur Curtiss James of Newport, Rhode Island, and yachted with some of the wealthiest men and women in the Americas. In terms of tennis, the English ladies outclassed their American competition, while the American men did better than Englishmen with Perry, the best of the British bunch, making only the fourth round of the national singles at Forest Hills. The British men had a round of excuses such as the “poor thin quality” of the grass growing on the American courts when compared to English lawns, but Perry put it more accurately that by the mid-thirties the “standards of American lawn tennis is the highest in the world.” Britain and France could field a fine Davis Cup squad of four to six

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<sup>16</sup> Perry, *My Story*, 11, 18-21.

players, but only America could put dozens of topflight competitors in a draw. That competition and the British Lawn Tennis Association's money pushed Perry to return to play the American amateur circuit year after year.<sup>17</sup>

By the 1933 to 1934 season Perry realized that the best players in the world were not the amateurs like himself playing for the Davis Cup but the "Tilden Troupe" of Bill Tilden, Ellsworth Vines, Henri Cochet, Vincent Richards, Hans Nusslein, and Karel Kozeluh. Perry not only respected the game of these men but also their grit in that they subsisted on their own ability rather than on the "underground sources" of money and "shamateur" practices amateur players and amateur associations routinely practiced. At that time he defended that practice not only because he took that money himself on which to live, but also because he believed subsidizing players from outside of "the moneyed and leisured" was the only way to reach "world pre-eminence in the game." Of his contemporaries ranked in the top twenty in the world, only the Frenchmen Jean Borotra had made a business career for himself outside of family inheritance and amateur association allowances, whose own businesslike approach to collecting cash from their member clubs meant more than enough money to distribute to a half-dozen of their country's top competitors. Perhaps because "Open Tennis" seemed a real possibility at that time, widely discussed in the press, Perry decided to remain an amateur, thinking the International Lawn Tennis Federation would resolve his dilemma for him. When that governing body's

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 23-29, 53, 67.

members decided to continue the prohibition between amateur and professional competition, Perry decided the time was not right to turn professional despite his observations.<sup>18</sup>

Two years later was the right time for Perry. He decided to turn professional because he felt he had nothing left to prove in the amateur ranks and had never received the respect he deserved from the British Lawn Tennis Authorities. Where one came from mattered in England like it did in America, and even though Perry's family had some money, his roots were "the North Country rather than the old-school-tie country" of Sir Samuel Hoare and the other leaders of the British Lawn Tennis Association. He gave those men four Davis Cup titles and British Singles Champion of Wimbledon three times by 1936, and they never batted an eye at the personal and psychological toll managing such high national expectations for his country had had on the North Country lad. Turning professional was a way for Perry to make tennis personal again—and get paid for doing that.<sup>19</sup>

On November 6, 1936, at Wall Street offices of the firm Donovan, Leisure, Newton & Lombard, he accepted Bill Tilden's \$100,000 guarantee to play tennis against Ellsworth Vines in a twenty-two week tour. That agreement took Vines by surprise because he had traveled to Japan for a series of international tennis exhibitions. The professional champion Vines and the amateur champion challenger Perry finally connected over the phone with Perry making the pitch to Vines: "Listen, Ellie, would you like to make some money?" They both did, as did Tilden and the other professional players, but so too did the group of investors Tilden put together to front

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 67, 87-89, 148-150, 176. A quick perusal of the "1930 in sports" wiki showed no other sporting tours that involved both men and women—an anomaly attributable to the feminized origins of tennis discussed in chapter one of this study. See, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1930\\_in\\_sports](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1930_in_sports) (accessed 1-2-2017).

<sup>19</sup> Fred Perry, *An Autobiography* (London: Hutchinson, 1986), 108-13.

the cash to guarantee Perry the \$100,000 necessary to lure him from the amateur ranks. Given the peripateticism of the professional tennis tour during the thirties, these backers did not expect a return on their investment. “If we make any money out of this I’ll give you a horse’s ass in diamonds,” said one. But Perry brought with him not only a top reputation as a player but also international connections to well established lines of credit in London. In particular, he secured coverage from the famous insurance syndicate Lloyd’s of London to mitigate the risk of match cancellations from the exacting toll the grueling schedule placed on the players’ bodies.<sup>20</sup>

Over the next two years Perry and Vines played each other approximately 350 times and forged a friendship that lasted a lifetime: They reinvested sizable sums of their individual incomes in their tour, where Vines managed the finances in America and Perry managed their accounts overseas; they mutually owned and ran the Beverly Hills Tennis Club in Southern California; they entered into various other joint ventures, all without a contract when it came to each other. All the while they competed hard against one another on the court. Their 1937 tour opened at Madison Square Garden on January 7 to the unfurling of the Union Jack for Perry and Old Glory for Vines as dueling musicians struck up “God Save the King” and “The Star-Spangled Banner” to the 18,000 fans in attendance. They made \$52,000 that opening night and the nationalism narrative played well with the spectators who came out in droves night after night.<sup>21</sup>

That public interest, along with the money that came with it, kept the professionals to their vagabond schedule. Each evening’s play featured a warm-up match between two undercard

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

professionals, a two-out-of-three or three-out-of-five (depending on the size of the city) main event between Perry and Vines, and a two-out-of-three doubles rubber to conclude the evening. The players then rushed to catch a midnight train, still wearing their sweats, and rode the four or five hundred miles they usually traveled between matches. The morning schedule consisted of breakfast, press conferences, and local promotional duties before the players finally took some solid hours of sleep at their hotel before waking up in the late afternoon, eating again, pitching the match one more time, usually over radio, and then heading for the arena or gymnasium to warm up for the primetime match. Sometimes the matches went late and the players drove themselves through the night to the next tour stop—often on the brink of exhaustion. On one occasion, Vines and Perry got pulled over on the Illinois and Wisconsin border when the former ran a stop sign traveling 85 miles an hour. A search of the car produced dozens of tennis racquets and balls that secured the players' release with a small cash gift to the local policemen's benevolence fund. Traveling through the Southwest, Tilden once flipped his car and decided to leave it, hitching a ride with Perry and Vines so he would not miss the start of their match that evening. Itinerancy bred solidarity among the players, all of whom also shared ownership stakes and some logistical duties in the tour. The onus in 1937 fell hardest on Perry, because as the challenger to the champion Vines, people came primarily to watch those two gentlemen play, having been unable to see their rivalry since late 1933 when Vines transitioned into the professional ranks. Vines's periodic ailments and injuries meant that Perry sometimes found himself playing ten nights without a rest.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 113-6.

As a foreigner, Perry also shouldered additional challenges that Vines, Tilden, and the other American players avoided. Chief among those problems was that of taxes. Players from the United States who kept a permanent residence there simply reported their income and filed their returns as any other worker would, but Perry needed constant monitoring for fear he would flee the United States without paying taxes on his earnings. Given that the 1937 and 1938 professional tours flitted across the Canadian and Mexican borders several times, stopped off at a number of Caribbean countries, and ended with an extended tour of Europe, little wonder that the Bureau of Internal Revenue assigned an agent to accompany Perry on his different tour stops, where, after the distribution of that night's gate receipts among the players, in the locker room the auditor would report Perry's income for each match.<sup>23</sup>

The European leg of the tour also gave Perry a headache. The tension there came not from taxes but from the logistical challenges he faced as the organizer of the group's schedule overseas. While the British Lawn Tennis Association had lionized their champion while he won Wimbledon titles and Davis Cup crowns, his turn to professional tennis caused them to revoke all his privileges that had included membership at whatever private sporting club he sought to play at in the United Kingdom. That move essentially closed most venues to the professional troupe in England—a country with far fewer armories and municipal arenas than the United States. The players frequently played in town halls or on soccer pitches such as the Liverpool Club's Anfield ground, although they also received invitations to play at grand venues such as the newly constructed Empire Pool Wembley Arena in Wembley Park. That stadium and the 27,000 fans who watched them play over a three-night stay rivaled if not bettered any experience

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 108-9, 111, 117-20.

the professionals had had in the United States. The canvas travel court the players put down for most matches allowed them to play on almost any surface; because ice rinks, wooden basketball courts, and dance hall floors were all commonplace, they did this often. When they competed outdoors, they sometimes struggled to find anchor points to tie down their court, or they competed on two different surfaces, as was the case when they marked out a tennis court in Yankee Stadium between the outfield and along the infield diamond.<sup>24</sup>

Perry, Vines, and all the professionals touring in the thirties remained out in the cold because of the more adversarial relationship players and sports promoters had maintained with the amateur stewards of the game. Those stewards organized in the United States Lawn Tennis Association monopolized most of the tennis venues suitable for hosting a large enough crowd to earn a hefty return on the matches. For example, the 1937 professional tour between Perry and Vines consisted of close to sixty matches between the two professionals in the United States, virtually none of which took place on courts run by clubs that belonged to the USLTA.<sup>25</sup> When

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> The 1937 tour consisted of the following: January 6 match at Madison Square Garden in New York City; January 8 match at unknown stadium in Cleveland; January 9 at the Chicago Stadium in Chicago; January 15 in Duquesne Gardens in Pittsburgh; January 16 at an unknown stadium in Detroit; January 18 at Boston Garden in Boston; January 20 in Broadway Auditorium in Buffalo; January 22 at unknown stadium in Philadelphia; January 23 at unknown stadium in Baltimore; January 25 at unknown stadium in College Park; January 26 at unknown stadium in Richmond; January 27 at unknown stadium in Charlotte; January 31 at unnamed outdoor courts in Miami Beach; February 1 on the Everglades Club courts in Palm Beach; February 5 on unknown courts in Birmingham; February 7 on unknown courts in New Orleans; February 10 on unknown courts in Houston; February 12 on unknown courts in Dallas; February 16 at the Pan-Pacific Auditorium in Los Angeles; February 17 on unknown courts in Pasadena; February 20 at the Dreamland Auditorium in San Francisco; February 21 on unknown courts in Oakland; February 21 in unknown stadium in Vancouver; February 26 in unknown stadium in Seattle; February 28 in Portland Ice Coliseum in Portland; March 2 in unknown gymnasium in Salt Lake City; March 6 at City Auditorium in Denver; March 8 in unknown stadium in Kansas City; March 10 in Butler Field House in Indianapolis; March 12 on unknown courts in St. Louis; March 15 at unknown stadium in St. Paul; March 16 at unknown stadium in Minneapolis; March 17 at Music Hall in Cleveland; March 18 at unknown stadium in Memphis; March 19 at Nashville Hippodrome in Nashville; March 20 at unknown courts in Chattanooga; March 25 on unknown courts in Columbus; March 29 in unknown stadium in Milwaukee; April 2 at unknown stadium in Albany; April 3 at



combined with a European tour leg and additional matches against other top professionals in substitute matches, both seemed to have done well financially, with Vines purported to have earned \$34,000 while Perry received \$90,000. The large financial discrepancy owed to Perry's position as the recently turned professional challenger to Vines, who was defending the professional title he had won against Bill Tilden in 1934 as well as in 1935 and 1936, when he beat Lester Stoefen. The financial success of their barnstorming from the players' perspective also owed to how close the players' ability levels stayed throughout the entirety of the tour, with Vines narrowly edging Perry to retain the professional title. That success, however, came at the high cost to the players in energy and time as they spent a full six months out of their year competing night after night at different venues across the country because appropriate tournament venues were closed to them due to their professionalism.<sup>26</sup>

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unknown stadium in Springfield, MA; April 7 at unknown stadium in New Haven; April 13 at Cornell's Drill Hall in Ithaca; April 15 at White Plains Country Center in White Plains; April 16 at unknown courts in Orange; April 17 at unknown stadium in Atlantic City; April 18 at Regiment Armory in Brooklyn; April 20 at Montreal Forum in Montreal; April 21 at State Armory in Syracuse; April 23 at unknown stadium in Toronto; April 25 at unknown stadium in Providence; April 28 on unknown courts in College Park; April 30 at unknown stadium in Lynchburg; May 1 on Cavalier Hotel courts in Virginia Beach; May 3 at Madison Square Garden in New York City; May 5 at Chicago Stadium in Chicago; May 6 at unknown stadium in Louisville; May 8 at Trenton Country Club in Trenton; May 9 at Hartford Golf Club in Hartford; May 10 on unknown courts in Plainfield; May 11 at Hershey Arena in Hershey; and May 12 at unknown stadium in Scranton. For the sources detailing these stops, see the next footnote, number 229.

<sup>26</sup> "Perry Wins No 2 in Cleveland," *American Lawn Tennis* 30, no. 13 (January 20, 1937): 7; "Perry and Vines," *American Lawn Tennis* 30, no. 13 (January 20, 1937): 17; "Vines' Comeback in Pittsburgh," *American Lawn Tennis* 30, no. 13 (January 20, 1937): 27; "Vines Leading," *American Lawn Tennis* 30, no. 14 (February 20, 1937): 7; "Vines and Perry," *American Lawn Tennis* 30, no. 14 (February 20, 1937): 22; "The Pros in Philadelphia," *American Lawn Tennis* 30, no. 14 (February 20, 1937): 28; "Vines Forges Ahead," *American Lawn Tennis* 30, no. 15 (March 20, 1937): 10; "Vines Still Ahead," *American Lawn Tennis* 31, no. 1 (April 20, 1937): 13; "Vines Denver Victory," *American Lawn Tennis* 31, no. 1 (April 20, 1937): 17; "Perry-Vines Return to the Garden," *American Lawn Tennis* 31, no. 2 (May 20, 1937): 20-21; "Vines 32, Perry 29," *American Lawn Tennis* 31, no. 2 (May 20, 1937): 21; "The Pros Abroad," *American Lawn Tennis* 31, no. 3 (June 20, 1937): 25-26; "Vines and Perry End Their Tour," *American Lawn Tennis* 31, no. 4 (July 5, 1937): 32.

Those difficulties aside, Perry and professional tennis seemed to fit. He endorsed sporting goods such as Slazenger tennis racquets and went on to follow the lead of French champion Rene Lacoste in founding the successful Fred Perry clothing line. Glamour also appealed to him. While the reality of the professional tour was far from glamorous, the public at least thought of the professionals in much the same way as other celebrities. Perry himself liked that association to the point that he and Vines purchased the Beverly Hills Tennis Club in late 1937, required a minimum income of \$78,000 a year to join, and restricted membership to a total of 125 members—preferably from the movie industry. Such exclusivity worked, with their club counting some of the biggest studio executives and film stars as members. Perry dated the German actress Marlene Dietrich and was engaged to the English actress Mary Lawson in Europe. While in America he met and married the actress Helen Vinson. Their marriage fell apart after a few years, and Perry had no trouble finding actresses and models to date through the forties. The Englishman even found himself playing a tennis player in a few American pictures produced by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios—though his talent behind the camera lagged far behind his talent on the court.<sup>27</sup>

Distraction and age took a toll on Perry's game. From the 1938 professional tour on he was not the same player. Vines and Perry's full ownership stake in that tour also meant that the two top billing players managed the schedule of the players, accounts receivable, payroll, and everything else that went into running an entertainment enterprise. Those added responsibilities came at the same time that both Vines and Perry seemed more interested in golf than tennis. At

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<sup>27</sup> Perry, *An Autobiography*, 109, 121-3, 148-55.

most stops the players tried for a round before their evening matches. In the summer of 1938 the players toured the Catskills, Adirondack, and Pocono Mountain hotels frequented by wealthy New Yorkers and North Easterners. On what they came to call the “Borsch Circuit,” the players raked in the money while still finding time to squeeze in some golf on the resorts’ courses. That summer they drove their own vehicles, which signaled the independence Richards, Kozeluh, Tilden, Perry, and Vines began to exercise from one another. For his part, Perry also had trouble at home when Helen Vinson served him divorce papers. That separation prompted Perry to seek United States citizenship in November 1938, not long before war seemed ready to break out between Britain and Germany. Perry’s settlement left him financially vulnerable just at the moment when a third year tour headlining Vines versus Perry seemed a hard sell to a public that had grown weary of that rivalry. Fortunately for Perry and for professional tennis, a new amateur champion had agreed to join the professional ranks, and he brought with him more buzz for the sport than any player since Suzanne Lenglen.<sup>28</sup>

The first Grand Slam popularized tennis in much the same way that the thoroughbred War Admiral galvanized public interest in horse racing. In 1937, the horse won the Kentucky Derby, Preakness Stakes, and Belmont Stakes—the Triple Crown. That same year the Californian Don Budge so thoroughly dominated the tennis events he played that he finally received the funding needed to travel to Australia to try for what later came to be called the Grand Slam—the Australian Championship, the French Championship, Wimbledon, and the United States Nationals. In that campaign he succeeded in complete fashion with convincing

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 125-6, 130-2.

straight set wins in the final matches over John Bromwich in Australia, Roderich Menzel in France, Bunny Austin at Wimbledon, as well as a four-set win over Gene Mako at the United States Championships. Sportswriter Al Laney recalled that Budge's success led the *New York Herald Tribune* editor to give him "two-and-a half, three columns of space" for his tennis coverage—space greater than that of even more popular team sports.<sup>29</sup>

The public followed Budge's transition into professional tennis with great interest, just as they had followed his quick ascendance in the amateur ranks where Budge had always stood out as a prodigy. His parents did not play tennis, but his older brother Lloyd, who played for the University of California at Berkeley, encouraged the youngster Donald to steer clear of football, basketball, and baseball, and instead put his energy into tennis. The pattern of an older sibling taking up the game and playing with a younger brother or sister that goes on to a bigger career did not begin or end with Don Budge, but he certainly fit that mold. A bigger and stronger older brother to play with very much mattered to Budge, because his parents could not afford much instruction in the late 1920s and early 1930s. John Budge managed the Chrystal Laundry in Oakland while his mother worked as a type-operator for an East Bay newspaper. In 1931 the fifteen-year-old Budge won the California State Championship—the first tournament he ever entered. Such promising early results piqued the interest of his brother's coach at the University of California, Tom Stowe, who instructed the younger Budge in stroke technique and tactics.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Laura Hillenbrand, *Seabiscuit: An American Legend* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2002), 141-2; Al Laney Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, RI.

<sup>30</sup> Don Budge Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, RI; "Don Budge 'Takes the Shilling,'" *American Lawn Tennis* 32, no. 11 (November 20, 1938): 4-5.

Budge first traveled east to play in the high ranking point lawn tournaments in 1934. He performed so well there that when he returned the following year, he secured the number-one ranking in the country, although he had to wait until 1937 for the USLTA to sponsor him to travel to Wimbledon, where he won his first of six consecutive major tournament titles, only halted by his decision to turn professional. In the offices of his Davis Cup captain Walter Pate on November 10, 1938, Budge inked a contract with a \$75,000 guarantee to play Ellsworth Vines in a tour promoted by Jack Harris. Unfortunately for all of those involved in the 1939 and 1940 tours, war in Europe still-birthered those tours.<sup>31</sup>

Budge came to be remembered as one of only two players in men's tennis history to win all four major tournaments in the calendar year. The Grand Slam became the stuff of sporting legend even though contemporaries within the tennis establishment remembered Budge for something far less grand at the time. USLTA officials despised Budge for turning professional because that decision made the world's best player unavailable to them at a time when nationality reached a fever pitch. Budge's professional move in the minds of these men made him a traitor to his country and his class. The editor of *American Lawn Tennis* magazine likened Budge's decision to that of Judas Iscariot betraying Jesus for fifty pieces of silver. What these enflamed contemporaries missed was the very real significance that Budge himself noted later in life about his own tennis career and his place in the larger transition from amateur to professional tennis. "In the Tilden era, it was mostly a wealthy man's game, and you had to belong to the good clubs and have the tennis lessons and so forth to be heard of in the tennis field, but since, I would say, starting with Ellsworth Vines and Mako and myself and many of the other players

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.; Ibid.

like Jack Kramer and so on. Gonzales is a another one. We all came from the public parks. Eventually, we got to the point where we could play at the clubs. They would like us to play, but initially it stemmed from the public parks,” said Budge.<sup>32</sup> Those words came from the perspective of a player who lived with tennis rather than that of the amateur association officials who simply lived around tennis.

Budge’s doubles partner and Champion in his own right, Gene Mako, also grew up playing tennis in public parks and then in the private clubs of Southern California. His path to tennis stardom was far more circuitous, however. Mako’s father was a soldier fighting for the Austria-Hungarian Empire at the outbreak of Word War I. Following the birth of his son Gene in January 1916, the senior Mako approached his superior officer about a short shore leave. With weekend pass in hand, Mako gathered his family and fled to Trieste, where they hid out for half a year before crossing the Atlantic to Buenos Aires. After three years in the Argentinian capital, Mako again moved his family, this time to Los Angeles in July of 1923. The wonderful weather in Southern California afforded the seven-year-old Gene the opportunity to spend day after day playing outside. And that he did, enjoying bat and ball games such as softball and baseball, team sports such as soccer and football, running and field events—everything except tennis. He took to athletics naturally as his father had excelled at soccer, sprinting, and distance running in Europe, along with holding the middleweight wrestling title in Hungary before the outbreak of the Great War. The senior Mako was a cosmopolitan continental in every respect. In addition to playing soccer for club and national teams, Mako’s paintings passed jury reviews and hung in art galleries in Budapest, Prague, and Vienna. In the United States, Mako put his artistic talents to

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.; Ibid.

work in the growing movie industry, helping to adorn movie theatres with sculptures and ornaments as Fox Fest Coast expanded up along the Pacific from Hollywood to Seattle in 1926. But for all his refinement, the senior Mako did not play tennis. Gene did not pick up the game until he was twelve years old, getting ready to enter his freshmen year at Glendale High School in 1928.<sup>33</sup>

The summer before enrollment, one of Mako's friends approached him about playing on the poorly built court at Harvard Park near the boys' homes. Mako agreed and fell hard for the game. Later that evening he convinced his parents to buy him a tennis racquet. Gene then began playing with his classmates, hoping to make the high school team the following spring. The boys played often and took to training by running the mile and a half between their school and the park where they practiced. Mako entered his first tournament in both the thirteen-and-under and fifteen-and-under divisions after having only played the game for half a year. Financed and owned by the railroad baron Henry Huntington, the luxurious Huntington Hotel in Pasadena hosted the prestigious Southern California Tennis Association's Boys Championship in December of 1928—a setting far removed from the hardscrabble park court where Mako and his freshmen friends played. The tournament experience primed Mako to make an immediate impact; he played in the number one position on his squad as a freshman.<sup>34</sup>

Mako also found quick success in the tournaments put on by the Southern California Tennis Association. In the early 1920s the United States Lawn Tennis Association had facilitated

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<sup>33</sup> Gene Mako Oral History Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, RI.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

the expansion of competitive junior tennis through the USLTA's regionally based organizations. The Southern California section with the Southern California Tennis Patrons Association was particularly robust in the number and quality of the junior players produced by the late twenties. The SCTA offered girls and boys divisions for thirteen-and-under, fifteen-and-under, and eighteen-and-under play. Each division had a cutoff-date at the first of the year, meaning that a December birthday meant one would play up an age division compared to a youngster born on the first of January. Mako benefited from a birthday on the twenty-fourth of January, effectively giving him a year-up on his competition. Fortune notwithstanding, he made the most of this. When he began SCTA competition in 1929 playing in the fifteen-and-under division, Mako did not lose a match or even a set over the next six years in which he played SCTA sanctioned singles and doubles tournaments.<sup>35</sup>

Mako's undefeated junior career in regional tournaments certainly piqued the interest of college coaches in Southern California. In the 1920s, colleges did not recruit players with much vigor; certainly no national or international recruiting network existed. Mako liked his adopted hometown of Pasadena and was thrilled to get the chance to play, ostensibly in his backyard, at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. As a college freshman, the eighteen-year-old Mako won the intercollegiate national singles and doubles titles in 1934, the first time a Trojan had captured the crown. Mako's tennis career continued to ascend when he hitched his

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.



star to the national bandwagon in Davis Cup play. Like Ellsworth Vines had done a few years before, Mako left USC to accept his spot on the 1935 team.<sup>36</sup>

Over the next four years, Mako proved himself one of two integral players in the United States' resurgence in international tennis. Don Budge rounded out the doubles team. The two first played together in an exhibition match in 1934 in the Bay Area in an event coordinated by Perry T. Jones—the executive secretary of the Southern California Tennis Association and the de facto powerbroker of tennis up and down the West Coast. Roscoe Maples, a tennis contact in the Bay Area, played matchmaker, and in the late winter of 1934, Mako came to San Francisco. The exhibition took place in the Marina District at the Palace of Fine Arts, one of only a handful of structures that remained from the Panama-Pacific Exposition of 1915. Mako and Budge first locked horns in singles, each winning a set. After a short respite, the main event followed, which pitted Jerry Stratford and Phil Near, two top doubles players from the Northern California Tennis Association, against Budge and Mako, who partnered together for the first time. Budge and Mako flogged their opponents 6-0, 6-1, one game away from the *recherché* double-bagel match score. Budge, with his fiery red hair and stretched frame, Mako with his chiseled facial features and strong movements on the court, whipped the crowd into enough of a frenzy that tennis officials from Northern and Southern California had little choice but to recommend Budge and Mako pair together on the United States Davis Cup team.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

Three years later in 1937, Mako and Budge found themselves playing at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club (ALETTC) against the Baron Gottfried Von Cramm and Henner Henkel in the most politically significant Davis Cup match of the twentieth century. The ascendance of the Nazi party in Germany during the thirties owed in no small part to the arguments of Aryan racial superiority that Hitler and Reich officers shouted breath after breath. The six-foot-tall blonde-haired and blue-eyed Von Cramm presented the ideal image for Nazi propaganda. His world rankings, usually around numbers one or two during the mid-1930s, mattered too. But for his part, Von Cramm never toed the party line. A likely apocryphal story went that Von Cramm called himself as having struck an out ball before it bounced out of play in order to deliberately lose a Davis Cup tie against the American Don Budge in a form of protest against the Nazi party's crackdown against perceived political threats. The questionable veracity of this story notwithstanding, the fact that contemporaries believed it revealed a great deal about the high regard his supporters held for Von Cramm's sportsmanship and integrity, not to mention the frustrations the Nazi party had in deploying their most visible worldwide sportsman to meet political ends. Retaliation came first in a refusal to support Von Cramm in a 1937 return bid to defend his French Championships title of the previous year. More severe measures came in 1938 when the Nazis incarcerated Von Cramm on charges of homosexuality. Von Cramm served about half a year in prison, returning to competitive tennis at the start of the summer season in 1939.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.; "Cramm Sentenced to a Year in Prison; He Was Blackmail Victim," *New York Times*, May 15, 1938, p. 6; Paul Fein, *Tennis Confidential: Today's Greatest Players, Matches, and Controversies* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2003), 132, 144, 271-5.

Fresh from his March occupation of Czechoslovakia, Hitler eyed further expansion in the summer of 1939. The German players, and everyone else for that matter, attended the 1939 Wimbledon with the pall of war ready to fall over all of Europe. When Von Cramm and Henner Henkel met the Americans John Van Ryn and Wilmer Allison in the men's semi-finals, national politics intervened directly on the court. On match point for the Germans, Henkel approached the net and called on his partner to translate.

“We default,” said Von Cramm.

“Just say that again. We didn't hear you loudly. What did you say?,” replied Van Ryn and Allison.

“All German nationals have been demanded to leave England tonight on the night boat, and we can't play the Finals tomorrow, so that if we should win the next point, we couldn't play. So we default to you.’

With that the Germans left the court and England in order to prepare for war. The German military drafted Von Cramm not long after in early 1940, and the great champion lost his peak playing years to the fighting. With the prelude to the war, international sport completely broke down.<sup>39</sup>

The Davis Cup match between Budge and Von Cramm three years before the war later came to symbolize the battle between the Axis and the Allies. Following closely on a doubles win for the United States in which Mako and Budge beat Von Cramm and Henkel, Budge and Von Cramm faced off in a decisive reverse-singles match. Von Cramm blitzkrieged to a two-set

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<sup>39</sup> John Van Ryn Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

to love lead, before Budge dug in, weathered, and then battled back the German onslaught in the third and fourth sets. Von Cramm attacked again in the fourth set and seemed poised to punch through, up four games to one in the fifth and deciding set. Budge surged, leveling the game score and eventually besting Von Cramm 8-6 in the final set to claim the match and the overall victory for the United States. Outside of the political and military significance of the United States' victory over Germany on British soil that observers would soon come to realize, the 1937 match proved significant in another important respect. Bill Tilden, the famous American amateur-champion-turned-professional, had gone over to Germany to train with the German squad in preparation for his own European professional matches—a move which subjected Tilden to withering scorn from the United States Lawn Tennis Association and the American press.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> The journalist Marshall Jon Fisher—who has written a vivid account of 1937 Davis Cup tie between Germany and the United States—suggests that Bill Tilden was in fact the coach for the German squad. While Tilden certainly had an ax to grind with the USLTA, the best available evidence does not support this position. While Fischer concedes that the world's leading tennis historian, Heiner Gillmeister of the University of Bonn, disagrees with the claim that Tilden was the coach for the German Davis Cup team by citing the absence of any mention of Tilden in the German tennis publication *Der Tennissport*, the more telling refutation of Fischer's position is found in the evidence he does and does not deploy. His most direct evidence is a short reference Tilden himself made in his 1938 autobiography about traveling to Germany to coach the squad. The brevity of this entry, along with Tilden's penchant for exaggeration if not outright misstatement in his voluminous writings, necessitates corroboration with other sources. Unfortunately, the additional evidence Fischer provides is unsatisfactory by the historian's standards. Fischer makes use of two photographs of Tilden with the German squad, both of which are associational but give next to no credence to a claim of an official coaching position. The interviews Fischer cites deserve more serious consideration. Don Budge, a key player in the Davis Cup tie, himself recalled Tilden coaching the Germans in an interview Fischer says resides at the ITHF. This may be the case, as there is perhaps a lost recording the ITHF archivists had forgotten about around my last visit to Newport in the summer of 2015, but if it is so, that is not the same oral history interview of Don Budge conducted on December 6, 1975, and housed at the ITHF. In this interview, Budge makes no reference to Tilden and the German Davis Cup team, though he does mention Tilden frequently in other contexts. Lastly, the interviews Fischer says he conducted with two people with first-hand knowledge of the 1937 tie, Gene Mako and Wolfgang Hofer, are substantial pieces of evidence in need of evaluation. The problem is the best practices of journalists do not conform to the more exacting standards of historians, which, for all their trips down the deconstructionist rabbit hole, still cling to a degree of scientific empiricism that urges the open availability of historical data so that the conclusions of the individual historian may be tested, repeated, refined, and departed from. Journalists, on the other hand, also cling to pre-postmodern ideal of

Different in degree but not in kind, Tilden's sexuality became a target for USLTA officials. These efforts came to a head just over a decade later when Tilden sat before a magistrate in a Los Angeles County Court on January 17, 1947, facing charges of sex with a minor. Tilden was arrested two months earlier when Beverly Hills police pulled over his Packard Clipper after tailing the vehicle on Sunset Boulevard. A teenaged boy—whom Tilden had met the previous week at the Los Angeles Tennis Club—with his pants' fly unbuttoned sat behind the wheel, and Tilden had had his arm around him just prior to the pullover. The police took Tilden to the station, where they booked him and forced him to sign a statement. Tilden later claimed the police had coerced him into signing the statement and presented false information to him as, being without his glasses, he could not read it. In any case, Tilden soon sought counsel in the lawyer Richard Maddox in order to prepare for the coming hearing presided over by Los Angeles

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the only access is, by default, the best access. That is one of the reasons why the often riveting interviewing work by journalists so seldom makes its way into archives and depositories to the determinant of social knowledge and the public good. Fisher's own "Author's note" admits to placing invented dialogue in the mouths of his characters in order to tell a story that grips readers. He tries to explain away this move by claiming that his conjuring of specific thoughts, words, and mental states when they do not survive in the sources is nonetheless warranted because "each is based firmly on my research (as referenced in the notes)" (p. xi). Leading journalists praising Fisher's book may accept such invention as a stock of their trade, but historians do not—especially when Fisher's sources and his handling of those sources (when he does stop short of whole-cloth invention) is so shoddy. In the case of the Tilden coaching conundrum, this leaves the historian to go off of the evidence that is open to research. In the case of the oral history interview of Gene Mako conducted on May 27, 1976 and housed at the ITHF archive, Mako flatly rejects that Tilden was the coach of the German team when pressed on the point by the interviewer, Bud Lessor. Mako, who was lucid throughout the recording, instead remarks that Tilden served not as the official coach but rather as a training player for the German team. Without more evidence, Mako's remembrance of Tilden as a hitting partner rather than the far more treasonous position of a coach to the German team seems the most plausible position. For Fischer's case and evidence, see Marshall Jon Fischer, *A Terrible Splendor: Three Extraordinary Men, A World Poised for War, and the Greatest Tennis Match Ever Played* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2009), pp. 4-5, n. to pp. 4-5 on pp. 272-3. On how Gene Mako remembered the 1937 Davis Cup Tie, see audio recording of Gene Mako Oral History Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, RI. A transcription of the recording made by Gregory Ruth is also on deposit at the ITHF archive.

Superior Court Judge Alfonso Aloysius Scott, made famous for his rulings protecting the rights of adolescent film actors and for hearing the murder trial against Bugsy Siegel.<sup>41</sup>

Professionally, the hearings could not have come at a worse time for Tilden. He was the primary organizer in the middle of preparing for an upcoming professional tennis tour. To this end, Tilden received letters of support from throughout the sports media and tennis community with the glaring but unsurprising absence of any support from the USLTA—seemingly glad to see a man who had so chapped their control and commitment to amateurism for so long. Politically, Tilden’s legal troubles also came at a difficult time. While the second “red scare” was still several years from finding a voice in Wisconsin U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy, many already thought of Hollywood as a haven for radicals. Tilden’s close friendships with actors such as Charlie Chaplin, themselves accused of communist sympathies, meant the imaginations of the public, judge, and potential jurors would not need to stretch far in order to associate Tilden with the degeneracy assumed of all communists. The psychiatrists ordered to examine Tilden reached essentially these conclusions, going so far as to diagnose him with the degenerate insanity that, coincidentally enough, afflicted all communists and homosexuals in the minds of the postwar mental health profession.<sup>42</sup>

Tilden likely took some of this to heart when he ignored the advice of his lawyer to seek a jury trial and decided to plead guilty with the expectation the judge would grant him counseling rather than jail time. That was a mistake. After making statements on the particular incident and

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<sup>41</sup> Deford, *Big Bill Tilden*, 244-53.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

expressing deep remorse to the incident in the Packard, Tilden then refused to give detailed answers to Judge Scott's questions about his previous homosexual encounters. Fed up, the judge sentenced Tilden to a year of detention, mostly served at the Castaic Honor Farm, to psychiatric counseling following his release, and to prohibition from coming into any contact with minors in the future. Tilden served close to eight months of this sentence before his release.<sup>43</sup> A competitor seldom defeated on the tennis court emerged a thoroughly beaten man. He was dead five years later at the age of sixty.

Most contemporaries knew nothing about Tilden's ignominious personal life. The public preferred to view him as a champion of his class rather than a disreputable derelict. The same cannot be said of Bobby Riggs. From his amateur days through his 1973 Battle of the Sexes match against Billie Jean King, Riggs was the most notorious tennis professional to ever play. Born in Los Angeles on February 25, 1918, to a preacher father and homemaker mother, Riggs cultivated his later reputation as the "happy hustler" at an early age. Adolescence in the Great Depression meant making the most of the outdoors for young Bobby, his siblings, and their friends. Riggs recalled he learned about winning and losing by playing marbles for keeps with his neighbor. After beating a friend soundly enough to collect all his marbles, Riggs then won the boy's sister's tennis racquet staked as collateral in a double-or-nothing game. Racquet in hand, Riggs did not immediately focus on tennis; instead, he tossed footballs, caught baseballs, kicked

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 250-9. Deford's reputation as a sportswriter and investigative journalist remain so above reproach that I have decided to trust his account of the Tilden trial, which he says he based off of the court documents, despite the fact that my own research in the Los Angeles County Superior Court archives not only produced no court records but did not even find the case listed on the dockets of any of the courts within the Superior Court's jurisdiction. Such an absence is perhaps one reason why a United States Professional Tennis Association member, Richard Hillway, told me in personal communication that he thinks the stories about Tilden's pedophilia are malicious slander. In either case, the enigmatic Tilden might have embraced the controversy.

soccer balls, batted, tackled, boxed, sprinted, jumped, swam, dove, and played in all sorts of games so long as winning and losing remained integral. Riggs, the runt of the family, competed so fervently because he sought approval from his older, bigger, and stronger siblings. This need led Bobby to take up tennis for the first time in 1930 at the age of twelve when he discovered that the game masked some of the athletic disadvantages due to his diminutive size.<sup>44</sup>

Without formal training Riggs did remarkably well in his first year of junior tennis competition. Three months into the game, Riggs won his first tournament and attracted the attention of junior tennis power-broker Perry T. Jones, who was based at the Los Angeles Tennis Club. Jones recognized Bobby's desire to win and helped to convince the small-framed Riggs that tennis afforded a small athlete with certain opportunities unavailable in contact sports. Impressed by Jones's success in producing world-class players such as Ellsworth Vines and Don Budge, Riggs agreed with the proven Jones's formula: start young; supervise the youngsters to make sure they learn proper technique; compete, always competition; secure proper fitting and quality equipment for every player; keep the players out of trouble both on and off the court by emphasizing activity over idleness; enter every tournament; play hard every tournament match; pair younger players with players up an age group and ability level so that the mimicry and imitation so crucial to adolescent learning can take place in a natural rather than a forced setting. Combine Jones's system with a cutthroat mentality with the game of tennis, as played in the thirties, became, in Riggs's estimation, "the one game where the large man doesn't necessarily have a big edge on the little fella." In this Riggs spoke from experience. He won thirteen-and-

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<sup>44</sup> Bobby Riggs Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, RI.



under, fifteen-and-under, and eighteen-and-under Junior Championships, including the 1933 National Boy's Doubles Championships and the 1935 National Junior Singles Championships. The next year he entered Senior Competition and won both the Singles and Doubles titles in the 1936 National Clay Court Men's Championships.<sup>45</sup>

Riggs's quick ascendance to adult competition rankled Perry Jones. The SCTA Secretary treated his junior players as investments: while he could not make their value as players move up or down in the competitive tournament environment, he fiercely defended his authority to keep or divest players at the time he considered opportune. Jones wanted to keep Riggs because at age eighteen Bobby maintained his eligibility to defend the National Junior Championships. As the head of the Southern California Tennis Association and Director of their Junior Tennis Program, wins from eighteen-and-under players reflected highly on Jones and promoted the National standing of the SCTA Section to a degree that adult tournaments did not, because adult players often played out on their own, not beholden to any particular regional tennis association. Tradition mattered to the blue-blooded Jones. His junior players had always followed his orders to defend their titles. Riggs, however, refused to follow the example of earlier junior players because his ambition, spurred by his modest economic background compared with the tennis champions from past decades, preponderated his physical stature. Faced with insubordination, Jones tried to dissuade Riggs by arguing that the men in the adult competition hit too hard, ran too fast, and competed too hard for an immature player. When words failed to persuade, money talked as Jones pulled SCTA financial sponsorship, a move that forced Riggs to hustle for the

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

first time in convincing patrons at the Los Angeles Tennis Club to fund a trip out east to compete in the National tournaments outside of the channels of the SCTA.<sup>46</sup>

His break with Jones made his 1936 season into a year of ups and downs. Riggs traveled east, won big tournaments, and finished the year ranked fourth in the nation. In fact, he fared well against the other top players, notching straight-sets wins over Frankie Parker and Bryan “Bitsy” Grant. Don Budge dominated tennis that year, but the next best player behind him was a toss-up. With several players near equally matched, the selection of the 1937 Davis Cup team came down to amicability rather than ability. Jones had the real say in the selection, and he said no to Riggs, replacing him with a lower-ranked player named Joe Hunt who, in an irony not lost on Riggs, attracted Jones’s attention because of his strength, size, and “stature.” Once again on the wrong side of the SCTA, Riggs found help from friends at the Los Angeles Tennis Club who agreed to pass the hat for a trip to compete at Wimbledon. When Jones exited his office at the Club and found Riggs soliciting donations, he said, “Bobby, if the Davis Cup Committee don’t feel that it wants you on the team, I have a responsibility to Southern California Tennis, I don’t feel like you should represent us [at Wimbledon] either.” Undeterred, Riggs managed to collect several thousand dollars for the trip to the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, only to hear from Jones that the Davis Cup Team Captain Walter Pate needed Riggs as a practice partner to prepare Don Budge, Gene Mako, Frankie Parker, and Bitsy Grant for their Inter-Zonal Match against Germany. Riggs played the piñata, the funding for his trip to Europe never materialized,

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

and he found himself playing summer matches in Salt Lake City rather than on Centre Court Wimbledon.<sup>47</sup>

By 1938 Jones and Riggs finally agreed that American tennis needed Bobby Riggs. Joe Hunt and Frankie Parker had not contributed to the 1937 team victory to the degree Jones and Pate expected. Don Budge and Bitsy Grant played tremendous tennis, but for how much longer? Budge's dominance worried the amateur tennis establishment that an opportunistic promoter might convince the best in the world to start playing for pay, and Grant's tournament wins simply did not match up to those Riggs had accumulated early in 1938. As the defending champion, the United States would host the Challenge Round after the U.S. Championships, giving the Davis Cup selection committee and captain until late August to make final selections. With Gene Mako's spot secure as a doubles specialist and Don Budge's partner, the second singles spot was ripe for the taking, and Riggs's consistent wins throughout the year earned him the spot. Riggs beat the Australian Adrian Quist on September 3, at the Germantown Cricket Club in Philadelphia in the first singles rubber of the Davis Cup final. Budge made the team score 2-0 with his singles win over John Bromwich, Australia answered back by winning the doubles rubber, before Budge secured the tie for the U.S. by besting Adrian Quist in straight sets in the reverse singles. Riggs had contributed to the international prestige of tennis in a big way, and the U.S. tennis establishment awarded him accordingly.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

In 1939 he finally got the financial backing to play in Wimbledon. Needless to say, he made the most of it. Stepping off the Atlantic liner, he bee-lined for a London bookie who agreed to take a \$500 (roughly £100) bet to win the Wimbledon Singles title at three to one odds. The odds maker, thinking the deal done, sat astonished when Riggs placed an extended wager, taking the presumed winnings from the singles bet and putting them on a doubles championship with partner Elwood Cook. Riggs proposed odds at twenty to one for such a feat, which, given the magnitude of such an accomplishment, actually would have been a suitable stake for the bookie to take. Betting on tennis was uncommon in general and foreign to this particular bookie, to say the least, so he must have sensed Riggs's eagerness rather than focusing on the numbers in proposing counter odds at six to one. Riggs wanted none of that and chose to raise the stakes by proposing, "What if I win the triple crown, the hat trick, it's never been done by anybody up to this time, the youngster to come over on the first visit, nobody's ever won all three, but I'm going to try to do it....I'm going to put it all on the mixed doubles," he exclaimed. The preposterousness of Riggs's braggadocio must have convinced the bookie to take the bet at twelve to one odds that put \$108,000 on the line. Raising the championship trophy at Wimbledon in 1939 meant winning six rounds in men's singles; five rounds in doubles; and four matches in mixed doubles.<sup>49</sup>

Riggs obviously liked his odds to place such a wild bet, but more sober analysis suggests recklessness and hubris. While he had competed well on the world stage in Davis Cup play and raised the trophy at many quality tournaments, Riggs had never won one of the three largest

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

International tournaments—the French Championships, Wimbledon, and the U.S. Championships. He had made it to the final at the French Championship, but the American Don McNeill soundly defeated him in straight sets. With Don Budge's move into professional tennis and therefore barred from the amateur championships like Wimbledon, Riggs felt the confidence that now was his time. But Riggs could not count on the same buoyancy from his doubles partner Elwood Cook and mixed doubles partner Alice Marble, who might bring the effort to a halt either through poor performance or injury withdrawal. Remarkably, he won: first the singles title; then the doubles the following day; and with fading light on the final Sunday, he and Alice Marble raised the mixed doubles trophy. Riggs was rich and on top of the world—so it seemed.<sup>50</sup>

Major world events directed the influence athletes, like everyone else, could make on history. In 1939 that direction moved for the second time to world war. After Wimbledon, Riggs won the 1939 U.S. Championships contested at Forest Hills, New York. He entered the apogee of his career just as World War II plunged the importance of international athletes to a point lower than that of World War I. Battling German bombers in the Blitz, England did not host Wimbledon in 1940—a pattern that continued until the 1946 Championships. While not as longstanding as it was first played in 1925, the French Championships also went uncontested between 1940 and 1945. Essentially an all-Australian affair from its inception in 1905 until the thirties, when the tournament received a few more international players, the Australian Championship remained the least cosmopolitan and most regionally-focused of the big international amateur tennis championships. Despite this isolation, the Australian Tennis Federation also suspended the tournament between 1941 and 1946. That left the U.S.

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

Championships as the only international tournament played during World War II. Interestingly enough, the U.S. Championships never missed a year between 1881—when the tournament began—and 1968, when the game allowed professionals in for the first time, even playing through World War I when the other tournaments halted for the conflict. This gave Riggs a chance to defend his ranking as the best in tennis, which he more or less did, making the finals of the 1940 U.S. Championships, where he lost to Don McNeill but bouncing back the next year by defeating Frank Kovacs to claim the September 1941 title at Forest Hills.<sup>51</sup>

Fresh from their final, Riggs and Kovacs joined Don Budge and the Englishman Fred Perry on the professional tour. Lex Thompson, the owner of the Philadelphia Eagles gridiron squad, swayed Riggs to forgo amateurism with a \$25,000 one-year contract that Bobby was only too happy to accept. For his part, Kovacs had a reputation as a comedian on and off the court, and he too did not need much sweet-talking to start playing tennis for money—officially. Riggs recalled in his memoirs that in one of their previous meetings Kovacs appeared on court dressed in the classic long-sleeved shirt and flannel trousers worn by players at the turn of the century. Throughout the match he mocked the skimpy legs Riggs’s shorts revealed, only to grab scissors toward the end of the match and slash his own pants into thigh-high shorts right on the court. Fellow players may have hated playing Kovacs, but a promoter like Thompson recognized the crowd appeal the bad-boy inculcated. Every Kovacs’s antic, from stalling in between points and games, to lying down on the court and refusing to play on because of a questionable ruling by a tournament official, the “Clown Prince of Tennis,” as contemporaries called Kovacs, would

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<sup>51</sup> Collins, *The Bud Collins History of Tennis*, 357-61, 386-9, 414-21, 454-61.

balance out a tour of the finest tennis players and four of the most recognizable international athletes in the world at the start of World War II.<sup>52</sup>

Their tour began on December 26, 1941, at Madison Square Garden in New York City. Three weeks earlier the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor, and in the weeks leading up to the opening night next to no one wanted a ticket. Thompson simply gave away seats to anyone off the streets in a desperate attempt to create some atmosphere for the players and the media shooting newsreels for distribution. The tennis also disappointed spectators. In particular, the match between Fred Perry and Bobby Riggs proved disastrous when Perry moved for a ball, went down hard, and injured his elbow. The English champion defaulted the match, sought medical attention at a hospital, and withdrew from the tour to return to England. Thompson scrambled to replace Perry with players like Gene Mako and Lester Stoefen, but neither American drew the crowds that a major international celebrity like Perry inveigled. Logistically the tour also suffered. Government rationing of tires and gasoline made a barnstorming sports tour that depended on daily travel unfeasible during wartime. Thompson cut his losses, called the tour off, and paid the players the little that he could.<sup>53</sup> Athletes like Riggs were out of work.

Two decades of military drawdown and comparative isolation in world affairs compared to that of Western European nations resulted in an American military of smaller size than seventeen other countries along with a military budget of only 2 percent of the United States' entire Gross National Product in 1940, which rose only slightly above that in 1941. The

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<sup>52</sup> Bobby Riggs, *Court Hustler* (New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1973), 68, 70-71.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 71; Bobby Riggs Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, RI.

following year, American workers made more military equipment than all of the Axis powers put together, a gap that widened as the war progressed. By the time of the treaty signing on the Battleship Missouri in 1945, American manufacturing accounted for two out of three planes, ships, planes, tanks, trucks, guns, uniforms, and supplies produced for the Allies' cause. Traditional manufacturers such as General Motors ran at capacity throughout the war; entrepreneurs like Henry Kaiser rolled out new plans for more efficient production; and 500,000 new businesses opened their doors between 1941 and 1945. The war increased employment in America from forty-five million people in 1940 to fifty-five million people in 1945 and decreased unemployment from eight million people in 1940 to under one million people by 1945. Those sixty-five million American workers produced one out of every two manufactured goods in the world at war's end. By 1945, twelve and a half million Americans also served in the military.<sup>54</sup>

Such high levels of productivity and military service seemed all the more remarkable given the physical fitness of most Americans before the start of World War II. Before the last major war, enlistment tests had shown widespread failure of American men to pass even the most basic fitness tests. In the 1920s, politicians from both sides of the aisles stressed policies that purportedly prioritized physical fitness, but World War II was what boosted American fitness. As commandant of West Point, Douglas MacArthur revamped the educational requirements of cadets, making physical training through individual and team sports a critical

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<sup>54</sup> Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1995), 190-8, 205-7; *Economic Report of the President Transmitted to Congress*, January 8, 1947 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1947), 3, 23; William O'Neill, *A Democracy at War: America's Fight at Home and Abroad in World War II* (New York: The Free Press, 1993), 75-76, 78-80, 82-84, 90, 98-101, 214-215, 218, 222.



part of the professionalization of army officers. Fellow generals such as Omar Bradley and Dwight Eisenhower all agreed that sports could help win the War, and they commissioned athletic officers to build company morale over what many believed would be a protracted conflict requiring long tours of duty. From naval stations, to airfields, to forward operating bases, baseball diamonds were part of the daily routines of men in uniform. Soldiers read sporting magazines, played ball against other companies, and attended exhibition games headlined by the biggest Major League phenoms. Both inside and outside the military's ranks, the triumph of American athletics came to symbolize both the supremacy of the American war machine and the eventual push to Allied victory.<sup>55</sup>

Tennis stars were no different than Major Leaguers in that World War II halted their normal routines and forced them to either serve the war effort directly or find a new avenue in which to ply their trade. For the fifty-year-old Bill Tilden, this meant combining theatrics with a new tennis tour featuring some of the finest female talent from the amateur ranks. Just prior to the War, Tilden had embarked on a brief theatrical career, acting in the stage-plays *The Nice Harmons*, *The Fighting Littles*, and *The Children's Hour*—for the last of which Tilden received some positive reviews from the *Los Angeles Times*. At around the same time Tilden also appeared in War Bond drives and benefits across the country. Buoyed by his popularity in these ventures and aware of the massive influx of GIs and war workers to Southern California where

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<sup>55</sup> Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, 190-8, 205-7; *Economic Report of the President Transmitted to Congress*, 3, 23; O'Neill, *A Democracy at War*, 75-76, 78-80, 82-84, 90, 98-101, 214-5, 218, 222; Gorn and Goldstein, *A Brief History of American Sports*, 180; Wanda Ellen Wakefield, *Playing to Win: Sports and the American Military, 1898-1945* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 61, 79-80; Steven Bullock, *Playing for Their Nation: Baseball and the American Military during World War II* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), xi-xiii, 143-4.

he made his home, Tilden put together a tennis production for young men in uniform. Tilden partnered with Walter Westbrook, a Pasadena tennis professional, but the real draw for the soldiers were the widely popular and young amateur champions Gertrude “Gorgeous Gussie” Moran and Gloria Butler. Tilden and Westbrook would hit a few shots before quickly showing themselves off the court so the soldiers could watch Moran and Butler play. Tilden would add some provocative commentary over a public address system before returning to the court with Westbrook, both of whom were now both dressed in drag. After a few games of Tilden and Westbrook versus Moran and Butler, the men would throw off their costumes and pair up with women for a mixed-doubles match—basically the only real tennis of the whole show. Needless to say, such a spectacle ran afoul of the USLTA. Tennis officials certainly continued to bristle at the thought of Tilden involved in the game in any way, and the cross-dressing certainly did not bring them onboard. What ground their gears, though, was not the intermixing of the sexes. The presence of amateur players and professional players on the same court was what proved insufferable.<sup>56</sup>

Moran and Butler built on the legacy of women such as Lizzie Stroud and Alta Weiss, who had for decades blazed trails for women to earn money from their athletics. World War II meant increased opportunities for women athletes, most visibly the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League that ran between 1943 and 1945.<sup>57</sup> Beginning in 1943, the military extended the draft further—Congress had first authorized the draft in 1940 and expanded it after

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<sup>56</sup> Deford, *Big Bill Tilden*, 234-7.

<sup>57</sup> Gorn and Goldstein. *A Brief History of American Sports*, 198, 200-2.

Pearl Harbor—to conscript groups such as fathers previously deferred from service.<sup>58</sup> That move bolstered the ranks of the military with new recruits. The young father Bobby Riggs was one of those recruits when he entered the basic training program at the Great Lakes Naval Training Station.<sup>59</sup>

Riggs and most other athletes soon found themselves sent to Bainbridge, Maryland, where they joined the Physical Instruction Brigade commanded by Gene Tunney.<sup>60</sup> During World War I, Tunney served in the U.S. Expeditionary Force, where he made a name for himself as a boxer. In the 1920s, Tunney won bout after bout and established himself as world heavyweight titleholder with an attendance-setting victory over then champion and celebrity Jack Dempsey. Tunney went on to defeat Dempsey in the infamous 1927 “Long Count” rematch, retaining his title until his retirement in 1928. He remained a prominent public figure in retirement through the serialization of his autobiography in *Collier’s Magazine* that became a bestselling 1932 book titled *A Man Must Fight*.<sup>61</sup> That book’s title brilliantly captured Tunney’s

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<sup>58</sup> John Morton Blum, *V Was for Victory: Politics and American Culture During World War II* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1976), 7, 9, 143; “The Draft: Navy Spanking,” *Time Magazine*, May 24, 1943, p. 69.

<sup>59</sup> Riggs, *Court Hustler*, 68, 72; Bobby Riggs Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, RI.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*; *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Gene Tunney, “A Man Must Fight: A Champion’s Autobiography,” *Collier’s Weekly*, February 6, 1932, pp. 7-9; Gene Tunney, “A Man Must Fight, Part II: The Fighting Marine, Part II,” *Collier’s Weekly*, February 13, 1932, pp. 12-13; Gene Tunney, “A Man Must Fight, Part III: The Championship of the A.E.F.,” *Collier’s Weekly*, February 20, 1932, pp. 14-15; Gene Tunney, “A Man Must Fight, Part IV: Upgrade Toward the Championship,” *Collier’s Weekly*, February 27, 1932, pp. 24-27; Gene Tunney, “A Man Must Fight, Part V: The Grab Feud,” *Collier’s Weekly*, March 5, 1932, pp. 14-15; Gene Tunney, “A Man Must Fight, Part VI: Meeting Carpentier,” *Collier’s Weekly*, March 12, 1932, pp. 16-17 ; Gene Tunney, “A Man Must Fight, Part VII: Getting Ready to Take Dempsey,” *Collier’s Weekly*, March 19, 1932, pp. 12-13; Gene Tunney, “A Man Must Fight, Part VIII: The First Dempsey Fight,” *Collier’s Weekly*, March 26, 1932, pp. 16-17; Gene Tunney, “A Man Must Fight, Conclusion: The Story of the Long Count,” *Collier’s Weekly*, April 2, 1932, pp. 12-13; Gene Tunney, *A Man Must Fight* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1932).

own experiences as an athlete willing to answer his county's call, and military leaders found Tunney a good fit to lead a new generation of soldier-athletes—people such as Major League slugger Johnny Mize, Dodgers' shortstop Harold Peter Henry "Pee Wee" Reese, and Chicago White Sox ace Johnny Rigney—in World War II.<sup>62</sup>

In some respects athletes simply continued doing what they normally did. They played games to entertain others. What differed during wartime was who they were entertaining, where they were entertaining, and who was paying for the entertainment. Before the draft began, professional athletes primarily played benefit exhibitions for suitable causes like war bond drives or aid rallies for the Allies. For example, as the World's Professional Champion in 1941, Bobby Riggs joined Warner Brothers movie stars George Brent and Errol Flynn for tennis exhibitions in Los Angeles and San Francisco to raise money for British War Relief. When the draft began in earnest and the country's best athletes found themselves in uniform, the entertainment changed to focus on the fellow men in uniform rather than the public at large with competitions between different branches of the service being one of the more common formulations. Riggs and Wayne Sabin played for the Navy against Army officers Don Budge and Franky Parker. Major Leaguers like Buddy Blattner, Skeets Dickey, and Johnny Lucadello likewise formed intra-service baseball squads to entertain troops. The soldiers gambled incessantly.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Riggs, *Court Hustler*, 72.

<sup>63</sup> "Screen and Net stars..." press release, Folder Tennis 1, Box 73, Recreation – Tennis collection, California Historical Society, San Francisco, California; Bobby Riggs Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, RI; Riggs, *Court Hustler*, 72-74.

Entertainment for troops reciprocated the grand strategy priorities of Allied politicians and war planners. Prioritized operations in the North African and European theatres of battle meant that American troops marshalling in the Pacific—but not yet engaged in heavy combat—recreated with greater regularity than their European counterparts. In the Pacific, troop entertainment centered on Hawaii because Navy bases like Pearl Harbor massed the most troops. As the intensity of the U.S. military’s island-hopping strategy intensified in 1943, Physical Instruction brigadiers accompanied combat troops battling Japanese troops on Pacific archipelagos. Riggs and Sabin played Budge and Parker in both singles and doubles on Saipan, Tinian, Iwo Jima, and Guam after American troops captured these islands from the Japanese. On Guam, under the direction of the avid tennis player, Vice Admiral John Hoover, the ever-busy servicemen of the Naval Construction Forces, popularly called the “SeaBees,” built a tennis court for the naval brass and Physical Instruction soldiers to compete on in-between war making.<sup>64</sup>

Troops stationed in the United States were also entertained by athletes in and out of uniform. After a tour of duty as the captain of a tank-landing ship for the Allied Invasion of Europe, the American Davis Cupper Gardner Mulloy was sent back stateside by the Navy to train for action in the Pacific. In the interim, Mulloy convinced his superiors at the Little Creek Naval Base in Camp Bradford to allow him to organize exhibition and fundraising matches. Mulloy recognized the draw lady players had for American GIs, so he first recruited Alice

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<sup>64</sup> Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, *A War to Be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 583-4; Bobby Riggs Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, RI; Riggs, *Court Hustler*, 72-74.

Marble and Dodo Bundy before filling out the roster with big names such as Bill Tilden, Vinny Richards, and the Irish champion George Littleton Rodgers. As the troop toured different bases, they made the most of fellow players in uniform and incorporated them into the exhibitions. In Norfolk, Virginia, for example, the naval aviator and tennis champion Ted Schroeder squared off against Bill Tilden before Mulloy and his group moved on to another base in another state. Opinion surveys completed by men in uniform overwhelmingly approved of these entertainments; most soldiers did not seem to mind that these men and women held a tennis racquet or microphone in their hand rather a rifle.<sup>65</sup>

During the war, private tennis clubs also did their part for the American war effort. Those with money and influence held special events such as fundraising exhibitions featuring the best players—many on loan from their military units. On the East and West Coast, clubs like the La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club of La Jolla, California, adhered to the coastal evening blackouts by prohibiting night tennis in order not to give the German or Japanese air forces suitable targets. And clubs fortunate enough to have talented teaching professionals often bid goodbye to those men without complaint when the draft notice of these healthy young men came up.<sup>66</sup>

The war certainly changed the playing careers of many competitive tennis players. Unlike professionals like Tilden who entertained troops for pay without joining the army or players like Riggs who were themselves in the military and playing for Uncle Sam, amateur players like

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<sup>65</sup> Gardner Mulloy Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Samuel Stouffer, "The American Soldier in World War II: Athletes and Entertainers in Uniform," Research Brand, Information and Education Division, War Department, May 1945, available digitally at [www.ropercenter.cornell.edu](http://www.ropercenter.cornell.edu) (accessed May 10, 2016).

<sup>66</sup> Ruth Stofen to La Jolla Club Membership, November 5, 1943, Folder La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club, box L—Love, California Business Ephemera Collection, California Historical Society, San Francisco, California.

Doris Hart still could not receive any form of compensation for winning their matches. Furthermore, with players throughout the world serving their respective countries, any semblance of international competition was deferred until the conclusion of the war. Because large numbers of top male players wore uniforms, women players like Hart carried the torch of amateur tennis throughout the conflict. In some ways, these women resembled their fellow female athletes who filled the bleachers and swung the bat on the baseball diamond while the boys were away from the field. The resemblance did not go much beyond that, however, mainly because the organizers behind the All American Girl's Baseball League (AAGBL) had a very different background when it came to the place of money in sports. Phillip K. Wrigley and his management staff at the Chicago Cubs spearheaded the AAGBL and held few reservations about making money off the backs of their lady players during wartime.<sup>67</sup>

On the tennis side, the United States Lawn Tennis Association still held their defensive position of no money to any amateur player. That stance presented a problem, though, because the USLTA had previously collected money from their high attendance tournaments and distributed this money to various sectional tennis divisions after keeping a substantial sum for their administrative duties at the national office in New York City. The tournaments could not run by themselves either, so the USLTA decided to donate all of the proceeds—after subtracting the costs incurred in running the tournament—to charity organizations of stature such as the International Red Cross. All in all, many top players did not pick up a racquet during the war, while those who did played in fewer tournaments and faced diminished competition between

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<sup>67</sup> "The Sexes," *American Lawn Tennis* 39, no. 4 (July 15, 1945): 14; Jean Hastings Ardell, *Breaking into Baseball: Women and the National Pastime* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005), 102-3, 109-16.

1941 and 1945. But with most other sports, leisure activities, and entertainments, tennis survived the War and continued on in the immediate postwar period—albeit in a new direction.<sup>68</sup>

That westward movement of the game literally coincided with the direction toward professionalism tennis had moved during the thirties and early forties. One of the most lasting consequences of the Great Depression and World War II is that Americans became more mobile than ever before. Between 1940 and 1945, sixteen million Americans served in uniform in some capacity while one out of every five citizens of the United States moved to a new city, state, or region of the country. The deeply cherished physical and emotional degree of mobility most Americans enjoyed when compared to their European peers exploded altogether anew in the heady economic times in which people no longer disparaged the government spending money on what would become the country's great postwar infrastructure projects.<sup>69</sup>

At war's end, tennis clubs in the United States numbered in excess of eight hundred and covered the entire country. The game that began at a Welsh Garden party in 1873, came to America via Bermuda in 1874, and had its rules standardized in a New York City hotel in 1881 had, during the first three decades of the twentieth century, grown to the point that the national office of the USLTA struggled to exercise authority over its member clubs, let alone player members. The dozen sectional associations that reported to the national association may have held the organization together and helped the game of tennis grow, but at the same time those

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<sup>68</sup> George "Pat" Hughes, "Lawn Tennis Economics," *American Lawn Tennis* 39, no. 1 (May, 1945): 25-26; Lt. Hal Surface, Jr., "US Army Sports Program," *American Lawn Tennis* 39, no. 4 (July 15, 1945): 12; Corporal John Kraft, "Parker vs. Budge in the Pacific," *American Lawn Tennis* 39, no. 4 (July 15, 1945): 13.

<sup>69</sup> James Sparrow, *Warfare State: World War II Americans and the Age of Big Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 113-6, 127; James E. Block, *A Nation of Agents: The American Path to a Modern Self and Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 305, 310, 318, 328, 330, 383, 412.



regionally based sub-associations had their own agendas that often clashed with both one another and the national office. The agendas of the amateur associations also contrasted with those of the amateur champions turned touring professionals. One-time insiders Suzanne Lenglen, William “Big Bill” Tilden, Don Budge, and Bobby Riggs became outsiders the moment they publicly played tennis for money. Without the organizational support the amateur associations provided, the touring professionals formed their own subculture on the road that kept them apart from and primed to upend what amounted to the tennis establishment still based largely in East Coast private clubs.<sup>70</sup> Conflicts between different associations and between the highly visible touring professionals and the heavily cloistered amateur clubs chipped away at the authority exercised by the national office and in so doing, hastened the rise of the postwar professional tennis tour led by the Southern Californian Jack Kramer.

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<sup>70</sup> Holcolmbe Ward, Draft of Letter to Ranking Players, January 2, 1948, Folder [no number] USTA Amateur Rule Committee 1948, Box 14, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE “KRAMER KARAVAN”

The first international sports tour took place in 1859 when a dozen professional English cricketers traveled to Montreal, Quebec, and Rochester, New York, to compete against Canadians and American batsmen. With only a few stops, minimal promotion, poor turnout, the 1859 tour nevertheless prompted imitation from other national sporting associations and private clubs.<sup>1</sup> In 1861 an English cricket team toured Australia, and seven years later the Australians reciprocated and toured England. The first Tour de France did not involve bicycles but baseball teams, who barnstormed France in 1903. International test matches and world championships were in place for nearly all sports by the first third of the twentieth century, but in the United States, at least according to a British sports historian, what would become the triad of American spectacle sports—baseball, football, and basketball—preferred domestic tours if the teams and clubs toured at all. In fact, most professionals in the three major team sports in Americas had found comfortable city homes by the mid-1930s.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Fred Lillywhite recalls this tour in *The English Cricketers' Trip to Canada and the United States* (London: Kent & Co., 1860), v.

<sup>2</sup> Steen, *Floodlights and Touchlines*, 92-93, 286, 290-1, 306-7. On basketball barnstorming, see Robert Peterson, *Cages to Jump Shots: Pro Basketball's Early Years* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 12, 59, 62-65, 73, 101. On baseball barnstorming and racial integration in the first-third of the twentieth century, see Neil Lanct, “‘A General Understanding’: Organized Baseball and Black Professional Baseball, 1900-1930,” in Patrick Miller and David Wiggins, eds., *Sport and the Color Line: Black Athletes and Race Relations in Twentieth Century America* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 30-52. While professional football never boasted peripatetic teams to the degree that baseball and basketball did, it was not until the mid-1930s that professional football teams really began to cement themselves in urban centers with populations large enough to discourage frequent regional travel in search of fans. On this change as told through the life of Joseph Carr, the president of what came to be called the National Football League from 1921 to 1939, see Chris Willis, *The Man Who Built the National Football League: Joe F. Carr* (Plymouth, England: Scarecrow Press, 2010), 199-201, 244-66, 337-47.

The sport of tennis had likewise embraced the idea of touring in the first half of the twentieth century. The Davis Cup international competition and the tournament-to-tournament travel of players for United States Lawn Tennis Association sanctioned events, British Lawn Tennis Association sanctioned matches, French Tennis Federation tournaments, Australian Lawn Tennis Association matches, and any other country that belonged to the International Lawn Tennis Federation all constituted what a few contemporaries called the “amateur tennis circuits.” But what people meant and thought of when they spoke or read about tennis tours were the professional barnstorming matches of Suzanne Lenglen, Bill Tilden, Ellsworth Vines, Fred Perry, Don Budge, and Bobby Riggs, among other players and promoters.<sup>3</sup>

A fresh faced-challenger taking on a seasoned professional champion constituted the core attraction of nearly all the tours in the prewar years, and that drama remained at the center of the professional tours led by Jack Kramer beginning in 1947. Whereas fresh faces in terms of players helped the tours, both prewar and postwar, a high turnover in terms of tour managers and tour promoters hurt professional tennis. Kramer’s constant presence as the head of the postwar professional tennis tour during the next decade professionalized professional tennis which, in terms of a business enterprise, had come across as scattered and at times sloppy. The consistent entertainment product Kramer put before the United States public and people around the world on his international tennis tours popularized the sport in the postwar years at the same time that Kramer’s constant presence in seemingly all aspects of the game unnerved the directors of the United States Lawn Tennis Association and amateur tennis abroad. Kramer thus became an

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<sup>3</sup> Don Budge, *Don Budge: A Tennis Memoir* (New York: Viking Press, 1969), 41, 95, 125-6, 141.

impediment to the arrival of Open Tennis competition between amateurs and professionals because he did so much to grow the game. The “Kramer Karavan” was professional tennis in the fifties, for better and for worse.<sup>4</sup>

Kramer thought he understood what earlier professional tennis promoters from C.C. Pyle to Bobby Riggs did not: the USLTA would countenance professional tennis if they received part of the action. Better to make the amateur association the ally of professional tennis rather than its antagonist. So at the same time the Southern California Tennis Association, acting on authority from the USLTA national office, labored to make sure even a truck driver associated with Jack Kramer’s World Tennis Incorporated (association member Hugh Stewart, who wanted to maintain his amateur status to play tournaments), could not pick up a racquet and hit around for fun with the professionals and could only receive compensation “no greater than those ordinary payable to a truck driver,” the directors of the Southern California Tennis Association agreed to split profits from the Los Angeles professional tennis tournaments Kramer and his players sponsored. Such an arrangement between amateur tennis and the professional tour happened because of Kramer’s special relationship with Perry Jones—the leader of Southern California tennis. Jones believed in amateur tennis, but more than anything he desired Southern California to lead the world in grooming tennis champions. Forty-five percent of the gate receipts for the professional exhibitions introduced innumerable young players to tennis if that money found its way into the Southern California Tennis Association and the Southern California Tennis Patrons Association. The alliance could also happen because Jones always considered Kramer his favorite player to come out of the junior development system at the Los Angeles Tennis Club. In

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<sup>4</sup> Jeane Hoffman, “Bouncing Around,” *The Racquet* 47, no. 3 (July 1953): 26.

Jones's mind, professional tennis did not look so bad if it looked like the blond and muscular Jack Kramer.<sup>5</sup>

In particular, the potential for television contracts Kramer dangled excited the SCTA, SCPTA, and USLTA board members. They liked Kramer so much they even went so far as to bless him to scoop up a dozen of the best junior players after the national juniors in Kalamazoo to go train with him and his professional players. That flew in the face of the USLTA leadership's normal paternalism, amateur code, and the ethics statements they drafted at around the same time that sought to prohibit contact between amateur players and association members with professional tennis players and promoters at all costs. The Southern California Tennis Patrons wanted the money they expected to make from the televised professional tournament, so the USLTA sanctioned Kramer to hold his event. Perry Jones and his peers at the Association's national office always fancied professional tennis as a windfall profit generator for the players and promoters, both Kramer and his predecessors, but the limited receipts that came in from the first major association of the professional tennis troupe with a major amateur-owned and -operated venue in the Los Angeles Tennis Club revealed to anyone who cared to count the money that the life of a touring tennis professional and their promoter was risk-filled for little financial reward.<sup>6</sup> As the player professional to beat in the early 1950s, the ambitious sports

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<sup>5</sup> Minutes of a Specially Called Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Southern California Tennis Association, December 17, 1953, Folder [no number] Southern California Tennis Association 1953-1954, Robert Kelleher Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Minutes of the Organization Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Southern California Tennis Association, January 21, 1954, Folder [no number] Southern California Tennis Association 1953-1954, Robert Kelleher Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Ned Potter, "Passing Shots," *World Tennis* 1, no. 10 (March, 1954): 37.

<sup>6</sup> Minutes of the Organization Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Southern California Tennis Association, January 21, 1954, Folder [no number] Southern California Tennis Association 1953-1954, Robert Kelleher Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

promoter, and the spokesperson for professional tennis, Kramer saw the opportunities and challenges better than anyone.

Professional tennis suited Kramer from the beginning. As with so many other parts of life, World War II upended positions of power in the tennis world with the antebellum dominance on the court of Donald Budge giving way to Bobby Riggs, who beat Budge for the first time twenty-three matches to twenty-one matches in the first professional tennis tour after the war. As in the tours in the late 1930s, Jack Harris promoted and managed the 1946 to 1947 tour that Riggs won. For his part, Riggs only secured his position as the touring professional to beat in the coming year with a win over Budge at the Forest Hills National Professional Tournament in September. There Harris made it perfectly clear to both players that the loser of their final match would not receive a tour contract. The winner could expect to take on the current amateur champion Jack Kramer in a tour beginning on December 26, 1947 and going into the spring of 1948.<sup>7</sup>

Riggs's victory earned him a contract of 17.5 percent of the tour gross receipts as compared to 35 percent of the total gross receipts allotted to the amateur champion turned professional challenger. In fact, Harris negotiated Riggs down from 25 percent to 17.5 percent simply by threats of finding other professionals to tour against the amateur champion turned professional challenger, whom Harris maintained was the real draw for spectators anyway. The wily promoter further leveraged the power he held over the few professional players, unable to return to the amateur ranks, by offering the Ecuadorian Francisco "Pancho" Segura and the

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<sup>7</sup> Bobby Riggs, *Tennis is My Racket* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1949), 8-10, 15-16, 160-1.

Australian Dinny Pails not a percentage fee but a flat weekly rate of \$300 to play the tour's undercard match. Both signed quickly because they did not have a choice. Regardless of who won the most matches in the tour, Kramer would earn \$86,470, Riggs \$43,225, Segura around \$5,000, and Pails around \$5,000. Kramer's first tour had earned him the largest payday per match of any player in professional tennis history, yet he also realized that by not promoting the tour, he had missed out on the roughly \$107,705 Jack Harris had netted as tour promoter and manager.<sup>8</sup>

Like Riggs, Kramer's earliest tennis took place on the public park courts in Los Angeles County built by the New Deal's recreational revolution. La Cienega Park, Boyle Heights Park, and municipal courts in the working-class suburb of Southgate were his regular haunts until, like Riggs, he attracted the attention of Southern California Tennis's boss, Perry T. Jones, who opened the Los Angeles Tennis Club to the promising junior. Unlike Riggs, however, Jones adored the clean-cut and well-behaved Kramer. Jones made sure to arrange matches for his protégé with the best junior players and many of the best one-time professional players who played their retirement tennis at the Los Angeles Tennis Club. Great competition in Southern California meant that, in Kramer's own words, he "was almost automatically the best in the country."<sup>9</sup>

That claim got put to the test in 1947 when, after having won the Davis Cup Challenge Round, the 1947 Wimbledon title, and the 1948 United States Championship, Kramer turned

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> "Kramer Comes Through," *American Lawn Tennis: News Supplement* 49, no. 1 (July 2, 1938): 2; Jack Kramer with Frank Deford, *The Game: My Forty Years in Tennis* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1979), 20-23, 28, 30-31, 50-52.

professional to challenge Bobby Riggs. The challenger thoroughly routed Riggs sixty-nine matches to twenty matches in their 1947-1948 tour. That summer Kramer again bested Riggs in the twenty-first year of the National Professional Tournament hosted by the West Side Tennis Club in Forest Hills, New York, and thus assured himself a place on the tour for the following year to take on the top amateur player who could be coaxed to join the professional ranks. Getting to tour mattered so much to the finances of the professional player because of the limited tournament schedule of events for professional players and the small payout each event offered. The highest profile, largest grossing, and best paying professional tournament in 1948, for example, collected gross receipts of \$25,856.00. After liabilities, the tournament netted \$17,095.17, of which 60 percent (i.e., \$8,057.10) was distributed to the roughly thirty players who competed. A first-round loser thus received \$50, a round 16 loser \$100, a quarter-finalist \$322, and a semi-finalist about \$500. For his second place finish, Riggs earned \$966.85 while Kramer's win secured 18 percent of the tournament purse—\$1,450.20 in winnings for singles with an additional \$825.14 of winnings in doubles. That modest amount when combined with the infrequency of professional tournaments meant that a professional player could not make it financially without a tour unless they were willing to spend most days of the year teaching the game to people willing to pay for the instruction.<sup>10</sup>

The vast majority of people who called themselves tennis professionals and were called tennis professionals by the USLTA never made a living playing tennis. The moment a tennis amateur earned their first dollar from the game in any capacity, outside of the sanctioned

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<sup>10</sup> Kramer and Deford, *The Game: My Forty Years in Tennis* 20-23, 28, 30-31, 50-52; "Kramer Absolute Ruler," *American Lawn Tennis* 42, no. 5 (August 1, 1948): 6-10.



expenses the USLTA approved, they became a professional regardless of the origin of that money. The majority of tennis professionals were simply tennis amateurs who the USLTA caught teaching tennis, stringing racquets, or selling apparel to earn their living. Outside the USLTA's structure, these teaching professionals thus formed their own association in the Professional Lawn Tennis Association, which primarily served the teaching professionals rather than the handful of playing professionals. As a tennis professional in 1931, Bill Tilden organized the Professional Player's Association for the handful of top players touring for a living. While never strong, that organization existed apart from the PLTA in functioning essentially as a way for the few top tennis players to discourage competition from other professionals who might think of starting a rival tour.<sup>11</sup>

Division among those labeled as professional tennis players reached a boiling point on June 12, 1948, when the PLTA announced that only full members of their organization were allowed to play in the National Professional Championship sponsored by the PLTA and hosted by the West Side Tennis Club at Forest Hills. That excluded Kramer, Riggs, Pails, Segura, and Budge; however, without those players that fans across the country most associated with professional tennis, the tournament's draw underwhelmed. Both teaching professionals and playing professionals recognized this, and in final negotiations tour players agreed to forsake their own professional organization in favor of the tennis teacher-focused PLTA if the latter organization would not interfere with the best players' efforts to tour when the PLTA sponsored championship was not going on. The PLTA would continue to devote the majority of its time

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<sup>11</sup> Murray Janoff, "'Doomed' Pro Tourney Gets Late Reprieve," *American Lawn Tennis* 47, no. 2 (June 1948): 9, 32; Roy Miller, "Among the Pros," *American Lawn Tennis* 42, no. 3 (July 1, 1948): 32-33.

and resources to helping their few hundred members receive better contracts for their instruction at different clubs and sporting goods stores while the half-dozen touring professionals continued to play tennis for money.<sup>12</sup> Kramer's first major impact on developing professional tennis thus involved new associations—not always successful and not always mutually beneficial, but new associations nonetheless—with fellow professionals and amateur associations alike.

Kramer also further professionalized tennis in that he pioneered a completely new style of play. Contemporary sportswriters and spectators came to call his style the “Big Game.” For the first two-thirds of a century of tennis, nearly all top players—Tilden, Richards, Vines, Bromwich, Quist, Pails, Budge, Parker, Talbert, Riggs, and Mulloy—preferred to play groundstrokes from the baseline with an emphasis on consistency and defense. After Kramer, nearly all top players played a hard serve, well-placed return, or penetrating ground-stroke after which they explosively approached the net looking to end the point quickly with a volley or, should their opponent lob to them, an overhead smash. Kramer did not pioneer the big game in a vacuum. Rather the innovation owed to the championship 1946 Davis Cup team. Walter Pate, the squad's captain, picked Kramer, Ted Schroeder, and Gardner Mulloy precisely because he believed an aggressive style of play to be the only means to victory over the seasoned Australian team of Dinny Pails, John Bromwich, Adrian Quist, and Victory Murphy. In front of a boisterous Melbourne crowd at the Kooyong mega-stadium, the Americans' aggressive serve-and-volley game so thoroughly overwhelmed the Australians that only one match out of five went more than straight-sets in the sweep for the United States. Tennis's huge popularity in Australia practically required that the Australian Lawn Tennis Association and their internationally famed Davis Cup

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.; Ibid.

captain Harry Hopman adopt the strategy of attack, attack, attack of the Americans. From the first year of competitive tennis after the war, the two tennis nations that all other countries looked to as an example espoused the big game.<sup>13</sup>

Kramer continued to popularize and refine the big game in his years as an amateur player and then as a professional. In his stellar 1947 season, Kramer increasingly played opponents in the final rounds of the big tournaments who had also begun to serve and volley, chip and charge on the service return, and look for a short ball to hit an approach shot to follow into the net. The 1947 Davis Cup pitted the United States against Australia with both teams playing more of the big game—though the Americans playing it slightly better to defend their title. With few titles left to win, Kramer turned professional, where his big game overwhelmed the world's professional champion Bobby Riggs in their 1948 tour. Riggs, a highly adaptable, thoughtful, and strategic player, enjoyed early success against Kramer—including in their opener at Madison Square Garden in front of a record-setting crowd despite a blizzard outside. Rather than getting drawn into Riggs's gamesmanship, however, Kramer slowly tweaked his aggressive game in order to maximize what he called "percentage attack." This meant the likelihood of winning a point based on Kramer having hit a certain shot in a certain situation. Kramer was bigger and stronger than Riggs, but the real key to his tour victory came from the realization that he could only control his percentages with any regularity if he consistently took the initiative to set up scenarios of shots when the percentages would fall in his favor. If he allowed his opponent to dictate what sort of rallies they entered, then his likelihood of having to play statistically un-

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<sup>13</sup> Peter Young, "The Big Game," *World Tennis* 2, no. 12 (May 1955): 24; Edward Potter, "The Big Game," *World Tennis* 7, no. 7 (December 1959): 35-37.

advantageous exchanges increased, and too large an increase in these un-advantageous exchanges would result in a lost match and eventually a lost tour.<sup>14</sup>

The percentage attack theory got a thorough test on the 1949 to 1950 professional tour when Kramer went up against a bigger and stronger opponent in Pancho Gonzales. A fellow Los Angeles public-parks player, Gonzales was far less welcome at the Los Angeles Tennis Club than either Jack Kramer or Bobby Riggs, but the big-serving and hard-hitting Gonzales proved his mettle two years in a row with pressure wins over Ted Schroeder in the finals of the U.S. Championship at Forest Hills. The ability to handle big-match pressure did not beat the percentages, however. Kramer thoroughly defeated the strong-striking Gonzales on the indoor canvas courts of their tour, 97 matches to 26 matches. For his part, Gonzales learned from his defeat and developed his own percentage attack game that, when combined with Gonzales's physical gifts and mental toughness, thoroughly dominated tennis for a decade beginning in 1953.<sup>15</sup>

In the meantime, Kramer beat Eduardo "Little Pancho" Segura—whose two-handed forehand and counter-punch hustling style were as far away from the big game as a player could get—in the 1950 to 1951 professional tour before defeating Frank Sedgman 54 matches to 41 matches in a stretched/false-started 1952 to 1953 professional tour. The big game, however, had taken a toll on Kramer's body, and after only half of a decade of professional touring, he retired from full-time play to focus on minding the percentages of his promoting.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Potter, "The Big Game," 35-7; Kramer and Deford, *The Game*, 160; Miller, "Kramer Absolute Ruler," 6-7.

<sup>15</sup> Kramer, *The Game*, 92-94, 192.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

Kramer could have made close to the same amount of money not playing as he did playing because he retained his key source of income long after he stopped competing on the court. Since the 1920s, sporting goods companies had tried to establish endorsement deals with the best amateur players of a more robust sort than the few gratis racquets. Every time the USLTA had nixed these attempts through the enforcement of their “Sporting Goods Rule” that not only prevented an association player from having his likeness attached to a racquet but also prohibited any amateur player from working for a sporting goods company in any capacity. Once again the primacy of the Davis Cup in the thinking of the USLTA Executive Committee raised the tolerance of the association’s voters for amateurism when, after having held the Davis Cup for four years in a row, the Americans lost to the Australians in the 1950 through 1953 ties. USLTA Executive Committee members correctly attributed at least part of the Australians’ newfound dominance to the Australian Lawn Tennis Association’s (ALTA) acceptance of its top amateur talent working for Australian sporting goods firms. In fact, the ALTA’s position on amateur tennis players working for sporting goods firms went beyond forbearance to the active encouragement of the practice, whereby senior ALTA members secured lucrative consultantships for the most talented young Australian players who no longer had to worry about actually clocking-in and could spend all of their days improving their game and traveling for tournaments. For four years the USLTA bristled at that action by the Australians until 1954, when the hundreds of delegates and their proxies met at the Association’s annual meeting and overwhelmingly ended the sporting goods rule with only one dissenting vote. Tony Trabert, the

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United States' top amateur player in 1954, went to work for the Wilson Sporting Goods Company; that December he led the American Davis Cup team to victory over the Australians.<sup>17</sup>

The USLTA 1954 vote was supposed to go only so far. Delegates did not countenance both the so-called “givesmen” of sporting goods companies who outfitted amateur players with free racquets, strings, and apparel as well as the association of a player’s likeness to a racquet, sneaker, or tennis ball in exchange for a small percentage of each good sold. In a satire published in *World Tennis* magazine that same year, player Art Larsen and editor Gladys Heldman gave a comical but highly accurate portrait of the absurdity of the USLTA’s Amateur Rules Committee’s obsession with policing gratis sporting goods and amateur player product endorsements. Sporting goods firms in the early 1950s simply did not have that much free stuff to give away because they did not operate on big margins themselves. Firms such as Spalding, Dunlop, Wilson, and Cortland preferred to use their extra equipment not for giveaways to amateur tournament players but in free junior tennis clinics sponsored across public park courts. The players they partnered with for endorsements had to play professionally because the players’ likeness or signature that came to literally appear on the neck of the endorsed racquets in those days made plain to the USLTA who got paid to play with that racquet. Hiding such an affiliation so that a player could keep his amateur status made no sense from the point of view of the sporting goods firms, who wanted the association of their product with the best players in the most visible of ways. The dual strategy of big play-day-in-the-public-parks and professional product endorsement paid off for the big four sporting goods firms, who in 1958 reported that

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<sup>17</sup> J. Joubert and C. Heldman, “25 Years Ago,” *World Tennis* 3, no. 11 (April 1956): 3; “Around the World,” *World Tennis* 1, no. 4 (September 1953): 33; “Around the World,” *World Tennis* 1, no. 6 (November 1953): 36; Gardnar Mulloy, “USLTA Annual Meeting,” *World Tennis* 1, no. 9 (February 1954): 10-14; “Around the World,” *World Tennis*, 3, no. 5 (October 1955): 68.

over the past decade they had increased sales of tennis equipment and apparel by 60 percent. That increase came about because of an innovative marketing partnership between the Wilson Sports Equipment Company and Jack Kramer.<sup>18</sup>

Sporting goods firms liked tennis because the game required a lot of equipment. Whereas late nineteenth-century outdoor sports sellers such as Peck & Snyder of New York City as well as early twentieth-century racquet makers such as A.J. Reach Company of Philadelphia, string manufacturers such as Armour Company of Chicago, and sporting apparel clothiers such as Brooks Brothers all marketed and advertised without a prominent player associated with their firm, by the mid-thirties professional tennis players had toured enough that profitable sporting goods manufacturers such as Dunlop thought the time right to pay professionals such as Vincent Richards to associate himself with their products. At first those associations took the form of a company like Dunlop claiming that professionals like Bill Tilden and Richards “designed,” “tested,” and “played” with a racquet with a generic name such as “Maxplay.” During the war years, marketing in the sporting goods industry tapped into patriotism to sell more products and used their professional player spokespersons such as Richards and others for campaigns like “Yes Tennis Will Help Keep the Nation fit in 1943.” If a professional player served in the military or directly aided the war effort, his or her image might appear alongside a product such as Don Budge’s, Bobby Riggs’, Alice Marble’s, and Ellsworth Vines’, all having a head-shot in Wilson’s “New Wartime ‘Championship’ Tennis Ball” campaign. During wartime and in the first few years afterwards, sporting goods manufacturers stopped short of a complete association

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<sup>18</sup> Kramer and Deford, *The Game*, 134; Art Larsen and Gladys Heldman, “The Sporting Goods Representative,” *World Tennis* 2, no. 6 (November 1954): 19; “Tennis Clinics,” *World Tennis* 2, no. 4 (September 1954): 60-61; Edward Potter, “Vic Denny is New USLTA Prexy,” *World Tennis*, 5, no. 10 (March 1958): 12-13.

between one of their racquets, balls, strings, or apparel, and a professional player. Wilson's early advertising in the prewar and war years did not feature a player endorsing the product; to pay a professional player a flat fee or percentage would have made little financial sense since little tennis touring was taking place in the early forties. As the war continued into the mid-forties, professional and amateur players alike entered military service and put on exhibitions for troops and war bond fundraisers; however, patriotic advertising placed limits on the individual professional making money during a time of national sacrifice. In a major campaign immediately after the war, Wilson emphasized the technology of their "Strata-Bow" racquet frame by equating it to the jet airplanes of the present and future.<sup>19</sup>

Wilson soon recognized, however, that features could only take a product so far—even at a peak time of technological vogue. The firm needed people to help sell their products, and no tennis person appeared more visible than the popular professional champion Jack Kramer. His full partnership with Wilson began in early 1948 right after Kramer signed a contract with Jack Harris to play Bobby Riggs on a professional tour. Wilson wanted everyone to know that no matter who won the "World's Tennis Championship" in 1948, either Riggs or Kramer, both men "have used Wilson rackets since their early amateur days...and still play Wilson exclusively."

The key innovation came after Kramer secured the World's Professional Title and Wilson

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<sup>19</sup> Peck & Snyder, *Price List of Outdoor Sports & Pastimes* (New York: n.p., ca. 1886), p. 36, Call Number GV747, Trade Catalog Collection, Winterthur Museum and Library, Wilmington, Delaware; "Advertisements," *American Lawn Tennis* 14, no. 1 (April 15, 1920): i-1; "Advertisement," *American Lawn Tennis* 28, no. 14 (February 20, 1935): i; "Advertisement," *American Lawn Tennis* 34, no. 5 (July 20, 1920): i; *Wilson Tennis Equipment* product catalog for 1941, Call Number .W7395 1941, Trade Catalog Collection, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Delaware; "Advertisement," *American Lawn Tennis* 37, no. 1 (April, 20, 1943): i; "Advertisement," *American Lawn Tennis* 37, no. 3 (June 20, 1943): 23; "Advertisement," *American Lawn Tennis* 37, no. 14 (May, 1944): 24-25; "Advertisement," *American Lawn Tennis* 41, no. 1 (July 15, 1947): 22-23.



recognized that Kramer would dominate the game both on the court and in the court of public opinion for the foreseeable future.<sup>20</sup>

In December 1948 Wilson announced their new partnership with Kramer to present the “Jack Kramer Autograph.” Advertisements to the contrary, the racquet had the same specifications as Wilson’s standard strata-bow racquet except it came in two different weights and displayed Kramer’s cursive handwriting on the stick’s neck. “I’m as proud of this racket as I was of my first championship trophy. It’s the finest racket I’ve ever played with,” said Kramer about his new equipment. While the Kramer autograph was not the first signature racquet—Ellsworth Vines and Don Budge, as examples, each had racquets designated as their very own by Wilson in the late 1930s and early 1940s—the Jack Kramer Autograph was the first tennis racquet to come out during a heady time for the sale of sporting goods. In a meeting at Wilson’s Chicago offices, Kramer wisely accepted the company’s offer by President L.B. Iceley and the company’s sales executive Bill King’s of 2.5 percent earnings on units sold compared to the 3 percent Riggs, Vines, and Budge collected. Wilson pushed the Kramer racquet on wholesalers and retailers harder than they did all their other racquets, and Kramer’s royalties rose from \$13,000 in the early years for the Kramer Autograph, to \$50,000 in the late sixties, and \$160,000 a year in 1975. The tennis boom of the mid-seventies ensured that the Jack Kramer Autograph became the best-selling tennis racquet of all time and paved the way for a host of athlete

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<sup>20</sup> Jack Miller, “Jack Brightens Pro Scene,” *American Lawn Tennis* 42, no. 12 (January 1, 1948): 6-7; “Advertisement,” *American Lawn Tennis* 42, no. 12 (January 1, 1948): 38-39.

signature sporting goods endorsements in other individual sports such as golf and team sports such as baseball.<sup>21</sup>

Playing style and product endorsements alone did not make much change to a tennis professional's bank account if the athlete behind the endorsement did not back up his or her action on the court. In that Kramer made good. He overwhelmed Bobby Riggs in their 1947-1948 tour; he soundly beat Pancho Gonzales in the 1949 tour 94 to 29 matches; he remained the all-American champion widely popular across the country after besting Pancho Segura 64 to 28 matches in their 1950-1951 tour; he defeated Frank Sedgman 54 to 41 matches in their 1952-1953 tour. Four tours in a row, Big Jack had retained the title "World's Professional Champion." On the thirty-fourth match of the last tour, Kramer met the \$100,000 guarantee he had offered Sedgman and Ken McGregor to lure the Australian champions out of the amateur ranks and to his professional troupe, which was rounded out by Pancho Segura. In the United States alone, the four players reported \$800,000 in gate receipts, eclipsing the next closest professional tennis tour by \$300,000. Kramer thus understood that people wanted to pay to watch him defend his title.<sup>22</sup>

Kramer, however, refused to risk losing to Gonzales. While not playing night after night on the tour, Gonzales still had established himself as the man to beat in professional tennis both by fellow professionals like the Irishman George Lyttleton Rogers, who ranked both Gonzales and Pancho Segura in front of Kramer, and through his on-court play by having won titles as the

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<sup>21</sup> "Advertisement," *American Lawn Tennis* 42, no. 13 (February, 1948): 20-21; "Advertisement," *American Lawn Tennis*, 42, no. 11 (December, 1948): 20-21; Kramer and Deford, *The Game*, 134-6.

<sup>22</sup> Jeane Hoffmann, "Bouncing Around," *American Lawn Tennis* 44, no. 3 (July 1, 1950): 13; Hugh Stewart, "The Pro Tour: Success or Failure," *World Tennis* 2, no. 1 (June, 1954): 45; "End of Tour: Kramer Wins—On the Court and in the Bank," *World Tennis* 1, no. 1 (June 1953): 27; "Around the World," *World Tennis* 1, no. 2 (July 1953): 20.

World's Professional Champion through the yearly tournament contested in Cleveland, Ohio. He was playing against the strongest professionals across the globe. Kramer compensated for his own absence on the court by instituting a new mini-tournament format that replaced the standard "exhibition" event that had always paired an undercard match before a main event match. Now, players scrambled against one another during the first night of a tour stop, with the two winners playing each other on the second night for a prize-money incentive. This two-night format led Kramer to institute a new tennis scoring system called the pro-set that replaced the standard tennis scoring system of first player to win two out of three sets or three out of five sets with a single set played to eight games. These reforms did not address the real issue, though, of having the director, manager, accountant, and promoter of the tour also being a part-time player, which brought a great degree of emotional baggage to the enterprise of professional tennis in the fifties. That baggage weighed down the financial prospects of the players as they readied to travel across the country for another season.<sup>23</sup>

Along with Kramer, the person who most made the tennis tour successful and exciting to the audience was the last person to come onboard. In the Lenglen and Tilden tours, people paid to see the grace and dominance of the champion. But after the Depression tours of Vines, Perry, and Budge, promoters believed people paid to see conflict between the upstart amateur challenger and the established touring professional. They therefore prioritized luring the most attractive amateur champion, no matter the cost. The David versus Goliath narrative continued to resonate with Americans into the fifties for several reasons. First, differences notwithstanding,

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<sup>23</sup> "World Professional Championship..." *World Tennis* 1, no. 1 (June 1953): 18; "10,000 P.O.C. World Tennis Championship of 1954," *World Tennis* 1, no. 10 (March 1954): 32-33.

the conclusion of World War II had brought American Jews and American Christians, both Catholics and Protestants, into common cause to a greater degree than at any other time in the nation's history. With the onset of the Cold War and the godlessness of the new enemy, it was little wonder people of different faiths found the emerging popularity of the "Judeo Christian Tradition" settling and righteous warriors from the Old Testament beating insurmountable odds inspiring. Second, the Gilded Age and Progressive Era middle-class built a foundation for the American Dream in the twentieth century supported by a plank of professionalism. At the same moment when doctors, lawyers, and accountants, to name a few of the upstart career trajectories, all grew in the rigor of their training and standardized in their methods and results, so too spectator sports grew and modernized, with the athletes dedicated to fulltime training and specialization for the first time in any real numbers. Third, ever since the explosion of modern consumer culture and leisure in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Americans obsessed over what historian William Leach has called "the cult of the new"—that is, finding happiness in the next good to buy, the next spectacle to see, the next experience to experience.<sup>24</sup> Kramer intuited all of this. With his tennis tours in the fifties he reaped respectable gate receipts with minimal advertising expenses. But it was not just Kramer who was bearing the cost of the tour. That burden fell on the players.<sup>25</sup>

The start of the 1954 tour revealed just how touch-and-go professional tennis in the fifties was. The Australian professional arrived in the United States from the Melbourne-hosted Davis

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<sup>24</sup> Kramer and Deford, *The Game*, 187; Paul Tillich, "Is There a Judeo-Christian Tradition?" *Judaism* 1, no. 2 (April 1952): 106-9; Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism*, 80-83; William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 3.

<sup>25</sup> Tony Trabert Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

Cup tie on January 2, 1954—the day before the professional tour began. Jack Kramer had spent the last couple weeks of 1953 not preparing to play but in promoting the tour across newspapers, radio, and television. Big Jake made more than a hundred phone calls a day on subjects that ranged from renting a truck large enough to move their canvas court, securing a driver for the truck, insurance policies should one of his four touring players injure themselves, and printed programs for each tournament venue. The tour opened at Madison Square Garden on January 3, 1954 and featured a pre-card match of Don Budge versus Pancho Segura, a main attraction of Frank Sedgman versus Pancho Gonzales, and a doubles pro-set of Segura and Gonzales versus Sedgman and Kramer. At their second night at the Garden, Gonzales and Segura faced off, as each had won the night before, with Gonzales serving ace after ace to win the match and secure the \$1,500 bonus for the event's winner. On January 5, the troupe left New York City for their city-to-city tour with plans to play the same format at most stops—that is, two-night engagements with winners from the first night's matches squaring off against one another for the second night with an additional prize money bonus on the line.<sup>26</sup>

As they set off, a sports reporter asked the competitors who they expected to win the tour. Segura thought Gonzales, Gonzales named himself, both Budge and Sedgman did not offer a definitive pick, and Kramer picked Sedgman, thinking Gonzales out of shape, ill-focused, and weak in spirit. The players had 100 engagements to bear these predictions out. In the next month, for example, the tour played the Onondaga Memorial in Syracuse, New York, before moving on to Rochester, Albany, and then Boston Gardens and then departing the next day for Montreal for

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<sup>26</sup> Hugh Stewart, "The Pro Tour: A Three Day Account," *World Tennis* 1, no. 8 (January 1954): 26-27; "The Jack Kramer Tour Itinerary," *World Tennis* 1, no. 9 (February 1954): 39.

the Forum. The Canadian leg concluded with matches in Quebec City and the Auditorium in Ottawa. Cornell University, Duquesne Gardens in Pittsburgh, and the Fort Wayne, Indiana, Arena followed. The players then planned to go on to play Kansas City, Los Angeles, Pebble Beach, Sacramento, Oakland, and Palm Springs before the end of February, despite Kramer not having secured final venues for any of the California matches. Such fly-by-night scheduling exemplified just how underdeveloped barnstorming professional tennis was in the 1950s.<sup>27</sup>

The play of the professionals was far from underdeveloped, however. During the tour's first month, Pancho Gonzales proved his own prediction of his success true with a singles record of fifteen wins and six losses as compared to Pancho Segura's win-loss record of 13-9, Frank Sedgman's of 10-10, and Don Budge's winless record of 0-15. Jack Kramer's prediction that no player could win more than 45 percent of their matches was certainly a marketing strategy on behalf of the tour promoter to gin up media interest. Claiming that no player had an edge over another player made for more intrigue over the day after day, months-long tour, that, as past experience had shown, dwindled if one player became too dominate. Kramer's unwillingness to recognize how thoroughly Gonzales dominated the matches also stemmed from an unwillingness to move past his own playing prime as Big Jake. He practiced with the players on a regular basis and played some doubles matches in select cities, but on the court Kramer was only a shadow of his former self. His domination of tennis in the late 1940s and the first two years of 1950s was near complete.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.; Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> "Around the World," *World Tennis* 1, no. 9 (February 1954): 41; Stewart, "The Pro Tour: A Three Day Account," *World Tennis*, Vol. 1, No. 8, January, 1954," 26-27.

But the candle that burns brightest burns half as long. Aggressive play meant Kramer developed nagging pains that turned into career-ending injuries after what amounted to less than a decade of combined topflight amateur and professional play. Compared to other players of his generation, along with prior and subsequent generations of players, for that matter, Kramer's dominance was short-lived—so much so that he at times disparaged the very professional players he needed to promote and market. The ego of Kramer the athlete was not the reason professional tennis only scraped by in the fifties, but it certainly did not help World Professional Tennis, Inc. What did help was the fine entertainment value the players themselves provided. Crowds loved Pancho Segura's unorthodox two-handed strokes and never-quit hustle across the court. They respected Don Budge's place in tennis history as a two-time Grand Slam amateur champion despite the nightly shellacking he took on the court. With Frank Sedgman and especially with Pancho Gonzales, the crowds sat in awe at the talent and the power of the play. Even filming Gonzales practice serves and overheads, a television crew remarked that he hit with such power that "TV viewers would have a mass heart attack if this were in 3-D."<sup>29</sup>

After a season of nightly matches, Pancho Gonzales emerged above Sedgman, Segura, and Budge in match wins. Having watched seventy-five nights of play, and even umpiring a few matches, the sportswriter Hugh Stewart remarked that Gonzales beat out the other players simply because of "his big serve" and his "complete all-court game" without mentioning his determination and willingness to work hard to capitalize on the second chance at professional tennis he had received. In fact, in writing short summaries of Sedgman, Segura, Budge, and

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<sup>29</sup> "Around the World," *World Tennis* 1, no. 8 (January 1954): 42.

Kramer, all of whom Gonzales soundly defeated on the doubles court and the singles court, Stewart considered all of them superior in “fighting spirit” and “concentration” to Gonzales, but big Pancho simply had more physical strength to draw from than any other tennis player in the world. Such observations seemed difficult to justify when Stewart himself umpired matches where Gonzales “caught fire” and ground his way back from major score deficits to win a match, or, in the case of a Fort Wayne, Indiana, match where Gonzales held the nerves at bay to win 28 games to 26 games when the match could have ended at 8 games to 6 games.<sup>30</sup>

Stewart’s opinions of Gonzales revealed a deep dislike on the part of sportswriters for Gonzales the man, not the player. His game stood above reproach, but his personality came under frequent attack. The harsh commentaries came, at least in part, because of Gonzales’s outspokenness over his financial compensation for his performance on the tennis court. Having won the tour handily with victories in 85 of 126 singles matches played over sixteen weeks, Gonzales secured \$39,425, for the 1953-1954 tour—\$35,000 less than he earned for losing badly to Kramer on the 1949-1950 tour.<sup>31</sup>

Modest attendance for the 1953-1954 tour partly explained why Gonzales earned half as much for playing twice as well. Gate receipts from the most recent tour gave Kramer less money to move around compared to the first professional tour Gonzales participated in and the 1951-1952 and 1952-1953 tours Kramer forced Gonzales to sit out. But differences in compensation had more to do with how Kramer structured the tour now that his skill was diminished. The

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<sup>30</sup> Hugh Stewart, “The Pro Tour: Success or Failure,” *World Tennis* 2, no. 1 (June 1954): 45; “Around the World,” *World Tennis* 2, no. 1 (June 1954): 41; “Around the World,” *World Tennis* 1, no. 11 (April 1954): 41; “The Pro Tour,” *World Tennis* 2, no. 2 (July 1954): 39.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*; *Ibid.*; *Ibid.*; *Ibid.*



round-robin mini-tournament format was supposed to reward the player with the most match victories, but Kramer distributed prize money bonuses based on his own whims rather than on the actual wins of the players. For example, in April 1954, the tour swung down into Texas with Gonzales maintaining a healthy match lead, Sedgman second, Segura third, and Budge fourth, despite Segura sitting atop the prize money standings at \$25,525, Gonzales second at \$25,240, Sedgman third at \$20,025, and Budge, having won only one match on the entire tour, with \$10,900. While Big Pancho did end up with \$4,000 more than Little Pancho and a few thousand dollars more than Sedgman by the tour's final accounting, the percentages Kramer paid to the players did not accurately reflect their win-loss record on the tour.<sup>32</sup>

Big Jake also took a more whimsical approach to his promotional duties than previous tours. In the years where he both played and promoted, conventional wisdom would have suggested an under-promoted tour when compared to the 1953-1954 tour, where he essentially just promoted. The opposite actually happened. When the tour played New Haven, Connecticut, on February 4, 1954, Jerome Scheur recalled how much fuller the arena was in Boston the year before when he saw Kramer play Sedgman. Scheur's sister-in-law lived in New Haven and had not even heard that the tour planned to visit. At the matches she had no other explanation for the "third full" gymnasium than the "lack of advance publicity." Whereas in previous years the troupe had always come close to selling out Madison Square Garden for the tour opener, the January 1954 Garden matches set an underwhelming tone, soon followed by 500 people at the Teaneck, New Jersey, Armory matches when, only the year before, 4,000 people had filled that venue. Kramer missed basic details he had never before missed, such as securing ball boys in

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.; Ibid.; Ibid.; Ibid.

advance for the matches. He spent a lot of time playing golf at the different cities the troupe stopped at rather than looking ahead to make sure the marketing was set for future stops on the tour. Kramer put on tennis clinics for promising junior players with the blessing of USLTA and the underwriting done by corporate friends such as the publisher of *Holiday* magazine. He partnered with Perry T. Jones and the Southern California Tennis Association to hold a professional tennis tournament in Los Angeles. In short, the promoter Jack Kramer realized that he could still make the money he wanted—even with skimping on marketing and contracting out what publicity took place to Frank O’Gara—because the players had no recourse to challenge the compensation Kramer decided for them.<sup>33</sup>

World Tennis Incorporated was the only game in town for the world’s best professional players shut-out from returning to play amateur tournaments. It owned the professional players, body and soul. The meritocracy of professional tennis where the best player got paid the best was as much fiction as fact on the professional tour. Whereas professional tennis tournaments like the 1953 Wembley Professional Tournament attracted record crowds of up to 15,000 paying spectators a night and paid the players based on how they finished in the tournament, enough of those events simply did not exist for a professional player to earn a living in the 1950s. If people

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<sup>33</sup> Jerome Scheur, “The Pro Tour: An excerpt from a letter, New Haven, February 4,” *World Tennis* 1, no. 10 (March 1954): 50; George McGann and Peter Hastings, “Professional Tennis is Tougher than Ever,” *World Tennis* 1, no. 10 (March 1954): 17; “Around the World,” *World Tennis* 1, no. 11 (April 1954): 41; Ann Olson letter to the editors of *World Tennis* magazine, *World Tennis* 1, no. 11 (April 1954): 2; Ned Potter, “Passing Shorts,” *World Tennis* 1, no. 10 (March 1954): 37; Jack Kramer, “Our Young Players: An Analysis,” *World Tennis* 2, no. 4 (September 1954): 20; “Around the World,” *World Tennis* 1, no. 6 (November, 1953): 34.

like Gonzales wanted to make it through the year just by playing tennis, they needed Jack Kramer as much if not more than Kramer needed them.<sup>34</sup>

Kramer's influence over the professional players even extended to when the players were not officially under contract with him. In February 1954, Kramer sat down with Jack March, who ran the World Professional Championship in Cleveland at the Sutton Restaurant in New York City—the preferred venue among sports promoters for tennis deals. The two signed an agreement that required all professionals in Kramer's troupe to play the Cleveland event after Kramer's tour ended. The details of the enforcement mechanism for such a deal after the players' contract with World Tennis, Incorporated, do not survive in the written record, but Kramer likely threatened his players with refusal to renew their tour contract if they did not play March's tournament from which Kramer drew what amounted to a finder's fee. While they did not care for getting told what to do, the professional players certainly wanted to play in the World Professional Championship tournament because March ran a good event. The Pilsener Brewing Company supplied \$10,000 in prize money for the sixteen-person tournament with the winner after four days of play receiving \$2,000. A tournament-approved betting pool assured gambling action on the tournament and stoked excitement with bookies barred from the grounds of amateur tennis tournaments.<sup>35</sup>

After four months on tour, Gonzales and Sedgman entered the main tournament in peak form and played each other in the Sunday afternoon final on May 2, 1954, after having

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<sup>34</sup> Don Budge, "Wembley Professional Tournament: Sedgman Wallops Gonzales," *World Tennis* 1, no. 7 (December 1953): 12; Mike Davies, *Tennis Rebel* (London: Stanley and Paul, 1962), 149-52.

<sup>35</sup> "Around the World," *World Tennis* 1, no. 9 (February 1954): 41; Jack March, "Gonzales Retains World Pro Title," *World Tennis* 2, no. 1 (June 1954): 50-52.

demolished the rest of the field. While March certainly had every incentive to hype the talent of the players in his event, he also spoke truthfully when he remarked that what fans saw in final was “the finest tennis” the world had ever seen. Night after night on tour had perfected Gonzales’s serve to a point where Pancho literally threw down two aces a service game against one of the strongest service returners around. He lost his own serve in only one game to take the match 6-3, 9-7, 3-6, 6-2 for a repeat as the World’s Professional Champion. For his part, Sedgman played his best tennis, committing next to no unforced errors, and missing only one overhead the entire tournament. “Not since the days of Tilden has a top player so completely overshadowed the field,” remarked March. Such dominance actually posed a real problem for the champion’s future in professional tennis, because he had already established his dominance over the best professional players and what amateur wanted to turn professional only to get embarrassed on the court and forfeit the financial assistance they received from their amateur tennis association? March was glad that Gonzales planned to return to Cleveland in 1955 to try to defend his title, but the tournament director could not help but wonder if Pancho had “dug his own financial grave.”<sup>36</sup>

Gonzales proved himself the most consistent winner of all tennis professionals for the next decade. His dominance, however, was incomplete. Segura bested Big Pancho and six others in the Pacific Coast Professional Championships on August 22, 1954. These professional tournaments were often slapdash combinations of tennis, movie stars, comic entertainment, and last-minute funding from a business executive with a fondness for tennis. On the Copa Club Courts on the grounds of the Beverley Wilshire Hotel in Los Angeles, for example, actors Walter

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<sup>36</sup> Jack March, “Gonzales Retains World Pro Title,” *World Tennis* 2, no. 1 (June 1954): 50-52.

Pidgeon, Mark Stevens, and Howard Duff umpired the matches, while actress Ida Lupino handed out the prizes, and Rosemary Clooney, Spike Jones, Jose Ferrer, and the Ritz Brothers sat in the stands and attended the after-match cocktail hour. Outside of a few household names such as the two Panchos, less well-known teaching professionals such as the Irishman Freddie “The Fox” Houghton would fill out the draw and willingly subject themselves to embarrassingly one-sided losses for the few hundred dollars of a \$2,500 total purse awarded to first-round losers as a thanks for playing incentive. That Gonzales, Segura, and a handful of other top professionals demolished their competition so systematically certainly did not help tournament promoters such as Frank Feltrop put fans in the stands, but a champion winning convincingly against weaker opponents, as people expected champions to do, did not hurt attendance nearly as much as naysayers stated. If anything, people paid a little to see their expectations met, and then were willing to pay more to see a contest with a less certain outcome in a tournament semi-final or final where the best players would meet.<sup>37</sup>

One of the more unusual experiences people paid to watch was the 1950-1951 mixed doubles tour that proved a profitable venture for World Tennis, Inc. Many fans had tired of Kramer’s predictable bruising of challenger after challenger. The fast-paced serve and volley power game of the dominant male players in the fifties had turned people off because of the predictable one-off serve, return, volley, point over. Fans wanted less predictability and more variety. They wanted longer rallies more in line with the women’s game. Promoters like Kramer saw this and needed a new draw to boost the gate. He settled on two players whose prime assets

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<sup>37</sup> George Lytelton Rogers, “Segura Takes Pacific Coast Pro Event,” *World Tennis* 2, no. 5 (October 1954): 34.

to the tour were the way they moved on the court. The two players he picked were women, and they appealed to the crowds because of their sex and not in spite of it.<sup>38</sup>

Gertrude “Gorgeous Gussie” Moran turned heads whether she had a tennis racquet in hand or not. Her good looks and gregarious personality led to short movie roles, regular photo shoots, and numerous product endorsements that she leveraged off of her most sensational moment at the 1949 Wimbledon Championship. A finalist in the women’s title match at the end of the tournament, Moran’s fortnight at the All England Club broke tradition and protocol with her bold fashion choice. For the club that both hosted the first lawn tennis tournament and most prized tradition, Moran’s sartorial selection of short skirt and white lace panties flew in the face of over sixty years of tennis history. The typical stretches and lunges of a competitive match with legs on full display revealed a tennis garment that had never before been treated as appropriate for stylizing. Pilloried in the press for her titillating fashion, the crowds could literally not get enough of Moran, further stoking the controversy.<sup>39</sup>

Moran defended her attire with a practical assessment of the connection between competitive tennis and women’s fashion: “After all, jumping and dancing about the court, people see your underwear anyway, so they might as well see something with lace on it.” A tournament spectator, A. Steward of London England, agreed, remarking on the fine play and good looks of the American players, while also singling out Moran’s underwear for keeping the “female flag

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<sup>38</sup> Kramer and Deford, *The Game*, 93-95; Louise Brough Clapp Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, RI.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.; “Sport: Build Up at Wimbledon,” *Time*, July 4, 1949; All *Time* magazine articles were accessed digitally using keyword searches of the Time.com magazine archive on September 26, 2012. The digital formatting of these articles is the reason for the exclusion of page numbers for these sources.

flying high.”<sup>40</sup> Moran’s intimates even attracted the attention of Members of Parliament who denounced the “panties worn by ‘Gorgeous Gussie’” along with the media outlets zealously covering her lack of coverage.<sup>41</sup> The player Moran, the spectator Steward, and the government officials understood that the tournament crowds looked at female players with more on the mind than the spin of the forehand or the power of their serve. Gazers expected style, grace, and celebrity as defined by a balance between the old and the new. For his part, Ted Tinling, the designer of the athletic ensemble, thought any woman in the ladies events could and should wear his panties and short skirt. He went so far as to take his prototype into the locker room, where he propositioned players who met his prodding with mixed reactions. Pauline Betz seemed to show some interest, while Louise Brough Clapp stridently resisted, labeling the clothes a “distraction”—prophetic words, as the heavily favored Moran lost on Centre Court to a relatively unknown Chinese player. What the competitor Clapp did not realize was the entertainment power the panties possessed. Spectators cared more for the sizzle of the players than their strokes and strategies. As a sport, tennis was entertainment after all, and by dressing just a little differently, Moran made a name for herself that would help to pay the bills in the decade to come while the great champion Clapp scraped by teaching tennis lessons to beginners.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.; Ibid.; A. Steward, *Letter to the Publisher*, *Time*, August 1, 1949.

<sup>41</sup> Royal Commission on the Press (Report), *House of Commons Debate*, vol. 467, cc2683-794, July 28, 1949 <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/> (accessed on Dec. 2, 2012).

<sup>42</sup> Louise Brough Clapp Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, RI. Moran did, however, reapply to join the amateur ranks only to see the Southern California Tennis Association refuse to back her bid for returned amateur status at the national level. See, Minutes of a Specially Called Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Southern California Tennis Association, December 17, 1953, Folder [no number] Southern California Tennis Association 1953-1954, Robert Kelleher Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

Kramer's plan to celebrate the panties fizzled out not long into the 1951 World Professional Tennis tour. The foursome played a typical stop on February 1 at Oakland's Auditorium Arena. Attendees paid \$1.80 for a Gallery spot, \$2.40 for a Balcony view, \$3.60 for a position in the Dress Circle, and \$3.60 for Main Floor seats. The tour promoted "the California boys who have made good" to the East Bay audience, even though Kramer came from Southern California, Pancho Segura hailed from Ecuador, and Moran and Betz made up half of the tennis tour without even acknowledgment on the tour's promotional materials. Those problems aside, the real issue centered on the difference in the players' skills. Segura entertained but he could not consistently beat Kramer. Moran turned heads but she could hardly rally with Betz. The difference between the playing ability of the ladies became the bigger issue because their match-up was the novel addition to that year's tour to deflect from Kramer's failure to lure a new challenger out of the amateur ranks. Kramer never disclosed how much he paid Betz, but given that she had toured previously as a professional in the late forties, the number he and Riggs agreed to pay her likely fell more in line with the \$1,000 a week they offered Segura compared to the \$35,000 guarantee plus 25 percent over \$35,000 that both Moran and Kramer accepted.<sup>43</sup>

Betz grew up playing tennis in Southern California, first on the Queens Playground public park courts near Los Angeles High School, and later on the courts of the Los Angeles Tennis Club after she became California state high school champion. Throughout her junior career, she learned the game from Dick Skeen, one of the country's most successful professionals at developing youngsters. At the LATC she had matches against other top players

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<sup>43</sup> Tennis Tours broadside, Folder no number, Box Teale-Thompkins, Business Ephemera Collection, California Historical Society, San Francisco, California; Kramer and Deford, *The Game*, 93-95.



such as Louise Brough, arranged for her by Perry T. Jones. Jones took an even greater interest in Gussy Moran and Jinx Falkenburg, who also began playing there in 1938. Like he did with so many players, he paid for their lessons, secured practice partners for them, and even bought their tennis balls. That support figured prominently in cresting the wave of Southern California lady players that thoroughly dominated women's tennis in the middle third of the twentieth century. Those women won thirteen national singles championships between 1935 and 1950; they held seven national eighteen-and-under championships between 1940 and 1950; they raised the Wimbledon singles trophy five times in a row between 1945 and 1950; and the Southern California lady players likely would have won more tournaments had World War II not limited the amateur tournaments available to them in the prime of their careers.<sup>44</sup>

The USLTA male directors grew so accustomed to the dominance of the Association's women players that these men balked at any hint that one of their amateur champions might consider playing tennis for money on a professional tour. Since Suzanne Lenglen and Mary K. Browne's 1926 tour, the only other women to play professionally were the Californian Alice Marble and the English champion Mary Hardwick, who joined Don Budge and Bill Tilden in the 1941 professional tour promoted by Jack Harris. Women players continued to play with their male professional peers in fundraising until after World War II, when those matches stopped. The excitement of matches on the road outside of the control of the USLTA inspired Betz and a handful of other women champions to consider playing some exhibition matches of their own outside the auspices of the Association. The USLTA leadership treated that curiosity as a

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<sup>44</sup> Patricia Yeomans, *Southern California Tennis Champions Centennial, 1887-1987: Documents & Anecdotes* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1987), 155; Dick Skeen, *Tennis Champions are Made*, 4; Budge Patty, *Tennis My Way* (Tiptree, Essex: Anchor Press, 1951), 21.

complete betrayal of the financial support they had given Betz and Sarah Palfrey Cooke during their prewar amateur careers. Those same male directors thus helped to make Betz's and Cooke's decision to turn professional for the women when they suspended the champions' amateur status. Shortly thereafter Betz and Cooke announced they would play a professional tour in the summer of 1947 with the former player and Cooke's husband Elwood Cooke managing their tour. For the first time, women had a professional tour of their own.<sup>45</sup>

Betz and Sarah Palfrey Cooke played the first professional match of their tour in front of 1,500 fans in Los Angeles on July 8, 1947, following a signing ceremony at the Beverley Wilshire Hotel. Their opener certainly showcased the fine playing ability of both players, but spectators noted the contest more of a splendid spectacle than a serious contest because in addition to the singles match, Cooke paired with the actor Mickey Rooney and Betz partnered with the fine tennis player and coach Carl Earn for a mixed doubles match. Over the coming months the two women played match after match from the West Coast, to the Midwest, and on to the Atlantic Coast with crowds that averaged 1,000 spectators. Betz beat Cooke most of the time, but the matches remained competitive and the competitors remained on good terms throughout. Finishing their tour in New York City, Betz and Cooke then traveled with Bobby Riggs and Don Budge to Europe for matches in England, France, Belgium, and Switzerland.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Alice Marble, "Tennis Has Room for Both Amateur and Pro Games," *American Lawn Tennis* 41, no. 2 (June 15, 1947): 8; Jack Miller, "Net Queens Abdicate," *American Lawn Tennis* 41, no. 2 (June 15, 1947): 6-7; Mary Hardwick, "Pauline's Exodus Leaves Gap in Women's Racket Ranks," *American Lawn Tennis* 41, no. 2 (June 15, 1947): 8-9; "Tentative Schedule Drawn for Betz-Cooke Tour," *American Lawn Tennis* 41, no. 2 (June 15, 1947): 9; Sarah Palfrey Danzig Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, RI; David Lardner, "Thirty Years War," *The New Yorker*, July 15, 1944, p. 65.

<sup>46</sup> "New Pros Debut," *American Lawn Tennis* 41, no. 4 (July 15, 1947): 43; "Sarah Cooke Enjoys Pro Tour," *American Lawn Tennis: Weekly Supplement* 1, no. 5 (July 15, 1947): 2; Roy Miller, "Among the Pros," *American Lawn Tennis* 41, no. 3 (July 1, 1947): 28-29.

Cooke was forty and too old to tour again when Kramer approached the women professionals about joining his 1951 tour. Betz and Moran were not only in shape; they were physically attractive as well. Neither woman was a stranger to the sexualized gaze of onlookers. Moran had embraced that attention with her sartorial selections while *Life* magazine's coverage of the 1946 United States Women's Singles Championship featured that year's winner Betz flat on the ground with a gaze looking up the back of her legs to her rear-end. The interest of arousal proved fleeting for many fans, however, as Betz bested Moran night after night on the court. The one-sidedness of the tour grew so bad that Kramer and Riggs each approached Betz about withdrawing from the remainder of their matches because people decided to forgo attending if they could guess the outcome ahead of time. In trying to force Betz out and then offering to buy her a car as a *quid pro quo* for her withdrawal from the tour, both Riggs and Kramer earned themselves reputations for sexism that continued to cling with them throughout their later careers. At the same time, though, the financial failure of the 1951 Professional Tour showed that sex and sport worked together only if the sex did not substitute for the sport. The competitiveness of the players mattered a great deal too given the format of the 1950s professional tennis tour where the same two people played one another night after night.<sup>47</sup>

The basic logistics of the professional tour posed another big problem to the sports promoter. Small and medium towns had few venues suitable to hold a tennis match where enough spectators could attend to make a decent gate and also provided enough lines of sight so

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<sup>47</sup> Bobby Riggs Presents World Championship Tennis Tour, 1950-1951 tour program, Professional Tennis Tour Program Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; "Forest Hills Crowds See National Tennis Upsets," *Life*, September 23, 1946, p. 92; Kramer and Deford, *The Game*, 93-96.

that those spectators would not howl in protest over paying so much for so little viewable action. The ambitious schedule World Tennis Inc. maintained made rain an ever-present fear in the promoter's mind, which in turn led Kramer to favor indoor over outdoor venues. The players might have despised playing on armory and gymnasium floors in front of a howling crowd that raised temperatures indoors to stifling temperatures, but they wanted to get paid.<sup>48</sup> Kramer tour veteran Barry McKay remarked, "I have played tennis in 42 countries throughout the world—traveled around the world five times and played in matches on every surface from burned clay courts in Moscow to dried-out cow dung in Hybrabad, India." In the adversity the barnstorming players faced daily lay one of the sport's greatest profit generators, because difficulty meant drama. Furthermore, the fact that difficulty played out in locations exotic to and far flung from the American viewing public meant that if television could be brought to lay the struggles of those players bare, then tennis stood a good chance of growing in the future as the world became more globally connected.<sup>49</sup> That same drama also cut the opposite direction from the players' point of view, and that different perspective helped to explain why so few chose to join the professional tour during the fifties.

Professional prospects gave a number of other reasons why they often chose to remain amateurs. They cited the physical and emotional toll of a barnstorming tour. For example, player turned promoter Bobby Riggs courted Richard Savitt in 1951 in the midst of Savitt's remarkable season. Winning the Australian and Wimbledon titles, Savitt seemed the heavy favorite to win the U.S Championship at Forest Hills and the heir apparent to replace Pancho Gonzales as the

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<sup>48</sup> Frank Sedgman Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

<sup>49</sup> Barry MacKay to Mark McCormack, March 11, 1967, Mack, Barry (1967), Television Tennis, Folder, Box M0705 (453), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

challenger to world professional champion Jack Kramer. Savitt's semi-final exit at Forest Hills made the picture of who was the best amateur player a little less clear, but also gave Riggs more flexibility in negotiating a better contract for the tour and a worse contract for the player because Savitt's domination in 1951 proved less sure. Without a truly sweet contract, Savitt had an easy time putting the thought of playing professional out of mind. Matches in armories and night after night on the road simply made for "a difficult life" from Savitt's perspective. But foregoing the professional circuit in no way meant that Savitt removed tennis from his life. Instead, he continued to play in the U.S. Championship for the next decade and even won the U.S. Indoor Singles Championship, all the while making a name for himself in financial services on Wall Street. Savitt simply thought professional tennis in the fifties a bad investment.<sup>50</sup>

Amateurs did, however, admire and seek to emulate the independence from the USLTA professionals exercised even though most tennis players in the 1950s were unwilling to forgo the limited financial support and network of tournaments the Association provided. For example, in 1954, during the peak tennis tournament months of June through September, the USLTA's various sections sanctioned 300 tournaments across a few dozen categories that ranged from under-ten year-old players, to super-senior age divisions, and father-daughter events. The problem from the amateur player's point of view was not with the number or variety of tournaments but with how the tournaments were run. In an anonymous short story titled "The Rich Man's Game," the player-author, presumably Gardner Mulloy, lambasted a fictionalized sportswriter named Bob Considine who had written an article claiming that "big-time tennis was now monopolized by poor sandlotters and public parks players." Mulloy goes on to rebuff the

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<sup>50</sup> Richard Savitt Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, RI.

sportswriter by conjuring an Associated Press story that listed number one ranked player Gardnar Mullard (Gardnar Mulloy) as the seventh wealthiest person on the planet, tennis champion Smudge Patty (John “Budge” Patty) kept full households of servants at his American and European mansions, and top lady player Patricia Podd (Patricia Canning Todd) did not attend a tournament without a dozen luggage bags and her personal assistant. Given their ostentatious display of wealth, Mulloy observed, did organizers of events such as the Overhampton grasscourt tournament really expect a player who drove up to the match with his 1926 Rolls Royce and who played with six 24-carat gold racquets to sleep six players to a room in the club’s servant’s annex? Did the tournament organizer Harrison Pringle need to give the players their twenty-five dollars in expenses with such secrecy and beam with such pride when the tournament champion received a piece of used luggage as first prize? Did such a wealthy Long Island Club need to plan a special player menu of sardines and bread rather than the club’s normal turtle soup, foie gras, and soufflé? The satire was not subtle.<sup>51</sup>

Mulloy’s opinions rallied fellow players because his views were based on their actual experiences. At South Hampton, New York, for example, members of the Meadow Club literally put their player guests on army military personnel cots stacked side by side in a squash court. They served the players “special tennis meals” which was code for innutritious and cheap food rather than the normal delicacies enjoyed in the dining room. These slights aside, the biggest problem from the players’ point of view was that members treated the competitors “as if they were the performers solely for the enjoyment of the Meadow Club’s exclusive membership”

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<sup>51</sup> “1954 Schedule of Sanctioned Tournaments,” *World Tennis* 1, no. 1 (June 1953): 34-36; “The Rich Man’s Game,” *World Tennis* 1, no. 1 (June 1953): 20-21.

rather than invited guests who happened to play tennis very well. Worse still, players would sometimes show up for a tournament, often after having traveled across the country, only to find an event like the Narragansett tournament cancelled for inadequate organization on the part of the host club. At other times, the USLTA tried to over-manage the schedules of players without input from the participants. In the fall of 1953 the USLTA and the Australian Tennis Federation agreed to a quid pro qua whereby Australian players would attend the United States Championship at Forest Hills while American players would remain in Australia after the Davis Cup for the Australian Championships. When USLTA committee members told Davis Cup competitor Tony Trabert about the deal, he flatly refused to stay because he wanted to return stateside to his wife. Such treatment at event after event spurred amateur players to organize the game's first amateur player association in the summer of 1953.<sup>52</sup>

The "Tennis Players' League" made a public announcement in September 1953, that named the organization's nine specific goals. First, give the players a substantive voice on the important USLTA decision-making committees. Second, help create better press for the USLTA and the game of tennis. Third, aid tournament officials in securing players and bringing more money into tennis by running better tournaments through promotions and marketing. Fourth, coordinate the schedule of sanctioned tennis events to avoid tournament overlap. Fifth, convince tournament officials and association leaders to recognize what players brought to the game. Sixth, grow junior tennis, especially through player-run clinics. Seventh, promote public interest in tennis by bringing the rules of the game out of the late nineteenth century and into the postwar

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<sup>52</sup> Gardnar Mulloy, "Is Tennis Dying?," *World Tennis* 1, no. 3 (August 1953): 12; "Around the World," *World Tennis* 1, no. 3 (August 1953): 20; "Around the World," *World Tennis* 1, no. 5 (October, 1953): 32.

world. Eighth, assist in the building of new public courts and the opening of new tennis clubs. Finally, grow the financial resources of the game.<sup>53</sup>

The players chose Sidney Wood, Jr. to lead the League as president. They elected the outspoken Gardner Mulloy vice-president, with Grant Golden serving as secretary-treasurer. Vic Seixas, Art Larsen, Chauncey Steele, Billy Talbert, Don McNeill, and Tony Trabert also served on the league's first executive committee, which meant that the lion's share of the top ranking amateur men's players in the country participated in the League. Such solidarity gave the USLTA President Colonel Bishop little choice but to work with the players toward the mutual purpose of growing amateur tennis.<sup>54</sup>

Wood and his fellow amateur players certainly had statistics and anecdotal evidence on their side to show that the growth of the amateur game had not been well served by the USLTA Executive Committee since the thirties. In 1935, United States sports goods companies sold 6,250,464 tennis balls and 537,002 tennis racquets. By 1952 those numbers fell to 5,070,288 and 382,600—respective declines of 18.8 percent and 28.6 percent, even as the United States population as a whole rose 11 percent from 138,439,069 to 154,233,234. In the early thirties major grass court tournaments took place at Wilmington, Delaware; Seabright, New Jersey; Orange, New Jersey; Newport, Rhode Island; Staten Island, New York; Rye, New York; Boston, Massachusetts; Narragansett, Rhode Island; Providence, Rhode Island; Germantown, Pennsylvania; Merion, Pennsylvania; Southampton, New York; Glen Cove, New York; Piping Rock, New York; and Forest Hills, New York. Two decades later, the only substantive lawn

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<sup>53</sup> Sidney B. Wood, Jr., "The Tennis Players' League," *World Tennis* 1, no. 4 (September 1953): 34.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*



tennis tournaments that remained were the Eastern Championships played at Orange Lawn Tennis Club, the Merion Cricket Club tournament, the Newport Invitational at the Newport Casino, the United States Doubles Championship contested at Longwood Cricket Club, the National Championships at Forest Hills, and two new but smaller tournaments at the Nassau Country Club and across greater Baltimore. European tournaments attracted much greater crowds than American tournaments, and “in Australia,” one American player noted, “more people watch members of our Davis Cup team practice than attend any tournament final or Davis Cup match in the United States!”<sup>55</sup>

Yet in certain respects the game had actually grown in the United States because of the recreational revolution of the late thirties and early forties. By 1950 thousands more people played the game competitively than ever before, which was due largely to the proliferation of public courts built during the Great Depression. While elite East Coast lawn tennis tournaments suffered and came to occupy only four weeks on the USLTA’s national tennis calendar, tournaments in the South, Midwest, and Pacific Northwest boomed along with the long popular Southern California amateur circuit. Initiative to grow the amateur game seemed to come from everywhere except from the USLTA’s national office. In July of 1953 American sportswriters contacted the USLTA in Manhattan to ask for an interview and some photographs with recent Wimbledon Champion Vic Seixas upon his arrival back in the United States. The USLTA had no idea when Seixas would arrive despite their insistence to the players that they manage all aspects of United States tennis abroad. That paternalism in thought but not in practice contrasted sharply

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<sup>55</sup> Wood, Jr., “The Case for the Tennis Players’ League,” 8; Gardner Mulloy, “Is Tennis Dying?,” *World Tennis* 1, no. 3 (August 1953): 12.

with golf—the game to which sportswriters most often equated tennis. The Professional Golfers' Association and the United States Golf Association were only too happy to help the mayor of New York City coordinate a ticker-tape parade along Broadway for golfer Ben Hogan upon his return stateside after having won the British Open. So the blame for the parts of the tennis that had declined lay not with larger social forces but with the passive mismanagement of the USLTA national officers, or so the players argued.<sup>56</sup>

In selecting Wood to lead them, amateur tennis players picked a capable spokesperson for their interests. Wood established himself as an amateur player consistently ranked in the top ten in the nation during the 1930s and 1940; however, he never ranked in the top three, and therefore a career change to professional tennis made no financial sense. Wood also realized that simply accepting the expense payments provided by the USLTA would never give him a stable or satisfactory income. He solved this problem by partnering with professional tennis player Don Budge to establish one of the first celebrity athlete-owned and -operated businesses in America in 1940. The Budge-Wood service pressed the laundry, waxed the floors, washed the windows, and shampooed the carpets of New Yorkers on Manhattan's East Side. Headquartered at 306 East 61st Street, by 1953 Budge-Wood Services employed 350 people who serviced clients in Manhattan, Long Island, Westchester, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. Wood then plowed some of this money into a non-profit tennis club called Town Tennis Club built on the site of a former brewery at Sutton Place, sandwiched between 55<sup>th</sup> and 56th Streets. The tennis champion and dry-cleaner kept clean from the stains of professionalism by refusing to accept any money

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<sup>56</sup> Sidney B. Wood, Jr., "The Case for the Tennis Players' League," *World Tennis* 1, no. 5 (October 1953): 8; Mulloy, "Is Tennis Dying?" 12.

directly from this sporting venture, and by using all monies collected from member fees to subsidize player development for competitive juniors. He also ran a public relations business with connections throughout the New York City sports media. That combination led one sportswriter to remark that along with Jack Kramer, “Sidney is tennis’s foremost business man.”<sup>57</sup>

To a degree not seen before from a player turned promoter, Wood succeeded in softening the hardest edges of the tennis establishment by appealing to USLTA officials’ vanity about their own importance. He cajoled players, both amateurs and professionals, to play against each other in exhibitions specifically for USLTA national and sectional officers. At a 1953 event hosted by his Town Tennis Club, Wood convinced mayor-elect Robert Wagner along with many of New York City’s first families—the Chryslers, Vanderbilts, Coreys, and Fairchilds—to watch a match between Don Budge, Bobby Riggs, Don McNeill, and Gardnar Mulloy with the far less prominent USLTA officials who all enjoyed an over-the-top champagne brunch. Special treatment dampened association officers’ opposition to Wood’s proposal for a nationally televised thirty-five-week round robin tournament played at Wood’s Town Tennis Club and complete with corporate sponsorship, Monday evening television coverage by WPIX for thirty-five weeks, and publicity by Wood himself. Play week after week meant amateur players drew their maximum association expenses of \$15 a day on a much more regular basis than the current tournament schedule allowed for—a fact seemingly lost on the notoriously tight-fisted USLTA, who at the same meeting voted down a player expense increase per play day from \$15 to \$20.

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<sup>57</sup> Ray Robinson, “Sidney Wood: Tennis Tycoon,” *World Tennis* 1, no. 6 (November 1953): 10-11.

The players' spokesmen had figured out a basic rule of influence: make people feel important and they will go so far as to act against their own financial self-interest and embrace impractical schemes such as a nine-month revolving tennis tournament.<sup>58</sup>

Actually running a successful tennis event was another matter entirely, and Wood did not prove up to the task. On Monday, April 26, 1954, WPIX crews ripped out a fence behind the show-court at the Town Tennis Club in order to secure line-of-sight positions for their television cameras. They brought in special 24,000-watt lights strung atop twenty-four-foot poles that required power cable connections that ran to the top of a nineteen-story building next door. Logistics aside, WPIX producers had a fundamentally different view of what they were televising from Wood and his players. The Tennis Players' League, USLTA officials, and Wood all wanted the broadcast of "a sports event," while the network wanted to air "a TV show." That difference of opinion contributed to the poor reception television viewers gave the match between the biggest stars of amateur tennis—Tony Trabert, Vic Seixas, Gardnar Mulloy, and Ham Richardson. Wood wooed the USLTA board members to provide the match with linesmen, umpires, and ball-boys by once again providing gratis food and beverages along with a spate of celebrities that included Gene Tunney, Lana Turner, and Igor Cassini. About twice as many guests as were invited turned up for dinner and the open bar—an overflow that pushed back the start time of the match. So much reliance on celebrity service bulletins and publicity from

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<sup>58</sup> "Around the World," *World Tennis* 1, no. 7 (December 1953): 30; Gardnar Mulloy, "USLTA Annual Meeting," *World Tennis* 1, no. 9 (February 1954): 10-14; Sidney Wood, "A TV National Round Robin," *World Tennis* 1, no. 9 (February 1954): 34.

Charlie Einfeld and Martin Michel at 20th Century Studios led Wood and his team to overlook the basics of running a tennis event.<sup>59</sup>

Disorganization reigned with play set to begin. The players did not even have tennis balls with them on the court for the start of the match. Lights make the tennis ball hard to see from the players' perspective, and photographers' flashbulbs further handicapped the players, who put on less than a stellar performance. Eighty letters from viewers found their way to Wood—a full quarter of which complained of the poor event and the larger problem of having turned topflight tennis into a “circus.” Those epistles, not openly hostile to the round robin event, offered suggestion after suggestion to improve the experience. To his credit, Wood tried to put some of these suggestions into practice, such as adjusting the position of the cameras so the entire tennis court fell into the field of view rather than showing only one player at a time. But changes like limiting celebrities' time on camera in favor of keeping the action on tennis did little to solve the fundamental problem with the venture. The round robin simply demanded too much from America's top amateur players in terms of time away from crucial tournaments in Europe during the late spring and early summer. Without financial remuneration, how could Wood expect the players he supposedly represented to block out substantial parts of their schedules so that he could earn a commission from television networks for promoting a tennis event hosted at his club? Sportswriter Jim Burchard of the *World Telegram* panned the event; his opinion was shared by the sliver of viewers who watched the match and the few players themselves who participated. USLTA officials, their fascination with television and their susceptibility to

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<sup>59</sup> Sidney Wood, “S-S-S-Sh, We’re on the Air,” *World Tennis* 2, no. 1 (June 1954): 24-26; Bill Rockwell to Sidney Wood, Jr., “A Letter to Sidney,” *World Tennis* 1, no. 5 (October 1953): 8.

selective flattery aside, likewise felt underserved by the event and by Wood.<sup>60</sup> Jack Kramer's position outside of the amateur association as the head of the professional tour put him in a much better place to take advantage of the changed economic outlook for sports in the fifties that television had made possible.

Society-wide changes in the postwar period that moved entertainments squarely from the public sphere to squarely inside the home had by the early 1950s brought on what one historian has called "The Great Sports Slump of the 1950s." Between 1947 and 1949, Americans spent about \$282 million per year on attendance at sporting events. Over the next decade, that yearly number fell thirty million to \$252 million dollars. Every spectator sport suffered at the same time that the economy hummed along and consumer spending boomed. Along with where they spent their money and what they spent their money on, who spent the money mattered in the fifties. Women exercised increased control over their household incomes, and tasked with raising the largest generation, up to that point, of children in American history, it comes as no surprise their spending focused on the home. The role of women as primary household consumers became so total by the early 1950s that even when men did spend money on entertainments outside the home, be it movies, concerts, and especially spectator sports that they previously had attended exclusively with male friends, these men now bought a ticket for themselves and a ticket for their wives. Given the long popularity of tennis with women compared to baseball, football, and

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.; Ibid.

boxing, tennis fared proportionally better than the major team sports and prizefighting, whose spectatorship slumped during the fifties.<sup>61</sup>

The rise of television in the home also impacted attendance at sporting events. Home-viewership did not, however, toll the death bell for many spectator sports as quickly or as loudly as commonly assumed. Television ownership rose from four million Americans in 1950 to 75 percent of all families by 1956. Families in the United States by the middle of the fifties watched television about five hours per day. At the same time, the popularity of sports programming fell from the high water mark in the late 1940s and early 1950s when teams and sports ranging from the Chicago Cubs and championship prizefighting had sold their broadcast rights to television networks on the cheap, or for nothing at all, because the sports executives believed television boosted their gate sales. Once the novelty wore off, television viewers quickly realized that some of the fun of attending a wrestling match or the incredibly popular roller derbies of the late forties and early fifties did not translate well into the family room. The technical limitations of the standard camera at the time, popularly known as “Doctor Cyclops,” also limited the angles of the action to a degree that the quick and oftentimes decentralized movement of team sports proved too complicated to capture for home viewership. Networks compensated for these shortcomings by doubling-down on producing quality programs in other areas, such as comedy, drama, and gameshows that most families spent more time watching in the fifties than sports shows.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Benjamin Rader, *In Its Own Image: How Television Has Transformed Sports* (New York: The Free Press, 1984), 33-35.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-38.

Whereas football had proven troublesome to televise, tennis had long been made into a camera-friendly sport. The reality of airing a tennis match nonetheless posed a real challenge for broadcasters. Editors could add sound-effects and commentary later, but cameramen had difficulty keeping the ball and players in frame, especially as the speed at which the top professionals increased. The predictability of the serve-and-volley game helped cameramen pan their cameras immediately up following the serve and frequent charge to the frontcourt, but the different environments in which the matches took place—stadium one afternoon, armory that evening, gymnasium the next—meant that without the purchase and set-up of dark matting along the back and sides of the court, players' white outfits, not to mention the white tennis balls, would appear vaguely on screen if they showed up at all. But they did show up with great regularity during the intermission of double features, where tennis newsreels brought far-away and posh tournaments into the movie palaces popular with the less well-to-do. The focused drama of two competitors, one rectangular court, and one ball meant that one camera rather than a troupe of operators could cover a match. The major newsreel series, *The March of Time*, *Pathé News*, *Paramount News*, *Fox Movietone News*, *Hearst Metrotone News*, and *Universal Newsreel* all recapped tennis tournaments and ties with dramatic commentary and cheesy tennis shot sounds. The rapid rise in television ownership and viewership in the late 1950s and early 1960s ended those sports newsreels. Television sports programming grew worldwide, as was the case in Australia in 1962 when producers shot thirteen 30-minute television shows of professional tennis in Sydney and planned another thirteen episodes in Melbourne. The next year the Riviera Tennis Club in Los Angeles taped matches of Kramer's players and aired those matches on KTTV and other California networks in 1963 and 1964. In 1965 CBS Sports further abbreviated



a tennis tournament by interspersing one-hour matches with bowling shows as the popularity of that sport rose steadily in the mid-1960s.<sup>63</sup>

Jack Kramer's tour took partnership between competitive tennis and television to a new level by separating production from the amateur tennis associations and their tightly controlled tournament venues. Without set tournament homes such as Forest Hills, Wimbledon, or Roland Garros, the more peripatetic professional tour could attach itself to venues whose owners and operators seemed amenable to sharing revenues generated by televised coverage of the tennis. Kramer's abbreviated round-robin match format between just four players made for a night of interesting television without locking the network into paying a steep price to secure two weeks of tennis tournament coverage where they were likely to use only a small fraction of what they had paid for.<sup>64</sup>

The players embraced television. Kramer secured short-term broadcast contracts that stipulated cameras would not adversely affect play by being poorly placed around the court. With television, Kramer and troupe expected a positive impact on their pocketbooks. They did not do as well as they hoped. At the cusp of the Open Era in 1968, tennis remained, in the words of former tennis champion turned longtime broadcaster Barry MacKay, "wide open as far as television goes." It took the next generation of sports managers to create multi-year contracts worth multi-million dollars, but by getting media outlets such as the BBC to agree to televise

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<sup>63</sup> Donald Dell, *Minding Other People's Business: Winning Big for Your Clients and Yourself* (New York: Villard Books, 1989), 205; Barry MacKay to Mark McCormack, March 11, 1967, Mack, Barry (1967), Television Tennis, Folder, Box M0705 (453), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

<sup>64</sup> Barry MacKay to Mark McCormack, March 11, 1967, Mack, Barry (1967), Television Tennis, Folder, Box M0705 (453), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

dramatic tennis matches at London's Wembley Stadium, for example, Kramer's barnstorming tennis tour demonstrated to sports promoters and marketers the realizable future, especially after 1968, when the problems between professionals and amateurs became less apparent.<sup>65</sup>

A great number of problems remained, though, with the sport of tennis and the place of the professional player in that sport prior to 1968. The Australian champion Frank Sedgman, who toured with the Kramer troupe beginning in 1953, captured the essence of the professional tennis tour in the fifties and sixties when he said: "With professional tennis in those days, you'd just have to get out there and play, and not complain about it, because you were there to make a buck. And you had to put on a good show."<sup>66</sup> But a good show in the fifties was a heavy burden to carry. On no one's shoulders did that burden fall more heavily than on the longtime World's Professional Champion Richard "Pancho" Gonzales.

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Frank Sedgman Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE METEORIC RISE OF THE KID FROM THE “WRONG SIDE OF THE TRACKS”

Tennis-professional-turned-sports-instructor Dick Skeen liked to say, “tennis players are not born—they are made!” In the mid-twentieth century, Skeen taught more top-level tennis players in America than any other coach. He knew how to make winners. At the end of his teaching career, he published his accumulated wisdom on technique, tactics, and strategy that drew on his forty-five years in tennis, his time on court with the game’s top amateurs and professionals, and his training of more than forty United States national champions.<sup>1</sup>

Skeen’s major insight was that proper training along with mental toughness could overcome athletic deficiencies and make any junior into a player capable of playing at a level high enough to earn a university athletic scholarship. With the right serve, groundstrokes, footwork, net play, and service returns, along with a set of goals, Skeen contended, any player, after a decade of practice and competition, could excel as a tournament player. In emphasizing the proper technique of stroke production and competitive fortitude, Skeen spoke well from the experience of a proven coach; however, in his assertion that the where and the with what one was “born” did not matter in their future prospects in competitive sports, he missed the large impact that class conflict and ethnic antagonism had on the everyday lives and future prospects of professional athletes in America during the mid-twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> In tennis—a sport highly

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<sup>1</sup> Skeen, *Tennis Champions are Made*, 4-5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5, 15, 19-21, 27-32, 33-35, 41, 45-46, 49, 53, 57.

steeped in class conservatism, racial exclusion, and traditional amateurism—those tensions proved particularly acute until the most unlikely of figures pivoted between amateur tennis with limited professionalism and professional tennis without real amateurism. Professionals were on the outside of tennis before open competition began in 1968. Outsiders thus found something attractive in joining the professional tour.

Richard “Pancho” Gonzales was born in Los Angeles and grew up on a tennis court that could not have differed more from the posh private clubs popping up along the West Coast, where most of Skeen’s students originated. The hustling world of the public parks and the streets were a far cry from the clubhouses and manicured lawn courts of Philadelphia, Boston, and New York City. The personal refinement and self-control with which the game instilled amateurs—according to International Lawn Tennis Federation and United States Lawn Tennis Officials—did not stop the adolescent Gonzales from running afoul of the law. His life of struggle on the streets almost ended his tennis career before it began. The game he learned to play in the public parks resembled the sport played by East Coast elites and the Country Club caste in name only. The circuitous path he followed to become the U.S. amateur champion was part of a broader renegotiation and disintegration of a half-century of sports tradition devoted to amateurism. In tennis it took Gonzales, someone from what tennis officials called “the wrong side of the tracks,” to make that accommodation happen. But even among a band of outsiders, Pancho lived his life on the outside.<sup>3</sup>

The first tracks Gonzales’s story crossed was the southwest border of the United States and the century-long struggle in Mexico. Beginning in December of 1808 with the Valladolid

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<sup>3</sup> Oscar Frailey, “Young Mexican Wins National Net Title,” *Amarillo Globe*, September 30, 1948, p. 30.

conspiracy and the Hidalgo Rebellion of the following year and a half, a succession of rebellions had culminated in a self-government with a constitution in 1824, only to see years of struggle devolve into near constant internal strife and frequent invasions from outside nations until the 1880s finally ushered in modest political solidity. Over the following thirty years, cracks grew wide enough to plunge the country into a deep chasm of revolutionary violence that came to be called the Mexican Revolution. For roughly twenty years following the start of the Mexican Revolution in 1910, Mexicans emigrated from their country's northern states by the hundreds of thousands. They settled throughout the American Southwest and remade the social fabric of this region. Traveling as individuals and as families, the climate, kinship networks, and opportunities for agricultural work pulled many migrants to the fertile valleys of Southern California. As more and more immigrants arrived, in the analysis of the leading historian of the topic, a burgeoning Latino "subculture" developed in and around the growing metropolis of Los Angeles.<sup>4</sup> Gonzales's parents, Manuel and Carmen, made just such a journey to Los Angeles in the early twenties.

Unlike Manuel, who lived near subsistence before walking to Arizona, Carmen Esperanza came from the wealthy Alire family, whose numerous land holdings surrounded their home in the city of Chihuahua. Property ownership made the Alires targets for attacks similar to those reported by American coffee plantation owner Charles F. Simon. Armed resistance fighters raided different estates, seizing cash, documents, and deeds with the intent to muddle legal

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<sup>4</sup> Timothy Henderson, *The Mexican Wars for Independence* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2009), 51, 74-75, 106-7, 134-5, 172-180, 214-21; George Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 6.

possession of lands.<sup>5</sup> Under this climate of concern, Carmen's father entrusted his property records to a nephew and moved to El Paso with his wife and daughters. A short time later, unwilling to return home but unsatisfied with her life in rural Arizona, Carmen moved independently to Los Angeles. There she met Manuel Gonzales, whose own journey from Mexico was equally harrowing. Escaping the influenza outbreak of 1918, the nine-year-old Manuel walked barefooted with an uncle from Durango to the mining town of Globe, Arizona. After staying a short while with family in Globe, Manuel moved during the late 1920s to Los Angeles—a city whose Latino population had increased from roughly 4,000 persons in 1900 to nearly 150,000 at the start of the Great Depression.<sup>6</sup>

Manuel and Carmen spent their first year in Southland together living in an ethnically-mixed neighborhood at 1268 East 58th Street. There they welcomed their first-born son, Richard, into the world on May 9, 1928. A “Depression Kid,” as he would write years later, both his parents' difficulty in finding work and the family's peripatetic search for housing outside of the Mexican *barrios* of East and South-Central Los Angeles marked Richard's first years. Carmen worked as a seamstress, for a company and from home, because outwork was often the only option for Mexican women recently arrived in Southern California. Skilled as a carpenter, Manuel tried to find stable employment with mixed success. Much of his work consisted of

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<sup>5</sup> “Memorial of Charles F. Simon in Support of His Claim against the Republic of Mexico,” in United States Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Investigation of Mexican Affairs* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1920), vol. 2, pp. 3294-95.

<sup>6</sup> Greg Gonzales, oral history interview conducted by author October 12-13, 2012, in author's possession, hereafter abbreviated GGOH; Caroline Seebom, *Little Pancho: The Life of Tennis Legend Pancho Segura* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 62-63; Vicki Ruiz, “Star Struck: Acculturation, Adolescence, and the Mexican American Woman, 1920-1950,” in Adela de la Torre and Beatriz Pesquer, eds., *Building with Our Hands: New Direction in Chicana Studies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 109-29.

painting and assisting in the construction of movie sets. With upwards of 90 percent of Latinos in Los Angeles doing some form of blue-collar work, the Southern California film industry had a rich pool of skilled but easily marginalized workers to draw upon. Movie studios began relocating from New York City to Southland in the 1910s because executives believed Southern California offered better climates in terms of both sunshine and weaker labor unions. Those moves meant jobs but only manual work for Latinos living in Los Angeles. Between 1,000 and 3,000 workers plied 275 unique skills in order to create a movie. Manuel supported his family in this way. Even when he held a job on set, Manuel still had much to fear. As with any other industry, Hollywood suffered the effects of the Great Depression. In the spring of 1933, cinema producers slashed workers' wages by 50 percent and cut back on the production of big budget films. At the same time, Hollywood studios turned over six out of every ten members of the Actors Guild annually. Manual laborers like Manuel Gonzales fared even worse. Manuel and men like him, mostly below 35 years of age, found themselves scrounging for work in 1933 and 1934.<sup>7</sup>

New migrants to Southern California from Oklahoma and the Midwest further pressured employers for jobs previously held by Mexican workers. Under these conditions Washington partnered with both local governments and the Mexican government to return Mexican immigrants to their country of origin. The contrived repatriation of Mexicans during the thirties

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<sup>7</sup> Year: 1930; Census Place: Los Angeles, California; Roll: 145; Page: 7B; Enumeration District: 318; Image: 265.0; FHL microfilm: 2339880, Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*; Gonzales, *Man with a Racket*, 32; Dave Lewis, "Once Over Lightly," *Long Beach Independent*, February 14, 1948, p. 17-18; Charles Ramírez Berg, "Colonialism and Movies in Southern California, 1910-1934," *Aztlán* 28, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 83-84; *Federal Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration, Los Angeles in the 1930s: WPA Guide to the City of Angels* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 78-79; "Cinema: New Deal in Hollywood," *Time*, May 1, 1933 [www.time.com](http://www.time.com) (accessed December 1, 2012); Larry May, *The Big Tomorrow: Hollywood and the Politics of the American Way* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 183.

forced tens of thousands of families to leave America, while thousands more voluntarily returned to Mexico. In all, around one-fifth of the total Mexican-American population went back to Mexico during the first half of the Depression. Making just such a journey, Manuel led his family back to Chihuahua in the early thirties. Expecting some Alire wealth to still be intact, the Gonzales family instead found the state's economy drained both by the earlier depopulation of northern Mexico and the infighting among those who remained. Leaving his daughter Margaret to live with an aunt in the city, Manuel, Carmen, and their five other children returned to Los Angeles in late 1934.<sup>8</sup>

By 1935 the Gonzales family had settled a mile north and a mile west of their previous home in South-Central Los Angeles. Living on the corner of East 43rd Street and San Pedro Avenue placed young Richard in the shadow of Wrigley Field—a proximity that mattered to the young boy. A racially mixed community with no one group dominating, around 75,000 people lived in the neighborhood, with a slightly higher than average elderly population for Southern California. Monthly rents hovered around \$25, and the Gonzales family lived with neighbors who, like themselves, earned a below average income and enjoyed below average social services compared to the city of Los Angeles as a whole. Manuel disciplined his children with a heavy hand, and as the oldest boy, Richard tested his father's limits more often than did his siblings. After turning seven, Richard spent more and more time on the street roughhousing with the neighborhood kids. On more than one occasion he returned home having bloodied another boy or

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<sup>8</sup> Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 72-75; Greg Gonzales Oral History Interview, Author's Collection.



having been scraped up himself. Manuel regularly struck Richard for misbehaving and, on several occasions, hung the boy by his thumbs in their garage.<sup>9</sup>

Carmen pursued a gentler tack with the strong-willed Richard. She encouraged him to pursue wholesome play rather than meting out punishments for bad behavior. A longtime admirer of the sport of tennis as played by the wealthy in Mexico, Carmen bought Richard a hardware store racquet as a Christmas gift. Richard hit the ball against the garage doors for the first half a year until a trip to the movies opened the youth's eyes to the world-class play of Britain's Fred Perry—an amateur champion turned touring professional who at that time made his home in Southern California. Walking out of the theatre, Richard told his mother, "I'm going to be just like him." An avid marbles player, Richard regularly journeyed a mile north and half a mile west of his home to Exposition Park for games and the National Marbles Championship. Starting in 1935, the grounds surrounding the Memorial Coliseum and which had been the site of the 1932 Olympics would be where Gonzales learned the game of tennis. While tennis was not an Olympic Sport in the 1932 Games, the facility master plan had called for courts on the southeast side of the park<sup>10</sup>

Reformers and social workers in Los Angeles County combined the "amateur ideal" of the Olympic Games with their own aims of producing "sound character" in otherwise delinquent

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<sup>9</sup> Year: 1940; Census Place: Los Angeles, California; Roll: T627\_413; Page 4B; Enumeration District: 60-448, Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*; Roy Sorenson, et al., *Recreation for Everybody: A Community Plan for Creation and Youth Service for Los Angeles*, vol. 2 (Los Angeles: Welfare Council of Metropolitan Los Angeles, 1946), 92-93; Pancho Gonzales Interview, ITHF, hereafter abbreviated PGOH, ITHF.

<sup>10</sup> PGOH, ITHF; Gonzales, *Man With a Racket*, 35, 43-44; Rita Agassi Gonzalez, "The Power and the Fury: The Childhood that Produced the Great Pancho Gonzalez," *World Tennis*, September 1987, pp. 24-7, 75, 77; Dave Lewis, "Once Over Lightly," *Long Beach Independent*, February 14, 1948, pp. 17-18; *The Official Report of the Xth Olympiad, Los Angeles*, 60, 64, 78-79, 106, 149, 777.

children to the “supervised recreational activities” the city’s Parks and Recreation Department sponsored. Officials classed recreational sites in different ways, but they long maintained schoolyards as the best place to promote “citizenship” in America’s youth through the constitutive development of both body and mind. Building on the Civic Center Act passed by the California government in 1913, the representatives passed legislation supporting the efforts of schools to extend recreational opportunities past school hours. The City did their part by floating bonds to pay for new parks, most notably a \$12 million bond in 1947.<sup>11</sup> Despite comparatively well-funded efforts, a real challenge existed in providing the Los Angeles metropolitan area with adequate recreation space. A burgeoning population, the largest and most decentralized metropolitan area by square mileage in the country, and the great diversity of social class and race in Southland gave urban planners—charged by the Los Angeles Community Welfare Federation—plenty of work in recommending recreational changes that took into account the metropolis’s boom during the World War II.<sup>12</sup>

The reason city planners and municipal reformers approached play with such seriousness had a lot to do with the youth delinquency crises that swept the nation at the same time. Since the Depression, federal officials had warned against the vulnerability of young people to fall into misbehavior at an early age, only to descend further down the criminal ranks each passing year. Social workers linked juvenile crime to parental irresponsibility. They also considered “misdirected leisure” a root cause, with the personal and group responsibility taught by

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<sup>11</sup> “An Evaluation of the Survey of the Over-All Plan of Recreation in Los Angeles County: With Recommendation for Future Planning in Program Content and Facility Needs,” Report (Los Angeles: Metropolitan Recreation and Youth Services Council, 1952), 7, 10.

<sup>12</sup> Roy Sorenson, et al., *Recreation for Everybody*, 2-3

organized play as the cure to this youthful anomie. The tone of these reformers changed from concern to panic with the absence of fathers and male role models forced by the draft.<sup>13</sup> Right to identify a problem and try a non-punitive solution, the jeremiads missed the possibility that the presence of fathers and young men in uniform might cause trouble too.

In 1943 the infamous Zoot Suit riots made the racialized dimensions of youth delinquency impossible to ignore. The name of the riots came from the bold sartorial choice favored by young Mexican-American men in cities like Los Angeles. The generous cut of the suit and extra fabric needed to achieve the look created both a sense of danger by hiding the wearer from view while also making the wearer highly visible in a crowd. During the war, the zoot flaunted authority by consuming cloth otherwise usable in military uniforms.<sup>14</sup> The race of the wearers mattered all the more beginning in late 1942, when the United States and Mexican governments agreed to allow migrant laborers from Mexico to come north for work—primarily in the agricultural fields of Southern California. The Bracero Program reversed the decade-long policy of voluntary and forced repatriation, now welcoming Mexican workers on temporary

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<sup>13</sup> “A Renewed Emphasis on Our Major Task,” Program for 1943-1944, Folder 3, Box 1 LA County Coordinating Councils Records, 1930-48, California Social Welfare Archives, USC Special Collections; J. Edgar Hoover, “Juvenile—or Public—Delinquency?,” *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 19, 1937, p. J10; “Delinquency Blame Put on Adults,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 27, 1937, p. A5; Crete Cage, “City Recreation Declares Supervised Play Must be Public Concern,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 5, 1935; R.W. (Pat) Shepard, “Boys Kept From Crime,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 30, 1937, p. A5; “Four Main Causes Given for Youth Delinquency,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 2, 1945, p. A14; Myron E. Gurnea, “War Delinquency of Youth Serious Problem,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 18, 1947.

<sup>14</sup> “Findings and Recommendations of the Grand Jury of Los Angeles County for 1943,” Folder 3, Box 1 LA County Coordinating Councils Records, 1930-48, California Social Welfare Archives, USC Special Collections; “Portent of Storm,” *The Christian Century*, June 23, 1943, 735-6; “Pachuco Troubles,” *The Inter-American*, August 1943, p. 5-6; “Los Angeles’ Pachuco Gangs,” *The New Republic*, January 18, 1943; Carey McWilliams, “The Zoot-Suit Riots,” *The New Republic*, June 12, 1943, p. 818-820; John Reese, “Scoundrels Among the Angles,” *Westways*, June, 1956, p. 37-39; Thomas McCarthy, “Report from Los Angeles,” *Commonweal*, June 25, 1943, p. 234, 244. The fullest analysis of the zoot’s place in wartime political economy is Luis Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot: Youth Culture and Resistance during World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

contracts to meet both the need for laborers to fill the vacancies caused by the draft and the entirely new demands of increased wartime production. Within Los Angeles, an already vibrant Latino subculture received an influx of young men who worked hard during the day and looked to play hard when time allowed.<sup>15</sup>

The first flashpoint occurred on August 2, 1942 with the death of José Gallardo Diaz. Police arrested seventeen Mexican Americans, charging these young men with the murder of Diaz near a swimming hole popular with young minorities. The trial of the suspects in what came to be called the “Sleepy Lagoon” murder revealed the racial fears fomenting beneath the bucolic surface of Los Angeles’ unified war effort. The perceived criminal underworld connections between the youths charged with murder and Pachuco gangs particularly distressed the media and the public. A group that was difficult to characterize, generally Los Angeles’ Pachucos had origins in borderlands groups called Tirilis. These laborers stood outside of mainstream Mexican society by embracing vice and violence, as well as conspicuously marking their marginalization with tattoos and slang speech. Moving with other Mexicans to Southern California, these men morphed into Pachucos—the name for El Paso in the slang dialect they spoke.<sup>16</sup> While a very

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<sup>15</sup> Michael Snodgrass, “The Bracero Program, 1943-1964,” Mark Overmyer-Velásquez, ed., *Beyond the Border: The History of Mexican-U.S. Migration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 79-102; Manuel García y Griego, “The Importation of Mexican Contract Laborers to the United States, 1943-1964,” David G. Gutiérrez, ed., *Between Two Worlds: Mexican Immigrants in the United States* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1996), 45-85; Michael Snodgrass, “Patronage and Progress: The Bracero Program from the Perspective of Mexico,” Leon Fink, ed., *Workers Across the Americas: The Transnational Turn in Labor History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 245-66. The best book-length treatment of the Bracero Program is Deborah Cohen, *Braceros: Migrant Citizens and Transnational Subjects in the Postwar United States and Mexico* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

<sup>16</sup> Eduardo Obregón Pagán, *Murder at the Sleepy Lagoon: Zoot Suits, Race, and Riot in Wartime L.A.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 36-39. As Mauricio Mazón makes clear, the equation had more to do with a media construction than a lived reality. See Mauricio Mazón, *The Zoot-Suit Riots: The Psychology of Symbolic Annihilation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), 62, 80, 98.

small number of the city's roughly 300,000 Mexicans, some young men did form gangs who competed—mainly with each other—for spaces in barrios where racketeering and other criminal activity could flourish. To help control territory, the Pachucos' weapon of choice was the knife. Through the publicity of the trial, many came to believe that most Latino youths wore a zoot, wielded a switchblade, carried a scar, and threatened civic order.<sup>17</sup>

Los Angeles police reinforced the stigma by charging hundreds of innocent Mexican Americans—on occasion in a single night—with misdemeanors simply for appearing in public in a group of three or more. The arbitrariness of these actions in some cases emboldened young men to don the zoot and stride into public spaces. In June of 1943, white servicemen stationed and furloughed in Los Angeles decided any Mexican debouching their assigned place was targetable for attack. Beginning on the evening of June 4 and continuing the next three nights, nearly a thousand sailors and civilians stormed along Main Street and into the barrios near streetcar lines, accosting all zoot suiters and nearly any Mexican unfortunate enough to cross their path. The police responded by punishing the victims; as before, Mexican youths spent time in jail under charges of “vagrancy.”<sup>18</sup> In the midst of what Carey McWilliams called “the ‘Wolf-Pack’ Crusade,” many reformers thought providing minority youth with supervised spaces for recreation would be a way to protect these young people from outside aggression by placing

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<sup>17</sup> Again, the press and law enforcement officials grew this stereotype from a small basis in fact. See Pagán, *Murder at the Sleepy Lagoon*, 162.

<sup>18</sup> Tuck, “Behind the Zoot Suit Riots,” 313-6, 335-6.

them on a path that led to fuller citizenship rather than delinquency on the street.<sup>19</sup> For groups like the Los Angeles County Coordinating Council, the Zoot Suit riots made curbing juvenile delinquency the top national security priority.<sup>20</sup>

A survey of ten thousand youths conducted by the Coordinating Council of Los Angeles County formed the basis of renewed efforts in the wake of the Pachuco crisis to create spaces for safe recreation in 1944. More specifically, two thousand Los Angeles youths were asked to rank the types of games and activities they liked best. Out of a list of twenty potential activities, male respondents ranked tennis as the sixth most popular sport while female respondents ranked it second on the list of preferred recreational activities. Taking the survey results seriously, the Coordinating Council also talked back to their respondents using mass media. In the mid-forties, they hired a writer and partnered with the Columbia Broadcasting Company to produce thirteen radio dramas aimed at educating young people about the perils of youth delinquency.<sup>21</sup>

Other episodes were aimed more at adults. The plot of “The Community Goes into Action” explains how even formal recreational spaces such as school playgrounds can attract youth gangs without proper adult supervision. These “young sneak thieves” may appear to be “innocently playing marbles” when “they are actually utilizing the time to carefully plan the raids they intend to make that night.” Fortunately for all involved, the community rallied behind

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<sup>19</sup> Carey McWilliams, “Nervous Los Angeles,” *The Nation*, June 10, 1950, pp. 570-2; Roy Sorenson et al., *Recreation for Everybody*, 2-12.

<sup>20</sup> Robert A. McKibben, “A Renewed Emphasis on Our Major Task,” July 30, 1943, Folder 3, Box 1, LA County Coordinating Councils Records, 1930-48, California Social Welfare Archives, USC Special Collections, hereafter abbreviated Folder #, Box#, CCC.

<sup>21</sup> “Findings From the Questionnaire,” Folder 3, Box 1, CCC; Lucile E. Carnes to Mr. Beam, n.d., and “A Brief Synopses of A Series of Radio Drams Entitled ‘Problem Children’ by Frank H. Tobey,” Folder 3, Box 1, CCC.

the Coordinating Council fathers to quash the “delinquent atmosphere” with “closer supervision.” In this way, the airwaves worked with the very real problem of holding parents accountable for supervising and encouraging the healthy recreation of their children.<sup>22</sup>

The shortage of recreational spaces in Gonzales’s neighborhood compared to the citywide average was offset by the quality of supervised leisure Exposition Park afforded the community. However, it was unlikely that members of the Coordinating Council actually understood the type of tennis played there. Frank Poulain, a washed-up and ostracized professional, managed the tennis shop, and a ragtag assortment of players helped maintain the courts. African Americans, Mexicans, and even some cripples hung around the shop where betting on marbles and poker occurred near every day. The confidence games of the street played out on the hard concrete of the municipal tennis courts. Gonzales himself recalled trash talking and hustling. He also looked to the courts as a “sanctuary” from the truant officer. Without proper adult supervision, Exposition Park tennis fell far short of the transformative vision reformers had in mind when renewing the city’s recreational space.<sup>23</sup>

On the other hand, the park courts were truer to real life than the cloistered world of the private club. Bill Tilden’s generation of elite players originated in and thus remained somewhat ensconced in what was popularly called at the time the “country club set.” The clubs provided players with club professionals who were the only people who knew and could teach the proper

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<sup>22</sup> Lucile E. Carnes to Mr. Beam, n.d., and “A Brief Synopses of A Series of Radio Dramas Entitled ‘Problem Children’ by Frank H. Tobey,” Folder 3, Box 1, CCC; C. Lon Bowers, “Youth Guidance Unit: A Proposal,” Folder 3, Box 1, CCC.

<sup>23</sup> “Central Juvenile Index,” *Confidential Annual Report* for 1944, Folder 2, Box 1, CCC; Gonzales, *Man with a Racket*, 25-26, 36, 43; GGOH; PGOH, ITHF.

stroke mechanics and tactical patterns. The clubs were the likeliest places to secure the funds necessary to travel and compete in the growing number of tournaments. Most importantly, before the recreational revolution, the clubs were the only places to find tennis courts. This changed with the New Deal, which ushered in a new cohort of players centered in California. Ellsworth Vines, Gene Mako, Bobby Riggs, Gene Mako, and Pancho Gonzales, as their contemporary Don Budge recalled, “all came from the public parks.”<sup>24</sup>

After exhibiting promising results in the public parks, Gonzales and his generation of recreational revolution players might find some acceptance by USLTA authorities. That attention could mean financial support to improve one’s game. It certainly meant subjecting oneself to a great deal of paternalism not dissimilar to the control exercised by recreational reformers more broadly at the same time. As Executive Secretary and President of the Southern California Tennis Association, Perry T. Jones directed the warm-weather USLTA Western section’s evolution from a fine place to play to the epicenter of championship tennis. Born forty-five miles east of Los Angeles in Eltiwanda, California, on June 22, 1890, Jones was scarcely older than tennis in America and one of the first Californians to take up the game. His father, a bookkeeper, moved the family to San Bernardino by 1900, where Jones started playing tennis around the age of ten. During his teens and twenties, few tournaments existed west of the Mississippi River. A player but only a one-time champion—holding the Los Angeles Metropolitan singles title in 1918—Jones worked as a salesman and began officiating and promoting small tournaments

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<sup>24</sup> Don Budge Oral History, Oral History Collection, ITHF. On continuing controversy of amateurs seeking money, see “Mako Denies Taking Money for Exhibition,” *The Daily Iowan* (Iowa City), April 13, 1938, p. 3.



before directing the major Pacific Southwest Tournament during its inaugural year in 1924. That same year Jones secured the position of the Junior Development Chairmen for the SCTA.<sup>25</sup>

The responsibility of supervising training, setting up tournaments, and chaperoning juniors on away tournaments fell to Jones. He was tasked by the Los Angeles Tennis Club members making up the newly formed Tennis Patrons Association to develop both world-class tennis and the well-behaved juniors. Beyond his basic responsibility of helping boys hit better backhands, Jones emphasized proper social behavior in his interactions with Southern California's young tennis players. Jones himself was a bit of a dandy, usually sporting a bow tie, tinted glasses, and a double-breasted suit. He often took afternoon tea at the Club. The stress Jones placed on etiquette in his own life informed his efforts to refine his junior players both on and off the court. After returning from a tournament and a homestay, Jones always required his players to write thank-you notes to their host family. Likewise, if he could not travel with the players, he arranged a chaperon to make sure the youngsters used their silverware properly. For Jones, tennis was still an elite sport where manners and gentility mattered a great deal. He emphasized proper dress and "all white attire" on page one of his guide to junior tennis, linking confidence on the court to the right clothes, ethics, and sportsmanship.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Perry T. Jones Biographical File, Biographical Files Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Year: 1900; Census Place: San Bernardino Ward 2, San Bernardino, California; Roll: 97; Page: 9B; Enumeration District: 0225; FHL microfilm: 1240097; Year: 1920; Census Place: Los Angeles Assembly District 63, Los Angeles, California; Roll: T625\_106; Page: 98A; Enumeration District: 166; Image: 902. In the 1930 census he reported his occupation as a managing accountant and his industry as building and loans. See, Year: 1930; Census Place: Los Angeles, California; Roll: 134; Page: 4B; Enumeration District: 64; Image: 380.0; FHL microfilm: 2339869. In the 1940s Census Jones reported his occupation as the Southern California Tennis Association and his Industry as Sports. Year: 1940; Census Place: Los Angeles, California; Roll: T627\_405; Page: 62A; Enumeration District: 60-311; Baltzell, *Sporting Gentlemen*, 233.

<sup>26</sup>Jim Murray, "Last of the Victorians," *Los Angeles Times*, October 1, 1970, p. 20A; Yeomans, *Southern California Tennis Champions Centennial*, 67; Perry T. Jones, *Perry T. Jones Presents Fine Points of Tennis for Youth* (Union Oil Company of California, 1958), 1.

In considering the moral uplift of tennis, Jones was far from alone. The game's history bespoke a strong tradition of refinement and gentility designed to uplift the elite player above the suspect leisure pursuits of the middle and working class. Will Levington Comfort understood as much, opining in the *Los Angeles Times* that tennis served as the best antidote to temptations confronting youths between the "dangerous age" of twelve and seventeen. Moreover, Comfort pointed out the popularity of the game among the working class and the importance of growing the game on the public courts where the "less favored" boys could compete. Likewise, the Presbyterian Minister, College President, and USLTA Tennis Clinic Committee Chairman William Plumber Jacobs believed tennis to be the best sport for increasing the "moral stamina" of America's youth. Plumber thought tennis was not just for the well to do. He called on every city across America to provide public courts and instruction in a game that bred self-reliance, persistence, and wholesome competition. Plumber also saw the potential for "spiritual development" in the sportsmanship required to play the game. Echoing Teddy Roosevelt's call for a "Strenuous Life," Plumber argued that primarily as a game for the young and impressionable, tennis played a more important role in "citizenship building" than any other sport.<sup>27</sup> High minded to be sure, Plumber and Comfort failed to address the specific hurdles facing a working-class youth trying to become a competitive player.

Tennis's unique blend of mental and physical match-play fused the cerebral challenges of golf with the corporeal demands of one-on-one boxing *sans* violence. As a sport that demanded

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<sup>27</sup> Will Levington Comfort, "Tennis Playing Benefits Youth," *Los Angeles Times*, May 24, 1925, p. B3; William Plumber Jacobs, *Tennis, Builder of Citizenship: The Psychology and Technique of the Game as Taught in the Tennis Clinic* (Clinton, SC: Jacobs Press, 1941), 21, 27, 30-33, 37-41. Roosevelt's 1899 speech is reprinted in Theodore Roosevelt, *The Strenuous Life: Essays and Addresses* (New York: The Century Co., 1902), 1-24.

complex biomechanical moves in order to progress beyond the most rudimentary level of play, tennis required the watchful eyes of a seasoned instructor who corrected and guided the newcomer on the proper stroke mechanics, playing tactics, and match strategy. On one level then, becoming a competitive tennis player resembled an apprenticeship where the master shared direct experience and gave direct feedback to the journeyman. This mode of training meant a challenge for any outsider trying to break into the cloistered world of competitive tennis because the traditionally elite champions felt most comfortable training new players that resembled themselves. By both excluding working-class players from private club courts while simultaneously holding tennis up as a wholesome activity for all people, elites limited the ability of the “wrong” players to break into the top echelons of the game.<sup>28</sup> In the sport of tennis, where one played often dictated not only how one played but how good they could become.

California clubs did care about who played on their courts, but classicism and racism was less overt than on the East Coast. When asked about three African Americans competing in the Southern California Tennis Championships held at the Los Angeles Tennis Club, Perry Jones told his East Coast superiors the SCTA had always encouraged talented players from outside the club to participate in the tournament. Feeling the pressure to take a harder line toward unwelcome players, Jones became more selective in inviting juniors to the courts of the Los Angeles Tennis Club. Regardless of efforts to police play, the strength of competition and subsequent number of champions produced on the courts set the Los Angeles Tennis Club apart

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<sup>28</sup> John T. Bailey, “How to Improve One’s Game: A Series of Practical Articles for the Average Player,” *American Lawn Tennis* (March 15, 1909): 410-1; A.E. Bemish, *First Steps to Lawn Tennis* (London: Mills & Boon, 1922), 13-14; P.A. Vaile, *Modern Tennis* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1915), vi; “Review of the Woodford Tennis Club,” *American Lawn Tennis* (March 15, 1909): 413.

from competitive tennis found anywhere else in the country. By 1940, Californians held nine of ten national championship titles, and the SCTA had burgeoned into the largest USLTA section with more than fifty public and semiprivate clubs paying dues. The junior development program Perry Jones invented was so rigorous it earned the nickname the “Factory System” from the national media because of the consistent champions Southern California tennis produced. Consistency, however, extended down to include the background, appearance, and attitude of players. All the players knew “Mister Jones” kept a list of favorites who looked, dressed, and acted the part.<sup>29</sup>

The most significant tension to ever surface between Jones and a player involved not Bobby Riggs but Pancho Gonzales. While not explicitly about Gonzales’s class and racial background, Jones’s decision to ban Gonzales from sanctioned tournaments was bolstered by his refusal to attend school about the time he entered seventh grade. Although the association had a policy in place requiring schooling if a junior planned to play tournament tennis, they enforced the rule inconsistently. The talented Jack Kramer was a few years further along in development than Gonzales. Jones granted him court time at the Los Angeles Tennis club that fell during the normal school day. With this comparison, it is hard not to read Gonzales’s ban as directed at Gonzales’s working-class, Mexican, and, potentially, delinquent background. While not from the

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<sup>29</sup> Perry T. Jones to USLTA President John Holcombe Ward, August 2, 1943, Box 8, Folder 4.14.1, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island. African Americans first came to Los Angeles in large numbers during the twenties. The work they found there can only be assessed on a case-by-case basis as some of the City’s 456 industries employed African Americans as full equals to white and Mexican workers while others separated them, paying out lower wages. See, “Department of Research and Investigation in the National Urban League,” 1926 Report, undated typescript, California Contemporary Culture 1926-1937 Folder, Box A874, Works Progress Administration, LOC; Kramer and Deford, *The Game*, 20-23; “The Business of Pleasure,” typescript, September 14, 1939, Los Angeles Guide Sports Folder, Box A533, Works Progress Administration Collection, LOC; Tennis Factory: Perry Jones is Champion Producer of Champions,” *Life*, August 7, 1950, pp. 98-102, 105; PGOH, ITHF.

worst part of town, Gonzales did live in a neighborhood that had a slightly higher than average number of cases of juvenile delinquency. Moreover, the long hours Gonzales's parents worked and the aggressive discipline his father imposed made Richard particularly prone to delinquency in the eyes of reformers. But most damning was the association Jones could make between Gonzales and the Pachucos. Big for his age, Gonzales seemed a potential leader of the Mexican youth gangs roaming the city in the forties. He also had a prominent scar on his face that resembled the type of cut one received in a knife fight. While the fears were not completely unfounded as Gonzales did choose to drop out of school and hang out with hustlers before his ban from competitive tennis, the SCTA's decision to sanction him removed his most important recreational outlet.<sup>30</sup>

Jones's strict instructional methods and unrivaled successes in producing so many top-class players set him apart from any other tennis coach and official in the United States. He was not alone, however, in espousing regimented training. The second most successful nation at producing world class tennis players in the late 1940s and 1950s was Australia. The Australians had their own Jones in Melbourne-based coach Harry Hopman. When Australian Davis Cupper Frank Sedgman referred to Hopman as a "very strict disciplinarian," he greatly understated Hopman's approach to the game. While Jones sought to help youngsters gain self-discipline over their minds through the manipulation of their bodies in terms of proper tennis technique, proper dress, and proper sportsmanship, Hopman more straightforwardly strove to have his players

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<sup>30</sup> Gonzales, *Man with a Racket*, 48-49. The association between race and male delinquency nationwide is taken up by Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot*, ch. 2. For the gendered origins of earlier juvenile reform efforts in Los Angeles, see Mary Odom "City Mothers and Delinquent Daughters: Female Juvenile Justice Reform in Early 20th Century Los Angeles," William Deverell and Tom Sitton eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 175-99; The Los Angeles County Plan of Coordinating Councils, *Why Have Delinquents?* (Los Angeles: Rotary Club of Los Angeles, 1933), 32, 41, 44-45.

master their bodies through unprecedented physical conditioning. “Physical fitness,” remarked Hopman, was his “philosophy” and his “whole theory.” He introduced weight training to tennis players at a young age, placing prospects in gymnasiums when they turned thirteen. He made his players run mile after mile, both distance and speed work. His signature conditioning move, the Kangaroo jump, where an athlete squatted down and then exploded upward and brought their knees up to their chest and their elbows down to their knees, became the bane of every youngster baking underneath the Australian sun.<sup>31</sup>

Those who survived Hopman’s training and developed the right stroke mechanics went on to successful careers. The regime secured Australia’s international reputation for the fittest players in world tennis competition. But so long as they remained amateurs, even playing at the highest level as demonstrated by winning the Davis Cup, Australians remained under the control of coach Hopman and the Australian Tennis Federation just as the American amateurs remained under Perry Jones’s and the United States Lawn Tennis Association’s control. In fact, the better a player became, the more tennis officials tightened their handling of a player. Players competing abroad in major tournaments and Davis Cup play, in particular, garnered unwanted scrutiny from their respective federations who feverously promoted and policed the international reputations of their countries’ games. Harry Hopman flatly told his players, “I don’t want you talking to the press, I want to do all the talking to the press.”<sup>32</sup> In words and actions, Hopman was far from the only tennis official who protected the purity of the amateur ideal and safeguarded the sanctity of

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<sup>31</sup> Frank Sedgman Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island. John Van Ryn Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island. Having trained at Melbourne Park during the January heat of the Australian Open, the author can attest to the unpleasantness of even far less demanding fitness activities.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., Ibid.

the national tennis federations over the basic freedoms of speech and property earned but not enjoyed by the players who put those national organizations on the world map.

Pancho Gonzales had none of those thoughts and actions on his mind when he once again ran afoul of both Perry Jones and Los Angeles legal officers. Gonzales encountered the truant officer one too many times, stole toys from local stores, and even burglarized homes in 1942. A 1943 juvenile court ruling removed Pancho from his neighborhood and put him in the custody of the California Youth Authority (CYA), who operated a series of reform schools throughout the State. The Authority first placed Gonzales in the Preston School of Industry in Ione, California, forty miles east of Sacramento and thirty miles south of Folsom State Prison along the Sierra Foothills. The foreboding “Preston Castle” was a place of woe for Gonzales and his fellow wards. Opened in the summer of 1894 to a handful of youths transferred there from adult penitentiaries, by the 1920s the school had earned a reputation for cruelty towards wards and recidivism among those released. Superintendents routinely flogged boys and used solitary confinement to coerce certain behavior. Nine out of ten boys sent to Preston found themselves back in the CYA or in adult corrections not long after their discharge from the reform school, compared to estimates of only 2 percent reformed to the satisfaction of CYA officials.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Gonzales, *Man with a Racket*, 25-26, 36, 43; GGOH; PGOH, ITHF; John F. Lafferty, *The Preston School of Industry: A Centennial History* (Ione, CA: Preston School of Industry, 1994), 278-9; Leon Adams, “Boys ‘Graduate as Crooks at Reform School,” unnamed San Francisco paper, July 10, 1923, newspaper clipping, in Miscellaneous Records, Newspaper Clippings, Preston School of Industry, Folder 3738:67, California Youth Authority Collection, California State Archives, Sacramento, California; “Notorious Crooks ‘Graduates’ of Preston,” *San Francisco Daily News*, July 11, 1923, newspaper clipping in Miscellaneous Records, Newspaper Clippings, Preston School of Industry, Folder 3738:67, California Youth Authority Collection, California State Archives, Sacramento, California; Leon Adams, “Only Two Per Cent of Boys are Reformed at Preston,” *California Daily News*, July 18, 1923, newspaper clipping, in Miscellaneous Records, Newspaper Clippings, Preston School of Industry, Folder 3738:67, California Youth Authority Collection, California State Archives, Sacramento, California.

Numbers alone do not do justice to the harshness of life in the Castle. For example, on February 23, 1950, the school's housekeeper, Anna Corbin, was strangled and beaten to death, her body wrapped in carpet and hidden in a locked room. Severe interrogations of the wards extended throughout the night and coming days until Amador County officials finally charged an African American youth named Eugene Monroe with the murder. Corbin's death was far from the only "major incident" in Preston's history. In 1946, for example, fracas between Mexican-American and African-American gangs broke out on two separate occasions with wards fashioning shanks for stabbing, sheriff's deputies arriving to quell the violence, and several boys receiving convictions for attempted murder. To try to keep order in the face of such madness, Preston's wardens placed boys in "silent rooms," placed boys on "restricted diets," and deployed tear gas canisters as a last resort. Even the superintendent of the school had a hard time reporting that life in Preston Castle was anything but cruel.<sup>34</sup>

Fortunately for Gonzales, the United States' wartime production goals lifted him out of what otherwise might have been a long stay in Preston Castle. In the spring of 1943, the CYA increased their coordination with the National Youth Administration (NYA) and the War Manpower Commission to put youths in the custody of the CYA to work in war industries. Over the prior nine months, the NYA trained 8,000 youths across 705 workstations that ranged from

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<sup>34</sup> Ruth Grandbois, "Housekeeper at Preston School Found Murdered," *Stockton Record*, February 24, 1950, newspaper clipping, in Miscellaneous Records, Newspaper Clippings, Preston School of Industry, Folder 3738: 562, California Youth Authority Collection, California State Archives, Sacramento, California; "Monroe Murder Trial Enters Fourth Day in Superior Court Here," *Amador Ledger*, April 27, 1950, newspaper clipping, in Miscellaneous Records, Newspaper Clippings, Preston School of Industry, Folder 3738:67, Box 67, California Youth Authority Collection, California State Archives, Sacramento, California; R.V. Chander, Superintendent of the Preston School of Industry, report submitted December 27, 1952, to Herman G. Stark, Director of the California Youth Authority, "The Preston Story, 1945-1952," pp. 25, 85, in Preston School of Industry Thesises, Folder F3738:530, California Youth Authority Collection, California State Archives, Sacramento, California.



Los Angeles to Sacramento, California. They now needed even more youth workers. The plan to put CYA wards to work required the shuffling around of equipment and youth, and Gonzales found himself transferred along with one hundred and fifty fellow CYA inmates to the Benicia Arsenal positioned at the Western tip of Suisun Bay and the northeast shoreline of the Carquinez Straits in Solano County, California. That location made the arsenal an ideal point for munitions production because it connected to the Sacramento River via the Suisun Bay to the Pacific Ocean via the San Pablo Bay and San Francisco Bay. CYA youths joined roughly 4,500 NYA and other civilian employees who moved more munitions to the Pacific Ocean than any other military facility in World War II.<sup>35</sup>

Gonzales participated in the behemoth logistical operation, albeit against his will. The challenges of fighting a war across the largest body of water in the world forged Pacific coastal cities into massive arsenals of ships, planes, vehicles, and munitions. California cities, in particular, drew huge numbers of warriors and war workers to their factories and bases. Los Angeles County grew more swiftly and more dramatically than anywhere else, with the population skyrocketing 49 percent from 2.78 million people in 1940 to 4.14 million people in 1950.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> “NYA Operations in California During the First Nine Months of Fiscal Year,” typescript report, Director’s Records, Subject Files, National Youth Administration, F3738:312, California Youth Authority Collection, California State Archives, Sacramento, California; Harold Slane to Karl Holton, March 24, 1943, Director’s Records, Subject Files, National Youth Administration, F3738:312, California Youth Authority Collection, California State Archives, Sacramento, California; Pancho Gonzales, “Outside Looking Back,” *Parks & Recreation*, September, 1974, 21-23, 66-67; Gladys Wold, “Benicia Arsenal, Benicia Barracks,” *National Register of Historic Places*, nomination entered November 6, 1978.

<sup>36</sup> Lotchin, *The Bad City in the Good War*, 9.

War workers transformed the social character of Los Angeles suburbs such as South Gate seemingly overnight. Defense and home contractors alike strove to meet the demands of the War Production Board that favored worker output as well as hastily constructed and deconcentrated housing over more farsighted metropolitan planning. In this way wartime Southern California set a pattern for postwar urban planning that spread to both coasts and the emerging Sunbelt region after the United States' dramatic break with a tradition of immediate and sustained military demobilization after war. Major American demobilization took place after World War II, but Congress's passage of the National Security Act of 1947 and President Harry Truman's decision to fight a land war in Korea recommitted America to massive defense spending to a degree that varied only nominally for the subsequent three decades.<sup>37</sup>

Truman's willingness to continue to project United States military power after the defeat of Germany and Japan gave Gonzales an opportunity to get out of the custody of the CYA by joining the military in 1946. His service on a naval ship guarding the California coast not only freed him from youth prison but instilled in him a new fascination with all things mechanical that continued into his postwar tennis career. Like many veterans who returned to Southern California after the War, he became enamored with drag racing. The appeal stemmed from three factors: young men had spent months if not years working around and fixing vehicles and other machines; former airfields and roads along landing strips proliferated in Southern California that allowed for flat and safe driving; combat culture became speed culture for returning veterans.

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<sup>37</sup> Becky Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920-1965* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 188, 219; Greg Hise, *Magnetic Los Angeles: Planning the Twentieth-Century Metropolis* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 118; Ann Markusen, Scott Campbell, Peter Hall, and Sabina Deitrick, *The Rise of the Sunbelt: The Military Remapping of Industrial America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 8-10, 12-14.

Gonzalez built vehicles and drove them with his brother Manuel and other veterans on abandoned airfields and salt flats across Southern California, racing on top courses like Sauggish against the fastest dragsters in the world at that time. Gonzales's affinity for time in and around cars attracted him to the peripatetic lifestyle of the professional tennis tour, which existed as a roadshow of sorts. But in the meantime, his military service encompassed none of the fun of playing tennis exhibition matches that more established players such as Don Budge and Bobby Riggs had enjoyed on exotic courts built by the U.S. military as it hopped from Pacific Island to Pacific Island.<sup>38</sup>

Gonzales's return to competitive tennis in late 1947 marked the most significant comeback in the history of the sport. He spent almost four years without touching a tennis racquet. Fresh off a troop transport ship moored off the California Coast, the nineteen-year-old Gonzales arrived back in Los Angeles and told his parents he planned to dedicate his life to tennis. The news shocked Gonzales's parents, whose strained relationship with their son had further deteriorated during his long absence from home after the juvenile division of the Superior Court of Los Angeles removed the delinquent Gonzales from their care. He had not picked up a racquet in so long, his parents thought, how could he ever regain lost ground? With

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<sup>38</sup> Southern California Timing Association, Inc., "SCTA Program Time Trials," November 3, 1946, Elmrage, Calif, November 3, 1946, SCTA, Folder, Finn Race Files, Box 11, Revs Institute, Naples, Florida; "What This is All About—" SCTA Bulletin No. 2A, July 25, 1947, Harper Dry Lakes, Calif., July 6, 1947, SCTA, Folder, Finn Race Files, Box 11, Revs Institute, Naples, Florida; "Fourth Annual Bonneville National Speed Trials," *Souvenir Program*, August 25-31, 1952, Bonneville, UT – Aug 23-31, 1954, Folder, Finn Race Files, Box 11, Revs Institute, Naples, Florida; Bobby Riggs Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

determination to show everyone he was now his own man, Gonzales started on the path to become a professional tennis player.<sup>39</sup>

Gonzales went back to the Exposition Park courts on which he grew up. He began to practice six to seven hours a day against anyone willing to play. Gonzales worked on his forehand, his backhand, his volleys, and his overhead. The weight he carried around as a child was gone. He had grown into a six foot, three inch slender frame. Long legs and a wide reach made his court coverage tremendous. To combat years off the court, Gonzales emphasized conditioning, going on long runs and training relentlessly to increase his foot speed.<sup>40</sup>

The quickness took a while to return, but his longtime flawless serve only improved. Fully extended, Gonzales's arm stretched just beyond the 114-inch height of tennis's longtime dominant server William "Big Bill" Tilden. Along with its height, the brilliance of the Gonzales serve came from the un-teachable timing of his motion that transferred the energy coiled from his body into the ball at the perfect moment. A kinetic chain of physics began when his legs pushed off from the ground, up through the rotation of his hips that pivoted the trunk, chest, and shoulders up toward the ball. The once opened chest and shoulders facing the sky now closed and moved parallel to the ground in a movement that whipped his serving arm up into the ball with tremendous force just as the ball floated in the air at the top of the toss. The racquet was simply an extension of his body that moved where and how his body did, naturally decelerating at a pronated angle after the ball left the sweet-spot of the racquet's string-bed. Following his arm's follow-through, Gonzales's body now followed the stroke naturally into the court, giving

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<sup>39</sup> PGOH, ITHF.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

him an aggressive position to exploit a weak return of serve with either a forehand drive or a well-placed volley. More than most players, Gonzales understood that winning in tennis meant playing to one's strengths. In so doing, Gonzales, along with Jack Kramer, initiated and popularized the new seize-the-initiative style of play.<sup>41</sup>

Gonzales's fast return to winning in topflight tennis happened because he badly wanted it. The early losses never discouraged him. The confidence of losing a match but knowing he would win the next one had a great deal to do with his success after such a long layoff. Contested in October 1947, on the Los Angeles Tennis Club courts, his dominant wins over Czechoslovakian champion Jaroslav Drobny, intercollegiate title-holder Bob Falkenberg, and two-time U.S. amateur champion Frankie Parker in Pacific Southwest Championship propelled him to national attention. After only a year of practice and minimal tournament play, Gonzales established enough winning potential to force the SCTA officials—men like Perry Jones who previously harbored significant reservations about Gonzales—to reexamine their opinions of him.<sup>42</sup>

The ban Jones imposed on Gonzales for not attending school expired upon his return from the military service. Jones, however, could have continued to keep Gonzales out of tournaments by refusing to fund the young amateur. Long obsessed with “What is an amateur in tennis?,” Jones and his fellow USLTA officials diligently protected the purity of their players from the corrupting influence of money in sports. The enforcement of what they called the “amateur

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<sup>41</sup> PGOH, ITHF; Deford, *Big Bill Tilden*, 98-99. These comments are also based on the author's experience as a college tennis player, teaching professional, racquet sports director, and high performance player coach.

<sup>42</sup> Dave Lewis, “Once Over Lightly,” *Long Beach Independent*, February 14, 1948, p. 17-18; PGOH, ITHF.

ideal” had a great deal to do with the USLTA’s charge to field the best Davis Cup Team possible—an international competition that allowed only amateur players. At the same time, the zealotry of the USTLA’s Amateur Rule Committee in imposing sanctions on players for the slightest infractions smacked of bureaucrats looking to maintain whatever measure of control they could over the game’s future. Sometimes fickle in enforcement, in Gonzales’s case the SCTA and the USLTA were more frank. A poor kid from urban Los Angeles with Mexican parents and a delinquency record was hardly the representative Jones wanted to send east to play in the summer grass court circuit and National Championship. That same young man representing the United States against other nations seemed equally unthinkable just a year earlier.<sup>43</sup>

By the spring of 1948, however, the USLTA could no longer afford to keep the gifted Gonzales on the sidelines. Not contested during the war, the Davis Cup returned to the United States in both 1946 and 1947 with the Angeleno and world number one Jack Kramer leading the squad to victory both times. Winning more than forty matches in a row including the 1947 U.S. Championships, Kramer turned professional in the fall of 1947, leaving the David Cup Selection Committee scrambling to find fresh faces to continue American dominance on the world stage. As Gonzales shared, “The Emperor Jones” himself decided to stake the still unproven talent on

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<sup>43</sup> PGOH, ITHF; “Proposed Changes in USLTA Amateur Regulations,” June 6, 1943, Amateur Rule Committee Folder 1, Box 1, Robert Kelleher Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Hugh W. Stewart letter to Perry T. Jones, November 20, 1953, Amateur Rule Committee Folder 1, Box 1, Robert Kelleher Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Minutes of Special Meeting of the Amateur Rule Committee, Dec. 11, 1953, Amateur Rule Committee Folder 1, Box 1, Robert Kelleher Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

his first extended trip east to play in all the matches leading up to the U.S. Championships at Forest Hills.<sup>44</sup>

Jones's reversal also had a lot to do with Gonzales's newfound maturity. While far from a decorated soldier, Gonzales did serve in the military, and on March 23, 1948, he married his first wife, Henrietta. For the conservative Jones and the entire USLTA establishment, Gonzales the serviceman and Gonzales the husband and soon to be father were necessary steps for the young man to take in order to potentially represent the United States abroad. And beyond the symbolism of a patriotic family man, Gonzales also made the actual choice to remain eligible to play for the United States. In February, the Bank of Mexico—on behalf of the Mexican Government—offered the nineteen-year-old Gonzales financial security for life, a nice beachfront home, and a lifetime appointment at the Mexican consulate in Los Angeles if he agreed to accept Mexican citizenship and compete for Mexico in all international tennis competitions. Gonzales briefly considered the offer before turning it down saying, “I prize my [American] citizenship above all the benefits.” Gonzales passed the temptation. USLTA officials like Jones gave him the necessary funds to compete in the tournaments leading up to the United States Nationals at Forest Hills.<sup>45</sup>

Gonzales's record in those tournaments was mixed. He won some important tournaments—most notably the National Clay Court Title contested in River Forest, Illinois. But

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<sup>44</sup> PGOH, ITHF; Gonzales, *Man with a Racket*, 51-2.

<sup>45</sup> PGOH, ITHF; Gonzales, *Man with a Racket*, 51-2; Jim Murray, “Last of the Victorians,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 1, 1970, p. 20A; “Pancho Ponders Mexican Citizenship,” *Reno News*, February 7, 1948, p. 8; “L.A. Net Star May Play for Mexico,” *Long Beach Independent*, February 7, 1948; “Gonzales Turns Down Mexican Net Offer,” *Oakland Tribune*, February 11, 1948, p. 18.

losses in some smaller events to low ranked players allowed for many to write him off as too inconsistent to mount a serious challenge for the U.S. Championship in September. The year before, Gonzales had made the trip east for the Nationals but lost in only the second round. People believed him soft, a reputation that developed into his nickname of “Gorgo”—that is, the cheese-champion. But on Saturday, September 18, 1948, Gonzales dominated South African Eric Sturgess in straight sets for the U.S. Championship singles title. More than ten thousand fans attended the match and shook their heads in disbelief at the “meteoric rise” of the “the scar-faced Pancho”—the second youngest champion in the history of United States tennis.<sup>46</sup>

The press interpreted Gonzales’s repeat win in several ways. Some outlets dismissed it as a fluke. Others stereotyped Pancho as a Pachuco. More rightly recognized the incredible social upheaval the champion “from the wrong side of the tracks” had just caused in the ranks of elite sports. During the coming year, Gonzales’s reputation ebbed and flowed depending a great deal on how he fared in bouts with California rival Ted Schroeder, who exemplified the simon-pure amateur. A crew-cut Anglo from California with a wonderful family and a prosperous refrigerator business, Schroeder played a very limited schedule, often skipping major events in order to spend more time at home. He long refused contracts from professional promoters, preferring instead to see tennis as a serious hobby rather than a means to make a living.

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<sup>46</sup> “Pancho Gonzales Wins National Clay Court Title,” *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, July 19, 1948, p. A10. “Pancho Gonzales, Eric Sturgess in Tennis Finals,” *Jacksonville Daily Journal*, September 19, 1948, p. 14; “Sport: Build Up at Wimbledon,” *Time*, July 4, 1949; “Clowning Gonzales Blasts Way to Amateur Tennis Crown,” *Montana Standard*, September 20, 1948, p. 8.



When Gonzales repeated his 1948 win over Schroeder at the 1949 United States Championship, many who followed the tournament disbelieved it.<sup>47</sup>

Gonzales's decision to turn professional days after lifting the amateur trophy again surprised no one. As the youngest player to join the professional ranks, an inner-city kid who grew up gambling and hustling around public park courts could hardly be expected to turn down \$60,000, people interested in tennis thought. The press pointed out that a Mexican youth knew no other way to get ahead. Some capitalized on controversy. Bobby Riggs, who would promote the 1949 Jack Kramer versus Pancho Gonzales professional tour, encouraged such talk among the nation's sports reporters. Riggs's preferred word to describe Pancho to others was "colorful."<sup>48</sup>

Gonzales's Forest Hills Championship was the biggest story in amateur tennis in 1949. He followed that up with the biggest story in both amateur and professional tennis when he decided to turn professional. Gonzales ended his amateur tennis career a few weeks after his second National Championship with one final win on the courts of the Los Angeles Tennis Club. On September 18, 1949, in front of Perry Jones, Southern California Tennis doyens, and USLTA

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<sup>47</sup> "Pancho Gonzales Wins National Tennis Crown," *The Harlingen Star Farmer*, September 20, 1948, p. 3; Oscar Frailey, "Young Mexican Wins National Net Title," *Amarillo Globe*, September 30, 1948, p. 30; "Gonzales, as Amateur Tennis Champion, Poses Social Problem at Forest Hills," *Olean Times Herald*, September 29, 1948, p. 13; "A Boy Named Richard," Dick Clarke Show, September 1949, Author's Collection; "Ted Schroeder Defeats Gonzales Again," *Alton Evening Telegraph*, October 11, 1948, p. 10; "Gonzales Finds Rough Sledding," *Amarillo Globe*, October 19, 1948, p. 13; Stan Opoiowky, "Pancho Gonzales Ranked No. 1 Netman," *Portland Sunday Telegram and Sunday Press Herald*, Dec. 19, 1948, p. B2; Oscar Frailey, "Kramer Professes Sorrow at Schroeder's Setback, Though He Gains \$50,000," *Reno News*, September 11, 1949, p. 15; Ray Haywood, "Pancho Abdicates; To Miss Meet Here," *Oakland Tribune*, September 19, 1949, p. 23; Gonzales, *Man with a Racket*, 34.

<sup>48</sup> "Gonzales Joins Pro Net Ranks for \$60,000," *Portland Press Herald*, September 21, 1949, p. 18; "New Racket," *The Inter Lake*, September 23, 1949, p. 2; Richard "Pancho" Gonzales, "Amateur Tennis Champ Tells of Lure of 'Pro Dollars,'" *Tipton Daily Tribune*, September 24, 1949, p. 4; Bobby Riggs, "To Fly When Pancho Launches Tour with Jack," *American Lawn Tennis* 43, no. 9 (October 1949): 10.

officials, all of whom despised the Mexican-American player until his talent left them little choice but to begrudgingly accept him, Gonzales demolished Ted Schroeder one final time—a symbolic victory over amateur tennis and the men who guarded that ideal.<sup>49</sup>

Upon turning professional Gonzales, quickly found himself facing a different attack—that of his seasoned opponent Jack Kramer. The 1949-1950 tour opened on October 25, 1949, in front of 13,357 fans squeezed into New York City's Madison Square Garden, who paid at least eight dollars apiece to see the professionals. Francisco "Little Pancho" Segura and the recently turned professional Frankie Parker warmed up the crowd with Segura's unorthodox two-handed forehand electrifying onlookers. Most everyone, however, came to see how well Gonzales would hold up against the champion. As the main event got underway, many people thought he would fare quite well. The two matched each other power for power, hitting harder than any tennis player, professional or amateur, ever had up to that point. The canvas court rolled over the arena's floor only increased the pace of their blistering serves, and shocked spectators who had only seen the speed of amateur tennis played outdoor on slower courts. In the end, Kramer's experience on the fast court and the big stage propelled him past Gonzales in four sets—the last set the most one-sided of the four. "He's not as tough as I thought he'd be," said Gonzales after the match. "I figure it will take eight or nine matches before I hit my stride against Jake. But don't worry, I'll hit it."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Hamilton Chambers, "Highlights of 1949," *American Lawn Tennis* 43, no. 11 (December, 1949): 20; Bion Abbott, "The Pacific Southwest," *American Lawn Tennis* 43, no. 9 (October, 1949): 5.

<sup>50</sup>John Boss, "Fans Cast Still Another Vote for Open Competition," *American Lawn Tennis* 43, no. 10 (November, 1949): 6-7, 14.

Riggs certainly was not worried. A veteran barnstormer, first as a player and then as the promoter, Riggs knew how much the opener set the tone for the rest of the professional tour. A gate of over \$100,000 from night one meant that Riggs would far exceed the minimum guarantees he had made to the players, and that neither of the singles matches were blowouts boded well for the continued interest of his players with fans as play continued over the next one hundred matches. Alice Marble, herself a former amateur champion turned touring professional and therefore no stranger to what made tennis profitable, advanced another reason why the Kramer versus Gonzales tour would pay dividends to the promoter and the players: Pancho intrinsically knew how to whip fans into frenzies either with his big shots, long stretches, or his on-court behavior. “The spectators automatically enthuse when they see his handsome dark face, his splendid physique and his many delightful mannerisms,” opined Marble after watching the Madison Square Garden match. Marble linked Gonzales’s crowd appeal to his troubled background that had not only produced some of the young professional’s more appealing physical features such as his muscular legs, shoulder, and core, but also packaged Pancho in a ready-made narrative of Mexican-American machismo that contrasted sharply with Kramer’s All-American backstory and those of most topflight tennis players in the past. From his fast serve to his fondness for fast cars, his spurning of the amateur authorities to his wide smile, what Pancho did both on and off the court titillated the public. He was both the good player and the bad boy of tennis at the same time. Riggs promoted Gonzales as the “people’s choice” on the lookout for “new worlds to conquer.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Alice Marble, “Kramer, Gonzales, & Co.,” *American Lawn Tennis* 43, no. 11 (December, 1949): 26; *Bobby Riggs presents World Championship Tennis Tour, 1949-1950*, tour program, Tennis Tour Programs Collection, ITHF,

But the tour quickly went from good to bad for Gonzales as the grind continued into the winter of 1950. Whereas the USLTA's prohibitions against accepting money had sheltered players during their amateur careers, upon turning professional, companies came calling. Gonzales and Parker found themselves constantly at the beck and call of companies who wanted them for everything from cigarette advertisements to tennis racquet designs. Part of succeeding as a professional meant balancing off-court money-making opportunities with on-court commitments. More so than his fellow professionals, Gonzales faced the greatest degree of media scrutiny for two reasons: first, because so many sportswriters clung desperately to the mistaken belief that the best amateur tennis players could beat the professionals; second, because of his Mexican-American heritage. Gonzales had ended the year 1949 ranked number one while Frankie Parker ended it ranked fourth, but the hollowness of world rankings that included only amateurs but not the professionals rang true night after night as the more experienced professionals Kramer and Segura consistently beat their young colleagues. To help explain those losses, sports reporters once again used the Mexican-American narrative, this time stereotyping the challenger Gonzales as lazy and tired, unfit for the day-in and day-out work of professional touring. The reason Gonzales trailed Kramer by thirty matches through January 1950, had less to do with the former's effort and more to do with the latter's experience—although such a straightforward explanation hardly made for good copy. In fact, when the barnstormers made it to the West Coast in February, Gonzales began winning matches more consistently than Kramer, even notching an 80 percent winning percentage over a California stretch of matches. Gonzales

was far from lazy. Most of their matches consisted of hard-fought tennis, point after point. For example, on February 2, the first set alone of their Seattle, Washington, match went 54 games—hardly an uninspired effort halfway into a tour of night after night play. Yet at the midway point in the tour, the ball rested firmly in Kramer’s court with Gonzales behind 18 matches to 59.<sup>52</sup>

By that point Gonzales simply did not have enough dates on the schedule left to claim the professional tour. He nonetheless continued to fight on because he knew he was improving and he believed that if he finished the tour strong he would secure himself a place on the next professional tour. Entering the spring of 1950, the current tour had no fixed end date. Riggs played his players as long as people continued to pay to see them. The promoter also made his troupe play the *Philadelphia Inquirer’s* professional tournament the week of March 20. Gonzales beat his fellow touring professionals along with a few dozen non-touring professionals to earn \$2,376 in prize money and claim the title of the best player in the City of Brotherly Love. There was no love lost between Kramer and Gonzales, however, as the two continued to battle through New England during the month of April. When the tour finally ended in June, Kramer had notched 96 wins to Gonzales’s 27. As anyone who had attended understood, the final match count did not do justice to the quality of the tennis they saw. But professional tennis was about getting paid, not about justice. Kramer, Riggs, and Gonzales all got their fair share of the money,

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<sup>52</sup> Jeane Hoffman, “Bouncing Around,” *American Lawn Tennis* 43, no. 11 (December, 1949): 20; Edward C. Potter, Jr., “World Rankings for 1949,” *American Lawn Tennis* 43, no. 10 (November, 1949): 3; Jeane Hoffman, “Kramer Karavan” cartoon, *American Lawn Tennis* 43, no. 11 (December 1949): 20; Jeane Hoffman, “Bouncing Around,” *American Lawn Tennis* 43, no. 12 (January 1950): 15; Jeane Hoffman, “Bouncing Around,” Pancho Gonzales in bed cartoon, *American Lawn Tennis* 44, no. 1 (May 1950): 11-12; Joan Raulet, “Capsule Court News,” *American Lawn Tennis* 43, no. 13 (February 1950): 21; “Kramer Holds Pro Tour Lead,” *American Lawn Tennis* 43, no. 14 (March 1950): 27.

pay far exceeding the guarantees the players retained. Kramer and Riggs then tried to end Gonzales's professional career as their tour concluded.<sup>53</sup>

In May 1950, Kramer and Riggs began feeding the Associated Press rumors that Gonzales himself wanted a year respite from the tour in order to rest and recuperate. The veracity of such a claim seemed questionable given that Gonzales had started to play stronger tennis as of late when compared to his earlier play on the tour. The casual follower of the sport, however, accepted the rumor because that fit with the lazy Mexican-American stereotype. Gonzales did himself no favors in that regard when he posed for beer advertisements that made their way into popular glossy magazines like *Life*. There he was lounging on a chair and swigging beers, "a natural alliance if we ever saw one," remarked one sports commentator.<sup>54</sup>

Such images served the purposes of Kramer and Riggs. They waited until their tour ended on May 21, 1950, in Dayton, Ohio, after over one hundred events on the road, and then quickly dismissed a bewildered Gonzales. Pancho believed that the \$400,000 in gate receipts he had helped earn would have secured him at least a place as the undercard match for the forthcoming fall 1950 to spring 1951 tour, especially given that Ted Schroeder and other eligible amateur champions had turned down Riggs's offers to tour against the professional champion Kramer. Sports commentators shared that view, editorializing how much "the crowds loved him," how they "lustily" rooted him on, and "how heartening for a kid from the other side of the

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<sup>53</sup> Kramer Holds Pro Tour Lead," *American Lawn Tennis* 43, no. 14 (March 1950): 27; Mayer Brandschain, "Pancho Surprises, Upsets Kramer in Inquirer Event," *American Lawn Tennis* 44, no. 1 (May 1950): 11-12; Pancho Gonzales Testimony, Court Transcript pp. 129-30, *Richard A. Gonzalez v. The International Professional Tennis Players Association*, case file, National Archives and Records Administration-Riverside, [NARA-Riverside] Riverside, California.

<sup>54</sup> Hoffman, "Bouncing Around," Pancho Gonzales in bed cartoon, *American Lawn Tennis*, Vol. 44, No. 1, May, 1950, p. 14.

tracks” to make a living in such an elite sport. Unbeknownst to Gonzales, though, Riggs had already started working to entice Gussy Moran to turn professional with a first offer of \$100,000 for her services on the tour. The two agreed to \$75,000 for “a 100 match barnstorming tour” four months later.<sup>55</sup>

Gonzales returned to Southern California embittered. He began to drink heavily, and a few weeks later San Diego police arrested him on charges of disorderly conduct. Law enforcement put Gonzales in jail before releasing him on a \$25 fine and an apology to the women to whom he and his friends had made inappropriate remarks. Feeling deflated, Gonzales decided to sit out some of the summer tournaments that filled out the professional players’ schedule in between the touring months, even though those tournaments were some of the only events he could play now. That absence gave other players such as Segura an opportunity to shine, and “Little Pancho” took full advantage, winning Jack March’s first big professional tournament in Cleveland, leveraging that win along with his entertaining personality to make a case for his spot on the forthcoming professional tour, and sealing the deal with his willingness to play on the tour for less money than any other challenger. Even the champion Kramer realized his precarious position in that the promoter could replace him at will, so he resigned with Riggs for the same percentage that had earned him \$100,000 from the previous year. For his part, Riggs especially wanted to pinch every penny because he was in the middle of a messy divorce proceeding with his wife Kay, who had also acted as an unpaid accountant and manager for the

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<sup>55</sup> Jeane Hoffman, “Bouncing Around,” *American Lawn Tennis*, Vol. 44, No. 5, August 1, 1950, p. 14; Jeane Hoffman, “Bouncing Around,” *American Lawn Tennis* 44, no. 3 (July 1950): 12. “Capsule Court News,” *American Lawn Tennis* 44, no. 2 (June 1950): 10; H.E.B., “Editorials,” *American Lawn Tennis* 44, no. 7 (September 1950): 14; Jeane Hoffman, “Bouncing Around,” *American Lawn Tennis* 44, no. 2 (June 1950): 12; “Capsule Court News,” *American Lawn Tennis* 44, no. 7 (September 1950): 14.

tour. The Riggs's separation left Bobby flailing to get his tour organized—and only days before he planned to open. Riggs even considered letting Gonzales play the undercard, only to revoke that offer at the last minute.<sup>56</sup>

Gonzales did get to spend more time with his family when Riggs and Kramer sidelined him—impractical when a player barnstormed. Shortly after turning professional in the fall of 1949, Henrietta and Richard used \$12,000 of his guarantee to buy a two-bedroom ranch house at 5838 South Arlington Avenue in the low income neighborhood of Park Mesa Heights in South-Central Los Angeles. There most of the child-rearing fell to Henrietta, who looked after the six-year-old Richard, Jr., the five-year-old Mike, and the four-year-old Danny. A few nights a week “Henry” and Richard drove their Mercury sedan to the neighborhood bowling alley for league night, where Gonzales averaged a 183. Pancho spent a significant amount of his time away from home building and racing hot-rods on a strip forty miles away at Saugus, California. The mechanical side of building cars drew Gonzales to racing, but the danger also thrilled him. That personality trait also led Gonzales to dog breeding, and he kept a kennel of boxers in his backyard. Mostly though, the player widely regarded as the best in the world at that time hit tennis balls much as he had as a kid before anyone who mattered had ever heard of him. At his

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<sup>56</sup> Jeane Hoffman, “Bouncing Around,” *American Lawn Tennis* 44, no. 5 (August 1, 1950): 13-14; Ned Potter, “Ned Potter Says...,” *American Lawn Tennis* 44, no. 3 (July 1950): 14; Pat O’Toole, “Segura Stops Kovacs In Surprise Finale,” *American Lawn Tennis* 44, no. 3 (July 1950): 10, 29; John Michaels, “There’s Gold in Them ’Thar Forest Hills,” *American Lawn Tennis* 44, no. 6 (August 15, 1950): 12, 28; “Capsule Court News,” *American Lawn Tennis* 44, no. 5 (August 1, 1950): 10; Jeane Hoffman, “Bouncing Around,” *American Lawn Tennis* 44, no. 7 (September 1950): 20.



house that meant hitting against his garage door at all hours of the day, much to the frustration of his neighbors.<sup>57</sup>

The Exposition Park courts he had learned to play on as a junior, however, provided a more favorable place for Pancho to practice. On any given day, kids and local hustlers might find themselves across the net from the two-time United States National Champion and holder of every professional championship except the tour title. A fifteen-minute car ride from his house to those courts spurred Gonzales to purchase the pro shop next to the Exposition Park courts. He would string racquets and teach the occasional lesson; his heart never went into retail or instruction. Fiduciaries upon his professional debut had encouraged Gonzales to buy annuities and other structured investments that would look after him and his families when his playing career inevitably came to an end, but that financial counsel presupposed that Pancho would play as a professional full time for at least half a decade rather than finding himself all but shut out after only one full year of touring. Not a pauper, he nonetheless needed cash more than the least talented of professional athletes in other sports. “Richard Alonzo Gonzales is a troubled man,” said his friends of Pancho in the early 1950s.<sup>58</sup>

The question on the minds of everyone who followed tennis after the 1952 professional tour never materialized was “Where’s Pancho?” Through all the trials, Gonzales kept his game remarkably sharp while not barnstorming on tour. He practiced against University of Southern California players and the best amateurs and teaching professionals in the area. He belonged to the Los Angeles Tennis Club, which always worked hard to get one of their own a match. More

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<sup>57</sup> Al Stump, “All Dressed Up and No Place to Play,” *Sport*, August, 1955, pp. 10, 71-73.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

frequently, Gonzales's professional matches took place overseas, where other countries paid better than what the limited professional tournament circuit paid in the United States. Four months of exhibitions across Southeast Asia from Japan to the Philippines netted Gonzales \$30,000, where in cities like Seoul, Korea, 15,000 fans might queue hours at a time to watch him play. Tennis-mad Australia offered even handsomer remuneration. Four-man tournaments in Melbourne, Perth, Adelaide, and Newcastle averaged 10,000 fans who paid about \$66,000 per event. Gonzales swept through the competition, winning \$2,800 per event for his first places.<sup>59</sup>

Gonzales's success abroad explained sportswriter Arthur Marx's answer to Pancho's whereabouts on America's professional tour—that is, “They're all afraid of Gonzales.” Kramer had said so, at least, admitting that Gonzales's consistent wins in the tournaments that featured all the best players made Pancho the player to beat even though he was not touring with Big Jake, Frank Sedgman, Pancho Segura, and Ken McGregor in the winter and spring of 1953. That fear, along with grudges each one held for the other, hurt the bottom line of the tour when Sedgman versus Kramer failed to compel fans to pay as had past matchups. Kramer intensified their mistrust by spreading rumors that he had made an offer that the greedy Gonzales turned down—scuttlebutt Gonzales and most sportswriters denied but some Kramer fans believed. In driving that wedge between himself and the future of professional tennis, Kramer set back the cause of professional tennis a few years and may have inadvertently pushed back Open Tennis by at least a few years.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Linton Baldwin, “Where's Pancho,” *The Racquet* 47, no. 1 (May 1953): 7-8; Al Stump, “All Dressed Up and No Place to Play,” pp. 10, 71-73.

<sup>60</sup> Arthur Marx, “They're all afraid of Gonzales,” *Sport*, July 1952, pp. 33, 75-76; Jerome Scheuer, “For the Defense,” *The Racquet* 47, no. 4 (August 1953): 25.

Unable to reconcile with Kramer, Gonzales began a comeback in the United States that would rival his earlier return to championship tennis in 1947 and 1948. On June 21, 1953, Pancho won the World's Professional Tennis Championship contested on the Lakewood Park Courts of suburban Cleveland. The preeminent professional tournament in the world was a study in contrasts with the most prestigious amateur tournament in the world. Pancho competed against fifteen other professionals over four evenings while the 1953 Wimbledon draw included 128 Men's singles entries reduced down to one champion over two weeks of play. Every player in the World's Professional Championship came from the United States, while Wimbledon focused attention on players from more than two dozen countries in the Men's Singles draw. The women's professional contest contrasted even more with the women amateurs. Pauline Betz defeated the only other entry, Mary Hardwick for the professional title—the first contested in four years—while the Wimbledon's Ladies draw presented 128 entries. For his first place finish in singles, doubles, and mixed doubles, Pancho earned \$1,600 in prize money out of a total prize pool of a mere \$8,000. Those earnings should have dwarfed the \$0 dollars Wimbledon players were supposed to have received, but the top players from most countries attending Wimbledon secured stipends and honorariums in excess of Pancho's winnings. The All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club made more selling strawberries and cream in one day than the total purse of the World's Professional Tennis Championship offered in 1953.<sup>61</sup>

Gonzales nonetheless accepted the engraved P.O.C. trophy from Sam Benjamin and Mrs. George Carter with a big smile. He had established himself as the best player in the world in

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<sup>61</sup> Jack March, "Gonzales Wins Pro Title," *World Tennis* 1, no. 2 (July 1953): 31; Tony Mottram, "Seixas is Wimbledon Champ," *World Tennis* 1, no. 2 (July 1953): 5-8, 32-33.

spite of the amateur and professional divides. Moreover, as a whole the professionals could view 1953 as a major success in popularizing their sport because for the first time, their championship aired on prime time television. The Empire Oil Company had their WXEL broadcast four nights of professional tennis coverage on channel 9. Viewers who turned in would have watched both the highest level tennis in the world and a poorly run event when compared to the major amateur tournaments like Wimbledon. For example, the professional players planned to give their own commentary rather than have a separate announcer narrate the matches. Budge had been both playing and broadcasting, but when he won in an upset, he couldn't broadcast anymore. Earn was just playing, but after Budge won and Earn lost, Earn took over broadcasting duties. In the tournament's final order of business, the players elected Cleveland's Robert Trenkamp as the professional tennis commissioner. That move did little to gain respectability for professional tennis, which continued into 1954 without open competition between amateurs and professionals.<sup>62</sup>

Kramer fretted that year about whether or not to step back from professional play because he knew the high likelihood of losing to a man he loathed in Gonzales. He knew his pocketbook would take a hit, but he also hated the idea of losing his first professional tour. Kramer reached a compromise with himself by announcing he would play doubles on the tour but not singles because of health complications, although he offered no explanation about how bending down for low volleys and rotating one's trunk for the American twist serve—the biomechanics that put the most stress on the players' spine—did not aggravate his back in doubles play while the same

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.; Ibid.

actions did on the singles court. The simple reality was that Kramer wanted to maintain his legacy as a player at all costs. His ego, a personality characteristic of many great competitors, actually worked against the financial success of the tour even after Kramer mostly retired from singles, played doubles sparingly, and focused almost exclusively on promotion just before the start of the 1954 tour.<sup>63</sup>

Gonzales took full advantage of that opening. He soundly beat all his challengers in a 1954 tour that more resembled a round robin than the undercard and primetime format Kramer had used for himself when he played. Gonzales won thirty matches to twenty-one losses against Frank Sedgman, thirty matches to twenty-one matches against Pancho Segura, and thoroughly dominated Don Budge and Carl Earn, who also played him in a smaller series of matches. The tournament format made for a mixed picture in that one player might lose in the stop's semi-final match one night and at the next stop win two matches in a row over two different opponents. The games of some players might match up well against all the competitors save one who would consistently beat that player. Kramer ran what sports commentators called his "circus" with a seasoned hand to try to prevent one player from consistently dominating the others to a degree that the gate receipts might suffer.<sup>64</sup>

The tour format also kept the players' finances in check because players were only paid if they won the two matches at each stop as opposed to a contract guarantee or option of a percentage of the gate receipt that the promoter had to meet. Whereas the professional champion

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<sup>63</sup> "End of Tour: Kramer Wins—On the Court and in the Bank," *World Tennis* 1, no. 1 (June 1953): 27; *Jack Kramer presents The World's Professional Championship Tennis*, 1955-1956 tour program, Tennis Tour Programs Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

<sup>64</sup> *Jack Kramer presents The World's Professional Championship Tennis*, 1955-1956 tour program, Tennis Tour Programs Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

previously secured upwards of \$70,000 for winning the tour, the round robin tournament meant that after seventy two-night tournaments, in effect more matches than had ever taken place on a professional tour before, the champion Gonzales, who won twenty-nine of those seventy events, took home \$39,425—or a little more than half what he had when he went down in defeat four years prior in the 1949-1950 tour. Moreover, more players on the tour meant more professionals in the spotlight and more confusion among sponsors about who to endorse. From Kramer's standpoint, that was all to the better because he could hide behind having won the last tour he fully competed on and keep his contracts with Wilson Sporting Goods and other companies well intact. The new round robin format did not give the same conclusiveness of results that the previous challenger versus champion format had. The lesser professionals did not seem to mind the round robin format because the previous challenger champion had allowed only for two prime-time players paid on guarantees or gate percentages and two undercard players paid on weekly salaries. All players could now compete for the dollars, and the prize money results showed a more equitable distribution than any previous tour: \$1,550 for Earn; \$2,125 for Riggs; \$3,170 for Kramer; \$12,050 for Budge; \$31,025 for Sedgman; \$31,025 for Segura; and \$39,425 for Gonzales. Given that even the tour's last place finisher Earn earned \$1,550 more than he could have as an amateur tennis player, the round robin format was attractive—attractive, that is, to everyone except the winner Gonzales, who in rising to the top now wanted a chance to show his dominance and be paid accordingly.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

The professional tour of 1955-1956 more closely resembled Gonzales's first professional tour in 1949-1950 in that the world's number one amateur turned professional to challenge the world's professional champion. This time Gonzales was the champion and Tony Trabert was the challenger. Along with Trabert, Kramer had convinced the Australian amateur doubles champion Rex Hartwig to turn professional to compete against the most entertaining of all the professionals, Francisco "Little Pancho" Segura, in the preliminary match. Kramer tried to adapt the format of each tour to suit the particular players competing that year. For example, in the 1955-1956 match he knew that Segura would soundly defeat Hartwig, so he kept their match short at only one set. He expected a close series between Gonzales and Trabert, so the main event match would be best three out of five sets. Hartwig's doubles skills would "feature" in the doubles contest that he increased from previous years to the best two out of three sets.<sup>66</sup>

Kramer also justified why he had again decided to skip playing in the tour. It came down to the stamina that Kramer lacked to play the "100 match series." When the players practiced, Big Jake laced up the boots, strung the racquets, and hit with them should an injury ever force him to "step in and fill the breach," but laying out a second season made clear to everyone who followed competitive tennis that Kramer's playing career had come to an end. He had won four tours, the same number as Don Budge, and two fewer than Ellsworth Vines, but over those four years Kramer had played four hundred tour matches in addition to the selected tournaments and random exhibitions the professionals played. His body was breaking down, and the baton passed to Pancho Gonzales. Yet Gonzales still had something to prove to everyone despite his past

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

results: he had won fourteen out of the past eighteen “major pro titles” that included the Nationals at Cleveland, the Internationals at Cleveland, the Miami Peach Professional Championship, the Los Angeles Professional Championship, the International Professional Championships at Wembley Stadium, the National Indoor Championship at Philadelphia, and the National Hardcourt Championship in Beverley Hills. He won the 1954 world’s professional tour against the world’s six best professionals with a singles record of 85 wins to 41 losses and a doubles record of 40 wins to 31 losses. Gonzales owned the most lethal shot in the sport, a 112-mile-per-hour serve—the fastest in recorded history.<sup>67</sup>

Kramer and Gonzales agreed to coexist, so the promoter went looking for the best players to compete against his new professional champion. Early headhunting did not go well when on October 17, 1955, the Australians amateur champions Ken Rosewall and Lew Hoad publicly walked-back their decision to turn professional. While competing in the United States for the defense of the Davis Cup, Rosewall and Hoad agreed to a behind-closed-doors offer from Kramer for £20,000 apiece guarantee for a professional tour against Big Jake and Tony Trabert. Once back in Australia, however, the Lawn Tennis Association of Australia officers applied pressure to the Slazengers and Dunlop sporting goods companies that employed Rosewall and Hoad to increase the players’ compensation to a level Kramer could not match. Slazengers went on to promise Rosewall the job security that professional tennis did not give with a five-year contract, an employee option to cancel the contract without penalty, and an executive position with the firm following his full-time playing days. To persuade Hoad against professionalism,

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.



the LTAA dangled what amounted to a blank check for tennis-related travel to Hoad, his wife Jenny, and his family.<sup>68</sup>

Kramer considered legal action. He produced contracts Hoad and Rosewall had signed for the professional tour. The LTAA produced contracts the players had signed prohibiting them from professional tennis. But Kramer realized the difficulty of litigation against popular athletes from another country—especially when the sporting goods companies also held employment contracts for each player that predated Kramer’s contract. In addition, both players were minors who had signed his contract without the binding signatures of their legal guardians. Kramer instead decided to try a carrot of his own with a red-eye flight to Sydney and a sweetening-of-the-pot to by \$17,000. When Dunlop stepped in again to offer more compensation to their player consultants, Kramer packed his bags and returned empty-handed. Rosewall and Hoad decided to stay away from the grueling reality of the professional tour until they were more prepared than Gonzales was in 1949.<sup>69</sup>

Kramer succeeded where other promoters failed because as a player-turned-promoter Kramer knew his sport and he knew how to manage his professionals. Two decades in the game had helped him refine the player contract that served as the principal mechanism he used to manage the strong-minded Gonzales and his fellow players. Whereas he had previously offered guarantees for a minimum income to entice players to join his tour, by the fall of 1953 Kramer felt self-assured enough to court globally known professional players such as the Czechoslovakian-turned-Egyptian and one-time world’s best amateur Jaroslav Drobny, to whom

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<sup>68</sup> Jim Russell, “Rosewall, Hoad Remain Amateurs,” *World Tennis* 3, no. 7 (December, 1953): 22-23.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

he offered a contract without a minimum compensation figure.<sup>70</sup> Contractual terms with the tour promoter mattered just as much if not more than match attendance, because without good terms for the player, any additional gate receipts could go right into the hands of the promoter. Donald Dell, a former amateur tennis champion, friend of Kramer, and a sports agent who managed professional athletes, nicknamed him “the czar of tennis” because of the influence Kramer wielded over the future of the game as tennis opened in 1968 because of preexisting contracts he held with many of the top players.<sup>71</sup>

Kramer certainly used those contracts first and foremost to benefit himself, but he did do some good by the players in helping to found the International Professional Tennis Players Association in Los Angeles during June 1960. Kramer realized that following his retirement from play at the end of 1953 and his sole focus on managing and promoting the top four professional players for his World Tennis Incorporated Tours, he had created some antagonism with the players who believed they drew the fans and therefore were entitled to a greater split of the gates than manager Kramer offered. His solution was to make the players greater stakeholders in their tennis enterprise. Kramer invited Earl Bucholz, Jr., Andres Gimeno, Rod Laver, Kenneth Rosewall, and Tony Trabert to join.<sup>72</sup> The Association’s by-laws and constitution stated a greater goal of mutual cooperation with the International Lawn Tennis

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<sup>70</sup> “Around the World,” *World Tennis* 1, no. 6 (November 1953): 36.

<sup>71</sup> Kramer and Deford, *The Game*, 212-4; Dell, *Minding Other People’s Business*, 87.

<sup>72</sup> *Richard A. Gonzalez v. The International Professional Tennis Players Association, an Un-Incorporated Association, Its Officers and Members, Earl Buchholz, Jr., as Member of the Association and Individually Kenneth Rosewall, as Officer of the Association and Individually, Anthony M. Trabert, as Officer of the Association and Individually, Jack Kramer, Myron McNamara, Haile Chasce, and Adler*, No. 63-CA-689 CC (C.D.C.A. Jun 13 1963), p. 2, NARA-Riverside.

Federation in bringing about Open Tennis competition between amateurs and professionals throughout the world. Two years after its founding, the organization claimed twenty-three members across countries, in effect the best tennis players on the planet.<sup>73</sup>

Those players could now run the professional tennis tour themselves. This suited Kramer just fine, because by the spring of 1962 he was tired of promoting the sport. In March he shuttered his Los Angeles offices—a quick process given that the only payroll he had to meet consisted of himself and his immediate family members who had kept his accounts. The option clause in the players’ contracts allowed Kramer to step away in quick order without having to meet any further financial obligations to the Australian professionals Lew Hoad, Frank Sedgman, Ashley Cooper, and Mal Anderson. All effectively entered free agency, while Pancho Segura relocated to Los Angeles to run the tennis program at the Beverly Hills Country Club. Pancho Gonzales likewise retired from touring to direct the tennis program at Paradise Island, Bahamas. The former amateur champion and professional touring player Tony Trabert tried to organize a professional tour. Without any top-card American players to recruit from amateur ranks or within the professionals themselves, Trabert decided to work with the four Australian free agents, sign the Australian professional Ken Rosewall, who had spent a good deal of 1961 retired from touring, and attempt to draw more top Australian players, who had dominated amateur tennis in the early 1960s, into the professional ranks. Both Neale Fraser and Roy Emerson declined

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<sup>73</sup> The International Professional Tennis Players’ Association, “Our Inauguration,” pp. 1-6, in *Richard A. Gonzalez v. The International Professional Tennis Players Association*, case file, NARA-Riverside. The players were M.A. “Mal” Anderson, Jack Arkinstall, Luis Ayala, Earl Bucholz, Jr., Ashley Cooper, Michael Davies, Andres Gimeno, Richard “Pancho” Gonzales, Robert Haillet, Rex Hartwig, Lewis Alan Hoad, Jack Kramer, Barry MacKay, Ken McGregor, Kurt Nielsen, Alex Olmedo, Dinny Pails, Paul Remy, Mervyn Rose, Kenneth Rosewall, Frank Sedgeman, Pancho Segura, and Anthony “Tony” Trabert.

professional contract offers, but Trabert landed the biggest name in world tennis in December 1962 when fresh off of a fourth consecutive Davis Cup win, the Grand Slam Champion Rod “Rocket” Laver joined the professionals.<sup>74</sup>

The recruitment of Laver brought the first player since Don Budge to have won the Grand Slam to the tour at a time when professional tennis desperately needed a fresh face. Everyone expected a positive impact on professional tennis because of Laver’s talent. Less apparent, however, to anyone except those on the inside was the discord among the players at that time. Trabert’s deep dislike of Gonzales made his choice to work with the Australian players as much a personal decision as a business one. Trabert considered the Australians agreeable and the future; he thought Pancho was surly and the past. While Gonzales had made his own decision to enter retirement with Kramer’s retirement, he did so expecting that the professional tour would go away with Kramer. Trabert’s resumption of the tour without giving Gonzales, the reigning professional champion, a chance to join on favorable terms prompted Pancho to channel his anger into a lawsuit that found its way to a federal court in Southern California.<sup>75</sup>

That 1963 case laid bare the fragility of professional tennis in the pre-1968 era as the players squabbled among themselves for the little bit of money in the game. Unfortunately for the petitioner Pancho, his counsel did not adequately explain to the judge just how little money there was in the professional game. The lawyer failed to reveal that a small clique of players (about half a dozen) in a larger group of three hundred tennis professionals, actually earned income from playing matches. More importantly, they monopolized that revenue source. He

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<sup>74</sup> “Around the World,” *World Tennis* 9, no. 10 (March 1962): 61.

<sup>75</sup> *Richard A. Gonzalez v. The International Professional Tennis Players Association*, case file, NARA-Riverside.

further failed to demonstrate that Gonzales's fellow professionals were guilty of discrimination. They deeply resented the position Pancho had held as the tour champion from 1954 to his first retirement in 1961. Along with his 1954 and 1955 wins, Gonzales defeated Ken Rosewall fifty matches to twenty-six matches in 1957, Lew Hoad fifty-one matches to thirty-six matches in 1958, Mal Anderson, Ashley Cooper, and Lew Hoad in a 1959 round robin, Ken Rosewall in 1960, as well as Andres Gimeno, Lew Hoad, Barry Mackay, Alex Olmedo, and Butch Bucholz for the "Kramer Cup" in 1961. Yet here he was, seemingly at the end of his career, suing them for scraps.<sup>76</sup>

Had that case been publicized, the public might have gained a better understanding of the economic weaknesses of professional tennis in the postwar period. The four or six best professional players formed the professional tour and barnstormed across the country playing exhibition matches night after night. The remainder of the tennis professionals, usually around two hundred people, mostly taught tennis and hoped for a "professional tournament circuit." That circuit never materialized, which meant that outside of the World Professional Championship tournament held in Cleveland, usually in June, more than 95 percent of professional players had no events in which to play. Noel Brown, one of those professionals without a place to play, found that situation so discouraging that he appealed the USLTA for reinstatement of his amateur status which he received after forswearing professional tennis and serving a two-year probationary period before being granted remittance to the amateur ranks.

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<sup>76</sup> Court Transcript pp. 154-178, *Richard A. Gonzalez v. The International Professional Tennis Players Association*, case file, NARA-Riverside; *Jack Kramer presents The World's Professional Championship Tennis*, 1960 tour program, Tennis Tour Programs Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Walter Bingham, "A Legend Dies on the Court," *Sports Illustrated*, July 8, 1963, pp. 18-19.

“The future of professional tennis is dismal, from the point of view of a pro circuit,” remarked Brown. “There is always room for the National Champion in an organized four-man pro tour, but the pros offer nothing to the lesser player who is still interested in playing tournaments.”<sup>77</sup>

Brown knew. He had tried to make a living as a professional for four years. Beginning in autumn 1946, as one of the top ten players in the country and a collegiate standout for UCLA, Brown decided to make a living as a professional, with ruinous financial consequences. Passed over by Kramer and Riggs for their tour, Brown taught lessons for \$6 an hour on the private Beverley Hills courts of clients such as William Wyler, Robert Parrish, Elia Kazan, Laurence Olivier, Coleen Gray, Jose Ferrer, and Montgomery Clift. He liked the work but missed playing. He knew that he had no job security and no means for promotion in what equated to life as an independent contractor. Three to four lessons a day were the most any “free-lance” professional ever secured in Los Angeles—the tennis capital of the country in the mid-twentieth century. Even in major tennis areas such as Southern California and Southeast Florida, only a handful of tennis clubs existed with a membership and grounds to support a professional looking to teach and raise a family: the Los Angeles Tennis Club in Los Angeles, the La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club in La Jolla, California; the Boca Raton hotel, and the Hollywood Beach Hotel in Florida, as examples. More club professional positions existed along the private tennis, cricket, and athletic clubs and resorts along the mid-Atlantic and Northeast, but here class privilege often meant that the club professional’s treatment and compensation did not rise above that of “hired help.” Unless a player had the game of Jack Kramer, Pancho Gonzales, Ken Rosewall, or Rod Laver with a personality to match, it made more financial sense to remain in the amateur ranks where

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<sup>77</sup> Noel Brown, “I Was A Pro,” *World Tennis* 1, no. 1 (June 1953): 19.

small subsidies and allowances appeared with surprising regularity.<sup>78</sup> Even for the best players and their promoter, professional tennis was not that great to them before 1968.

Near the conclusion of Pancho's suit against his fellow professionals, the judge spoke. "My judgement of Mr. Gonzales is he is a pretty good business man. I don't know how good a tennis player he is but he is an excellent business man," explained judge Charles Carr.<sup>79</sup> In that decision, at least, the judge was completely wrong. Gonzales played a great game of tennis but in the business of professional sport he failed miserably. He beat all the best players in the world throughout most of the 1950s and into the early 1960s, a decade at the top of the game, yet he fared financially worse than players he crushed on the court. Racism was an important factor. Pancho's income in 1963 was a pittance by the standards of the top handful of athletes in a global sport, but that income accurately reflected the outsider status of professional tennis. He earned \$25,000 for four months of seasonal employment at the Paradise Island Bahamas resort, where he taught tennis to rich tourists—his principal source of income. He earned \$15,000 a year from the Spaulding Company for his Pancho Gonzales Signature racquet and endorsements of other sporting goods products. His status as the top draw tennis player in the world also netted an additional income of \$4,000 in media appearances and \$5,000 in tournament guarantees, which together put his total income in the last year of his real tennis form at \$49,000. He was thirty-five years old.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.; Gladys Heldman, "Around the World," *World Tennis* 1, no. 1 (June 1953): 18.

<sup>79</sup> Judge comments, Court Transcript p. 178, *Richard A. Gonzalez v. The International Professional Tennis Players Association*, case file, NARA-Riverside.

<sup>80</sup> "Interlocutory Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Order," pp. 2-3, in *Richard A. Gonzalez v. The International Professional Tennis Players Association*, case file, NARA-Riverside.

The reality of Gonzales's money troubles appeared in sharp relief when compared to the generation of players who peaked right after he did. Pancho dominated professional tennis from 1954 to 1964, but he did not own the sport. There was not much to own. Few television contracts, limited corporate sponsorships, and inadequate tournament venues kept the best players in the world playing points for pennies. The tour promoter Jack Kramer retained the lion's share of what professional tennis made during that decade. Barred from returning to subsidized amateur competition, Gonzales and his fellow touring professionals had little recourse but to begrudgingly accept Kramer's terms. That changed in 1968.

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

### OPEN TENNIS TOURNAMENTS, PROMOTERS, AND TOURS

Pancho Gonzales's off-again-on-again retirement from professional tennis helped propel the sport into the doldrums. People attended matches to see the familiar champion. Kramer's withdrawal from managing the tour also mattered. He was the only person truly experienced in managing the more than one hundred separate appearances the group made across six continents. The players tried to compensate for both these absences by creating a tournament circuit with far fewer dates and venues to replace the more peripatetic touring days of World Tennis Incorporated. That changed format seemed especially necessary because the professional players now managed themselves in the International Tennis Professionals Association, which purported to organize prize-money events for any player who belonged to the Association and wished to compete. While real equality never materialized in practice, the Association did have a number of more active professional players competing for prize money than Kramer ever had without any of the carrot-and-stick contracts he deployed to control his players during the fifties.<sup>1</sup>

Riven with rivalries, the professionals failed to tour in 1963. The following year they organized a series of professional tournaments that carried an average purse of \$10,000 divided across a sixteen-player draw. The \$1,000 the first place finisher earned for a half-week of work barely covered his expenses in many parts of the world. In 1965 the finances behind the

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<sup>1</sup> "Around the World," *World Tennis* 9, no. 10 (March 1962): 61; "Around the World," *World Tennis* 9, no. 6 (November 1961): 56; "Around the World," *World Tennis* 9, no. 7 (December 1961): 56.

tournaments improved somewhat, but most everything else behind the events remained touch-and-go. The promotions of the events, or rather lack thereof, caused spectators to confuse the 7th Regiment Armory with the 71st Regiment Armory when the troupe played New York City. One professional, Barry MacKay, woke to nightmares of crowds crushing him in the cramped quarters where the players performed, only to find the real nightmare of actually playing in front of only 200 fans. Older professionals such as Lew Hoad continued to draw fans, but they often withdrew from an event at the last moment because their body or their mind simply could no longer take the day-to-day grind of life on the road in front of what seemed like dwindling crowds. Such last-minute withdrawals left fellow professionals playing in front of hostile or smaller crowds upset that the player they most wanted to see had bailed at the final moments. On balance, the professionals could not pay nor police themselves.<sup>2</sup>

Their frailty and factionalism attracted the attention of outsiders who saw opportunities to better organize and promote the players. At the same time the national amateur Associations became so divided themselves over the long-simmering debate of Open Tennis that the International Lawn Tennis Federation could no longer punt on that important topic. Disunity among and between both the amateur and professional leaders of the sport had prevailed from Suzanne Lenglen's playing days through those of Bill Tilden, Jack Kramer, and Pancho Gonzales. Those discrepancies would only increase, however, now that money could flow into the sport like never before. Professional tennis began to turn professional as a new generation of promoters—who had less connection to the game than player-promoters such as Tilden, Vines,

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<sup>2</sup> Mal Anderson, "The Pros Play New York," *World Tennis* 13, no. 1 (June, 1965): 36-39.

Perry, Riggs, Kramer, and Trabert—bought into the sport.<sup>3</sup> Sports promoters from outside organized tennis saw opportunity to make money in the game because disunity within and between national amateur associations had reached a degree that Open Tennis seemed a real possibility by the mid-1960s. Over the next decade the conflict and compromise between insiders and those outsiders made that possibility into modern professional tennis. The Open Era of tennis had arrived.

The most tradition-bound of all the national associations actually did the most to bring about Open Tennis in the years leading up to 1968. Modern sport began in Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, then spread throughout the world thanks to Britain's colonialization efforts and empire building. That geopolitical development assigned to Wimbledon a great deal of symbolic weight for the British and foreigners alike. Prior to World War II the English crowds at SW19 had a reputation for restrained applause and general appreciativeness to competitors from anywhere in the world. After 1945, however, Wimbledon fans earned a reputation for the reproach of foreign players. Ironically, given that they were allies during the War, British spectators treated American players more harshly than athletes from any other country, as several players made clear: "They would like to see the Americans lose," remarked the Indian player Narranda Nah; "Yes, they are anti-American," said Violette Rigollet Alvensleben of Belgium; "I don't think they like the Americans," stated the Frenchmen Jean Claude Molinari. In the 1948 doubles final featuring Gardner Mulloy and Tom Brown of the United States versus John Bromwich and Frank Sedgman of Australia, the British fans broke all tennis protocol by applauding wildly after service faults by the American team. In that match,

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<sup>3</sup> "Twenty Five Years Ago," *World Tennis* 4, no. 5 (October, 1956): 11.

along with each match that involved Americans, the Wimbledon fans reenacted the decline of the British Empire and the ascent of the United States as a world power. "It is because of Empire," said the English player Gem Hoahing when asked why the British had changed the way they cheered. For a quarter of a century since the Englishman Fred Perry last won the Wimbledon Championships in 1936, Britain endured not only the drought of a national champion but also watched while Australia and the United States competed in nearly every Davis Cup Challenge Round in the postwar period. The serious consideration the British Lawn Tennis Association gave in 1961 to hosting an Open Tournament without the ILTF's blessing exemplified a willingness on the part of British elites, some of whom also served in positions within the government, to reassert sovereignty and to take a measure of pride in the face of waning influence.<sup>4</sup>

Pride and insecurity had in the recent past prompted the British LTA to thwart attempts by other national associations to bring about Open Tennis. As far back as 1930 the USLTA had brought the idea of Open Tennis to the International Tennis Federation in the midst of the swirling controversy of the great American Bill Tilden's Davis Cup suspension and decision to turn professional. The resolution stalled until 1934 when USLTA President Louis Carruthers again broached the idea of amateur and professional competition. Once again Open Tennis went down to defeat. The Depression and World War II kept Open Tennis off the radar until after 1945, when the aggressive professional touring and promoting of Bobby Riggs and Jack Kramer soured a number of tennis officials on the character of professional tennis. By 1961, however,

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<sup>4</sup> Gloria Butler, "Four Wimbledon Questions," *World Tennis* 1, no. 2 (July 1953): 26; "The Open Tournament and the Specter of Jack Kramer," *World Tennis* 8, no. 10 (March 1961): 28-29; "Around the World," *World Tennis* 8, no. 11 (April, 1961): 60-61, 63-65.

Kramer had mostly left the picture, and USLTA officials revived Carruthers's 1934 Open Tennis resolution and presented it to the ITLF. The French Tennis Federation and the British LTA effectively killed the USLTA's push for Open Tennis, divided the USLTA sections over Open Tennis, and embittered tennis officials in the United States against their British counterparts. Four years later the British would need the cooperation of the Americans they had not long ago spurned.<sup>5</sup>

At first many members of the ILTF did not believe that the highly conservative All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club would come out in favor of Open Tennis. The Wimbledon host retained only between three hundred and four hundred total members and admitted a new member to full status only after a fifteen-year probationary period. The titled nobility that comprised a significant proportion of the Club's membership roll certainly favored tradition in most other walks of their lives while the new-money members likewise valued the tradition of Wimbledon for the prestige that heritage imparted on their own social statuses.<sup>6</sup>

Tradition cut both ways, however. Many tennis enthusiasts within Britain could not help but wring their hands over how lawn tennis had languished in the land that invented it when compared to the successes of other nations such as America and Australia on the international scene. As Great Britain failed year after year to advance to the Davis Cup Challenge Round, the British Lawn Tennis Association began to rely almost entirely on the Wimbledon Championships to subsidize all tennis activity in England. Even after some efforts to expand the tournament grounds, by the 1960s capacity crowds of 30,000 people attended most days of the

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<sup>5</sup> Edward C. Potter to Gladys Heldman, *World Tennis* 13, no. 5 (October 1965): 2.

<sup>6</sup> "Around the World," *World Tennis* 13, no. 3 (August 1965): 75; Lance Tingay, "Wimbledon Presses On," *World Tennis* 13, no. 4 (September [misprinted on magazine as October], 1965): 58-59.

tournament's fortnight, prompting the All England Club and their partners in running the tournament and sharing revenue, the British Lawn Tennis Association, to return more than \$250,000 in presale tickets to fans who had requested tickets but could not be accommodated during that year's tournament. Total monies collected by the British LTA from the tournament approximated \$140,000 annually by the 1960s. That number alone outvoted the hundred councilors from across the country who decided the policies of the British LTA. With the wishes of the Championships Committee of Management, stacked with All England Club members, firmly in favor of Open Tennis, the many members of the British LTA opposed to Open Tennis consoled themselves with the history that when cricket began open competition the sport had still retained much of its heritage while also improving its revenue stream. They hoped for the same with tennis.<sup>7</sup>

The leadership of the British LTA understood that Wimbledon was a jewel in their crown that put them in a unique position to press for Open Tennis when compared to the situations other national amateur associations making up the ILTF. Most ILTF member nations hosted their own national championships that invited popular foreign players to attend in order to increase the revenue the associations collected at the tournament gates. At the same time, few of these tournaments offered the players much in terms of expenses while many of the associations ran the tournaments in a sloppy fashion that frustrated the international players to the point of not attending, had the players had a choice in the matter. In fact, they did not have much of a choice because the real value in the ILTF came in the unity of the amateur associations at the expense of

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<sup>7</sup> "Around the World," *World Tennis* 13, no. 3 (August 1965): 75; Lance Tingay, "Wimbledon Presses On," *World Tennis* 13, no. 4 (September [misprinted on magazine as October] 1965): 58-59.

the players within different national associations. For example, players despised the poorly run Italian Championships to the point that the tournament would have folded long before 1965 had the Italian Tennis Association not requested the ILTF to direct other member countries to require their own players to attend the tournament. The attendance of the international players, despite their own frustration with the situation, prompted more spectators to attend the Italian Championships than otherwise would have. That in turn put the Italian Tennis Association in a better financial situation, having run a more profitable tournament without having had to invest money in actually improving the experience for the players. That situation was not uncommon among national associations within the ILTF.<sup>8</sup>

Not surprisingly, most of the smaller countries that ran smaller National Championships offered little in the way of player expenses. They wanted to see nothing change in how the ILTF conducted business. In the fall of 1965, then, the British LTA planned to move slowly in bringing other countries around to Open Tennis. The first tournament allowing amateurs and professionals to play could take place in the summer of 1966 or perhaps not even until 1967, and then a few more Open tournaments would appear on the schedule each year. The British plan of gradualism and compromise proved difficult to execute, primarily because the memberships of other national amateur associations were themselves divided over Open Tennis.<sup>9</sup>

Such was the case in the United States for years. The USLTA's national office failed to control Kramer's professional tennis players and struggled to keep the Association's various sections under the control. Those shortcomings finally cracked the longstanding opposition to

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<sup>8</sup> Tingay, "Wimbledon Presses On," 58-59.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

Open Tennis within the USLTA—the ILTF’s largest member nation. In 1956 the USLTA celebrated their “Diamond Jubilee” not at the traditional site of the annual meeting in New York City but in San Francisco, in what one meeting attendee called a testament to the “growing power” of the West Coast Sections of the Association. There, representatives from the 193 California tennis clubs realized that if they joined with clubs from the Pacific Northwest, Southwest, Mountain States, Midwest, and South, they could easily defeat the votes held by the 213 Eastern Section Clubs. They did so the following winter, sweeping the New Yorker Renville McCann out of the top position in the Association in favor of the Seattle financier Victor Dinny. Dinny replaced the officers from the East Coast and Mid-Atlantic with his own retainers, who ranged from Chicago to Florida. The most high profile removal Dinny made concerned the holy-of-holies of amateurism in American tennis—the Davis Cup. Bill Talbert, a former player turned coach, had led the Davis Cup team since 1953. Although the 1954 team defeated Australia, the squad put together by the famous Australian coach Harry Hopman had won seven of the previous eight Challenge Rounds. By 1958 Dinny decided to make a change. With one phone call he replaced the flabbergasted Talbert with Perry Jones, a surprise move, given Talbert’s pedigree as both a champion player and a proven match-situation coach compared to Jones’s strength as an organizer rather than an on-court tactician. Jones got the job done, though, and the Davis Cup returned to the United States from Australia in 1958. That victory brought Pails a great deal of goodwill from conservatives within the USLTA in terms of pushing other reforms centered on player expenses and amateurism.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> George McGann, “75 Years with the USLTA: A History of Hassles, Squabbles, and Controversies,” *World Tennis* 3, no. 8 (January, 1956): 11-13; Alan Trengove, *The Story of the Davis Cup* (London: Stanley Paul & Co., 1985),



At the annual meeting of the International Lawn Tennis Federation during the first week of July in 1960, voting members seemed ready to allow open competition between amateur players and professionals for the first time. Perry Jones's popularity on the national tennis scene allowed him to convince many reticent USLTA voters that Kramer had no designs to monopolize the sport should the United States back the prospect of Open competition. Australia, France, and Great Britain, along with the United States, collectively represented the big four tennis nations. Those countries produced most of the world's top players and had won every Davis Cup competition since the Cup began in 1900. All agreed and voted in favor of the Open Tennis resolution—though Britain and France chose not to exercise their sizable influence over other European countries that would have resulted in a land-slide victory for the American championed Open Tennis resolution. Other countries saw the matter differently, however. Spain's fear of losing their top player, Andres Gimeno, to a Kramer contract single-handedly caused that country's members to vote against the proposed rule changes. Open tennis in 1960 fell only five votes short of the necessary two-thirds super-majority. That autumn a sportswriter opined that the sport of tennis had reached its "low point" and over the next half decade many USLTA members wrote to the Association's leadership with much the same views.<sup>11</sup>

Jack Kramer, for one, certainly agreed with that assessment. He fervently believed that ILTF members voted more against Jack Kramer than they did against Open Tennis. Some members of the ILTF admitted as much. Reluctant supporters within the USLTA of the 1960

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11, 565; "Comes the Tennis Revolution," *Sports Illustrated*, February 24, 1958, pp. 23-25.

<sup>11</sup> "Tennis Faces Backward," *Sports Illustrated*, July 18, 1960, p. 10; Gilbert Rogin, "Low Point for Tennis," *Sports Illustrated*, September 19, 1960, p. 36; Ann Wetzell to Edwin Baker, *World Tennis* 13, no. 8 (January 1966): 8.

Open Tennis legislation returned to their normal tennis activities. Perry Jones, for example, began devoting his energy to attracting the United States National Championship from Forest Hills to the Los Angeles Tennis Club. USLTA conservatives opposed to Open Tennis had their biases confirmed with the 1960 no vote, and they redoubled their efforts to keep money out of the game, or at least money they did not control out of the game. Between 1963 and 1966 the USLTA in effect voted for a gag rule on the issue of Open Tennis when the topic arose at the ILTF annual meeting.<sup>12</sup>

Yet change was on the horizon, with the British LTA proposing to the ILTF a semantic change from amateur versus professional to a single category of “players” out of which applications could be made for tournament travel and training expenses in a more transparent and less under-the-table way. Jean Borotra, the former French amateur champion turned French Tennis Federation director and ILTF official, urged refining the player designation category. In his formulation, a “Special Committee” would meet to designate a player acceptable—in the view of the various national associations and the international Federation—to receive traveling stipends and living expenses throughout the year. Such semantics did not actually solve the “hypocrisy of sham-amateurism” constitutive of topflight international tennis for more than half a century, but Borotra’s words and the policies that followed gently nudged tennis toward Open competition at the same time the vote tallies of ILTF member nations told a different story.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> “Around the World,” *World Tennis* 8, no. 4 (September 1960): 63; “Around the World,” *World Tennis* 8, no. 10 (March 1961) 45; “Around the World,” *World Tennis* 9, no. 5 (October, 1961): 69; “Around the World,” *World Tennis* 8, no. 12 (May 1961): 45; Lance Tingay to Ned Potter, *World Tennis* 13, no. 8 (January, 1966): 4; Gladys Heldman, “A Senior International Championship,” *World Tennis* 14, no.10 (March, 1967): 14.

<sup>13</sup> “Around the World,” *World Tennis* 9, no. 9 (February, 1962): 68; Jean Borotra, “The Case for the Authorized Player,” *World Tennis* 7, no. 11 (April 1960): 14.

As before, the All England Club considered letting professionals onto their courts only if the tournament committee worked directly with the players and had nothing to do with Kramer. His aggressive recruitment of the Australian amateur champions Roy Emerson and Rod Laver further soured the mood for Open Tennis because the Australian Lawn Tennis Association felt compelled to pay their players unmatchable expenses to remain amateurs at the same time the ILTF had sought unanimity from national associations in piloting their new player expense structure. By 1960, top Australian players were accustomed to Australian sporting goods companies putting up £100,000 per year for player expenses. When decreased Davis Cup revenue from the Australians' near perpetual hosting of the Challenge Round dwindled in the mid-1960s, Australian businessman and tennis fan Bob Mitchell bankrolled Australian tennis players at £4,000 per player, which, combined with money from the Australian LTA and other sources, proved enough to keep players such as Roy Emerson, Ashley Cooper, and Margaret Smith Court amateurs playing for Australia rather than professionals playing for Jack Kramer. That practice put the differing agendas among different national associations within the ILTF into sharp relief in 1966 and that ultimately delayed what many sports commentators thought inevitable only a year before. Yet at the same time, contemporary officials in the USLTA, other national associations, and the ILTF missed the irony that the apotheosis of amateur tennis in the Davis Cup was the Trojan Horse about to let the professional raiders in to sack their amateur stronghold.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> "Around the World," *World Tennis* 9, no. 8 (January, 1962): 53; "Around the World," *World Tennis* 9, no. 9, (February 1962): 67-68; "Around the World," *World Tennis* 9, no. 10 (March, 1962): 61; Jack Pollard, "'Mystery Man' Wins January Marlboro Award," *World Tennis* 13, no. 8 (January, 1966): 32-33.

### George MacCall and National Tennis League

George MacCall's Davis Cup captaincy and Robert Kelleher's USLTA Presidency during the mid-1960s pushed the USLTA away from the anti-Open Tennis stance they had maintained between 1963 and 1966 to greater amenability to the idea by 1967. For the first time in his life, Perry Jones began delegating some of his tennis responsibilities to others as the old Southern California Tennis Association leader started to slow in the early sixties. Based in Los Angeles and with personal wealth and a flexible schedule from his insurance business, MacCall became one of Jones's protégés, performing some administrative duties for the Pacific Southwest Tournament and the Southern California Tennis Association. The USLTA named former Utah tennis champion David Freed Davis Cup captain to replace the aging Jones in 1960, thanks to the voting alliance of the Mountain States Section and the Pacific State Sections. Freed, however, proved an ineffective choice. The captaincy then passed to Robert Kelleher until the Association believed Kelleher better served United States tennis in several vice-president positions and as a delegate to the ILTF before his election to the USLTA Presidency in 1967. George MacCall assumed the duties of Davis Cup captain in 1965.<sup>15</sup>

MacCall immediately set to bringing more money into amateur tennis by convincing the USLTA to triple the budget for his handful of players from \$26,000 to \$64,000. The investment did not pay off in terms of wresting the Cup away from the Australians. In fact, under MacCall, the U.S. Davis Cup team suffered repeated pre-Challenge Round losses: first to Spain in 1965;

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<sup>15</sup>George MacCall, "National Tennis League," handwritten history, no date, Folder 1, Box 1, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; Biography of Robert Joseph Kelleher, Legal-Licensing Corporation of America 4/67-10/67 Folder [no number], Box 3, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Gladys Heldman, "Captain George MacCall," *World Tennis* 13, no. 4 (September [misprinted on magazine as October], 1965): 12-13.

then to Brazil in 1966; and most disastrously to the reputation-conscious USLTA, to Ecuador in the Americas Inter-Zonal Final in 1967. In defending himself from attacks both outside and within the USLTA, MacCall went on offense, stating that “nothing succeeds with the USLTA like failure,” when asked by reporters about his records as Davis Cup captain in April of 1967. With failure on the courts and finger-pointing in the press, MacCall started the summer with the job still his in all likelihood because he maintained strong relationships with most of his players. Both coach and players defended one another from outside threats, and that common defense created the camaraderie that MacCall soon put to his advantage in deciding to break away from the amateur ranks of the USLTA and forge his own tennis tour.<sup>16</sup>

In the fall of 1967 MacCall was ready to make his move. He signed many of the best players because his position as the United States Davis Cup captain from 1965 to 1967 gave him access to America’s and the world’s best players at just the right moment. Arthur Ashe, for example, sought the counsel of his coach on whether or not to compete in the 1968 Wimbledon Championships at the point when the International Lawn Tennis Federation had yet to affirm Open Tennis and therefore threatened disciplinary actions against any player who bucked that organization’s authority. MacCall quickly named Pancho Gonzales coach of the 1965 squad because of Gonzales’s successful coaching of the last United States Davis Cup squad to win the Cup in 1963. MacCall’s appointment of Gonzales built a working relationship between the semi-retired professional champion and the upstart tennis promoter. Gonzales’s regular practice sessions with the Davis Cup squad players at the Los Angeles Tennis Club got the former

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<sup>16</sup> “Around the World,” *World Tennis* 14, no. 6 (November, 1966): 54; “Around the World,” *World Tennis* 14, no. 11 (April 1967): 68; “Around the World,” *World Tennis* 14, no. 12 (May, 1967): 79.

champion back in playing shape. That led to MacCall signing Gonzales as one of his first tennis professionals for his newly formed National Tennis League and newly formed Tennis Championships, Incorporated. A minimum guarantee of \$40,000 for a twenty-six week season was much more money for much less work than Gonzales had earned while the number one player in the world under Kramer's control. MacCall used Kramer's technique of offering substantial guarantees to sign most of the top international players to his troupe at just the right time.<sup>17</sup>

Kramer's heavy-handed and at times under-handed management of his players resulted in myriad conflicts between the professionals and their promoter. In the main, though, Kramer's stern approach kept the big personalities of his players more or less in check, and that meant he could schedule a robust series of international tour dates, actually deliver his players to the events in order to keep sponsors happy, and in turn make sure his players were compensated well enough to keep them touring in the face of many obstacles. The same could not be said for the professionals in 1964, 1965, and 1966 when the players themselves—mainly led by Australians—more or less ran their own international tour that increasingly focused on

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<sup>17</sup> Robert Shepherd, Jr., to George MacCall, April 26, 1965, Folder 18, Box 2, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; Arthur Ashe to George MacCall, November 13, 1967, Folder 9, Box 1, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; Joe Henderson, "Gonzales to Coach U.S. Davis Cup Team," *Los Angeles Times*, March 17, 1965, p. C5; Joe Hendrickson, "Davis Cuppers in Good Hands," unknown publication, n.d., Box 2, Folder 15, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; Pancho Gonzales, "The Davis Cup," unknown publication, November, 1966, Box 2, Folder 2, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; Bob Galt, "Courtside with Pancho," unknown publication, no date, unknown publication, n.d., Box 2, Folder 15, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; Tennis Championships, Incorporated, promotional brochure, Folder 5, Box 2, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; Richard A. Gonzales Player Agreement, September 30, 1968, Box 2, Folder 15, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; Tennis Championships, Incorporated, promotional brochure, Folder 2, Box 15, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; "Around the World," *World Tennis* 15, no. 6 (November, 1967): 66.

tournament tennis in the land Down Under. Kramer continued to promote a handful of tournaments in the United States and Great Britain that generally did quite well, but the players took the day-to-day management of the tour into their own hands in forming the International Professional Tennis Association. In July that organization passed a code of conduct that stipulated fines for behavior infractions. Self-policing, however, meant individual professionals continued to do as they please.<sup>18</sup>

The year 1967 began in much the same inauspicious way with the failure of the professionals to recruit top amateurs such as Roy Emerson and Tony Roche into the pay ranks. Emerson, Roche, and other amateurs maintained they could make more under the table than the guarantees they were offered to turn professional. These top amateurs likewise did not believe the professionals could actually deliver on the guarantees they made. Rod Laver, for example, went on record reporting that as a top amateur he earned “between \$600 and \$700” per week from the Australian LTA and various other sources. During the year he made around \$40,000 of tax-free money in a sport whose amateur bodies purported that no money outside of single-figure per day (and then only during select tournament weeks) expenses made it into players’ pockets.<sup>19</sup>

That hypocrisy mattered more than ever to the professionals, because without new challengers to fill their ranks, people failed to turn up to watch the same match-ups they saw before. Whereas during the Kramer tours of the fifties, the professionals only toured in a group

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<sup>18</sup> Gladys Heldman, “The Best and Worst of 1966,” *World Tennis* 14, no. 9 (February, 1967): 12 ; “Around the World,” *World Tennis* 13, no. 12 (1965): 85; “Around the World,” *World Tennis* 14, no. 5 (October 1966): 74; “Around the World,” *World Tennis* 14, no. 4 (September 1966): 77, 79.

<sup>19</sup> “Around the World,” *World Tennis* 14, no. 8 (January, 1967): 70, 74-75, 79-80; David Gray, “The Pros at Wimbledon” *World Tennis* 15, no. 5 (October 1967): 74-75. “Around the World,” *World Tennis* 14, no. 6 (November 1966): 50.

of four, by 1967 a dozen professionals wanted to play on at least a semi-regular basis. Those numbers combined with a lack of suitable venues to accommodate multiple matches simultaneously forced the professionals to divide into two groups for the 1967 tours. A reduced schedule for each individual player made few of them happy, and the unwillingness of venues such as Madison Square Garden—which professional tennis had been closely associated with since the tours of Suzanne Lenglen, Vinnie Richards, and Bill Tilden—to host the players for their opener further distressed the athletes. To a man they vocalized that distress in screeds against the ILTF, the Australian LTA, and the USLTA—the latter of which took steps at the start of 1967 toward paying top American amateurs’ expenses equivalent to a full-time white-collar job. At the very moment when their tennis touring reached a nadir, the professionals catalyzed the cause of Open Tennis not through their actions but through their words. The willingness of Laver and other professionals to speak candidly to the sports press, particularly newspapers and magazines in Great Britain, about the secret payments they had received while playing as amateurs galled British LTA officials and galvanized them to take action against amateur-shamateurism.<sup>20</sup>

Over the next year, that action culminated in tennis becoming the last major world sport to allow Open competition between amateurs and professionals. In the summer of 1967 the ILTF held their annual meeting at Mondorft-les Bains, Luxembourg, where Open Tennis appeared up for a vote for the first time since 1961. The early tally looked like Open Tennis would carry with the three of the four largest tennis nations—the United States, England, and Australia. The latter

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<sup>20</sup> “Around the World,” *World Tennis* 14, no. 9 (February 1967): 66, 73-74.



defied the Australian LTA President William “Big Bill” Edwards’s conspicuous hatred of tennis professionals. All voted in favor of the resolution. The situation changed, however, when France mysteriously abstained from voting, and then smaller nations cast their votes. Every country in South America, Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe voted no to Open Tennis. The resolution failed 139 votes to 83 in favor. While the British LTA had expected solid opposition from the Soviet countries whose state sponsorship of players amounted to professionalism in all but name, the lack of support from countries such as Italy, France, India, and Brazil had ultimately doomed the measure to defeat.<sup>21</sup>

The British LTA moved ahead undeterred in staging a speculative professional tournament at the grandest venue in tennis. Since his first year as a professional, Jack Kramer had spoken his desire to get onto the lawn courts of the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club and play a professionals-only version of Wimbledon. Twenty years later, in August 1967, the British LTA decided to make that happen in part because Kramer had exited the promotional business. The All England Club extended direct invitations to Rod Laver, Ken Rosewall, Andres Gimeno, Dennis Ralston, Fred Stolle, and Pancho Gonzales, with an additional two spots determined by qualification matches. Some of these players had not entered the walled grounds of the Club as a spectator, let alone a player, since they had turned professional; all would now play for the largest purse in professional tennis history at £21,500. The tournament initially underperformed expectations; the short horizon of the preparations, the novelty of the event, and the lack of publicity led to only half of the seats on Centre Court filled on day one. The thirty-

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<sup>21</sup> “Around the World,” *World Tennis* 15, no. 4 (September 1967): 73; “Around the World,” *World Tennis* 15, no. 3 (August, 1967): 85.

nine-year-old Pancho Gonzales and the thirty-two-year-old Lew Hoad salvaged the tournament, though, with a spirited 3-6, 11-9, 8-6 match that repeatedly brought the crowd to their feet and left everyone who saw the tennis wondering what they had been missing by not getting to see these two professionals on Centre Court, where the caliber of their play so evidenced that that was where they belonged. Centre Court remained “Standing Room Only” for the remainder of the tournament, while the BBC broadcast the matches in color television around the world. Laver won the singles while Gonzales and Gimeno partnered to win the doubles. All the professionals walked away from the Wimbledon Professional Championships feeling good about the experience. In fact, the real winner of the Professional Wimbledon was the British LTA and the All England Club, who now had the confirmation that an Open Tournament would prove a commercial success.<sup>22</sup>

That momentum carried into the turning point that made Open Tennis a reality. On October 4, 1967, the British LTA decided to hold an open tournament despite the prohibition against such events by the ILTF. “We have hopes of not going it alone,” said British LTA President Judge Carl Aarvold, “but we have had no assurances from anyone.” The boldness of the British LTA action took other ILTF member nations by such surprise that assurances of any kind did not come for what felt like forever. To heighten the anxiety those opponents faced, the International Professional Tennis Association (IPTA) had recently been restructured into a corporation with an elected Board of Directors that for the first time included managers from outside tennis. Those directors brought a more aggressive approach to dealing with infighting

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<sup>22</sup> “Around the World,” *World Tennis* 15, no. 3 (August 1967): 87; David Gray, “The Pros at Wimbledon,” *World Tennis* 15, no. 5 (October 1967): 74-75.

among the professionals and, more substantially in terms of shaping the Open Tennis debate, a more aggressive approach to pressuring top amateur players to turn professional. In addition to the dozen professionals currently touring the world, the IPTA Board pursued the top twenty ranked amateurs so aggressively that amateur officials in countries like Australia expected that they would lose at least half of their world-rated players to professionalism. That was enough to prompt leaders such as USLTA President Bob Kelleher to put the idea of Open Tennis to a USLTA sectional vote after his own Executive Committee defeated the measure twenty-two opposed to twenty-one in favor. The seventeen USLTA Sections unanimously supported Open Tennis, and the USLTA delegates felt free to offer quiet support for the British LTA's Open Tennis agenda. Two years earlier the USLA Executive Committee had paid private investigators to ferret out expenses paid to players "under the table"; now the USLTA Sections voted unanimously that no Open Tennis position held by members of that Committee was irrelevant.<sup>23</sup>

Most people who spoke up about the Open Tennis issue supported the British LTA in their decision to make the 1968 Wimbledon Championships a tournament that allowed professionals. ILTF President Giorgio de Stefani's position that "a certain hypocrisy" on the part of the ILTF was preferable to the "antidemocratic and illegal action" of the British LTA was well outside the mainstream. De Stefani expressed his intention to remove any country from the ILTF if those national associations did not enforce ILTF rules against Open Tennis on their players. He seemed more or less alone in his opinion that the Open Wimbledon would prove such a financial flop that other countries would not even consider allowing professionals to play their own

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<sup>23</sup> "The British Defy Ban on Open Tennis," *World Tennis* 15, no. 6 (November 1967): 44-45; "Around the World," *World Tennis* 14, no. 12 (May 1967): 84; "Around the World," *World Tennis* 15, no. 2 (July 1967): 75; "Around the World," *World Tennis* 15, no. 3 (August 1967): 84-85; "Around the World," *World Tennis* 14, no. 1 (June 1966): 83.

national championships. USLTA Section Association presidents from Richard Botsch in Delaware to Robert Kelleher in the National Office opined in favor of the Open Wimbledon. Amateur players from Tony Roche in Australia, Pierre Darmon in France, and Allen Fox in the United States all voiced their intention to play the Open Wimbledon. Even recently retired professionals such as Lew Hoad announced their intention to get back into playing shape so they could participate. Professional promoters both past and present—Jack Kramer, George MacCall, and recent arrival to the scene Dave Dixon—all pledged the participation of the professional players. The only minority opinion that would matter was retired French Davis Cup player Bernard Destremau, who remarked that France “should organize a Roland Garros Open.”<sup>24</sup>

That, it turned out, was exactly what happened. French tennis had languished at the world level since the days of Suzanne Lenglen and the glory years of the Four Musketeers. Lenglen had died thirty years earlier in 1938, but Jean Borotra, Jacques Brugnon, Henri Cochet, and René Lacoste were all still living in 1968. Of the four, Jean Borotra remained the most involved in the administration of tennis in France and in the government of the ILTF. As President of the ILTF in 1961, Borotra put himself out in front of the Open Tennis debate when he gave an important press conference on January 19 of that year, remarking that while the ILTF planned to continue to keep professionals away from amateurs, personally he favored Open competition. George MacCall remembered those comments made to Chicago sportswriters when he visited Paris in 1965 with the United States Davis Cup team. Over the next two years, Borotra redoubled his

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<sup>24</sup> “A Forward Step,” *World Tennis* 15, no. 9 (February 1968): 12-13; Marty Mulligan, “Interview with the President of the ILTF,” *World Tennis* 15, no. 9 (February 1968): 45.

efforts to push the French LTA to lead on Open Tennis. Those efforts stalled until the British LTA announced they would hold an Open Wimbledon in 1968.<sup>25</sup>

As with the Tennis Court Oath of 1789, the French relished a good revolution, and in March of 1968 they whipped enough votes from the ILTF Committee of Management sanction Open Tennis. The so-called “Declaration of Principle” stressed the “retention” of “amateurism” as the principle that guided the ILTF, the “right” of “self-determination” among member nations to categorize players as amateurs or professionals as they saw fit, and the tight cap on the number of “open tournaments” allowed by the ILTF. The *digestif* the French proposed that helped other nations swallow such sweeping reforms was the category of the “authorized player”—that is, a player allowed by his or her National Association, and thus the ILTF, to accept an unlimited amount of expenses and other remuneration without forfeiting his or her amateur status, thus remaining eligible to play in both Open tournaments and those closed to professionals, especially the Davis Cup. What an authorized or registered player compared to a professional would actually mean in practice would take several more years to clarify, but in the meantime French tennis officials felt they could move ahead with holding Roland Garros as the first important Open Tournament just weeks before Wimbledon.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Jean Borotra, “The Problem Facing Tennis in the World Today,” Extracts of the Press Conference Held in Chicago, January 19, 1961, International Lawn Tennis Federation 1937-1967 Folder [no number], Box 6, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Perry T. Jones to William Clothier, April 9, 1965, Folder 11, Box 1, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; Report of the Committee of Management on the Subject of Amateurism,” ILTF, March 30, 1968, Folder 3, Box 1, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections.

<sup>26</sup> Jean Borotra, “The Problem Facing Tennis in the World Today,” Extracts of the Press Conference Held in Chicago, January 19, 1961, International Lawn Tennis Federation 1937-1967 Folder [no number], Box 6, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Perry T. Jones to William Clothier, April 9, 1965, Folder 11, Box 1, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; Report of the Committee of Management on the

The French had less than two months before their big tournament. Borotra's primary contact became MacCall, whom he knew and with whom he knew most of the top professionals remained under contract. The French LTA authorized a first offer of \$20,000 in guaranteed prize money. The low figure surprised MacCall and his players, who held longstanding beliefs about how financially lucrative each of the four major championships were for the sponsoring amateur bodies. The professionals failed to take into account that compared to Wimbledon and the U.S. National Championship, the French Championship seldom recorded a big profit for the French LTA. More importantly, the involvement of the professionals reintroduced the key concern of tax liability that shaped the policies of the private clubs that made up the amateur associations. Having no precedent in tennis for the division of taxable prize money to professionals, non-taxable expenses to the authorized players and amateurs, and partially-taxable revenue to the French LTA, Borotra and his fellow officials preferred conservative accountancies.<sup>27</sup>

Offers and counter-offers between the French LTA and MacCall kept an Open French Championship an open question days before the May 27, 1968, tournament start. In the interim, a comparatively small tournament took place in Bournemouth, England, from April 22 to April 27 where professionals and amateurs played against one another in an event sanctioned by a national amateur tennis association. The British Hard Court Championships thus technically became the first Open Tournament, but the significance of that event was that it catalyzed the

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Subject of Amateurism," ILTF, March 30, 1968, Folder 3, Box 1, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections.

<sup>27</sup> Jean Borotra to George MacCall April 2, 1968, Box 2, Folder 11, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; Jean Borotra to George MacCall April 4, 1968, Box 2, Folder 11, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections.

professionals and the French Tennis Federation to work out a deal. MacCall finally gave way on demanding close to the same purse for his professionals that the far more consistently profitable Wimbledon offered the NTL stars. Likewise, the French LTA agreed to pay the professionals lavish expenses in addition to prize money—a compensation structure the professionals preferred because it minimized their income taxes.<sup>28</sup>

Upheavals spread around the world in 1968. Major social and political revolutions in the United States, Poland, Mexico, Nigeria, Spain, Israel and Palestine, and Czechoslovakia, among other countries, as well as military interventions, particularly in Vietnam, bucked the stability of nation states the world over. Roland Garros was played in the middle of massive riots throughout France and centered in Paris. MacCall's professionals players had to fly into Brussels, Belgium, and then travel via bus to Paris. Laver, Emerson, and Stolle received special permission to land at a United States Air Force airfield near Paris. Many of the world's top amateurs skipped the French Open to play the far smaller Berlin Championships both as a protest of the presence of the professionals at Roland Garros and because of the significant logistical challenges of getting to the Parisian red clay courts. The competitors shared towels because the launderers in the city

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<sup>28</sup> Draft Protocol, no date, Box 2, Folder 11, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; "Around the World," *World Tennis* 15, no. 11 (April 1968): 76-77; Jean Borotra to George MacCall, cable, April 23, 1968, Box 2, Folder 11, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; Jean Borotra to George MacCall, cable, April 24, 1968, Box 2, Folder 11, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; French Open 1968 Contract, April 26, 1968, Box 2, Folder 11, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; Roger Ciotteau to George MacCall, May 2, 1968, Box 2, Folder 11, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; Mr. Darmon to George MacCall, cable, May 9, 1968, Box 2, Folder 11, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; Jean Barotra to George MacCall, cable, May 13, 1968, Box 2, Folder 11, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; Jean Bassompierre to George MacCall, May 13, 1968, Box 2, Folder 11, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; George MacCall to Borotra Tenisfedet, cable, May 16, 1968, Box 2, Folder 11, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; George MacCall to Borotra Tenisfedet, cable, May 20, 1968, Box 2, Folder 11, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections.

remained on strike, while the tournament did not serve the customary afternoon tea because electric rationing made cooking and hot water unavailable during those hours. Police and demonstrators clashed in the streets. One-fifth of the 128 men in the draw defaulted their first round matches because gas rationing meant walking to the tournament. The smell of food rotting along the avenues wafted through the Stadium. Open tennis seemed poised to fail at its beginning.<sup>29</sup>

Yet the fans came in droves to watch the competitors, both amateur and professional, play brilliantly against one another. Perhaps because Parisians had nothing else to do but to protest, perhaps because they wanted to watch the professionals play the amateurs, more fans attended Roland Garros in 1968 than even in the halcyon days of French tennis when Lenglen danced on the courts and the Four Musketeers won the Davis Cup for all of France. That the crowds came to watch the professionals play in a place of such tennis tradition became clear by the quarter-finals, in which five of the remaining eight players were professionals. Out of retirement, the forty-year-old Pancho Gonzales, the literal grandfather of the game, won a five-set grind against the reigning number-one amateur in the world, Roy Emerson, a victory that left an over-exuberant sportswriter claiming the French viewed Gonzales's effort equal to that of "General [Charles] de Gaulle."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Mark Kurlansky, *1968: The Year that Rocked the World* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2004), xvii-xviii, 9-13, 15-17, 33, 35, 375; "Around the World," *World Tennis* 16, no. 3 (August 1968): 71, 73; Lance Tingay, "The French Championships," *World Tennis* 16, no. 3 (August, 1968): 20-23.

<sup>30</sup> Lance Tingay, "The French Championships," *World Tennis* 16, no. 3 (August 1968): 20-23; Roger Cirotteau to George MacCall, May 7, 1968, Box 2, Folder 11, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; Jean Borotra to George MacCall, June 10, 1968, Box 2, Folder 11, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections.



Just as President de Gaulle weathered the strikes of that May to find his political career end in resignation a year later, so too did Gonzales's victory come to a quick end at the hands of Rod Laver after such a stirring victory. Laver then lost a mediocre Final to fellow Australian Ken Rosewall, who raised the trophy of the first major Open Championship. All the professionals won, however, because they had finally come back to play the courts where they belonged. The best facilities should have the best players, the professionals had argued for years, and the pocketbooks of the fans who came to watch the 1968 Open Championships validated that claim. During the first five days in 1967, the French Championships reported 13,000 francs in gate receipts. That number increased more than 1,000 percent in 1968 to 142,000 francs. Even a competitor as fierce as Gonzales considered the 50 percent stake in the gate that he and the half-dozen other professionals under contract received to be a victory.<sup>31</sup>

Strangely the professionals' promoter had a different view about winning and losing. Losses on the court rather than in the accounting ledgers were the chief concern MacCall carried with him in the early days of the National Tennis League. He full well knew that any new enterprise might incur debt while the concept found its footing with a public willing to pay. But every time one of his contract players lost to an amateur player, he wondered aloud whether or not a spectator would continue to find paying extra to see a professional worth it. Too many defeats of his professionals at the hands of amateurs would embolden the International Lawn Tennis Federation to reverse their course change to Open Tennis and financially ruin MacCall.

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<sup>31</sup> Lance Tingay, "The French Championships," *World Tennis* 16, no. 3 (August 1968): 20-23; Roger Cirotteau to George MacCall, May 7, 1968, Box 2, Folder 11, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; Jean Borotra to George MacCall, June 10, 1968, Box 2, Folder 11, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections.

The conservatives who had long balked at money in tennis might be proven right after all. Such fears weighed heavily on MacCall's players every time they took to the court. The history associated with the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club setting added pressure to the professionals who competed in the 1968 Wimbledon Championships.<sup>32</sup>

Begin at the King's Cross train station and buy a ticket for the SW19 stop. Board the train and ride past Patmore Estate, Battersea, and Earlsfield. Get off one stop before Wimbledon village and proceed up the platform onto the street level. A short stroll along cobbled streets and food stands where vendors wrap cod and chips in newspapers brings you past many of the flats players rent for the fortnight. At the Northeast corner of the village, you pass by a golf course packed with cars parked across the green and the fairways. Walk along the edge of the course, and you have arrived at the gates to the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club. You are at what is simply called The Championships.

A line forms along the west side of the grounds for tickets. Cut the queue and proceed through the green tunnel and through to the practice courts. The perennial ryegrass and creeping red fescue is one-eighth an inch off the hard packed dirt. Stapled into the ground are white lines that mark off the seventy-foot courts. Maple net posts driven into the ground hold up a woven black and white net loosened and tightened on one end by winding a brass hand-crank. The grass on these practice courts has already started to die in many places, worn bare by thousands of steps taken in just a few days. Bare dirt now sits behind the baseline, near the center hash-mark,

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<sup>32</sup> Tony Kennedy, "U.S. Amateurs on a Mission," unknown newspaper clipping, June 30, 1968, no pagination, in Folder 4, Box 2, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; "Eight of Each," unknown newspaper clipping, June 30, 1968, no pagination, in Folder 4, Box 2, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections.

and near the service T. On these practice courts, white Slazenger felt balls zing past. Fans congregate along the walkway and glance down to see who they recognize.

Walk past these spectators and into Club's main complex of courts. Off to the left is the massive oval of Court One. Next to it sits the boxier and bigger Centre Court. Proceed along the back side of Centre Court and you'll reach a small hill. Off to the back of the hill sits tables where fans often greet players. Scattered along the perimeter of the hill, you'll find fresh strawberries and cream, champagne in flutes, and cups brimming with Pimm's No. 1. Grab a libation and walk down along the side of the hill to see the courts. Court 18 sits up high above the rest. It backs up against the media area where journalists and technicians broadcast the tournament to the rest of the world. Courts 12 through 17 are small and lay below Court 18 in a straight line. Walk past them, and you come to the Court 2, infamously known as the Graveyard of Champions. Courts 4 through 22 proceed out past Court 2. Many of these courts are small and intimate. The players hit right next to fans, who can lean on the short fence-line. The final group of courts, numbers 8 through 12, lie farthest from the Club's entrance and jut up next to the croquet pitches on one side and the indoor courts on the other side. The scenes you just saw stayed alive because of what happened June 24 through July 6, 1968.<sup>33</sup>

At forty years old, Pancho Gonzales stood no chance to win Wimbledon that year. Memories of him as the best professional player for so many years and the number-one player in the world at the time of his effective retirement in the early 1960s, however, led many to hold unrealistic expectations for Gonzales. Fans carried those same expectations for all the professionals. Unlike the predictable grind of consistent tennis on the slow red clay of Roland

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<sup>33</sup> These observations are based on the author's visits to the All England Club for the Championships.

Garros, the slick grass courts of the All England Club always produced more uncertainty throughout the tournament fortnight. Players very seldom lost serve. If they did, their opponent more often than not ran out the set. A dark horse with a hot hand could down a champion because hour-long matches often came down to only a handful of big points. Physicality mattered in a far different way than on red clay, where the fittest player more often than not won. Early summer in England meant frequent rain delays and sometimes cool conditions that combined to cause not infrequent injuries in even the fittest of athletes. As the oldest seed in the draw, Gonzales competed more against time than against his younger opponents, and his third-round four-set loss to Russia's Alex Metreveli seemed to have surprised him less than the fans excited to see the old Champion play his first Wimbledon since 1949. The bigger surprise was the early exit of both amateur and professional seeds so that amateurs made up half of the field of the round of sixteen, professionals the other. In the Final, veteran professional Rod Laver beat young professional Tony Roche in straight sets to lift the title, but as with the French Championships, the real winner of the first Open Wimbledon was tennis in general. Whereas Roland Garros proved that Open Tennis could make money, Wimbledon demonstrated that Open Tennis could grow without forsaking tradition. Top amateurs might not beat the best professionals in the end, but they could win matches and not get blown off the court. Moreover, the game was bigger than the biggest names, either amateur or professional, and as with all sports, the big names of today would eventually fall to the new names of tomorrow.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Richard Evans, "Open Wimbledon," *World Tennis* 16, no. 4 (September 1968): 30-41.

Professional promoter George MacCall found that last development more unsettling than most because of the average age of the professionals he kept under contract. His players—Laver, Rosewall, Emerson, Gonzales, Stolle, and Gimeno—won the majority of big professional events. But it came at a high cost and for how long? All in all, the National Tennis League lost \$208,403.89 in 1968. The League's tournament earnings were good, but MacCall had promised unrealistically high guarantees in order to secure the signatures of nearly all the top professionals. He never stood a realistic chance of meeting those guarantees in his first full season of operation. While he personally did fairly well thanks to his side business of selling premium life insurance policies to all his top players, his fellow investors who had put up \$150,000 understandably felt burned by the enterprise. Men such as Charlton Heston may very well have wanted to see topflight tennis grow because they thought the game great entertainment, but more than that, they were investors interested in achieving a return on the capital they had provided to MacCall. They put pressure on MacCall to repay their investments. MacCall responded by merging his enterprise with that of Lamar Hunt's World Championship Tennis.<sup>35</sup>

#### Lamar Hunt and World Championship Tennis

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<sup>35</sup> George MacCall, "Employment History," no date, Folder 1, Box 1, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; National Tennis League Cash Flow Statement March 1 through December 31, 1968, Box 1, Folder 18, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; Life Insurance Policies in Force, no date, Box 1, Folder 18, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; "Memorandum of Agreement," Box 1, no date, Folder 1, Box 1, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; "Professional Tennis Proposal," June 26, 1968, Folder 4, Box 1, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; George MacCall to Lamar Hunt, July 13, 1968, Folder 4, Box 1, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; Bob Briner to George MacCall, February 24, 1969, Folder 6, Box 1, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections; professional tennis recollections typescript, no date, Folder 1, Box 1, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University, Special Collections.

No promoter and tour owner proved more consequential in bringing about truly profitable professional tennis than Lamar Hunt and the World Championship Tennis Tour (WCT) that he founded. Hunt made a major name for himself in sports by leveraging family business assets into owning and operating professional sports teams such as the Kansas City Chiefs in football. He took major risks in professional sports as well; he helped found the American Football League (AFL) and started Major League Soccer in the United States. So when a fellow sports entrepreneur, David F. Dixon, who brought the National Football League's (NFL) Saints Franchise to New Orleans to play in the Superdome that he helped finance, approached Hunt about the potential to make money off a properly promoted professional tennis tour, Hunt expressed the interest that later resulted in WCT.<sup>36</sup>

Tennis was not Hunt's primary focus when it came to professional sports. His first encounter with professional tennis came only a decade before he founded WCT at the Southern Methodist University tennis courts, where he watched Pancho Gonzales, Ken Rosewall, and Rod Laver battle each other in the Texas heat for the modest crowds that Jack Kramer's World Tennis Incorporated matches tended to draw. When Hunt and Dixon met in August 1967 to discuss forming a tennis tour of their own. Dixon sold Hunt on the waste of that talent. "The finest players in the world were playing their biggest tournaments before 150-200 people at little

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<sup>36</sup> Robert Moore, "A History of World Championship Tennis," unpublished typescript [pp. 2-3], Lamar Hunt Papers, Hunt Enterprises Archive, Kansas City, Missouri. Lamar Hunt Papers, [no box or folder number], Hunt Enterprises Archive, Kansas City, Missouri. My thanks to Bob Moore, corporate archivist for Hunt Enterprises and friend of the late Lamar Hunt, for providing me with a copy of his unpublished History of World Championship Tennis, that I draw on throughout this section, as well as access to Hunt's personal papers and the private print and television archive of World Championship Tennis housed in the SubTropolis cave complex, the largest civilian climate-controlled underground storage facility in the country, located off of Northeast Underground Drive in Kansas City, Missouri.

private clubs,” Hunt’s friend Moore recalled Dixon saying at the meeting.<sup>37</sup> They thought Kramer and George MacCall, both former players turned barnstorm tour promoters, could never look too far beyond the tennis itself to the sport’s broader position in the entertainment industry. But Hunt and Dixon thought they knew how to make tennis pay.

The first step meant mustering capital. Hunt arranged the financing from some of his other sporting investments, notably the American Football League franchise Kansas City Chiefs, as the AFL and National Football League looked to cease competing by merging into a super-league, and he added a business partner named Al Hill, Jr.<sup>38</sup> Then they needed players. The difficulty of convincing amateur players to turn professional and forever forgo playing the major amateur tournaments of Wimbledon, the United States Championships, the French Championships, and the Australian Championships was one of the major factors that kept the professional tennis tours of the 1920s through 1950s usually at four players. Hunt and Hill’s money convinced double that number of players to join. The top names in the game, Pancho Gonzales, Rod Laver, and Ken Rosewall, already had existing contracts with George MacCall’s National Tennis League, so Hunt went after the players of the future. The Yugoslavian Nikki Pilic, the South African Cliff Drysdale, the Frenchman Pierre Barthes, the Englishman Roger Taylor, two players from Australia, John Newcombe and Tony Roche, as well as two Americans,

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<sup>37</sup> Robert Moore, “A History of World Championship Tennis,” typescript [p. 3].

<sup>38</sup> For a discussion of the NFL-AFL merger in the best analysis of post-WWII professional football, see Michael Oriad, *Brand NFL: Making and Selling America’s Favorite Sport* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 19-21. For more detail on Hunt’s specific role in the AFL, see Michael MacCambridge, *Lamar Hunt: A Life in Sports* (Kansas City: Andrews McMeel, 2012), 156-62. A second biography of Hunt is also strong on his important role in professional football, soccer, baseball, and basketball, yet lighter on analyzing Hunt’s role in bringing profitability to professional tennis in his WCT venture. See, David Sweet, *Lamar Hunt: The Gentle Giant Who Revolutionized Professional Sports* (Chicago: Triumph Books, 2010), 7-8, 31-62, 64-69, 110-37, 139-67, 170-4.

Dennis Ralston and Butch Bucholz, formed what Hunt called “The Handsome Eight.” The finances made a hard decision for players more palatable. John Newcombe, the best nonprofessional player in the world, fed his family on \$15,000 per year. The chance to almost triple that with a three-year guarantee persuaded Newcombe and his fellow amateurs to turn professional.<sup>39</sup>

For the present those players had a chance to play in places not available to players from the past. Those venues began to sprout in what historian Robert C. Trumbour summarized as the “third era” of sport stadium construction in the United States, marked by “the geographical expansion of sports teams, acceptance of taxpayer-funded sports facilities, and the construction of large all-purpose stadiums and arenas.”<sup>40</sup> The popularity and profitability of football largely propelled sports stadium constructions in the fifties and sixties. Hunt’s position as the owner of a professional football franchise meant he knew firsthand just how much the venue mattered to the bottom line. Hunt made meticulous notes on the suitability of different tournament venues, which he kept in journals for reflection. For example, he noted that the West Side Tennis Club, then the host of the United States Championship, had too many courts spread over too far a distance for the small group of WCT professionals to suitably fill the Forest Hills grounds. Financial success in sports entertainment meant taking the specific rules and particularities of each sport into account.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Robert Moore, “A History of World Championship Tennis,” typescript [pp. 3-4].

<sup>40</sup> Robert C. Trumbour, “Stadiums, Arenas, and Audiences,” in *A Companion to American Sports History*, ed. Steven Reiss (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2014), 577.

<sup>41</sup> Moore, “A History of World Championship Tennis,” typescript [pp. 14].



Hunt's tour officially began in late 1967 when Al Davis, Jr., part of his retinue, signed the first eight players who agreed to forsake the amateur tennis ranks and take a chance on a limited number of matches. The so-called "Handsome Eight" competed directly against George MacCall's National Tennis League players. After MacCall accepted Hunt's buyout, WCT made it on the world scene in 1971 when thirty-two players agreed to play twenty tournaments across the continents of North America, Australia, Europe, and Asia. In cities as different from one another as Sydney, Miami, Rome, Tehran, Louisville, Vancouver, Cologne, Boston, Stockholm, and Dallas, among others, what Hunt called his "Million Dollar Tour" put the "World" in his organization's title.<sup>42</sup> But WCT also needed a home base—a fact Hunt might have realized from his professional football experience when he moved his American Football League Dallas Texans and to Kansas City in order to avoid direct competition with the upstart NFL franchise Dallas Cowboys.<sup>43</sup> Hunt and his partners strove to anchor the tour's year with a season-ending championship held in, of all places, Dallas's Memorial Auditorium in November. To this end they also drew on their experience in football, where a week's worth of hype meant more to a game's bottom line than four quarters' worth of action. Players spoke at press conferences, promoters wore tuxedos at galas with sponsors, and Hunt hosted his own version of Breakfast at Wimbledon on Finals morning at his Dallas home. In that final, two veterans from the Kramer

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<sup>42</sup> Moore, "A History of World Championship Tennis," typescript [p. 14]; Roger Moore, "WCT Yours: 1971-1990," typescript [pp. 1-2], Lamar Hunt Papers, Hunt Enterprises Archive, Kansas City, Missouri. I again offer my thanks to Bob Moore for sharing with me his unpublished and in-house year-by-year and month-by-month match results for WCT tournaments. As before, I have added pagination in brackets.

<sup>43</sup> For a detailed account of the Cowboy versus Texans competition, see John Eisenberg, *Ten-Gallon War: The NFL's Cowboys, the AFL's Texans, and the Feud for Dallas's Pro Future* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012).

and Gonzales tours of the early sixties—the Australians Ken Rosewall and Rod Laver—played a competitive match after officials paraded the players courtside in colorful outfits, much like boxers and their trunks moving ringside. Rosewall won. He collected \$50,000 in prize money, which was 100 percent more than one of his earlier professional titles, where a sponsor's bankruptcy meant winning the name of the best tennis player in the world without a dollar to show for it.<sup>44</sup>

Stadiums and stable sponsorship agreements mattered a great deal in making WCT a sustainable professional sports venture. Television contracts mattered even more. WCT had recorded and privately distributed the 1971 Rosewall-Laver final, and the popularity of that match with both the national and international media convinced National Broadcasting Company, after Davies and Hunt had approached the network, to accept a broadcast contract with WCT to begin in 1972.<sup>45</sup> Here as elsewhere, Hunt drew on his prior experience founding and growing the AFL, during which he had successfully negotiated a television contract with American Broadcasting Company that had single-handedly kept his upstart football league in business against the more powerful NFL during the early 1960s.<sup>46</sup>

For their part, the players did what they could in 1972 to attract and solidify attention. They competed hard in WCT tournaments held in twenty-three different cities and six different countries. Compared to the farther-flung 1971 season, players played more matches in the United

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<sup>44</sup> Moore, "A History of World Championship Tennis," typescript [p. 14]; Moore, "WCT Yours: 1971-1990," typescript [pp. 1-2].

<sup>45</sup> Moore, "WCT Yours: 1971-1990," typescript [pp. 1-2].

<sup>46</sup> Michael MacCambridge, *America's Game: The Epic Story of How Pro Football Captured A Nation* (New York: Anchor Books, 2005), 130-4.

States, Canada, and Western Europe—a decision indicative of the importance Hunt assigned to cultivating his tennis league’s fledgling relationship with television.<sup>47</sup>

The beginning of WCT’s end came in 1983 when Hunt initiated a lawsuit against International Tennis Federation (ITF), the International Professional Tennis Council, and the Association of Tennis Professionals. A decade earlier WCT was on good terms with the ITF, then called the International Lawn Tennis Federation. Hunt and the Federation officials had agreed to a schedule that allowed the sixty-four best players in the world to compete in two tours of thirty-two players on the WCT circuit during the first five months of the year. After the WCT Championship contested in May at the Moody Coliseum on Southern Methodist University’s campus, the players’ contracts stipulated their freedom to travel to Europe and the United States to compete. The players preferred the freedom to make their own schedule and play the events that paid them the most. Before the 1980s that meant playing WCT events. A better organized ITF schedule of Grand Prix tournaments gradually drew players away from WCT tournaments. At the time of Hunt’s lawsuit, WCT could only count a few matches that attracted top players because most big names played Grand Prix tournaments instead.<sup>48</sup>

#### The USLTA, Slew Hester, and Flushing Meadows

That a businessman of Hunt’s caliber in running highly profitable sports franchises such as the Kansas City Chiefs and the Chicago Bulls should have World Championship Tennis succeed at first, only to go bankrupt, owed a great deal to the peculiarities of tennis as a global sport and to the unique history of tennis as a game whose authorities fought professionalism for

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<sup>47</sup> Moore, “WCT Yours: 1971-1990,” typescript [pp. 1-4].

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, pp. 5-6, 23.

so long. Some of that fighting took the form of self-flagellation, as evidenced by the USLTA's long sensitivity to criticism. No barbs dug deeper than top players taking the Association to task for money-grubbing tournament ticketing and fees with simultaneous miserliness when it came to the on-court competitors. Players such as Bill Tilden and Ellsworth Vines deserved punishment for the opinions they penned in the popular press, maintained the USLTA leadership. In the case of Vines, the USLTA Executive Committee tried to bar him from entering the broadcast booth at Forest Hills so he could fulfill his contract with NBC to provide commentary for their radio broadcast of the United States National Championships. USLTA leadership thus seemed willing to hurt the bottom line of their showcase tournament and one of their biggest sources of revenue by side-lining the popular commentator and well-known sports personality Vines simply because he had thwarted the control they exercised over him by turning professional. In the mid-1930s the USLTA had "refused to accept money from a sponsor for the broadcasting of the national events because we did not want the events used for the promotion of business." Whenever journalists in the United States reported on the USLTA barring players for actions deemed professional while simultaneously paying other players' expenses above and beyond the amateur threshold without penalty, Association leadership lashed out. As President of the USLTA in the late 1940s, for example, Lawrence Baker wrote to *Life* magazine editor Henry Luce complaining about the latter's June 14, 1948, story highlighting hypocrisy in the USLTA's amateur player expenses. A decade later, in one prominent case, the USLTA Amateur Rule Committee prohibited the request of Gardner Mulloy, one of the top amateur players in the United States, to appear in a television commercial teaching tennis strokes in exchange for a small honorarium. The USLTA denied Mulloy's request, but had he played in a country such as

Australia, such a request likely would have been granted by the Australian Lawn Tennis Association.<sup>49</sup>

At other times, the USLTA came across as not hypocritical but simply confused and in need of counsel over their own rules. Such was the case most often for the USLTA Amateur Rule Committee, who, in just one of many available examples, sought legal advice over whether Wheaties Sports Federation's pursuit of Dennis Ralston's services in an educational tennis series for broadcast turned Ralston into a professional player. Robert Kelleher and Perry Jones each thought Ralston could participate. They wanted the best for Southern California Tennis after all, but they also sought assurance from the USLTA President James Dickey that such participation could proceed without fear of Ralston losing his amateur status. USLTA leadership decided to approve Ralston's participation if Wheaties agreed to remove all mention of professional tennis as played by Jack Kramer and his troupe.<sup>50</sup>

The quality of the tennis the Kramer professionals played throughout the fifties had created a climate of permanent crisis at the USLTA by 1960 at the same time that constant barnstorming had brought tennis to most parts of the country. The latter contributed to a steady

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<sup>49</sup> Joseph Ivy to Louis Carruthers, August 4, 1934, Media 1932-1962 Folder [no number], Box 6, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Louis Carruthers to Lawrence Baker, September 5, 1934, Media 1932-1962 Folder [no number], Box 6, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Lawrence Baker to Walter Merrill, September 6, 1935, Media 1932-1962 Folder [no number], Box 6, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Lawrence Baker to Henry Luce, June 24, 1948, Media 1932-1962 Folder [no number], Box 6, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Minutes of Meeting of the Amateur Rule Committee, September 3, 1958, Amateur Rule Committee 1958-1963 Folder [no number], Box 1, Robert Kelleher Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

<sup>50</sup> Donald Hobart to Lawrence Baker, May 14, 1964, Media 1963-1977 Folder [no number], Box 6, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Robert Kelleher to James Dickey, May 6, 1964, Media 1932-1962 Folder [no number], Box 6, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Renville McCann to Robert Kelleher, May 11, 1964, Media 1932-1962 Folder [no number], Box 6, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; "How To's of Tennis – Part V," television script, no date, Media 1932-1962 Folder [no number], Box 6, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

rise in USLTA membership from 12,555 dues-paying players in 1958 to 27,521 in 1962. Most of that growth came from junior players, because during the leaner finance years of the mid-sixties the USLTA wisely invested heavily in junior tennis as opposed to adult tennis. Between 1962 and 1963, for example, USLTA adult membership actually fell from 9,129 to 9,108—the first time that had happened in the postwar period. Open Tennis caused “Peak Memberships” in 1969 and 1970 with 52,474 dues paying members belonging to the USLTA by 1971. The crisis came in part because increased membership rolls had not put the USLTA on a firmer financial footing. Association leaders read with disgust newspapers that printed ten times more lines about golf than tennis despite the United States boasting 1.5 million more tennis players than golfers. They also misread the reasons why golf had become more interesting to report on than tennis. Far from harming golf, professionalism encouraged a cult of personality around certain players. Sports marketers such as Mark McCormack used that to secure sponsorship dollars from company executives willing to spend their firm’s advertising and branding budgets on sports marketing. Managers decided on sports rather than on other promotional opportunities in large part because such a decision came with a tee-time with Arnold Palmer at Pinehurst, Pebble Beach, or Augusta National. That money made for better golf tournaments. More importantly, the flow of dollars into the professional golf tour helped forge partnerships with television networks. Greater media attention helped make the sport of golf seem more popular to a television-hungry public than it was at the grassroots level. More people played tennis than golf, but a viewer would not see that on their television screen. Instead of picking up on that disconnect, USLTA leaders scratched

their heads at how golf seemed more popular with the press than tennis when the former maintained an even stricter policy of no talking or photographing during play than the latter.<sup>51</sup>

In the run-up to Open Tennis, Robert Kelleher's Beverley Hills legal background made him the first USLTA President to feel comfortable monetizing the majority of the Association's activities through licensing agreements with the Licensing Corporation of America (LCA). In the same year, 1967, the USLTA also looked to partner with Madison Square Garden Attractions, Inc., that managed the entertainment spectacles at the newly built Madison Square Garden. What Fred Podesta, the President of Madison Square Garden Attractions, offered the USLTA was actually a pittance compared with professional tournaments run a decade earlier. The USLTA received a guarantee of only \$30,000 from Madison Square Garden Attractions with two-thirds of that sum going to player prize money, while the USLTA had to shoulder the burden of securing "top flight foreign and American players," and Madison Square Garden Attractions kept all television revenue and receipts above the \$30,000 guarantee.<sup>52</sup>

LCA handled other negotiations that went even worse for the USLTA. Wilson Sporting Goods flatly told the Association that they would not play ball with them when it came to paying a licensing fee in order to have Wilson balls used in USLTA events. The USLTA under Kelleher

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<sup>51</sup> USLTA Membership: 1958-1971, Folder, [no number], Box [no number], Baker Collection ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Wilmer Allison to Ralph Westcott, June 21, 1960, Open Tennis 1960-1961 Folder [no number], Box 7, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

<sup>52</sup> Gladys Heldman, "The Kelleher Regime," *World Tennis* 15, no. 1 (June 1967): 14, 16; Licensing, Corporation of America, "A Proposal to Help Popularize Interest in Tennis Throughout the United States," Legal-Licensing Corporation of America 10/66-3-67 Folder [no number], Box 3, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; USLTA Grants Endorsement Rights to Licensing Corporation of America in Major Policy Action, press release, April 5, 1967, Legal-Licensing Corporation of America 4/67-10/67 Folder [no number], Box 3, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; H.W. Colburn to Edgar Mooney, July 3, 1967, Legal-Licensing Corporation of America 4/67-10/67 Folder [no number], Box 3, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

took an important step toward professional tennis, but before Open Tennis, companies simply did not see enough potential in a sport whose international governing body still officially outlawed money from entering the game in a commercial capacity.<sup>53</sup>

That all changed in 1968 with Open Wimbledon. For the first time sponsors saw real financial potential in sponsoring tennis events, and the USLTA had a bigger incentive than ever before to pursue those sponsors even though such pursuit put American tennis at loggerheads with the ILTF. In his capacity as president of the USLTA in the two years immediately following Open Tennis, Alastair Martin pointed out a number of problems with Open Tennis and the free-wheeling authority the ILTF exercised. Martin reiterated to his fellow USLTA Executive Committee members that their organization take their own path on these issues or suffer whatever fate the ILTF Committee of Management decided for them. The most significant area of disagreement toward the beginning of Open Tennis addressed the “authorized player” idea proposed by the ILTF Committee of Management. Taxes presented the most glaring problem to the USLTA leadership. No stranger to litigation over tax law, the Association’s counsel advised the Executive Committee that the IRS would almost certainly require authorized players, despite their technical amateur status under ILTF rules, to pay income tax on their expenses prior to leaving the United States for a tournament abroad. USLTA officers feared such an arrangement might leave them partly responsible for not providing a fellow ILTF member nation with players on time for the start of a tournament or an accomplice in players’ shirking their tax responsibilities. Whether or not the IRS would ever have held up the travel of a player who

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<sup>53</sup> H.W. Colburn to Edgar Mooney, July 3, 1967, Legal-Licensing Corporation of America 4/67-10/67 Folder [no number], Box 3, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.



claimed they were an amateur who did not receive income from their tennis proved a moot point because the very possibility galvanized the USLTA to look for another way to try to help their sport grow.<sup>54</sup>

The mechanism for growth they tried first was to “sanction” events. Before 1968, the USLTA sanctioned amateur tournaments, but if a professional player competed in an event not sanctioned by the USLTA, then he or she would forfeit eligibility to play in USLTA-sanctioned events. That rule reflected the consensus of the 96 ILTF member nations infuriated by the “fee” professional player promoters demanded of tournament committees and national associations in order “to deliver them to tournaments.” The ILTF took the action of “closing all events to players under contract to such promoters.” National associations had the blessing of the ILTF to charge appropriate sanction fees to tournaments within their jurisdiction, and the USLTA required a 6 percent cut of the tournament total prize money along with USLTA travel expenses in order for a tennis event to get a sanction. Little wonder then that promoters such as George MacCall, Dave Dixon, and Lamar Hunt came to blows with the USLTA and the ILTF, although the sides seemingly reached “an agreement” by the summer of 1972.<sup>55</sup>

The USLTA justification for the sanction fees they assessed in the years immediately after Open Tennis made sense from the point of view of the men who ran the Association. A

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<sup>54</sup>Alastair Martin, “Report by the President of the United States Lawn Tennis Association: A Statement of Opinion and Objectives,” April 14, 1970, International Lawn Tennis Federation, 1969-1977 Folder [no number], Box 6, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Alastair Martin to Members of the Executive Committee, July 24, 1970, International Lawn Tennis Federation, 1969-1977 Folder [no number], Box 6, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Lawrence Baker to James Dickey, June 30, 1960, Open Tennis 1960-1961 Folder [no number], Box 7, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

<sup>55</sup> *Gladys M. Heldman and Billie Jean King v. United States Lawn Tennis Association* 73. Civ 162, Opinion, for the United States District Court Southern District of New York, opinion issued February 7, 1973, [pp. 7-8], in Legal – Gladys Heldman, 1973 Folder [no number], Box 2, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

great deal of sponsorship dollars had entered into tennis, and the sanction fees provided, in their words, “an ever increasing source of revenue to the USLTA.” The Association could use that money in turn to keep “the future of tennis in this country...better off in the hands of the USLTA than of any other organization.” That they certainly meant, as Association lawyers prepared suits and counter-suits to wrestle as much control of professional tennis as possible from other stakeholders such as World Championship Tennis and the Virginia Slims Women’s Tour run by *World Tennis* publisher Gladys Heldman and Phillip Morris Chairman Joe Cullman. “In complete candor, I suggest that we stop pussyfooting with Gladys Heldman, Joe Cullman, Lamar Hunt, and others whose interests are selfish, short term, and in opposition to ours. Let us go our own way and build our own tournaments and our own players,” said USLTA leadership. Their idea of building would mean the abandonment of the West Side Tennis Club as the host of the United States Open Championships and the construction of the most commercial of all tennis venues. Sanction fees gave them the capital to get that project started, and what they needed then was a little luck.<sup>56</sup>

Flushing Meadows Park first come to the serious attention of New York City urban planner Robert Moses as far back as the 1930s when a torrent of New Deal money for urban recreation made even the grandest of park plans seem possible. Thirty years later, toward the end of his building career, Flushing Meadows remained undeveloped. He saw the opportunity to finally get his park built with the World’s Fair of 1964-65. His lack of enthusiasm for the Fair itself, however, undermined his vision for a grand Flushing Meadows. Buildings were built on

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<sup>56</sup> J. Howard Frazer to Robert Colwell, May 19, 1971, in Legal – Gladys Heldman, 1973 Folder [no number], Box 2, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

the cheap without the usual Moses mustard, and Moses's simultaneous loss of ten of his dozen planning commissionerships during the Fair's preparation meant that he directed that organization with an even greater degree of heavy-handedness than usual. Employees routinely lost their jobs without cause, and over a year went by before Moses finally listened to the accountants who reported that the Fair lost around \$17,000,000 in 1964. The Fair closed the following year having only made \$8,600,000 rather than the \$29,000,000 Moses expected to have in order to make Flushing Meadows Park grand after the Fair left town. Moses took \$6,576,000 more from his other remaining post—the Chairmanship of the Triborough Bridge Authority—to add additional improvements to Flushing Meadows. The Park, however, remained full of cleared land with little in the way of development due to the disappointing finances of the Fair.<sup>57</sup>

The USLTA saw a great opportunity for American tennis in Moses's failure to remake Flushing Meadows. After declaring irreconcilable differences with the West Side Tennis Club in Forest Hills, the USTA (formerly the USLTA) withdrew from talks in February of 1977 and began to search for a new home for the tournament that, upon the decline of the Davis Cup in the 1960s, single-handedly made or broke the Association's balance sheet. That summer USTA President Slew Hester and Association lawyers reached an agreement with the New York City Parks Department to lease some of the Flushing Meadows-Corona Park land that had been the site of New York World's Fair barely more than a year prior. Property in Queens, the largest in land area of New York City's five boroughs, did not command the potential real estate values of

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<sup>57</sup> Caro, *The Power Broker*, 619, 654, 772, 1061-2, 1082-1113.

property in midtown Manhattan or much else of the city, for that matter. The USTA also had the makings of a prime time show court in the Singer Bowl, left over from the 1964 World's Fair. Boxing bouts between Floyd Patterson, Vito Antuofermo, Saoul Mamby, and Edwin Viruet, among others, in the 1970s revealed that the odd rectangular-shaped venue could deliver the thrill of one-on-one sports to an audience large enough to justify the pricey location compared to more suburban venues near major freeways and with large parking lots. A functional-enough public transportation network already existed connecting the Singer Bowl to neighborhoods in Queens and New York City, by and large.<sup>58</sup>

Hester was the right person at the right time to help the USTA. His personality disarmed those in the Association heavily steeped in traditional amateurism and still reeling from the 1968 opening of tennis to professionals managed by the likes of McCormack and Bill Riordan and the tours of Kramer, McCall, and Hunt. He was perfect to navigate the new frontier of big money for big-time tennis. A World War II officer from the South, Hester wisely noted the commercial opportunities in the broad economic, political, social, and cultural strip that people came to call the "Sunbelt."<sup>59</sup> He first tapped the region's business potential by providing the most essential postwar technology that facilitated the mass demographic shift to this region—cool air on the cheap. He owned and operated a Carrier air-conditioning distributorship after returning from overseas to 1955. The following year, Hester prospected for oil in his home state of Mississippi during the rough-and-tumble wildcat postbellum decades of the Gulf Coast oil boom. The

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<sup>58</sup> Slew Hester Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

<sup>59</sup> William Hester III, "William E. Hester, Jr.," *World Tennis* 15, no. 3 (August 1967): 38-39; Michelle Nickerson and Darren Dochuk eds, *Sunbelt Rising: The Politics of Place, Space, and Region* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 16.

business worked like this: Hester hired geologists who proved the oil reserves of plots; he then purchased leases on lands that held oil and whose owners did not know what they had, at least not enough to demand a better offer; investors gave Hester money to negotiate individual drilling deals worth hundreds of thousands of dollars, agreements he often made on the telephone. He served as the executive vice-president and chief operating officer of the Southern States Oil Company until 1962 after which he opened a new office that he ran until his retirement from the energy industry.<sup>60</sup>

A tournament tennis player since 1925, Hester served the USLTA and then later the USTA at the regional, state, sectional, and national level until the 1980s, all the while playing national level tournaments from the junior level up through the Men's 65s and over. USTA officials looked favorably on Hester's experience developing new oil lands and negotiating complex and profitable deals on the quick, just as they noted that he had founded and built a successful tennis complex in the River Hills Club of Jackson, Mississippi. The National Office admitted a mistake and unanimously reinstated Hester after having ousted him from the board in a five to four vote following his refusal to approve a contract negotiation between the USTA, Lamar Hunt and World Championship Tennis, the Tournament Council, and the International Tennis Federation that would have effectively monopolized control of high-level American tennis. Hester's fellow board members rightly recognized that they needed Hester to ward off the

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<sup>60</sup> Slew Hester, "How to form your Own Tennis Club," *World Tennis* 15, no. 4 (September 1967): 44-46; Slew Hester Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

eclipse of the Association's relevancy in the tennis boom of the 1970s. A new tennis complex for the new moneyed game was the cornerstone of that effort.<sup>61</sup>

Just fourteen months before the 1978 U.S. Open, Hester, the only person within the USTA who believed construction of the tennis park could hold to a ten-month timeline, and New York City politicians and commissioners signed contracts. The USTA moved quickly to secure bids from contractors to complete a major renovation of Singer Stadium and the construction of other courts and tournament facilities on the surrounding grounds. Engineers first divided Singer Stadium into two tennis courts; then workers installed seats to bring the seating capacity of the newly named Louis Armstrong Stadium (after the famous trumpeter) to 20,600. The smaller court, called simply the Grandstand, sat 6,200 and abutted the prime-time stadium. What set the Flushing Meadows tennis complex apart from not just any other tennis tournament site in the world but from every other major sporting venue in the world in the late 1970s and 1980s was the catering. The USTA built nine indoor courts and air-conditioned them—first for serving meals and only a distant second for tennis. Those nine courts accommodated 5,000 at any one time, with spectators in the late August and early September heat availing themselves of the shade, refreshments, and cool air throughout the tournament.<sup>62</sup>

When it came to food, however, the USTA preferred hot over cold. Prior to Flushing Meadows, no major sporting venue served sit-down hot meals to spectators. Concessions reflected class conventions and country traditions: duck gillette and smoked salmon at the U.S. Open golf tournament; ploughman's lunches or pates with Champagne at Wimbledon; beef on

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.; Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Slew Hester Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

the barbie at the Australian Championship; beer and brats at the American baseball park. Hester planned to prevent the complaints from athletes and fans alike, who disliked the smell of large quantities of cooking meat wafting through the grounds on a late summer day. The USTA spent \$30,000 on one smoke washer alone that allowed for the firing of charcoal steaks without forcing the smell of accelerant and burnt flesh across the noses of thousands of people. Another larger smokewasher located in a restaurant situated between the highly trafficked area of the Grandstand Court and Louis Armstrong Stadium ascended 110 feet up an elevator tower, essentially to the railway line that linked the grounds to the Metropolitan Transit Authority.<sup>63</sup>

Food and drink sales immediately made the U.S. Open more profitable than the far older, more prestigious, and more exclusive Championships at Wimbledon. Good as the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club's strawberries and cream tasted, Flushing Meadows outsold SW19 three to one. Furthermore, California and Florida growers sold strawberries to the USTA at a price far below that of producers in the United Kingdom, which allowed the association to turn around and sell the classic tennis tournament fare to attendees at a price 60 percent lower than British Lawn Tennis Association, while operating at a more favorable margin. The Americans' clotted cream might not rival that of the British, but the U.S. Open tournament operated on a quantity of scale far beyond that of any other tennis tournament or annually contested international sporting event.<sup>64</sup>

Unlike Wimbledon and former high-profile tennis tournaments in the United States for that matter, Flushing Meadows stressed inclusiveness over exclusiveness. Compared to the

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

private tents McCormack erected for tournament sponsors and the Royal Box at Wimbledon, the two most visible V.I.P areas at Wimbledon, Flushing Meadows brought to the fore an Open Club open to anyone willing to pay \$25 above their ticket price. Outside the player locker room and broadcast booth, only one other room existed on the entire grounds that required pre-approval to attend. Called “Slew’s Place” after USTA president Slew, the VIP room was actually open to anybody on a first-come first-served basis who asked the current USTA president for a card to enter. Such openness compared to other major sporting grounds, which by the 1970s had already reached a point of high stratification, set Flushing Meadows apart as a sporting experience. The genesis of that openness lay in Slew’s own experience as a player during the Great Depression and the New Deal. Compared to the East Coast during those years, the South held few private tennis clubs. In fact, despite the fine weather for outdoor competition and the rich sporting tradition of the region, few tennis courts existed there before government initiatives built courts throughout the South and the rest of the country in the thirties and forties. The speed at which these courts were built inspired Hester. So, too, did the intransigence of the Eastern private clubs in the face of an onslaught of new players to the game and new competition at the highest level. Clubs throughout New England and the mid-Atlantic doubled down on their exclusivity, some even barring spectators from using the club’s restrooms, eating at the club’s restaurants, and drinking at the club’s bars.<sup>65</sup>

A gamble for openness in a traditionally closed game paid off handsomely for the USTA. In 1976, the USTA’s entire budget stood at \$800,000. Two years later when the tournament

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.



concluded at Flushing Meadows, owned and operated exclusively by the USTA, the association boasted a budget of more than \$8 million. The new U.S. Open at Flushing Meadows single-handedly increased the USTA's budget more than 100 percent, with the tournament immediately becoming the most profitable year-to-year athletic contest in the world after 1978.<sup>66</sup> The venue also allowed Donald Dell and the ProServ agency, who represented the interests of the USTA, to secure a record-setting cable television contract with ESPN for \$110 million paid over six years for broadcast rights to the U.S. Open. The private boxes the USTA had built into Louis Armstrong Stadium was just the sugar Dell needed to sweeten the deal with ESPN executive John Skipper.<sup>67</sup>

People usually apply the old adage “winners write history” to military matters and politics. But in business and in the business of sports, the companies, managers, and lawyers who beat rivals also tend to shape the historical record to their end. Such is the case with the WCT, now largely forgotten because Hunt's tennis venture fought against and lost to other competing interests in the game.<sup>68</sup> International Management Group and the smaller agencies of ProServ

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.; USTA, “Year by Year: U.S. Open Attendance,” [http://2014.usopen.org/en\\_US/about/history/years.html](http://2014.usopen.org/en_US/about/history/years.html) (accessed June 7, 2016); Kurt Badenhausen, “Business is Booming at the U.S. Open,” *Forbes*, September 10, 2015, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kurtbadenhausen/2015/09/10/business-is-booming-at-the-u-s-open/#46dc179290c5> (accessed June 7, 2016); Liz Kobak, “U.S. Open More Profitable Than Super Bowl,” *World Tennis*, <http://www.worldtennismagazine.com/archives/9855> (accessed June 7, 2016).

<sup>67</sup> Donald Dell, *Never Make the First Offer Except when You Should: Wisdom from a Master Dealmaker* (New York: Portfolio, 2009), 79, 105.

<sup>68</sup> The historian E. Digby Baltzell, the only academic historian to look at the subject in a sustained way, really says nothing of detail on the business side and legal side of professional tennis between 1968 and 1972, instead focusing on how the big personalities of players in the Open Era differed from the genteel backgrounds of the game's early twentieth century amateur champions. See, E. Digby Baltzell, *Sporting Gentlemen: Men's Tennis from the Age of Honor to the Cult of the Superstar* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 341-72. The couple journalists whose collected reporting addresses some portions of the myriad business interests and lawsuits that ultimately consolidated professional tennis into the progenitor of today's ATP World Tour is good on detail, clearly written, heavy on polemics, devoid of citation, and ultimately incomplete and dated because of lack of access to the Lamar

and Advantage International became a veritable Saturn that devoured the WCT son. But the impact Lamar Hunt and his WCT had on professional reached further in time and space than the tour itself. Nowhere was that more visible than on the reshaping of the physical landscape of the sport's most historic tournaments contested on the game's most revered venues.

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Hunt Papers, which I was the first to gain access to in December of 2015. See, Richard Evans, *Open Tennis: The Players, the Politics, the Pressure, and the Great Matches* (New York: Viking, 1989), 8, 130, 137, 190-4, 217-8; Peter Bodo, *The Courts of Babylon: Tales of Greed and Glory in the Harsh New World of Professional Tennis* (New York: Scribner, 1995), 141-4, 144-8, 389; Moore, "A History of World Championship Tennis," typescript [pp. 12].

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### AGENTS AND AGENCIES TAKE TENNIS TRANSNATIONAL IN THE OPEN ERA

The most profound change to modern entertainment in the second half of the twentieth century was the rise of management and marketing agencies. These organizations managed and marketed every hair on their clients' heads in order to maximize the clients' public exposure and money-making potential. The most successful generated solid earnings for the athlete, artist, and actor, while ensuring healthy profits for the agency and hefty commissions for the agents.

Whereas entertainers like singers and actors had for decades kept counselors and promoters, sports management became a new arena in the 1960s and 1970s thanks in large part to Mark McCormack and his International Management Group—the earliest, the most successful, and the most historically significant player. McCormack and the agents who worked for him did not create a new sport; they created a new species of entertainer in the managed athlete.

Those athletes who contracted with management agencies and the agencies that followed the trail they blazed struck it rich. Those athletes who did not seek their representation or did not obtain their representation struggled financially in the age of the managed athlete. Pancho Gonzales was in the latter category. His application for IMG representation was denied by IMG some time prior to the fall of 1965, but McCormack still “admired [him] as one of the truly great professional athletes of all time.”<sup>1</sup> McCormack, on the other hand, was named twice by *Sports*

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<sup>1</sup> Mark McCormack to Frank Barclay, September 9, 1965, Gonzales, Pancho, Client File, Box M3405 (0002), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

*Illustrated* “the most powerful man in sports,” for twenty years was consistently ranked number one in *Sporting News*’s power ranking for the influencers in global sports, and is remembered by his top competitor as a juggernaut whose firm made every other sports marketing firm up until the new millennium resemble little more than a “mom-and-pop operation.”<sup>2</sup>

Saying and doing were two different things though, as Mark McCormack knew well. A fine collegiate golfer for the College of William & Mary, McCormack served briefly in the U.S. Army at Fort Gordon, Georgia, conveniently located close to Augusta National Golf Club. Leaving the army in 1956, he attended Yale Law School, and, after a short time as a practicing attorney, earned an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School.<sup>3</sup> With law and business degrees in hand, he had the credentials to succeed at a moment when the economic production of the United States and the world underwent profound changes. Industrial production moved outside of America, and the economy of the United States transitioned to service, information, and technology. Information was paramount in this post-Fordist economy, and the control of information gave a firm in any industry a competitive advantage over their rivals.<sup>4</sup> McCormack possessed the tools, and the “golden Age” of sports after 1960 was the economic moment to make his mark.<sup>5</sup> Now he needed the clients.

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<sup>2</sup> Dell, *Never Make the First Offer Except when You Should*, 108-9.

<sup>3</sup> Mark H. McCormack, *Arnie: The Evolution of a Legend* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), 16-17.

<sup>4</sup> Jefferson Cowie, *Capital Moves: RCA’s Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labor* (New York: The New Press, 1999), 2; Daniel T. Rodgers, *Age of Fracture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 9; Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2009), 263-4.

<sup>5</sup> On the transition from the “Taylorist management theories” that stressed efficiency to “creativity” centered business practices in the late-fifties and throughout the sixties, see Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 15, 20-22.

McCormack wooed his first client through a mutually shared passion for golf. He was working at the prominent Arter, Hadden, Wykoff & Van Duzer law firm in Cleveland when he thought that golf exhibition matches could turn a profit if the person who ran them knew what to do. In 1958 he found a partner in Richard Taylor, who ran the Carling Golf Tournament. Together they started National Sports Management, Inc., a firm that convinced twenty topflight golfers to represent their business interests. The firm specialized in product endorsements and exhibition bookings that garnered players between \$350 and \$500—a paltry sum compared to what IMG commanded a decade later. Before long the golfers told McCormack: “Look, Mark, you’re a lawyer and you know golf, why don’t you look at some of the contracts that people are giving us to sign and give us some help?” McCormack thought negotiating contracts with other businessmen a great idea for both himself and the golfers, who could benefit from a skilled hand at the negotiating table. That sort of work, however, did not interest his partner Taylor. The two went their separate ways in 1959, a short time after Arnold Palmer—whose golfing star ascended after clinching the 1958 Masters Golf Champion—approached McCormack about handling all of his financial needs and interests ranging from event and tournament scheduling, player promotion, deal-making, financial planning, income taxes, and liabilities.<sup>6</sup>

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Scholars of consumer culture have looked at the franchising and branding of products and businesses, but the innovative and inventive legal work of licensing and branding sports stars remains an understudied topic, ignored in histories of consumer culture interested in the segmentation of markets through marketing and advertising physical products rather than people. See, for example, Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Vintage, 2003), 298-331.

<sup>6</sup> Mark McCormack, “Operational Memorandum: International Management and Affiliated Companies,” typescript dated Dec. 26, 1967, pp. 1, 3-4 Mark McCormack Personal File, International Management Group, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Special Collections Library.

The golfer and the lawyer literally agreed to a partnership by shaking hands. Palmer would play in the public eye and McCormack would shape his image and manage his affairs out of the limelight. Confidence in one another's integrity rather than a contract made the deal. McCormack believed it was better to manage a smaller number of higher-profile players than a large stable of middling talent. Reflecting on his first client agreement and his new business venture twenty-seven years later, McCormack correctly noted that "more than any other single event," his handshake with Palmer "ushered in the era of mutual profit between professional athletes and professional managers." In Palmer's case, that profitability meant an increase from around \$2 a year in 1960 on his sole investment, a savings account, to more than six figures annually on a diversified investment portfolio, out of which McCormack took a commission.<sup>7</sup>

McCormack soon signed agreements with other golfers. He signed Gary Player in 1960, Jack Nicklaus in 1961, and Doug Sanders, Bruce Devlin, and Bob Charles in 1962. The representation of Jack Nicklaus proved especially important for McCormack because "the Golden Bear" was still an amateur. McCormack was instrumental in transitioning the golfer into life as a touring professional. From that stable of clients McCormack extracted fees that ranged between 10 percent and 20 percent of the golfer's gross total income. As IMG grew, so too did the percentage of income that clients paid to the firm for management fees. By 1967, McCormack was receiving one third of his clients' income.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Mark McCormack, *The Terrible Truth About Lawyers: How Lawyers Really Work and How to Deal with Them Successfully* (New York: Beach Tree Books, 1987), 15; McCormack, *Arnie*, 17-19.

<sup>8</sup> Mark McCormack, "Operational Memorandum: International Management and Affiliated Companies," typescript dated Dec. 26, 1967, pp. 4-5, Mark McCormack Personal File, International Management Group, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Special Collections Library.

McCormack drew from other companies with longer histories in the entertainment industry in managing his athletes. The most important progenitor was Lew Wasserman's Music Corporation of America (MCA). MCA started when Wasserman booked the Guy Lombardo band and then signed entertainer after entertainer whose earnings grew so large that the 10 percent fee MCA charged clients earned the company an average of \$8 million a year. The United States government moved against the firm's monopolization of the music industry, and MCA sold off their stakes in performer management. From that corporate cautionary tale and conversations with Wasserman, McCormack realized the value in running his agency with a small-shop ethos where—despite the growth his company sought and the subsequent delegation that inevitably accompanied a firm's bureaucracy—"if Arnold Palmer wants a pair of shoes sent some place or wants to complain about the fact that his Shell Oil bill hasn't been paid on time," said McCormack, then "I am the only one that he is going to call and, for that matter, I am the only one that I would ever want him to call."<sup>9</sup> But cultivating that sort of relationship with sportstar clients meant that McCormack needed to recruit the right kind of athletes.

IMG preferred representing athletes in individual sports over athletes who played team sports. From the perspective of the company's history, that preference made sense because the agency's first and most important early clients played golf—not to mention McCormack liked golf the most. But there were also more hard-headed business motives free of nostalgia. Questionnaires the firm required potential clients to complete prior to a meeting about the athlete's suitability for representation revealed differences between how athletes in team sports versus individual sports earned income for themselves and the agency. For example, the agency

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

made clear to professional footballers such as Pat Summerall, Leo Sugar, Buddy Humphrey, and Joe Krupa that endorsements were where athletes from team sports made their money, while exhibitions made up a mainstay of the revenue that individual sport athletes generated. Herding a whole football team together, or two for that matter, proved expensive, whereas a single golfer or tennis player could play an exhibition for pay at a club and promote the clothing and equipment he or she endorsed at the same time. That difference explained why IMG favored signing clients from elite sports such as golf and tennis.<sup>10</sup>

How exactly did IMG make money off of and for their clients? They profited by commodifying their athlete into a malleable image for sale to any interested buyer at the highest possible price. Cultural theorists and historians have long hypothesized about the imaging of celebrities with little in the way of empirical evidence to show how that process actually worked in practice.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Summerall, Pat, client folder; Sugar, Leo, client folder; Humphrey, Buddy, client folder; Krupa, Joe, client folder, all in Box M3494 (0184) Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. That conclusion is drawn from the comparison of these applications to those of clients from elite sports such as Billie Jean King's Representation Agreement found in King, Billie Jean, client folder, Rep Agreement 1972-1982, Box M3162 (6219), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

<sup>11</sup> Leo Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and Its History* (New York: Vintage, 1997), 506-14, 548-65; Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: British Film Institute Press, 1990), 38-65; and C. L. Cole and David L. Andrews, "America's New Son: Tiger Woods and America's Multiculturalism," in *Sports Stars: Cultural Politics of Sporting Celebrity*, eds. David Andres and Steve Jackson (New York: Routledge, 2001), 70-86. The thousands of cardboard boxes housed in IMG's former Cleveland warehouse that are gradually being transferred to the DuBois Special Collections Library at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst represent the first time scholars can glimpse the day-to-day business of a major entertainment marketing agency. Every few months, archivists add new boxes to the McCormack Collection and plan to do so until the collection is processed and sitting under one roof. Until now, no historian has used these records. A team of archivists and students have started processing the collection, but much work remains to be done as new vanloads of boxes arrive quarterly. The influx of new material has meant the control put into place by the DuBois Library's archivists has evolved. As of July and August 2015, no standardized cataloging existed for much of the collection; therefore, the citation I provide for materials in the Mark McCormack Collection are the most complete from the time of my visit and subsequently likely the most useful in helping a researcher locate the materials as the processing of this collection continues. For example, many of the records in the collection sit vertically in large cardboard boxes separated by folder tabs for individual clients. Those boxes often have two four-digit numbers, one preceded by an M and the second in parenthesis. Given that many clients had files



The IMG operations manual drafted by McCormack on December 26, 1967, provides such a blueprint. He stressed keeping the sixty-one-page memorandum secret, but the rapid growth of his Cleveland-based company into a global presence with different units and subsidiaries across several continents spurred him to succinctly state his business philosophy and expectations for the various branches of the firm. The core of that philosophy was McCormack's own "reputation" as someone his athletes could trust to manage them and create income for them. For a company selling the intangible images of the agency's clients, it made sense for the firm itself to sell the intangible reputation of the company's founder to the athletes IMG sought to represent.<sup>12</sup> Fourth-generation management theorists might call that philosophy a "personal mission statement" of the most personal kind.<sup>13</sup>

McCormack and IMG pioneered another hallmark of management theory in the information age economy. They delegated.<sup>14</sup> Specialization within capitalist economies was as old as the nail-maker made famous by Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations*. In a modern corporation, selling entertainment meant not actually making something small but making someone larger than life. To convince a client that the transformation of their self was worth it,

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in the custody of quasi-independent organizations under the IMG umbrella, both box numbers and the name of the client file folder, when applicable, is the surest way to locate the materials. A second point addressing this collection involves the closure of some files within the collection until 2023. While I was made aware of the titles of a few folders presumably containing material of import to this study—for example, IMG's involvement in a lawsuit brought by the Tennis Player's Council—I have not included that material here because I did not read those records. The material used in this study is open to research and publication under the DuBois Library's policies and Deed of Gift for the Mark McCormack Collection.

<sup>12</sup> McCormack, "Operational Memorandum," typescript dated Dec. 26, 1967, pp. 1-2, 6-9.

<sup>13</sup> The classic of that genre, which clearly drew inspiration from McCormack and other executives of his generation, was Robert R. Covey's runaway bestseller *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004 [1989]), 129, 170-1.

<sup>14</sup> McCormack, "Operational Memorandum," typescript dated Dec. 26, 1967, p. 7.

McCormack hired experts in investments, book publishing and printing, bookings and publicity tours, accounting, hospitality, and other services to transform that client into a managed athlete ready for the market. But McCormack's "invisible hand" guided all the major decisions IMG made on behalf of their clients. The athletes represented took comfort in that control.<sup>15</sup>

The world's top athletes were also attracted to IMG for the agency's secrecy and selectivity. "I am not the least bit interested in having anybody outside of our organization know anything about what we are doing or planning until the event has actually been consummated—and sometimes, not even then," wrote McCormack in 1967. He meant it. He went so far as to advise against his agents holding public meetings with clients or business contacts in public places like Toots Shor's restaurant in New York City for fear that someone might overhear them at the bar and scuttle the firm's deal.<sup>16</sup>

McCormack's plank of exclusivity had roots in the progressive economist Thorsten Veblen's concept of "conspicuous consumption." He theorized that people bought expensive commodities because they thought the act of an expensive purchase made them popular and powerful. When it came to people rather than to things, Veblen's model seemed to flow in reverse, where the less someone saw of something the more that someone wanted to be a part of it—much like the private blueblood lawn tennis clubs of the early twentieth century. In straightforward terms, McCormack turned down, either permanently or for a time, most athletes who applied for representation, even famous ones such as boxer Cassius Clay, running-back

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<sup>15</sup> Adam Smith, *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, vol. 1 (Paris: James Decker, 1801), 12-13; Adam Smith, *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, vol. 2 (London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1778), 35; McCormack, "Operational Memorandum," typescript dated Dec. 26, 1967, pp. 7-8.

<sup>16</sup> McCormack, "Operational Memorandum," typescript dated Dec. 26, 1967, pp. 8-9.

Gale Sayers, chess grandmaster Bobby Fischer, switch-hitter Mickey Mantle, Formula One race car driver Joakim Bonnier, and a host of other athletes and entertainers.<sup>17</sup>

McCormack recognized the income lost every time he turned down a high-profile or an up-and-coming athlete. He justified to himself and his team that agreeing to represent the wrong sportsman or sportswoman would cost the company more money in the long term, because the company's reputation suffered every time a client left IMG's management. Agents thus received instruction to accept only clients that met two criteria: first, IMG could obtain an appropriate return on that client's hefty commission paid to the firm by increasing the market share of the entertainment industry that athlete commanded; and second, that the athlete's best years were in front of them rather than staring them in the face or behind them. Only with both of those criteria met could the partnership between the player and agency prove productive for both parties. For the first half of the company's history, IMG largely succeeded in meeting that objective as they lost only three clients: "We lost Jeremy Flint, the bridge player, because he couldn't find anybody to finance his continuing bridge efforts; we lost James Whittaker, the mountain climber, because he wouldn't climb any more mountains; and we lost Anderl Molterer, the ski racer, because there were no more races for him to ski in." In each case McCormack put the onus of the breakup on the failure of the athlete to excel in their chosen sport. Yet he also instilled in his

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<sup>17</sup> Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Dover, 1994), 53-54, 69, 79-80; Mark McCormack, "Operational Memorandum: International Management and Affiliated Companies," typescript dated Dec. 26, 1967, pp. 9-10, Mark McCormack Personal File, International Management Group, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

agents that the responsibility of a losing a client in the future fell on their shoulders. It was best to avoid signing a bad contract.<sup>18</sup>

Exclusivity and secrecy prompts the question: What did athletes expect when they signed and agreed to pay IMG between one-tenth and one-third of their income? “Coordinated services,” was McCormack’s answer. When a superstar client approached the agency, everything was found “under one roof.” No squabbles among the public relations expert, the accountant, the insurer, the talent manager, the fiduciaries, and the lawyer negotiating contracts. Because IMG was the first agency to streamline the management of every part of the professional athlete’s life, the firm absorbed much of the capital that was otherwise available to agencies run by people such as Frank Scott and Fred Corcoran, who might have wanted to integrate in the same way. Likewise, McCormack celebrated IMG’s ability to assuage the fears harbored by the firm’s clients that the interests of one client may come into “conflict” with the interests of another client also represented by the agency. Athletes competed on the field, but competition for endorsements mattered more to the athletes represented by entertainment management agencies such as IMG. Those firms made the arbitration of those conflicts a top priority because theirs was a business model where reputation made or broke the bank.<sup>19</sup>

The growth of the entertainment industry meant that firms like IMG had to grow or get out of the way. The business McCormack founded thus expanded into a conglomeration of at least twenty-three separate units that functioned together to maximize the exposure of the

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<sup>18</sup> McCormack, “Operational Memorandum,” typescript dated Dec. 26, 1967, pp. 9-11.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12-14.

athlete-entertainer they represented. Half of these units focused on developing the assets of stars from individual sports—mainly the golfers McCormack signed in the agency’s infancy.<sup>20</sup>

Merchandising was a particularly important component of a corporation that “made nothing in particular,” in the words of Sinclair Lewis’s protagonist *George Babbitt*.<sup>21</sup> Here the International Merchandising Corporation, one part of IMG, took the lead. IMG also looked to the potential for big profits in television, motion pictures, and sport instructional films in both wide and small-release formats, and radio broadcasting. Trans World Sports division, a conglomerate nested within IMG, led those efforts by partnering in joint productions with such worldwide media behemoths as Tokyo Broadcasting System and the British Broadcasting Corporation. That IMG division also ran wholly owned telecast rights of some of the largest sporting events in the world like the Daytona 500.<sup>22</sup>

Other branches of the group maximized the impact of clients in the print media. That took the form of both athletes for whom the International Literary Management company negotiated book contracts with publishers as well as for authors who sought representation from them to maximize their own dealings with publishing houses. If an IMG-represented athlete wanted a memoir ghost or co-written by a particular author, agents would only support that effort if the agency represented that author. Client files within IMG made clear that some sports journalists who enjoyed an outsized reputation for sports reporting actually had their careers made not by

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 15-18.

<sup>21</sup> Sinclair Lewis, *Babbitt* (New York: Dover, 2003), 2.

<sup>22</sup> McCormack, “Operational Memorandum,” typescript dated Dec. 26, 1967, pp. 15-18.

the quality of the prose on their pages but by IMG's manipulation of client athletes who selected the book's author and pocketed \$7,000 of the publisher's \$10,000 advance.<sup>23</sup>

Bud Collins, the most flamboyant tennis journalist of the twentieth century, was one such author. Born in Lima, Ohio, in 1929, Collins moved to Boston without a job or an interest in sports. Hard up for work, Collins went to graduate school at Boston College and wrote part-time for the *Boston Herald*. Serendipitously, Brandeis University approached him about helping out their tennis team, and without a tennis background, Collins said yes. He learned about tennis from his players and wrote about tennis for the *Boston Globe* beginning in 1963.<sup>24</sup>

Collins heard about McCormack's representation of athletes and approached IMG about what the firm could do for a writer. As it turned out, they steered Rod Laver away from his first-choice coauthor Frank Deford to Collins for his first book (the 1971 memoir of the Australian Grand Slam Champion titled *The Education of a Tennis Player*), a second co-written player memoir with IMG client Evonne Goolagong published in 1974, negotiations with Chris Evert's father for Collins to write Evert's book, and the resources for regular publication of *Rod Laver's Tennis Digest* first published in 1965 and reprinted over the next decade. Collins also did his part by tirelessly seeking out compliments from anyone who was anybody in the cities he visited, assembling what one IMG employee called "laudatory comments" in a "portfolio" Collins could present on demand. Most lucratively, IMG secured a commentator position for Collins to broadcast tennis, first with CBS Sports in 1968 and then in 1972 with NBC's Breakfast at

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., pp. 15-16.

<sup>24</sup> Bud Collins ITHF Induction File, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

Wimbledon coverage that IMG originally proposed, securing a prominent and visible commentating position for Collins during the next thirty-five years.<sup>25</sup>

Along with those contracts, IMG even helped Collins with his clothes. The company knew that color attracted free publicity, and Collins donned outrageous custom pants at his agent's suggestion: Saltie Crocodile Australia striped pants; Gap Khakis signed by players with quotations such as "30 years? Now that's stamina"; Uluru/Ayer's Rock pants; and his signature Koalas Bud Collins tennis log. His writing style, like his sartorial sense, was more about

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<sup>25</sup> Jacques de Spoelberch to Arthur J. Lafave, Jr., July 21, 1972, no folder, Box M3512 (0106), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Rod Laver and Bud Collins, *The Education of a Tennis Player* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1971); Rodney Laver and Bud Collins, *Rod Laver's Tennis Digest* (Chicago: Follett Pub., 1965); Evonne Goolagong and Bud Collins, *Evonne! On the Move* (New York: Dutton, 1975); Rodney Laver and Bud Collins, *Rod Laver's Tennis Digest* (Chicago: Follett Corp., 1975); Bud Collins, "Davis Cup Boss Got Shaky Start," *Boston Globe*, March 9, 1965, p. 21; Bud Collins, "VASS Ist das?: Idea for Net Profit," *Boston Globe*, March 21, 1965, p. 61; Bud Collins, "Lo, the Tennis Amateur—Can't Afford to Turn Pro," *Boston Globe*, April 15, 1965, p. 43; Bud Collins, "Ashe's Blazing Service Beats Osuna, 6-2, 6-3, 9-7," *Boston Globe*, August 1, 1966, p. 51; Bud Collins, "Ripped Ralston Rips Froehling," *Boston Globe*, September 9, 1965, p. 49; Bud Collins, "'Get Out, Run,' India Girl's Plea to U.S. Women," *Boston Globe*, July 1, 1966, p. 19; Bud Collins, "Miss Richey Outguns Billie Jean in Upset," *Boston Globe*, March 30, 1968, p. 18; Bud Collins, "Laver Wallops Roche for Wimbledon Crown," *Boston Globe*, July 6, 1968, p. 13; Bud Collins, "Ashe Defeats Okker for Open Tennis Title," *Boston Globe*, September 10, 1968, p. 1; "Rod Laver Wins 4th Wimbledon Crown," *Boston Globe*, July 6, 1969, p. 69; Bud Collins, "Hoad ousted at Wimbledon," *Boston Globe*, June 25, 1970, p. 29; Bud Collins, "Smith, Richey Reach Wimbledon Quarterfinals," *Boston Globe*, June 27, 1971, p. 82; Bud Collins, "Passarell Win Prevents US Shutout," *Boston Globe*, March 13, 1972, p. 25; Bud Collins, "A Typically Nasty Day Delights Wimbledon," *Boston Globe*, June 28, 1973, p. 72; Bud Collins, "Newcombe Dethrones Smith," *Boston Globe*, May 11, 1974, p. 24; Bud Collins, "Rosewall Out of Miracles, Bows to Rejuvenated Roche," *Boston Globe*, June 29, 1975, p. 68; *Tennis's Greatest Volleys & Follies*, Performed by Bud Collins (Van Nuys, CA: Castle Vision Film, Trans World International, and Castle Vision, 1994), videocassette; Tenniscollector, "Bud Collins with BJK, Chris Evert & Hana Mandilkova Wimbledon 1981," *YouTube* video, 2:16, January 7, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uJU64pfuqqo>; Tenniscollector, "Bud 'Mr Tennis's Collins interviews Connors Wimbledon Final 1982," *YouTube* video, 2:25, January 11, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8v73z0TK6Q>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8v73z0TK6Q>; Tenniscollector, "Bud 'Mr. Tennis's Collins with Martina and Chris – Wimbledon 1985," *YouTube* video, 4:13, January 11, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-uddKF0pjY>; Chrisevert.net, "Chris Evert d. Tracy Austin – 1979 Clairol (Part 1 of 2)," *YouTube* video, 6:26, November 15, 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5iTDR0sbVki>; Rafael Nadal Channel, "Bud Collins Analysis," *YouTube* video, 3:09, February 20, 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5POYIOe7P4>; WGBH News, "Beat the Press: Bud Collins," *YouTube* video, 5:09, March 4, 2016, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-\\_msV39qMA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-_msV39qMA). These articles and video clips, along with many others, give a good representation of Collins' reporting, interviewing, and analysis over his career.

sensation than about substance. The same can be said of his broadcasting, where any spectator familiar with tennis might wonder what the heck he meant as his florid commentary flowed forth over the airwaves. None of that mattered to IMG, though. The agency was just happy to collect its 33 1/3 percent commission from Collins.<sup>26</sup>

Clients with a much bigger footprint than Collins received even more attention, which in turn enabled IMG to make more money. The first athletes the agency signed were golfers, and the agency looked after them with care because McCormack realized that lending the image of someone handy with the club meant the realization of profits from exhibition fees, equipment endorsements, and, most significantly, course design commissions. IMG thus incorporated more than a dozen subsidiaries to manage the franchising of golfers that ranged from Arnold Palmer Dry Cleaning Centers to Ohio Promotions that managed Jack Nicklaus's "sportswear licensing, exhibitions and appearances, television programs and commercials, motion pictures and radio tips, premium sales, publishing, newspaper features, all franchised operations such as the putting courses, golf schools and driving ranges." As with George MacCall's National Tennis League, IMG controlled insurance options for the firm's athlete assets through divisions such as Nicklaus and Hoag Insurance Incorporated and the Palmac Company located in Chicago. IMG corporatized individual athletes and then hedged against the losses to come as time wore on the athlete's body and the subsequent desirability of that image.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Pants, Box 64, Bud Collins Collection, Boston College Special Collections.

<sup>27</sup> McCormack, "Operational Memorandum," typescript dated Dec. 26, 1967, pp. 17-19; Brian Roggenburk to Rod Laver, December 13, 1976, Laver, Correspondence, 1976 Folder, Box M3657 (1358/0158), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. In terms of athlete insurance, see George MacCall's National Tennis League discussed in greater detail in chapter seven; Arthur Ashe to George MacCall, January 6, 1974, Folder 9, Box 1, George MacCall Papers, Penn State University Special Collections.



The agents within IMG made it their business to make business from the athletes and other sorts of clients that they managed. Who were these agents and what specifically did they do? McCormack was the first among equals. Founder, President, Chief Executive Officer, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Chairman of the Executive Committee, Chairman of the New Client Committee, and Chairman of the Finance Committee, he also supervised IMG's oldest and many of the firm's most important accounts: Arnold Palmer; Gary Player, Jack Nicklaus; the U.S. Ski Association; Bob Beattie; Playboy; Newark Ford Dealers; Carreras Ltd; Gary Player Enterprises; Gary Player Company of South Africa; Gary Player Promotions; Golf Enterprises; and World of Sport & Bob Ferrier Ltd. He also liaised, negotiated, and struck deals with some of the largest corporations in the world—companies from which IMG sought license fees and endorsement deals: networks such as NBC, ABC, CBS, and the BBC; media companies such Newsweek magazine, Time, Inc., Sport Illustrated, and Playboy; airlines such as United and Pan American World Airways; manufacturers such as Ford and Lincoln-Mercury Division, General Motors and Pontiac Division, RCA, Firestone, Coca-Cola, Canada Dry, U.S. Gypsum, and Standard Oil; sports organizations such as the Professional Golf Company, Royal and Ancient, the Professional Golf Company, the United States Golf Association, Worldwide Dunlop and Slazenger Group, and the International Olympic Committee; and the credit card company American Express. He kept a “Money List” of powerful executives that he could call upon for a pitch—a list he kept up to date.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> McCormack, “Operational Memorandum,” typescript dated Dec. 26, 1967, pp. 25-26; Money List, n.d., Money List, Folder, Box M0705 (0453), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

McCormack also created for himself a separate corporate entity of McCormack's own commercial activities in publishing, paid speaking engagements, and self-promotion that IMG managed for him. Contacting all those managers and serving all those accounts across the world gave McCormack plenty of material to write a string of a dozen bestselling books with titles such as *McCormack on Negotiating* and *What They Don't Teach You at Harvard Business School about Executive Travel: Hit the Ground Running*. Despite McCormack's claim to candor, his books obscured as much as they clarified when compared to the actual day-to-day business practices IMG performed on behalf of clients and directed to bolster the firm's balance sheet. Moreover, his McCormack-centered books—in the latter title he goes so far as to give an hour-by-hour, restaurant-by-restaurant, and hotel-by-hotel accounting of his travels during February 1995—created the impression he did much of the firm's work himself. In actual practice in an organization as large as IMG, the company's founder and chief executive delegated a great deal to able subordinates.<sup>29</sup>

McCormack called Arthur J. Lafave, Jr., his “second in command.” Lafave was responsible for a smaller list of less priority clients. He was charged with licensing to smaller companies, and operating areas of IMG's media influence with fewer dollars in them than

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<sup>29</sup> Mark McCormack, *What They Still Don't Teach You at Harvard Business School: Selling More, Managing Better, and Getting the Job Done in the '90s* (New York: Bantam, 1989); Mark McCormack, *The Terrible Truth About Lawyers: How Lawyers Really Work and How to Deal with Them Successfully* (New York: Beach Tree Books, 1987); McCormack, *Arnie*; Mark McCormack, *What They Don't Teach You at Harvard Business School: Notes from a Street-Smart Executive* (New York: Bantam, 1984); Mark McCormack, *The 110% Solution* (New York: Villard Books, 1990); Mark McCormack, *McCormack on Negotiating* (New York: Random House, 1995); Mark McCormack, *McCormack on Managing* (New York: Random House, 1995); Mark McCormack, *McCormack on Communicating* (New York: Random House, 1995); Mark McCormack, *McCormack on Selling* (New York: Random House, 1995); Mark McCormack, *Staying Street Smart in the Internet Age* (New York: Penguin, 2000); ; Mark McCormack, *What They Don't Teach You at Harvard Business School About Executive Travel: Hit the Ground Running* (New York: Dove, 1996), 67-80.

television rights—books and syndicated newspapers, for example. Richard R. Alford oversaw the New Client Committee, probably the most crucial part of the firm’s growth, as did Charles L. Foley and Edward J. Keating. William H. Carpenter counseled IMG on most legal and insurance issues, while John W. McGrath worked on the Finance Committee to shelter clients’ tax money. In a market with total fluidity and no solid numbers behind what the licensing of a certain athlete might bring to a company that agreed to buy the rights of that athlete to endorse their product, good legal counsel from Carpenter was paramount. In representing clients from around the world who played in sporting events across the world, the opportunity existed for “creative tax planning” from McGrath and IMG’s accounts.<sup>30</sup> Expertise in those two areas more than anything else drew the world’s best athletes and biggest sports organizations to seek IMG’s services.

IMG’s chronological files of two important tennis clients reveals just how the firm operated. Rod Laver peaked as a tennis player during the late 1960s at just the moment that traditionally amateur tennis tournaments opened to professionals and IMG expanded its influence—they had major offices in Cleveland, Johannesburg, London, Los Angeles, New York, and Tokyo—over global entertainment. The red-headed Aussie may have earned his “Rocket” nickname back in his home country, but IMG’s agents were the ones who transformed Laver into a worldwide personality. He first approached McCormack about representation in 1966, but as with Pancho Gonzales, McCormack turned Laver down. With professional tennis coming off two of the game’s most unsuccessful years monetarily in America since professional tours in America began in 1926, McCormack simply did not see much potential in making

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<sup>30</sup> McCormack, “Operational Memorandum,” typescript dated Dec. 26, 1967, pp. 27-33.

money from a professional athlete positioned in a still largely amateur sport even if that player was the best in the world.<sup>31</sup>

Two years later Laver wrote McCormack again, and that time IMG responded differently because tennis had opened to professionals. The firm's Jay Lafave met Laver, signed him in short order in September 1968, and then put IMG's resources into gear for their first tennis client.<sup>32</sup> Most of that work began with letters Laver's IMG agents sent to companies who might consider paying the tennis player for the privilege of attaching his likeness to their company's product. Janet A. Horvath's letter to Howard Friedman, who managed Kodacorp's Menswear Division, typified the usual pitch: "Mr. Laver is one of the hottest properties in the sports world today and we are looking to develop a manufacturing program for him that would be ready for Spring '72."<sup>33</sup>

Letters never made any promises about how much money Laver's image would make for the company. Platitudes and generalities abounded. Companies who themselves operated in industries that did not make a physical product but rather traded in information—financial services, for example—tended to view unsubstantiated pitches with reluctance and passed on paying for endorsements.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Laver, *The Education of a Tennis Player*, 257-8.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 258; Janet A. Horvath to Mr. Howard Friedman, April 28, 1971, Folder, Rod Laver, Kodacorp, Box M3594 (0487/0158), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

<sup>34</sup> Richard R. Alford to Richard D. Moody and American Express, July 29, 1969, Folder, Rod Laver, Club Continental, LTD., Box M3594 (0487/0158), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Apparel companies proved far more amenable to paying for a player's likeness attached to their product. Those firms continued to seek athlete endorsements without a clear sense of how that endorsement actually affected their sales. The upstart Adidas Apparel Company agreed to pay Laver a 3 percent royalty and a \$10,000 guarantee to name a shoe after the tennis player with no market research into the impact his likeness might have on sales. A short photo shoot for a cover of a product catalog placed Laver between two models, one posed to reveal her underwear and the second to highlight her breasts; as far as Adidas was concerned, this small bit of Laver's labor made a difference to their bottom line. Adidas's operations and export department records show a far more complete picture that the company's real profits came from cheaply producing shoes in different countries throughout the world and then selling those same shoes to buyers in countries who could pay more. Numbers aside, IMG convinced Adidas and many other companies that a global product in a global economy needed to associate with a global sports figure. Athletes such as Laver had few qualms in accepting 3 percent of \$302,507.31 generated by the sale of 18,480 pairs of shoes, because they did little direct work for their endorsement check and they earned so many other endorsements through the ceaseless work of IMG's agents. The Puritan Sports Company claimed they sold "the shirt off Rod Laver's back," but that did not mean Laver sweated a bit for it.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Peter A. Kuhn to Richard R. Alford, August 24, 1972 Folder, Adidas Apparel, 1969-1972, Box M3512 (0106), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Hartmut Klar, Adidas Export Department, to Richard Alford, August 7, 1972, Folder, Adidas Apparel, 1969-1972, Box M3512 (0106) Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Advertisement, Puritan Sports Company, Rod Laver Company (large brown accordion folder), Box M3657 (1358) (0158), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Rod Laver Press Kit, Rod Laver Tennis Wear Collections by Vivo by Susan Thomas and the Puritan Sportswear Corp, Rod Laver Company, large brown accordion folder), Box M3657 (1358) (0158), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Those same agents diversified Laver and IMG's other client entertainers into as many different areas as possible. Consulting work at the Palmas del Mar resort in Palm Desert, Laver-Emerson tennis magazines distributed throughout Hyatt's 28,000 United States hotel rooms, management positions relating to the tennis programs at places such as Hilton Head Island Resort and the Newport Beach Tennis Club where pro shops paid to screen the instructional copies of the uninspired "Laver Emerson Method," joint ventures with other tennis players, the Insurance Companies such as Mass Mutual, who thought their products would sell better by putting a young and vigorous athlete in advertisements, the creation of player management companies named after the player and managed by IMG with the intention to manage and move some of the player's assets as needed, and various tennis products that ranged from ball machines that claimed to feed balls in the way that shots came off of the professional's racquet and "Hy-O-Sheep" racquet string—IMG's agents tried to put Laver into all of it.<sup>36</sup> In those efforts—along with the cattle breeding, ranching, and numerous other investments they found for their clients—the agency largely succeeded.<sup>37</sup> In less than a year McCormack doubled Laver's

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<sup>36</sup> David Armstrong to Palm Desert Property Representative, November 10, 1976, Folder, Rod Laver, Palm Desert Property, Box M3657 (0158); David Armstrong to Michael J. Narracott, December 22, 1975, Rod Laver Hyatt Hotel Corporation Folder, Box M3657 (0158); Mike Narracott to David Armstrong, October 29, 1975, Rod Laver Hyatt Hotel Corporation Folder, Box M3657 (0158); Mike Narracott to Bill Carpenter, January 13, 1975, Rod Laver, Hilton Head Folder, Box; David Armstrong to Mike Narracott, October 28, 1975, Mass Mutual, Rod Laver Folder, Box M3657 (1358/0158); Mike Narracott to David Armstrong, February 22, 1977, Professional International INC, Rod Laver Folder, Box M3657 (1358/0158); Statement of Financial Condition of The Rod Laver Company, December 31, 1970, Correspondence, Rod Laver Co. Folder, Box M3657 (0158); Securities and Exchange Commission Registration Statement for Automated Plater Machines, Inc., April 16, 1970, Automated Play Machine, 1969 through 1971 folder (brown according folder), Box M3594 (0487/0158); Contract between Rodney Laver and Rucanor Corporation, March 1970, Rod Laver, Rucanor Folder, Box M3512 (0106) all in Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

<sup>37</sup> Arnold Palmer Breeder Program Binder, no folder name or number, Box M3747 (097); Jack Nicklaus Breeder Program Binder, no folder name or number, Box 3747 (097); Brooks Robinson Breeder Program Binder, no folder name or number, Box 3747 (097) all in Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

off-court income, moved him from a no-name clothing endorsement to the up-and-coming Adidas sportswear brand, segmented the world market for Laver's racquet endorsement into Europe, Australia, and the United States for \$50,000 a year, and negotiated twenty contracts for Laver across a range of fields.<sup>38</sup>

Defending a player license against unwanted infringement from outsiders mattered almost as much as brokering the original sponsorship deal. Mark McCormack practiced law; so too did many of the agents who worked for him. Patrolling the unlicensed usage of an athlete client often meant IMG counselors went after small individuals or companies for petty infringements. One case occurred in 1975 when Rod Laver wrote to IMC's legal department about "a few nuts in the world" who produced cassette tapes that purported to teach the "Laver forehand" and the "Rosewall backhand." At \$15 apiece, Dick Bradlee of Dick Bradlee Tennis College planned to get rich off those images of Laver. IMG threatened Bradlee with a lawsuit and dissuaded him from trying to profit from "the highly valued property" that was "Rod's name and likeness."<sup>39</sup>

Once athletes like Laver accumulated a great deal of income in licensing, then IMG's performed its second major function in helping athletes move into an even wilder world of tax accountancy. The globalization of the world economy in the seventies incentivized some

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<sup>38</sup> Laver, *The Education of a Tennis Player*, 258-9.

<sup>39</sup> Rod Laver to David Armstrong, n.d., Professional International Inc., Rod Laver folder, Box M3657 (0158); Dick Bradlee's Tennis Colleges advertisement, Professional International Inc., Rod Laver folder, Box M3657 (0158); David Armstrong to Dick Bradlee, December 22, 1975, Professional International Inc., Rod Laver folder, Box M3657 (0158) all in Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

countries to offer tax shelters to corporations.<sup>40</sup> IMG operated in six of the world's seven continents without the usual problems of managing inventory that plague companies that actually manufacture products. The nation-to-nation traveling of IMG's client athletes meant the agency's tax lawyers did not have to work too hard in explaining away any financial irregularities. But secrecy rather than explanation prevailed. IMG coordinated Swedish tennis champion Bjorn Borg's various interests from the agency's headquarters in Cleveland and assessed a 25 percent fee through divisions or subsidiaries like International Merchandising Corporation, Inimark, Inc., International Merchandising Establishment, or I.M.E. Clearing House. Merrill Lynch brokered Borg's investment portfolio in New York City, but IMG's Cleveland office made decisions on when to buy and sell precious metals, stock, funds, bonds, property, and other securities for a client whose L'Estoril Avenue Princess Grace, Monte Carlo address in Monaco limited his tax liability in the United States and Europe, where most big money tennis tournaments took place. Seldom did clients' assets reconcile with their actual income.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Despite the scholarly vogue of writing transnational stories, historians have had remarkably little to say about the rise of tax shelters in the twentieth century constitutive with the globalization of the economy—specifically in the 1960s and 1970s. On this see, for example, Robin Einhorn's review essay, "Taxes," in Sally Hadden and Alfred Brophy eds., *A Companion to American Legal History* (New York: Blackwell, 2013), 349-66. The historiography of European money moving to the perceived safety of American banks is stronger for the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries rather than for the post-World War I twentieth century. For examples, see Scott Nelson, *A Nation of Deadbeats: An Uncommon History of America's Financial Disasters* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012), 13, 35, 221, 242; Eric Rauchway, *Blessed Among Nations: How the World Made America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), 3-57.

<sup>41</sup> Investment Statement and letter from Robert A. Bourne to Bjorn Borg, August 4, 1976, Bjorn Borg, Bank Accounts, Pre 1976 Folder, Box M3421; Bjorn Borg Cleveland checkbook reconciliation, January 6, 1976, Bjorn Borg, Checkbook Reconciliation, Box M3421 (0124); Chequebook Reconciliation from July 1 to July 31, 1976 Private Trust Bank, Vaduz Folder, Bjorn Borg, Bank Accounts, Pre 1976 Folder, Box M3421 (0124); Bjorn Borg Financial Reports Binders, Box M3421 (0124); Bjorn Borg, cheque book reconciliation May, 1976 Folder, Box M3421, (0124), all in Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. McCormack, "Operational Memorandum," typescript dated Dec. 26, 1967, pp. 20, 22, 33.



How did that representation vary for women clients or clients from racial minorities? In the case of female athletes, IMG essentially worked as hard to promote the images of these women as they did the men. McCormack's writings revealed staunch sexism when it came to hiring women and promoting them into senior management positions within his firm. On the occasions that women working for IMG rose above the secretary ranks to positions where negotiations of real weight took place, McCormack gave those employees due credit for rising high in a the "traditionally...male bastion" of sports while simultaneously hinting that a woman executive or lead attorney was the result of something unusual, such as the impression made by the imposing six-foot height of IMG lawyer Betsey Groff on negotiators looking to make a deal.<sup>42</sup>

As IMG grew, though, McCormack's reluctance to acknowledge the executive capabilities of many women softened, and he promoted women to lead core parts of the firm. For example, Stephanie Tolleson headed the IMG's Women's Tennis Division in the 1990s and grew that area by signing crucial contracts with players such as Venus and Serena Williams. Whereas women employees of IMG had an uphill climb to succeed in sports management, the company's account executives bent over backwards to please the company's female athlete clients. When it came to representing players such as Evonne Goolagong, Billie Jean King, and Martina Navratilova, McCormack put the business instincts of these women on par with if not exceeding many of IMG's male clients. The chief complaint the agency's account executives leveled against sportswomen pointed not at the athletes but at their entourages, spouses, and partners,

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<sup>42</sup> Mark McCormack, *The 110% Solution*, 17-18; McCormack, *The Terrible Truth About Lawyers*, 163.

who proved much more meddlesome in the financial well being of the IMG client than the wives or girlfriends of male players. That perhaps explains why the two women athletes McCormack most admired and most enjoyed managing were Billie Jean King and Martina Navratilova. Both players kept their sexual preferences secret during much of their playing careers and came to IMG unencumbered by male partners who thought they knew sports and sports management.<sup>43</sup>

The most influential female player IMG represented during the first two decades of the firm's tennis representation was Billie Jean King. Her lawyers agreed to IMG's "exclusive and worldwide" representation of "Ms. King's career" in September of 1978, though IMG may have done some work for King as early as 1974. In either case, by June 1980, IMG had generated and was managing nineteen contracts for King with companies ranging from American Express to Yonex Trading, each paying out retainers and annual minimum guarantees of between \$2,500 and \$100,000, with each guarantee set to rise between 10 percent and more than 100 percent annually over the two to four years of most agreements. In exchange for her retainer, King may or may not have had to make an appearance at a company event such as a photo shoot, conference, or exhibition. The inconsistency of the amount of money the contract awarded for the amount of real work in terms of appearances revealed not only the persuasive powers of IMG agents to make deals for their clients but also how difficult companies found assigning a dollar value to an athlete's likeness. For example, Nestle Tea paid King \$50,000 a year beginning in 1980 to drink Light Iced Tea but did not require her to make a single appearance or anything else except, on occasion, sip the bottled beverage. Charleston Hosiery, on the other hand, paid King

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<sup>43</sup> Mark McCormack, *Staying Street Smart in the Internet Age: What Hasn't Changed about the Way We Do Business* (New York: Viking, 2000), 150, 249; McCormack, *The 110% Solution*, 11-12, 39-40, 63-64; Mark McCormack, *On Selling* (West Hollywood, CA: Dove Books, 1996), 180-181.

\$10,000 in 1980 to wear their athletic socks in all her matches and attend one of their corporate events for the day. Simply put, the impact an athlete had on an advertising campaign was close to impossible to measure.<sup>44</sup>

King's personal measurements, on the other hand, were essential from IMG's standpoints. On March 15, 1980, IMG prepared detailed measurements of every part of King's body down to the quarter-inch. Armed with that information and King's impressive biography, IMG agents approached potential clothing sponsors with much of the information those companies needed to make a decision about whether or not to offer King an endorsement deal. IMG worked on biographies for many of their athlete clients. But in terms of the detailed analysis of athlete's bodies, IMG actually worked harder in generating that information for their female client athletes than their male client athletes—though the fact that a company sought such information points to the importance of sexualization of female athletes when compared to their male counterparts. By June of 1980, half of IMG's tennis clients were women. That percentage rose in the 1990s as IMG's tennis division grew compared to that of other agencies with strong positions in tennis recruiting.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> IMG to Future, Inc., September, 1978, King, Billie Jean, Client K: Rep Agreement 1974-1982, Folder, Box M3162 (0159), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Contract Summary for Billie Jean King as of June, 1980, King, Billie Jean, Client K: Summaries & Prior K's 1978, Folder, Box M3162 (0159), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

<sup>45</sup> Billie Jean King Measurements, March 15, 1980, King, Billie Jean, Fact Sheet 1979, Folder, Box M3162 (0159), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Billie Jean King Fact Sheet, King, Billie Jean, Fact Sheet 1979, Folder, Box M3162 (0159), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Patrick Alcox & John Nay to Tennis Committee, June 13, 1980, King, Billie Jean, Fact Sheet 1979, Folder, Box M3162 (0159), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; McCormack, *Staying Street Smart*, 249.

When it came to athletes from traditionally marginalized groups, IMG's efforts varied. The company represented only sixty-seven African American athletes out of a total of 2,335 unique clients—though the firm did count as clients the two most famous African American athletes in the world, Muhammed Ali and later Tiger Woods, and the most famous athlete of color outside of the United States, Brazillian striker Pelé. Despite doing a tremendous amount of business in Japan, in particular with Japanese companies obsessed with golf, IMG represented only six Japanese entertainer-athletes—LPGA champion Ayako Okamoto, PGA champion Tsuneyuki Nakajima, PGA champion Asao Aoki, poet Karou Maruyama, tennis player Soichi Nakamura, and Japanese-American tennis player Ann Kiyomura. The company preferred participating in Japanese sporting events rather than managing Japanese athletes. Religion and ethnicity mattered much less than race: Pope John Paul II and Itzhak Perlman both had IMG representation. IMG also did not mind getting political in representing presidential hopeful Bob Dole and other candidates in their campaigns. Nor did the company refuse to manage easy-going entertainers with audiences far afield from sports—Fred Rogers of Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood, for example.<sup>46</sup>

Examples of openness notwithstanding, when they had the opportunity to recruit a major African American athlete, IMG agents were less aggressive and successful. After a third recruitment meeting, Arthur Ashe described McCormack as “aloof.”<sup>47</sup> At the same time, the

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<sup>46</sup> McCormack, *The Terrible Truth About Lawyers*, 12, 173-4. No master client list can be found in the McCormack collection. These figures are a best estimate based on the firm's individual client records held as file room holdings at the DuBois Library. Again, my thanks to the University of Massachusetts-Amherst staff for making this material available to me.

<sup>47</sup> Dell, *Minding Other People's Business*, 39; Dell, *Never Make the First Offer*, 33-34; Mark McCormack, *On Communicating* (Los Angeles: Dove Books, 1998), 5; McCormack, *Staying Street Smart*, 256.

agency worked with the League's lawyers to discourage the formation of a "Negro Union" made up of African American representatives from the League's sixteen franchises authorized to bargain on behalf of African American footballers. Athletes Lionel Alridge, Elijah Pitts, and Henry V. Kane reported that they and "almost all of the other negro athletes in the NFL" had received "nil" in terms of dollars from advertisers, endorsements, and personal appearance fees. Writing on behalf of IMG, Richard R. Alford pointed out that while the tide of a "white only" preference among national advertisers was beginning to change, the proposed union's efforts "of Negroes banning [sic] together partly because they are Negroes is a step in the wrong direction." Alford simply did not see McCormack wanting to lend his influence and offer marketing help to "the Negro nobodies of the NFL."<sup>48</sup> Having said that, nowhere in McCormack's voluminous correspondence, to the author's knowledge, do specific slurs or specific policies of African American exclusion appear. Sometimes silence and inaction, however, speak louder than words and actions.

IMG's traditional stance against athletes who had already peaked likewise seemed more general guidance than a hard and fast rule when race entered the picture. The agency turned down Pancho Gonzales for representation when he was still the number-one tennis player in the world, while at the same time IMG looked to sign Jack Kramer, who promoted tennis but had not played the game competitively in more than fifteen years. McCormack himself even considered

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<sup>48</sup> Memorandum of Initial Meeting, May 2, 1967, NFL Negro Union Memo, Folder, Box M0705 (0453); Richard R. Alford to William H. Carpenter, June 28, 1967, NFL Negro Union Memo, Folder, Box M0705 (0453), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

supervising Kramer's account.<sup>49</sup> Here and elsewhere, IMG's agents made choices on who and what to represent with race an underlying but not explicitly stated factor in those decisions.

Stepping back from the work they did for individual clients to look at the Management Group as a whole, how did IMG spend the bulk of its resources? An imprecise but instructive inference is revealed by examining the entirety of the company's files and counting the frequency with which employees worked to promote clients' interests as those interests related to certain sports. Golf dominated with 8,621 (36.287 percent), followed by tennis with 2,368 actions (17.38 percent), and compared to sports often considered far larger such as baseball with 158 (1.159 percent), basketball 144 (1.057 percent), and football 487 (3.575 percent).<sup>50</sup> Out of 13,622 specific actions IMG's agents took relating to twenty-eight different sports or categories of sports (i.e., water sports), IMG prioritized individual sports eight-and-a-half to one for team sports, with golf first and tennis second for a combined eight for every ten sports activities IMG undertook. That prioritization goes far to explain the tennis boom of the 1960s and 1970s despite the fact no contemporary journalist then or historian since has carefully studied IMG records and archives.<sup>51</sup>

Less than a decade after the company signed Arnold Palmer, IMG counted a significant number of the most recognizable "personalities" in sports among the agency's clients. That rapid

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<sup>49</sup> McCormack, "Operational Memorandum," typescript dated Dec. 26, 1967, pp. 10, 25.

<sup>50</sup> My thanks to archivists at the DuBois Library, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Special Collections for providing me with these figures.

<sup>51</sup> For example, the classic and still best work that examines factors behind the upswing in the popularity of tennis between 1968 and 1979 was the reporting and analysis of longtime *New Yorker* writer Herbert Warren Wind, who, in two decades of tennis commentary, only mentions McCormack and IMG by name once in reference to managing Bjorn Borg. For that passing reference in Wind's collected writings on tennis, see Herbert Warren Wind, *Game, Set, and Match: The Tennis Boom of the 1960s and 70s* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1969), 144.

ascendance was attributable to how well McCormack ran his agency, to how much demand professional athletes had for professional representation, and, more broadly, to how popular sports—in particular individual sports—were with the broad public. McCormack also put into practice the old adage that it takes money to make money by pioneering—much to the chagrin of ProServ, his closest competitor in the sports management business, who was less than a third the size of IMG—the awarding of guarantees to potential sports client. An IMG executive would ask an athlete how much money he or she had received for an appearance or product endorsement and guarantee to double that number regardless of whether IMG actually convinced a company to match the stated offer for licensing or the “personal appearance fee.” The athlete usually agreed to IMG representation, which forced the firm to make good on their promise of increased compensation. They often honored that pledge by simply paying the additional money to their client out of IMG’s bank accounts without revealing to the athlete the true source of the money. Making good on their guarantees thus allowed IMG to accumulate far more athletes than they might have otherwise and created for the firm an economy of scale and a stable of clients unmatched by most of their competitors combined.<sup>52</sup>

In a 1974 letter bragging about the “caliber of athlete” they represented, an IMG executive put together something close to an agency master client list. For team sports, the agency represented only a handful of baseballers, players of great talent such as Frank Robinson. IMG’s basketball clients included names like Hank Finkel. The firm highlighted more football players of high caliber such as Archie Manning. Hockey and soccer clients of the status of Kyle

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<sup>52</sup> Donald Dell, “Q&A with Tennis Hall of Famer Donald Dell,” *USTA*, n.d., [https://www.usta.com/Pro-Tennis/Feature/QA\\_with\\_Donald\\_Dell/](https://www.usta.com/Pro-Tennis/Feature/QA_with_Donald_Dell/); Dell, *Never Make the First Offer Except when You Should*, 108-9.

Rote, Jr., were also few when compared to the individual sport athletes IMG boasted most about. The agency counted many more athletes as clients, but they liked to brag about their best. The same was true even more so, for their individual sport athletes: Arnold Palmer and Chi Chi Rodriguez, among dozens of other golfers; tracksters such as Brian Oldfield and Jim Ryan; motor racers such as Jackie Stewart, Sam Posey, and Brock Yates; tennis's most elite players such as Bjorn Borg and Martina Navratilova; along with dozens of other athletes at the top of their comparatively minor sports. IMG even counted non-athlete entertainers among the entertainers the firm represented, including fashion designer Jean Shrimpton, broadcaster Chris Schenkel, and several classical musicians.<sup>53</sup>

By the year 2000, IMG employed approximately 2,500 people in 81 offices across 31 countries. The firm represented the most profitable events in sports along with major music competitions—including the Winter and Summer Olympics during the 1980s and 1990s—and put Tiger Woods on course to become the first athlete in history to earn more than one billion dollars in pre-tax income.<sup>54</sup> At the time of McCormack's death in 2013, the agency had represented 2,335 client athletes, entertainers, organizations, and sporting events in a total of 42,937 negotiations.<sup>55</sup> All in all, the agency's influence over professional sports and

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<sup>53</sup> Gordon R. Lasenbury to Irwin Goldberg, November 5, 1974, Betsey Negelsen and Fabergé Cosmetics File, no folder, Box M3421 (0124), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; McCormack, *The Terrible Truth About Lawyers*, 12.

<sup>54</sup> McCormack, *Staying Street Smart*, viii, 8; ESPN Staff writer, "Tiger Richest Athlete in History," *ESPN News Service*, October 2, 2009, <http://espn.go.com/golf/news/story?id=4524640> (accessed March 1, 2017).

<sup>55</sup> These figures come a tabulation of the chronological files in Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.



entertainment more broadly was beyond quantification, but with influence came conflict with the other powerbrokers in the entertainment market.

The closest competition came from fellow sports agents courting celebrity athletes for representation. On December 30, 1968, McCormack wrote to the United States Davis Cup captain Donald Dell, via the United States embassy in Canberra, and wished Dell luck in the Davis Cup Challenge Round. The real purpose of the letter was to persuade Dell to join McCormack's agency because, in McCormack's words, "there is an awful lot that we can do together in this area." McCormack meant tennis, and he feared the competition Dell could give IMG if Dell decided to mimic McCormack's success with the greater connections he held with tennis players.<sup>56</sup>

That concern proved warranted because Dell brought a tremendous pedigree to the sports agency business. Dell garnered All-American honors three of the four years he lettered at Yale, and he reached the NCAA Men's Tennis Final his junior year. He competed in United States Lawn Tennis Association and International Tennis Federation amateur tournaments during the 1960s as well as playing on the American Davis Cup squad in 1961 and 1963. A year later he earned his law degree from the University of Virginia and entered practice in the Washington Beltway. Dell worked for powerful politicians such as Bobby Kennedy and Sargent Shriver, whom Dell served as his Special Assistant when Shriver directed President Lyndon Johnson's Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO).<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Mark McCormack to Donald L. Dell, December 30, 1968. Mark H. McCormack Papers (MS 700). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts, Amherst Libraries.

<sup>57</sup> Donald Dell Biographical File, Biographical Files Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

After Shriver left the OEO and accepted an appointment as the United States Ambassador to France, Dell continued to serve his country both domestically and abroad. That service also served Dell's ambitions to develop his own service-based business marketing professional athletes around the world. In the late sixties he lived in Georgetown along the Potomac River, giving him ready access to the Beltway power brokers. He talked to and dined with President Johnson. He drank with the Australian Prime Minister and Australian Ambassador to the United States when he captained the United States Davis Cup team, just at the moment when tennis moved to open competition between amateurs and professionals. He worked for Senator Robert Kennedy, ate lunch and played tennis at the Kennedy compound on Cape Cod, and sat next to the senator in Kennedy's campaign plane when President Johnson announced on May 31, 1968 that he would not accept the Democratic Party's nomination for President.<sup>58</sup> With the White House in Republican hands, Dell still maintained political connections with subsequent administrations as his ProServ agency expanded dynamically in the 1970s, speaking, eating, and praying with President Gerald Ford—himself a former University of Michigan football player and fan of athletics. Throughout his career Dell consistently maintained that his personal record of accomplishment on the tennis court gave him access to people powerful in both politics and business.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Dell, *Minding Other People's Business*, 7, 25-26; Donald Dell Diary Card, White House Diary Card File, alphabetical arrangement D, LBJ Presidential Library, Austin, Texas; White House Formal Invitation, May 27, 1968, White House Central File, S02, Box 4, LBJ Presidential Library, Austin, Texas; Donald Dell Social Events Card, White House Social Events Cards Collection, alphabetical arrangement D, LBJ Presidential Library, Austin, Texas; Dell, *Never Make the First Offer Except when You Should*, 16-18, 177-9.

<sup>59</sup> White House Dinner for Israeli Prime Minister, January 27, 1976, "Press Guests at State Dinners – Lists and Memos (6)" Folder, Box 23, Ron Nessen Papers, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan; Box 80, The Diary of President Gerald R. Ford, February 15, 1976, President's Daily Diary Collection, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Like McCormack, Dell recognized the seismic shifts in the American and the global economy in the late sixties and early seventies. When the U.S. Labor Department reported that most American workers earned their living in service rather than in agriculture and industry by the 1980s, Dell saw not an overturned but an underperforming economic sector. Nonetheless Dell hesitated to enter the sports agency business because he believed his career lay in legal practice focused on Washington politics. At the same time Dell kept one foot in the tennis world by captaining the U.S. Davis Cup team, and one of his players gave him the push necessary to leave his Washington law firm behind to create a rival agency to McCormack's IMG. In 1968 Arthur Ashe won the first U.S. Open as an amateur; suddenly the U.S. Army officer and champion received offer after offer from sports promoters to turn professional. The best offer came from George McCall, who guaranteed Ashe \$400,000 in playing fees over five years—serious cash when compared to the paltry earnings professionals like Pancho Gonzales had made on tour just a year previously. Ashe asked his mentor Dell for advice: “Arthur, I'd wait. Your name value is going nowhere but up. You're playing well. You are allowed to win prize money now. You're in the army. You're single. You don't need the contract now. I think the money will be bigger if you wait,” replied Dell.<sup>60</sup>

At the same time, Dell arranged a series of meetings between McCormack and Ashe with the belief that IMG could make Ashe into the “Arnold Palmer of tennis,” but those talks ultimately foundered. “Why don't' you represent me,” a frustrated Ashe asked Dell after leaving another failed meeting with McCormack. Dell spluttered unconvincing responses and waffled

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<sup>60</sup> Dell, *Minding Other People's Business*, 3-5, 38.

when Ashe pressed him late in 1968, until the lawyer abandoned his public service and his firm to open his own practice focused on “representing tennis players.” The first player was Ashe, the second Stan Smith, who—in a story right out of McCormack’s playbook—agreed to Dell’s representation with a shake of the hand. Overnight, Dell had the top two American tennis players on board. And as studies in contrasts, they gave Dell a great deal of flexibility in approaching companies for endorsements: Ashe was African American, a Southerner, a military officer, soft-spoken, with an elegant serve-volley and touch-game. Smith, by contrast, was blond, from California, brash, with a big game to boot.<sup>61</sup>

Nearly all the agents Dell hired were attorneys. Licensing an athlete’s image essentially fell in the realm of intellectual property work, where the strengths of lawyers in argumentation, contractual nuance, and combativeness mattered more than in other business pursuits where producers and consumers of a good could more easily reach agreement on the essence, utility, and value of a product or service—as well as the transaction from one party to the other of that product or service.<sup>62</sup> Agents with legal backgrounds meant ProServ could move against established stakeholders to set new precedents in professional sports. For example, in 1974 ProServ handled eighteen-year-old basketballer Moses Malone and his direct transition from high school basketball to professional play without the requisite stop in college. In so doing the agency defied upholders of tradition and threats from the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).<sup>63</sup> Malone immediately excelled in the American Basketball Association

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 39-40.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 49-50.

(ABA) and then the National Basketball Association (NBA), following the 1976 merger, for twenty years. At the time of his retirement in 1995, another talented high school senior named Kobe Bryant prepared to forgo college and head directly to the NBA draft despite the warnings against skipping college that continued and intensified two decades after ProServ's agent-lawyers made that vertical move a reality for players.

During ProServ's first twenty years Dell and his agents secured "playing contracts" for five hundred athletes and negotiated countless endorsement deals with companies for those athletes and additional clients.<sup>64</sup> The most important of those contracts came in the spring of 1984, when Dell and coworker David Falk met with Michael Jordan and University of North Carolina coach Dean Smith to discuss the upcoming NBA draft in June and Jordan's future in the league. ProServ's agents approached that meeting with a great deal of confidence because the dozens of tennis players they managed and effectively, turned into sports franchises in and of themselves had established a reputation in the minds of team sport athletes that the firm could do the same for them despite the presence of four teammates on the court at the same time. "Why don't we use this time for you to ask questions," Dell told Jordan. Before he even entered the draft, ProServ had made sure that Jordan understood himself as a player apart from his teammates, his franchise, the league, and his sport. They launched Jordan not as a player but as a "high-flying sports hero." Dell convinced Nike to agree to make the Air Jordan sneaker before Jordan even played his first professional game. That deal happened because Dell had long cultivated a relationship with Nike founder Phil Knight over bottles of wine with their wives at

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 19.

Dell's private box at the Italian Open tennis tournament in Rome. The actual "Air Jordan" slogan synonymous with the most profitable endorsement deal in sports history was simply an afterthought—without any market research or focus grouping—that arose as a throw-away comment at a final meeting between Nike and ProServ. With that contract for the yet unproven Jordan, Falk and Dell created the concept of athlete individuality in leagues and sports crowded with talented players. It became the agency's most powerful recruiting tool. From the mid-eighties and after, ProServ agents wooing a new client had only to present a contract after citing some specifics on the firm's success with "licensing and merchandising" Michael Jordan.<sup>65</sup>

Two major clients who signed contracts with Dell were the Communist nations of Russia and China. In 1986 General Secretary of the Communist Party Mikhail Gorbachev publicly announced policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* within the Soviet Union.<sup>66</sup> Three years later ProServ secured a contract with the Russian Tennis Federation for representation, unaware that the Berlin Wall would soon fall. The seeds of that arrangement dated all the way back to 1961 when Dell, along with his Davis Cup teammates, became the first American tennis players to compete behind the Iron Curtain. That international amateur competition gave the Russian Tennis Federation representatives and Dell a place to work from in crafting marketing policies for the international professional tennis that had proliferated in the 1980s.<sup>67</sup> President Richard Nixon's visit to Peking in the spring of 1972 started a dialogue between Chinese and American

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 48-49, 59, 97; Dell, *Never Make the First Offer Except when You Should*, 13, 170.

<sup>66</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2007), 231, 238-53.

<sup>67</sup> Dell, *Minding Other People's Business*, 71-72.

political leaders.<sup>68</sup> Toward the end of that decade Dell began reaching out to the Chinese athletic associations as well. ProServ agents did their first deal with Chinese athletes and their political handlers in 1979, and the agency and China continued to do business throughout the eighties and into the nineties with events such as the “Asian Games” that China hosted in 1990.<sup>69</sup>

Like IMG, ProServ’s pull even extended over athletic events themselves because the managers of star athletes could direct a player away from one event and toward another. For example, in tennis tournaments, seeding committees and directors often had discretion in admitting a small number of “wild cards” into the event’s draw without regard to the computer-generated ranking of the player under consideration. With prize money awarded to a player who even lost in the first round, simply making the draw of a tournament meant a payday for the player and the agency that represented him. The possibility of losing several ProServ client athletes or one ProServ client superstar often proved too great a threat for a tournament director to not extend the up-and-coming ProServ client athletes an entry into a tournament, whether or not rankings warranted such an invitation. But the events also did much for Dell’s business. Toward the end of his career, he reflected that the single greatest asset he had in closing a deal was his courtside private boxes at the French Open and the U.S. Open that he received as a thank you, along with millions of dollars in fees, for representing the French Tennis Federation and the United States Tennis Association’s television rights to interested networks.<sup>70</sup> McCormack adopted the same approach at the two exclusive tournaments to which he was closest—the

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<sup>68</sup> Richard Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978), 544-80.

<sup>69</sup> Dell, *Minding Other People’s Business*, 71-72.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 21; Dell, *Never Make the First Offer Except when You Should*, 103.

Masters at Augusta National and Wimbledon. The founders of the two major entertainment agencies that dominated sports management up until the 1990s understood that the CEOs and upper managers who controlled the budgets of corporations large enough to invest in sports marketing and advertising preferred the perceived exclusivity of golf and tennis events with a glass of champagne, a fine cigar, and strawberries with cream just a finger snap away. Show them a good time, and they would show the money.<sup>71</sup>

McCormack and Dell built their firms focused on individual sport athletes at the same time athletes in team sports wielded new power. Sports historian Charles Korr, for example, has written about the “enormous leverage” the Major Leagues Baseball Players Association (MLBPA) exercised between 1961 and 1980.<sup>72</sup> Baseball players had free agency, but tennis players were free of franchises. That freedom, when combined with the finances new to tennis after 1968, meant that IMG and ProServ made tidy profits from tennis players despite the game’s low profile compared to larger team sports. Furthermore, whereas team sports owners assumed little financial liability over publicly floated bonds for stadium building, sports management agents such as McCormack and Dell did not even have to answer to voters, elected representatives, or municipal officials.<sup>73</sup> They built someone else’s reputation for winning into sports celebrity, not bonds into buildings. The intellectual and legal sports world in which they

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<sup>71</sup> “Show me the money,” was Tom Cruise’s and Cuba Gooding Jr.’s signature lines from the most famous popular culture statement on sports agents. Watch, Cameron Crowe dir., *Jerry Maguire* (Gracie Films, TriStar Pictures, 1996).

<sup>72</sup> Charles Korr, *The End of Baseball as We Knew It: The Players Union, 1960-1981* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 5.

<sup>73</sup> Robert Trumpbour, *The New Cathedrals: Politics and Media in the History of Stadium Construction* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2007), 35-58.



moved proved more malleable than concrete. They cared less about local public opinion because they did not deal in specific places and spaces. The images of athletes they created moved across borders and away from local populations so fickle with their own tax dollars. In the entertainments that constitute popular culture, levels of abstraction have increased over time. The transnational sporting celebrity became the apotheosis of that transformation in the late twentieth century.

In 1967 McCormack published a promotional tract of his first client that masqueraded as a biography of Arnold Palmer. McCormack did not actually write the book, nor did he single-handedly write his bestselling classic *What They Don't Teach You at Harvard Business School*. What mattered was that IMG's founder stood behind every word. *Arnie's* second to last chapter printed a selection of letters golf fans submitted to Palmer. Not one of the letter writers realized how much Palmer's managers, acting on behalf of the golfer, invented and enforced questionable legal practices, practiced creative accounting, and manipulated companies who then passed their extravagant marketing budgets onto consumers in the prices for their products; instead, all the letter writers opined that Arnold was their friend, he inspired them, he played phenomenal golf.<sup>74</sup> That focus on emotional connection and athletic skill rather than on inequality and waste was and remains the power of sport in the contemporary capitalist marketplace.

The media-first tour and the managed athlete were just two expressions of that power. In tennis, that power reached fullest expression in the evolution of the game's greatest tournament. In the winter of 1985, Mark McCormack sent a company memorandum stating that "Wimbledon

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<sup>74</sup> Dell, *Never Make the First Offer Except when You Should*; McCormack, *What They Don't Teach You at Harvard Business School: Notes*, iii, ix; McCormack, *Arnie*, 221-44.

is our most important client and, therefore, it is your most important assignment as far as I am concerned – I don't have to tell you this either.”<sup>75</sup> For a firm whose primary mission was to convince companies that attaching a person's likeness to their products would help sell more goods, such blunt talk about the prioritization of a single sporting event over the dozens of celebrity athlete clients hints at just how profitable selling the sport of tennis became after 1968. The importance McCormack assigned to Wimbledon was right on the money.

The first Wimbledon dated back to 1877. By the start of the twentieth century, the tournament's popularity had grown to the point that the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club made a massive investment in bleachers around the Club's Centre Court to accommodate the burgeoning crowds. Detractors believed the Club had overreached, but year after year the number of spectators grew and filled the Centre Court stands. Eventually the crowd overflowed the grounds. With a proven track record of peak attendance, the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club signed a contract with Lawn Tennis Association to hold what was essentially Great Britain's National Championship at Wimbledon until 1972, at which point both parties agreed to revisit the suitability of the ALETC as the Championship's host. To players, wrote the revered British Champion Fred Perry, “Wimbledon indeed is the Mecca of lawn tennis.” Perry went on to note that the tournament was even more than that, however, for the late June and early July event helped promote the best time to visit London and became just one more fashionable stop for people with financial means and influence to visit Britain's capital. Wimbledon established itself during the late nineteenth century just as a host of other major sporting championships

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<sup>75</sup> Mark H. McCormack memorandum to Brian Roggenburk, February 12, 1985, Wimbledon/MHM Corr. 1985 Folder [really a black box], Box M0105 (1198), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

diffused from England and across the British Empire. The Championships thus served as a “great missionary,” in Perry’s words, for tennis and for Britain’s athletic legacy more broadly.<sup>76</sup>

The first Wimbledon to allow professionals to compete with amateurs proved a sweeping success for IMG because Rod Laver, the firm’s lone tennis client at that point, lifted the trophy on Championship Saturday. The next year proved even better for Laver, IMG, and the ALETC. Here McCormack’s plan to develop international offices paid off because IMG division World of Sports Ltd., run by Bob Ferrier, was already in place in London. Ferrier worked contacts throughout the United Kingdom to move behind the scenes after McCormack first caught wind that the International Tennis Federation and important national Tennis Associations would vote to allow open competition between the sport’s top professionals and amateurs in the biggest tournament venues.<sup>77</sup>

McCormack directed his Trans World International team to develop a project to impress the All England Club Committee members that was executable in a few weeks’ time. The producers decided on a video to highlight the historic moment when one of the oldest sporting tournaments in the world belatedly entered the contemporary world of commercial sports. Cocktails of nostalgia and excitement flowed in the club’s boardrooms as committee members quickly approved the pitch. Six months later, Jay Michaels of IMG’s Transworld International Division screened the film to Herman David, Chairman of the All England Club Committee, and his fellow board members at SW19. They heartily applauded; good news for Michaels because his real purpose at that meeting was to gather information about how IMG might make

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<sup>76</sup> Perry, *My Story*, 192-4; Rob Steen, *Floodlights and Touchlines*, 93.

<sup>77</sup> McCormack, “Operational Memorandum,” typescript dated Dec. 26, 1967, p. 16.

Wimbledon into the most profitable sporting event in the world. He knew international broadcasting held the key.<sup>78</sup>

The previous year's contract between the BBC and the All England Club had the broadcaster pay £15,700 for "worldwide" radio and television rights while the ITV network paid £10,750 for broadcasting rights throughout the United Kingdom. Michaels thought both networks paid well below a fair price; however, he soon realized just how much power the BBC wielded in Britain. Confusion existed about whether or not he could even ask around in Europe for a better offer for the ALETC without first speaking with the recalcitrant BBC. What the Wimbledon 1968 video bought IMG was the blessing of the Club's owner to pursue interested parties in the United States for Wimbledon broadcast rights. ABC, CBS, NBC, and SNI all showed interest, but here again the BBC frustrated Michaels and IMG by refusing to relinquish any space suitable for a camera broadcasting the tournament in the intimate Centre Court. Without their own camera and crew, American networks had little control over their sports production, and the sale of an event to a network became untenable from IMG's point of view. The All England Club would have to allow TWI to remove several prime Centre Court seats if they wanted an American network to agree to pay a sizable broadcast fee.<sup>79</sup>

Twenty years later at the 1989 Championships, McCormack sold \$19.5 million in television rights across at least fifty-four countries for the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club. The club collected an additional \$60,995 in radio rights. McCormack understood that a

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<sup>78</sup> Jay Michaels to Mark McCormack, January 28, 1969, Wimbledon: Correspondence 1967-1970 Folder, M0105 (1198), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

sale was only as good as the seller's ability to collect payment from the buyer. He thus exercised a great deal of flexibility in the price he asked different networks and media companies to pay for Wimbledon broadcast rights. He gave the Honduran-based Canal 5 the lowest asking price at \$600 for exclusive broadcast rights in that Central American county—a deal Canal 5 apparently thought was no good for them as their money remained outstanding a year later after IMG's repeated attempts to collect. Most companies did pay, however, because the financial stakes were too high for IMG to simply brush off nonpayment. The lion's share of funds payable to the Club for the 1989 Wimbledon Tournament came from the United States market, where NBC paid \$9.5 million for exclusive cable broadcast rights and HBO paid \$3.25 million for pay-per-view coverage rights. The German-based Universum Film AG (UFA) paid the same amount as HBO for television broadcast rights on the European Continent. After IMG deducted their fee, the broadcasting of the 1989 Wimbledon tournament netted the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club \$18 million. A year later television and radio rights earned the All England Club \$21.5 million. The Club's profits from media broadcasts continued to rise at the millennium.<sup>80</sup>

At the same time that the very tennis federations who had belatedly embraced professionalism signed massive television contracts, courted major corporate sponsorships, and built historic tournaments into commercial juggernauts, some of the professional players who made the tennis boom of the late 1960s and 1970s possible found themselves out in the cold.

Richard Savitt, a contemporary of Pancho Gonzales, looked jadedly at the state of tennis several

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<sup>80</sup> All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club, Television Rights Sales table, 1989 Wimbledon, Folder, Wimbledon Historical: Video Cassettes, 1987-1994, Box M0105 (1198), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club, Television Rights Sales table, 1990 Wimbledon, Folder, Wimbledon Historical: Video Cassettes, 1987-1994 Box M0105 (1198), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

years into the Open Era. Sure, a player would feel thrilled to play in front of a big stadium-sized crowd for a big paycheck, but the growth of the game also came with a cost for the players. The intimacy competitors enjoyed with their fellow players, with the fans, and with the members of the host clubs found at the likes of the Los Angeles Tennis Club and the Berkley Tennis Club was absent at the bigger tournaments in the Open Era. “The money wasn’t there, but the way of life, who we met, and what we got to see can’t be replaced or can’t be equated with a dollar amount,” Savitt said. Tennis used to foster community and solidarity through physical competition, verbal banter, stewardship of club’s facilities, and the mutual pursuit of the beauty of the human body in motion among players as collaborators in a game of ultimate skill. After 1968, at least in the mind of one player who peaked before tennis opened, tennis simply became “like all other professional sports,” and that was something to regret.<sup>81</sup>

Players also held certain misgivings when people over-identified them with their former athletic accomplishments even after they had long retired from sports and instead wanted recognition for their new business ventures. Savitt explained that tennis did not directly open doors in the commercial world in the conventional sense of business executives at members and men-only golf clubs hashing out deals over cigars and chips-shots on the links. For Savitt tennis did, however, allow him to travel abroad to new places where he met different people he otherwise would not have met. He thus returned to the United States with a more cosmopolitan worldview that translated into a more competent, comprehensive, and flexible business acumen than Savitt would have developed without the travel afforded by the tennis tours. The rub came

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<sup>81</sup> Richard Savitt Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

when a business associate identified Savitt by something he did on the court thirty years ago rather than what he did for an account yesterday.<sup>82</sup>

In an individual sport like tennis, such an affront was especially common because players' bodies simply could not compete at a high level for very long, which forced them out of the professional game, almost always before their mid-thirties. Before the game began to pay players money enough to save for retirement in the mid-seventies, the body's decision for early retirement meant most players still had half of their working life ahead of them without the ability or opportunity to work in the sport for which they had trained most of their life. Players such as Pancho Gonzales, who competed for more twenty-five years, were certainly the exceptions to the normal career of players; however, as Gonzales's career and retirement makes clear, two decades on or near the top of the game did not set a player up with the financial resources necessary for retirement before the tennis boom of the seventies. But just as missing out on the money that flowed into the new professional was a bitter pill for veterans of the barnstorming tours to swallow, championship tennis after 1968 also afforded a host of new players with a big income during the economic stagflation of the 1970s. McCormack's and Dell's managed athlete was the prime reason.

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER NINE

### SEX, CIGARETTES, AND OPEN TENNIS

At the start of the Open Era in 1968, eight million people played tennis in the United States. Many, if not most of these players were women. Such statistics may very well have surprised sports marketing agents like Mark McCormack, who tended to bring a fair amount of macho to their work, but to a steady number of topflight women tennis players, the game was always one of their own making.<sup>1</sup>

The first professional player of international renown was, after all, the French Champion Suzanne Lenglen who electrified the game in the 1920s. But by the 1950s, the coast-to-coast tours of the all-American boy Jack Kramer and the machismo Pancho Gonzales eroded some of the game's feminine origins in the minds of American sports fans. Women players generally fared far worse financially than their male peers because the career options of women in the fifties and sixties did not compare to the opportunities men enjoyed. That decline meant that women athletes in particular gained from the opening of tennis to professionals in 1968. Female professionals made the most of that opening and in so doing they did as much if not more than their male peers to create and sustain the tennis boom of the late sixties and seventies. In the highly visualized and sexualized world of professional sport, however, improved economic outlook came with objectification.

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<sup>1</sup> Mark McCormack to Noman Blake, December 31, 1968, Wimbledon: Correspondence 1967-1970, Folder, Box M0105 (1198), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.



Since the game's infancy in the late nineteenth century, women played tennis in such large numbers, with such frequency, and with such visibility that popular culture long talked and thought of tennis as a woman's game. The most talked about female sportswoman around the world in the early fifties was the tennis player Maureen "Little Mo" Connolly. As a teenager the San Diegan won the United States Nationals in 1951—the youngest player to do so at that point. Yet that same year, the seventeen-year-old found herself working as a copy girl for managing editor Richard Pourade at the Union Tribune Publishing Company in San Diego. In 1953, Connolly won all four major tournaments to become the first tennis player to earn the Grand Slam since Don Budge. She brought a fifty-match winning streak in major tournaments into the summer of her 1954 season when a horse riding accident effectively ended her career while she was still a teenager. She had planned to turn professional after that season, but injury forced her to retire and forgo Jack Kramer's \$100,000 guarantee for two years on his professional tour. Connolly's short career exemplified just how important it was for topflight women tennis players to consider turning professional and trying to earn money. Even without an injury, if they played only as amateurs they would still never earn much more than living expenses with no savings to fall back on. Then came the limited prospect of low-wage menial work after their amateur careers inevitably ended when they were still young women.<sup>2</sup>

Youth mattered for more reasons than just the athlete's ability to compete on the court. Spectators wanted vitality in their athletes and held women players to a higher standard in that regard. The popularity with the public women tennis players always enjoyed was a devil's

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<sup>2</sup> "Little Mo is Named Top Female Athlete 3rd Time," *Toledo Blade*, January 8, 1954, p. 30; Nelson Fisher, "Vacation from Tennis," *The Racquet* 45, no. 8 (December 1951): 6; Kramer and Deford, *The Game*, 96; Nelson Fisher Interview, Oral History Collection, San Diego Historical Society (now known as San Diego History Center), San Diego, California.

bargain that owed, to a considerable degree, to both the graceful movement of their bodies on the court and their willingness to push the acceptable boundaries of fashion. Attractive looks rather than playing well was what made women's tennis popular in the public's eyes. In tennis, sex sold better than shots.

The most important fashion designer of sportswear in the twentieth century cited Lenglen's play and public life as the inspiration behind his aesthetic that fused athleticism and sexuality. English born in 1911, Ted Tinling grew up around tennis and embraced the game to the degree that he moved to France to serve as one of the inaugural chair umpires for the first French Championships. Influenced by Parisian fashion, Tinling returned to England to set up his own label while also working as an official at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club. Tinling's position with the club set the stage for the most scandalous fashion moment in sports history when the Californian Gertrude "Gussie" Moran, finalist in the Championship's 1949 Women's title match, broke tradition and protocol when she donned a short white skirt with sheer white-lace panties underneath.<sup>3</sup>

Tinling first became enamored with fashion in the 1920s when as a boy living in the French Riviera, he came to know many of Europe and America's wealthiest and most glamorous people who wintered along the Côte d'Azur. As the sport of the Riviera, tennis had long tacked to high fashion as the leisure class routinely bought haute couture designs from the top Paris fashion houses that operated boutiques in the Riviera's resort towns. With the help of Lenglen's stardom, Tinling put on his first shows of note in London during the early 1930s. By 1935 and

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<sup>3</sup> Tinling, *Love and Faults*, 23-32; Ted Tinling Biographical File for induction into the ITHF, Biographical Files Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; "Sport: Build Up at Wimbledon," *Time*, July 4, 1949; All *Time* magazine articles were accessed digitally using keyword searches of the Time.com magazine archive on May 16, 2016. The digital formatting of these articles is the reason for the exclusion of page numbers for these sources.

1936, Tinling had established himself as a top designer in the select group of London designers then making a name in women's fashion on the world stage. Tinling enjoyed a banner year in 1938 with wedding dresses and gala gowns designed for the most prominent British citizens. The next year Britain declared war on Germany, and the fashion trade, along with nearly all luxury industries, ended until after World War II.<sup>4</sup>

In the Museum at the International Tennis Hall of Fame in Newport, Rhode Island, visitors can see and touch Tinling's postwar sportswear legacy. The most significant articles such as a drawing of Moran's drawers and Billie Jean King's 1973 Battle of the Sexes outfit are locked away in cases, but the Hall of Fame's Library and Archive holds an even more robust collection of Tinling's work in the form of photographs dated from 1949 to around 1980. A year-by-year reading of these photographs reveals not just how a tennis clothier changed his aesthetic but the evolution of women's sportswear more broadly in a world not just balkanizing during the Cold War but also connecting in terms of culture and commerce. In 1956, for example, Tinling cut Celanese satin and suede at an angled hipline for an East Asian-inspired ensemble called "Girlfriends." The overlapping tennis racquets sewn on the outfit symbolized cross-cultural connections between women in Asia, Europe, and the Americas. As the Beatles learned the sitar with the Maharishi and hippies throughout the world descended upon Goa to practice meditation, Tinling drew similar inspiration from India in bedazzling tunic tops and pairing them with loose

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<sup>4</sup> Tinling, *Love and Faults*, 8-9, 177-80.

fitting pants. Southeast Asian inspired design continued to influence Tinling as his work gained favor with fashion power brokers such as *Vanity Fair* in 1957.<sup>5</sup>

Tinling likewise drew inspiration from Western antiquity in his midcareer years. He crafted a series he dubbed the “Empire Line” that conjured Greek myths of female warriors into playsuits, bras, and dresses that resembled Spartan tunics. Medieval myths also informed Tinling’s aesthetic. From year to year he often put together a more conservative scalloped tennis dress that resembled the dresses worn by princesses in the illustrations that filled the pages of fairytale books. Tinling worked the most with cotton as white as the stone islands of the Aegean Sea, but he wanted his women to look strong rather than passive. He thus emphasized diagonals, hard corners, and square necklines in some of his designs. He also posed his models in confident if not aggressive poses as in his 1958 show when the model Jean Clank held a racquet in her cocked arm and flexed her other arm on her hip.<sup>6</sup> The expression on Tinling’s face and the gestures of his body in watching the models move in these outfits exemplified his desire for women who wore his clothing to exhibit strength.<sup>7</sup>

Along with stylized Western pasts, Tinling also looked to the future for his designs. He embraced new synthetic materials like “Terylene” that he fastened with the space-age sounding

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<sup>5</sup> Folder 1.1.9, 1956, Tennis (women), Box 2, Tinling Collection, ITHF; Folder 1..1.18., 1965, Tennis (women), Box 3, Tinling Collection, ITHF; Folder 1.1.10, 1957, Tennis (women), Box 2, Tinling Collection, ITHF.

<sup>6</sup> Folder 1.1.9, 1956, Tennis (women), Box 2, Tinling Collection, ITHF; Box 2, Folder 1.1.14, 1961, Tennis (women); Box 2, Folder 1.1.13, 1960 Tennis (women), Box 2, Tinling Collection, ITHF; Folder 1.1.11, 1958, Tennis (women), Box 2, Tinling Collection, ITHF.

<sup>7</sup> British Pathé, “Taiho Fashions 1955,” newsreel; British Pathé, “Beach and Tennis Wear 1955,” newsreel; British Pathé, “Teddy Tinling Fashions 1956,” newsreel; British Pathé, “Nylon Fair Beware – Other Colour Pics Share... 1958,” newsreel; British Pathé, “Nylon Fair 1958,” newsreel; British Pathé, “Teddy Tinling Fashions 1956,” newsreel; British Pathé, “Teddy Tinling Holiday Fashions 1958,” newsreel, all at [http://www.britishpathe.com/search/query/Tinling/search-field/record\\_keywords](http://www.britishpathe.com/search/query/Tinling/search-field/record_keywords) (accessed March 1, 2017).

“Nyzippers.” Jumpsuits made of futuristic materials with names like “Orlon” reflected the influence of the Cold War race for science and technological superiority. Organic inspiration countered a strictly technologically-driven aesthetic, and that came through in what he called the “Cocoon line” that encased the player in a single-piece bloomer. Likewise, some collections featured maxi-dresses and loose fitting clothing that on occasion carried a fruit theme. In 1961 he also experimented with covering up nearly all the player in a white fleece tennis coat that was so organic, it resembled the skin of a New Zealand mountain goat. The collection of that same year, however, also featured pairs of short shorts for the first time—a death knell to the covered approach and a harbinger of more revealing outfits as the sexual revolution of the sixties began in earnest.<sup>8</sup>

In adding some sex appeal to his outfits, Tinling evoked the 1920s and the flapper of that decade. His fondness for the bandeau popularized by Suzanne Lenglen during that decade exemplified the graceful French Champion as his muse. For their part, he wanted his models to draw inspiration from Lenglen’s charisma. They posed in sassy and provocative ways. In 1959, for example, photographers captured one woman wearing a headband lifting up her skirt for the camera lens. Models also gently bit their lower lips or the tip of a finger; they brushed their hair behind the back of the neck. By 1962, the dresses needed no help from the models to reveal. Skirts shortened, and necklines plunged. Bodices with deep scoops down the back created a hot-to-trot housewife motif with a different consumer in mind than the young single girl Tinling

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<sup>8</sup> Folder 1.1.11, 1958, Tennis (women), Box 2, Tinling Collection, ITHF; Box 4, Folder 1.1.26, 1968, Tennis (women), Box 4, Tinling Collection, ITHF; Folder 1.1.30, 1970, Tennis (women), Box 4, Tinling Collection, ITHF; Folder 1.1.11, 1958, Tennis (women), Box 2, Tinling Collection, ITHF; Box 2, Folder 1.1.14, 1961, Tennis (women), Box 2, Tinling Collection, ITHF; John D. Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 301-18.

targeted with his early work. The collections of the next several years reversed that trend, however, and the height of shorts continuing to rise higher toward the midsection. New accessories such as matching calf-length stockings and new novelties like embroidered flowers also began to appear in the mid-1960s. The addition of little tennis racquets or bunny rabbits about the *décolleté* or down around the bottom of the skirt continued over the years in pieces that ranged from double-breasted striped suits to socks.<sup>9</sup>

The details Tinling added to his designs with his star ascendant in the fashion world also found expression in the specific details he started to put into his fashion shows. For example, in 1967 a shop created large skyscraper cutouts for his models to stroll past. The women often also held two tennis balls in their hand or gripped a tennis racquet as they moved toward the gallery while Tinling and his cohost read out the details of the model's look.<sup>10</sup>

In the late sixties that style assumed a heightened sexually provocative tone with the debut of the miniskirt in his 1968 collection. The following year he introduced pantyhose and stockings to cover the legs his clothes now laid bare. More than any other article of clothing, however, Tinling's undergarments garnered praise. Sketch after sketch of his panties revealed an attention to the bows and lace because he knew the stretches and splits of the women players wearing his underwear would lay bare the intimates for spectators and photojournalists alike.

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<sup>9</sup> Folder 1.1.12, 1959, Tennis (women), Box 2, Tinling Collection, ITHF; Folder 1.1.17, 1963, Tennis (women), Box 3, Tinling Collection, ITHF; Folder 1.1.12, 1959, Tennis (women), Box 2, Tinling Collection, ITHF; Box 3, Folder 1.1.16, 1962, Tennis (women), Tinling Collection, ITHF; Folder 1.1.19, 1965, Tennis (women), Box 3, Tinling Collection, ITHF; Folder 1.1.20, 1966 tennis (women), Box 4, Tinling Collection, ITHF; Box 4, Folder 1.1.22, 1967 Tennis (women), Box 4, Tinling Collection, ITHF.

<sup>10</sup> Box 4, Folder 1.1.22, 1967 Tennis (women); Box 4, Tinling Collection, ITHF; Box 3. 1.1.19, 1965, Tennis (women), Box 3, Tinling Collection, ITHF; Box 4, Folder 1.1.24, 1967, Box 4, Tinling Collection, ITHF.

Women's tennis afforded him this unique opportunity to create a line of clothing that linked active wear with sexual excitement. In this, his clothes needed attractive female bodies.<sup>11</sup>

The players he seized upon were the best and most visible professionals in the game. Since the inception in 1970 of the well promoted and commercially successful Virginia Slims Circuit, Tinling outfitted the fittest women in tennis. Martina Navratilova, Virginia Wade, Olga Morozova, Nancy Gunter, Betty Stove, and Rosie Casals all wore his clothes on their tour matches broadcast across the country and around the world. The prime time setting for most of the tour's matches meant Tinling designed outfits with the elegance a viewer expected to see in an evening out about town. Black and white dresses, short skirts with high waistlines, and tops that laid shoulders bare dominated, as well as strapless bras paired with dipped necklines to accentuate the movements of the player when serving, retrieving shots, and stroking shots. Tinling understood the game as more than a sport when he said "nighttime tennis is a theatrical experience." His designs thus stressed "glamour" and "grace" while simultaneously trying to "slim" the player's body to titillate spectators with an experience much like watching a ballerina on stage. "Tinling designs with the spectators in mind," said Jeanie Brinkham, who worked for Philip Morris in the promotion of the Virginia Slims tour. Those spectators watched the players move from the many seats of large indoor stadiums. Belts and buttons with rhinestone and sequin strove to resemble the entertainment of Hollywood rather than the sweat of athletic competition. Sex appeal rather than athletic accomplishment was first on people's minds.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Folder 1.1.26, 1968, Tennis (women), Box 4, Tinling Collection, ITHF; Folder 1.1.26, 1969, Tennis (women), Box 4, Tinling Collection, ITHF; Folder 1.1.32, no dates, Tennis (women), Box 5, Tinling Collection, ITHF.

<sup>12</sup> Folder 1.1.32, (Virginia Slims), 1976-1978, Box 5, Tinling Collection, ITHF.

To help heighten that sex appeal, Tinling studied the movement of women tennis players. Between 1932 and 1969 he watched them compete in tournaments and on the practice courts, where he took notes in order to design clothes that both functioned as athletic wear and captured the attention of fans watching those women play. His photographs captured classic matches and the way champions such as Helen Wills Moody, Dorothy Round, Helen Jacobs, and Joyce Willing moved on the court. Suzanne Lenglen appeared in more of Tinling's photographs than any other player, a testament to the first worldwide professional tennis player's impact on modern sports fashion. The challenge of drawing on professional athletes for the design of sportswear was not of inspiration but rather of applicability and scalability. What worked for the athletic body did not easily translate to the everyday body. Tinling and designers compensated for that discrepancy by covering rather than revealing. A more conservative approach to his leisure wear for women matched the very functional and practical polo tops, track jackets, shorts, and high-waist chinos Tinling designed for men. But designing practical clothing for men and more loose-fitting clothing for mature women held little excitement for Tinling, who produced a only few collections not inspired by and directed toward young vivacious women. Over his career, Tinling's style evolved from a flirty yet restrained "new look" of the fifties to a more risky and sexualized mini-dress of the sixties into a sleek evening-out aesthetic for the seventies. By removing material and revealing a little skin, just as Lenglen did four decades earlier, Tinling announced the bolder position of women's bodies in both the public's space and in people's imaginations. Moreover, Tinling even commented on the restraints traditional tennis clothing placed on women by constructing tennis dresses out of paper. Wearable not more than once if a player was to move about and sweat, a dress of paper bordered on nakedness, a parody of athletic



apparel without completely crossing into the obscene.<sup>13</sup> The style of women's tennis then was heavy on the sex and lighter on the substance.

That style reached the widest audience in a dying media's last gasp to excite viewers toward the end of the Swinging Sixties. Since 1909 *British Pathé* had produced newsreels that routinely screened happenings in the sports world to movie palace goers. As television took bigger bites out of movie attendance, one of the ways newsreel producers tried to push their relevancy was by screening news too risky for network broadcasts. What could push traditional boundaries more than showing the world just how sexy women could look at the hallowed ground of Wimbledon? In the lead-up to the tournament, Tinling would march out a parade of models wearing the shortest and tightest of his outfits. The cameras followed Tinling's fingers as he reached underneath the white mini-skirt to adjust a model's hip-high hemline. The designer's own size at nearly six feet six inches conveyed a sense of masculine dominance reinforced when the model might then stoop low to scoop up a tennis ball on the ground so as to give viewers a better idea of the lace underwear's coverage. Viewers' eyes followed Tinling's large hands as they moved along the players' posteriors as the designer worked to get just the right fit on his athletic models.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Folder 1.3.1, Tennis Players (small), 1932-1969, Box 6, Tinling Collection, ITHF; Folder 1.3.2, Tennis Players (medium) 1939-1971, later undated, Box 6, Tinling Collection, ITHF; Folder 1.3.2, Tennis Players (medium), 1939-1971, later undated, Box 6, Tinling Collection, ITHF; Folder 1.2.1, Tennis Men 1956-1961, undated, Box 6, Tinling Collection, ITHF; Folder 1.1.36, Separates (women), undated, Box 5, Tinling Collection, ITHF; Karal Ann Marling, *As Seen on TV: The Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the 1950s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 14-16; Paper Dress—1961, Folder 15, Box 2, Tinling Collection, ITHF.

<sup>14</sup> British Pathé, "Wimbledon Take Cover 1965," newsreel; "Tennis fashions (1968)," newsreel; "Tennis Fashions (1967)," newsreel; "Tennis Fashions (1953)," newsreel; "Wimbledon All Stars (1965)," newsreel; "Beach and Tennis Wear (1955)," newsreel; "Wimbledon Fashion Preview (1967)," newsreel; "For Wimbledon – Next Summer (1966)," newsreel; "Tennis Fashions (1970)," newsreel; all at [http://www.britishpathe.com/search/query/Tinling/search-field/record\\_keywords](http://www.britishpathe.com/search/query/Tinling/search-field/record_keywords) (accessed March 1, 2017).

Along with media's depiction of women wearing tennis fashions, the content of tennis periodicals also reflected an evolving sexualization of women in the ever more important sports media. Compared to general sport magazines such as *Sports Illustrated*, tennis-specific periodicals long called attention to female competitors in article copy and pictures. During the first half of the twentieth century, *American Lawn Tennis*, the major United States tennis publication, spotlighted women players in cover photographs and feature stories several times each year. When they were not emphasized on the cover, editors always selected at least one women's story for inclusion in each issue. These articles often played out fairytale tropes of adolescent romance.<sup>15</sup>

One example was sportswriter Hamilton Chamber's coverage of Nancy Chaffee's 1948 girl's championship. Chaffee, a University of Southern California freshman, learned her footwork from dancing and her tennis rhythm from piano. From the fantasyland of Southern California, Chaffee's blue eyes, sun-lightened hair, and tanned skin against her pure white jumper struck the Philadelphia tournament gallery as those of a "Modern Cinderella." Like the fairy tale character, Chaffee held the liminal position between a girl and a woman: playing in her last junior tournament and now making her own schedule; deciding for herself the tournaments she would and would not compete in; allowing a new boyfriend back home to occupy her attention and make her blush.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> These comments are based on sampling the complete run—between April 15, 1908 and October, 1945—of *American Lawn Tennis* held by the ITHF Research Library, Newport Rhode Island. *Sports Illustrated* articles were sampled on the online SI Vault—which, at the time of writing, still allowed free access. <http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/> (accessed May 16, 2016).

<sup>16</sup> Hamilton P. Chambers, "Nancy Chaffee—Modern Cinderella," *American Lawn Tennis* (February 1948): 12.

While stories about women sprinkled the pages of *American Lawn Tennis*, the intended readership was men over women. The leadership of the publication's on-again-off-again parent body, the United States Lawn Tennis Association, was literally a boy's club. Most letters to the all-male editors came from men, the subscription renewal form addressed "Gentlemen," and even established lady players such as Patricia Canning Todd were labeled as whiners. Nonetheless, women regularly wrote articles for the publication, and male players were also pilloried in the magazine's pages. The real difference between representations of men and women involved the increasingly sexualized portrayals of female athletes accompanying the transition into the Open Era of professional tennis beginning in the fifties and finalized in 1968.<sup>17</sup>

Tradition-bound amateur tennis associations struggled to keep their depictions of male and female athletes relevant with changing times. In the summer of 1956 the International Lawn Tennis Federation accepted the Soviet Union into membership just as the USLTA began a U.S. sports publicity campaign in coordination with President Dwight Eisenhower's Youth Program. The Association hired Larry Fairhall, son-in-law of an emeritus USLTA president, to mark the Association's 75-year anniversary with \$20,000 for a comic book that then USLTA President Renville McMann said would sell millions of copies, a book written by Parke Cummings, and a "Miss Tennis of 1956" contest. All went nowhere in promoting tennis, and the costs spiraled to around \$100,000 with little to show for it except the individual USLTA sections forced to pony up \$20,000 in un-recouped fees. The long-serving USLTA Treasurer Ellsworth Davenport

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<sup>17</sup> The U.S.L.T.A. Amateur Rule Special Committee Membership List, Box 1, Amateur Rule Committee 1953 Folder, Robert Kelleher Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; "Pat Pouts Again," *American Lawn Tennis* 42, no. 13 (February 1949): cover; "Letters to the Editor," *American Lawn Tennis* 42, no. 13 (February, 1949): 5; "Committee Answers Pat," *American Lawn Tennis* 42, no. 13 (February 1949): 12.

offered his resignation over the debacle, but the Association's executive committee demanded he stay and stonewalled anyone who inquired about nepotism in the Jubilee mess that saw the Association's treasury fall from \$66,000 in 1954 to \$1,000 at the start of 1958 when the Wilson Sporting Goods came to the rescue and purchased \$15,000 worth of comic books. A close reading of *Tennis for Speed, Stamina, Strength and Skill* revealed just how closed-off the USLTA had become.<sup>18</sup>

The comic featured two boys named Steve Granger and Red Martin. The latter had red hair to avoid confusion. The pair venture outside their classroom one day at the end of their freshman year contemplating what to do over their summer break. Lo and behold, their football coach, the fedora and V-necked sweater dressed Bill Power, appears in his convertible to ask them to go to a track meet with him. Power immediately produces a tennis racquet to seal the deal. "I always pack my tennis rackets. You'll find out how handy they can be," he says to the teenagers.<sup>19</sup>

The racquets come in handy when the three visit a private tennis court, where they meet longtime World War I Marine Corps veteran and former Heavyweight Boxing Champion Gene Tunney. Tunney tells the boys that fighting requires stamina, but so does tennis. His time as a

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<sup>18</sup> Tennis Educational Foundation and the U.S. Lawn Tennis Association in Conjunction with President Eisenhower's Youth Fitness Program, *Tennis for Speed, Stamina, Strength, and Skill* (Book No. 1) (New York City: A. Derus Production, 1956), 2, in Vertical File, William T. Fischer Tennis Collection, Queens Campus Library, St. John's University; "Around the World," *World Tennis* 4, no. 3 (August 1956): 65; "Around the World," *World Tennis* 4, no. 2 (July 1956): 57; Ned Potter, "The Story Behind the USLTA Publicity Campaign," *World Tennis* 4, no. 7 (December 1956): 12-13; "Around the World," *World Tennis* 5, no. 11 (April 1958): 64; Gladys Heldman, "The Kelleher Regime," *World Tennis* 15, no.1 (June 1967): 14. On the important educational role of comic books in shaping American youth during the Cold War, see Bradford W. Wright, *Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), xiii.

<sup>19</sup> TEF and USLTA, *Tennis for Speed, Stamina, Strength, and Skill*, 1-2.

boxer and as a military man was fine, maintains Tunney, but he is glad that tennis is all he has played since then, and he is proud that his sons play tennis. Leaving the legendary Tunney behind, the boys ask their coach what it takes to maintain Tunney's stamina. "Tennis," Power responds.<sup>20</sup>

Coach Power then moves in for the close. He takes Granger and Martin on a kaleidoscopic tour where they encounter different tennis stars, average joes playing the game, the USLTA crest where an eagle clutches two racquets and two tennis balls in its talons, the Kalamazoo College Tennis Courts in Kalamazoo, Michigan, where eighteen-and-under players competed in the National Junior Championships, and the United States National Championship at the West Side Lawn Tennis Club in Forest Hills, New York. Power then assigns one of the four cardinal qualities a successful tennis player possesses, not coincidentally the title of the comic book—speed, stamina, skill, and strength—to each of four tennis superstars: Vic Seixas is fast; Tony Trabert can play all day without tiring; Bill Talbert has skill; and the Professional Champion of the World Pancho Gonzales holds power. Before their eyes, the boys see their path to tennis greatness if they only join "one of the 1500 member clubs of the United States Lawn Tennis Association." If club life is not for them, then school playgrounds, public parks, municipal armories, or community centers might be the ticket. They are reminded that a fifteen-year-old Vincent Richards and a sixteen-year-old Maureen "Little Mo" Connolly became the best tennis players in the world for their time.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 3-6.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 12-13.

The comic concludes with a nod to the past and an eye to the future where the game would continue to globalize. Pictures from across the world fill the boxes on the page with tennis images from across the continents: Centre Court at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club (a Centre Court that looks nothing like the real court), players meeting royalty, General-turned-President Dwight D. Eisenhower reading a speech, flags from around the world, players celebrating getting on a plane, the Davis Cup raised high. Those are the images on the page, with Coach Power, Granger, and Martin in the thick of all of it. “Since tennis is played in more countries than any other sport you can travel abroad and play in....more than 33 countries where the Davis Cup is competed for throughout the world. And the greatest honor of all is to become a member of America’s Davis Cup team....And reach the final round in the worldwide contest of international tennis supremacy!,” concludes coach on behalf of the Tennis Educational Foundation and their patron organization, the United States Lawn Tennis Association.<sup>22</sup>

The comic book medium fit with the USLTA’s message that the Davis Cup remained the Association’s top priority in the postwar period. The men who sat on the USLTA’s Executive Committee hindered their own sway over the future direction the game would take because they ignored the impact women already had in growing the game. Since the early twentieth century, efforts to promote tennis relied primarily on subscriptions to the *American Lawn Tennis* monthly magazine published by Stephen Wallis Merrihew—periodically under the auspices of the USLTA. One reason the Association agreed to bless Merrihew’s periodical was that the editorial staff only had room for men. That bias existed because the USLTA itself did not want women in any authoritative position over the game of tennis except playing on the court, where they could

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 14-15.

be controlled. With Stephen Wallis Merrihew and the USLTA's break following Merrihew's 1924 support of Bill Tilden in the face of the USLTA's assaults on Tilden's character as the tennis player turned tennis correspondent, the Association's ties with *American Lawn Tennis* were severed irrevocably.<sup>23</sup>

Merrihew continued to publish the popular *American Lawn Tennis* without the USLTA's approval. But by October 1942, at eighty years of age, he could no longer handle the rigors of editing the magazine that he had founded and published for thirty-five years. For the next five years until his death in 1947, Merrihew wrote regular columns for the magazine even though the publishing responsibilities passed to the South Carolinian Dr. William Plumer Jacobs. Jacobs's unexpected death in 1948 left *American Lawn Tennis* without a reliable publisher. Consequently the most respected source for tennis news and opinions floundered until the magazine's final issue appeared in October 1951. A periodical titled *The Racquet: The Magazine of Tennis, Badminton, Squash* tried to attract the readership of the now defunct *American Lawn Tennis* with limited success, publishing its first issue in November 1951 and running until August 1953, when its subscription list was too small to warrant continued publication.<sup>24</sup>

Voices readers had never tired of hearing were those of the players themselves. As with Bill Tilden's outspoken views, women players had long expressed their opinions on their sport in the press. Unlike in other sports, in which women's opinions were reported by male

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<sup>23</sup> J. P. Shanley, "Sports on Video—Channel 5 to Present Tennis Matches Originating in Station's Studio," *New York Times*, August 21, 1955, p. 105; "American Lawn Tennis has a vacancy....," *American Lawn Tennis* 2, no. 2 (May 15, 1908): 40-46; Richard Hillway and Geoff Felder, "Stephen Wallis Merrihew & American Lawn Tennis," *Journal of the Tennis Collectors of America* 29 (Autumn 2013): 452-6.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*; *Ibid.*; *Ibid.*

sportswriters, the opinions of women tennis players routinely took the form of their own columns.<sup>25</sup> After Bill Tilden's sexual proclivities alienated him from many former supporters, the amateur champion-turned-professional Alice Marble assumed the duties of providing the player perspective in *American Lawn Tennis*. In her monthly column "As I See It," she opined on a host of issues that ranged from mismanagement of Association resources on the part of the USLTA to how professional players such as Don Budge and Fred Perry received invitations from various city Chambers of Commerce to provide youth with athletic clinics as a means to "combat child delinquency." The photograph of Marble that accompanied her columns showed to all the readers of that popular magazine a knowledgeable, erudite, and athletic woman capable of challenging the old-guard men who still made the most important decisions in her sport. And challenge them she did, not only in her writing but on citywide playing and lecture circuits, where she not only entertained but also instructed on technical tennis issues that ranged from the proper grip to use for the overhead stroke to more serious issues such as urban recreational policy and sexism in sports.<sup>26</sup>

Marble had one of the more remarkable life stories of any professional athlete in the middle part of the twentieth century. Like so many top tennis players, she came from California, but far from the sunshine and the starlets of Los Angeles. The fourth child of farmers in Plumas County, Marble spent as much time as a preteen milking cows in the Sierra Foothills as she did swinging a tennis racquet. The young Marble also met a cacophony of strangers, unusual for

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<sup>25</sup>For example, see Grantland Rice, America's foremost sportswriter in the first half of the twentieth century, reflect on women athletes during his career in his *The Tumult and the Shouting: My Life in Sport* (New York: A.S. Barnes & Co., 1954), 237-46.

<sup>26</sup> Alice Marble, "As I See It," *American Lawn Tennis* 41, no. 3 (July 1, 1947): 1, 30.



such an isolated location, who traveled through her father's land to bathe in the sulphur springs on the family farm. While Marble learned a work ethic there that served her later in her career, she never could have developed as a player had her father and mother not decided to move the family to San Francisco when Marble was still a preteen.<sup>27</sup>

In 1919 sadness struck Marble's family when an automobile accident incapacitated her father at the same time that most of the family, and much of the city for that matter, fell ill with influenza. Most of Marble's relatives pulled through, but her father died from his injuries. His death required Marble's mother to work long hours cleaning offices in addition to her homemaking to keep the family fed, and that hardship meant that Marble spent a great deal of time under the supervision of her adolescent brothers. The boys relished playing in city parks, and Marble had little choice in accompanying them to the Golden Gate Park baseball fields. Marble quickly gained a reputation as a "tomboy" and an athlete more interested in ball games during recess than in her schoolwork or chores. On one occasion she even made the *San Francisco Examiner* when the Coast League Seals nine was a player short, and, in desperation to field a full side, mistook Marble watching the game for a teenage boy they could use on the diamond. She earned the spot. For the rest of her teenage years she could usually count on an invitation to play with the males, no matter their caliber.<sup>28</sup>

Athletic ability soon took Marble in a different direction. Her oldest brother Dan dropped out of school right after their father died to help support his mother and siblings by working in the lumber business. He always played handball to unwind after a long day of work, and by his

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<sup>27</sup> Alice Marble, *The Road to Wimbledon* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), 8-9, 11-12, 17.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 22-33.

late teenage years he was the number-one ranked player in Northern California. That success, along with respectable work in the lumber trade, led Dan to frequent “fashionable clubs” in San Francisco that offered facilities for individual sports such as tennis. Dan’s position as the de facto head of household led him to exercise a great deal of influence over his younger siblings, and he had grown tired of hearing about his younger sister playing all afternoon with boys in San Francisco’s Recreation Park in the Mission District. Marble had grown from a little girl to an athletically built woman of five feet seven inches and 150 pounds, and Dan expected her to start acting like the young adult she had become.<sup>29</sup>

Dan, however, recognized the athleticism of his sister. He soon settled on tennis as the right sport for a young woman. Marble wrote that her “heart was broken” when he gave her a tennis racquet with the warning that her baseball and basketball days were over. She claimed to endure teasing from her old friends, but with encouragement from her history teacher, she went to the Golden Gate Park courts, where she made new friends, including a coterie of athletic young women not altogether different than herself in the Junior Tennis Club. After only four months of playing the game, Marble won her first tournament, and within a year’s time she rose to the top of the junior players in the San Francisco public parks. At sixteen she was invited to play at the Berkeley Club in the California State Championship against the top females throughout California. Unaccustomed to losing, Marble lost in the finals and almost quit the sport. Her brother Dan, however, purchased a \$45 junior membership for her to San Francisco’s California Tennis Club, where Marble confronted the best competition in the Bay Area. Marble still preferred to play in the more free-wheeling environment of the public parks, where she

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 34-37.

routinely competed against people from all backgrounds such as Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino men. As she rose in the rankings, she credited the diversity of the people she played against as a major factor for her fast success.<sup>30</sup>

By 1932 Marble was the top player in California after having won the state women's championship. She relied upon the well-funded California amateur tennis associations to provide her with travel expenses to play on the East Coast. She also benefited from the collected wisdom of California coaches such as Eleanor "Teach" Tennant and the retinue of fellow California players who formed a clique on the East Coast amateur circuit. That solidarity proved important for Marble when the West Side Tennis Club lost her entry into the 1933 National Championship at Forest Hills and refused to remake the draw. Had the famous San Francisco Champion William "Little Bill" Johnston not intervened on his compatriot's behalf, Marble would have missed her first major tournament because of a miscommunication and potential prejudice on the part of the Eastern USLTA section. Johnston's support of Marble exemplified the tendency of sectional differences to matter more than class and gender differences when it came to the tennis players themselves. A West Coast player would support a fellow West Coast player, a Southern player a Southern player. Likewise, compared to other sports, the amateur tennis associations funded top women players to much the same degree that they funded top men's players. That support and camaraderie was most visible at the national level in the form of the Wightman Cup team that pitted the best women players in the United States against the best women players in England with the USLTA paying all expenses for the athletes representing America in that competition. Marble first earned a spot on the squad in 1933, and she played her last Wightman

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 37-47, 58, 107.

Cup match in 1939. That experience helped her grow close to the handful of other top lady players in the country and the chance to develop her game with those players led to her first National Singles Championship in 1936. That victory gained her the financial support necessary to travel to England for Wimbledon, where she won the singles championship in 1938 and 1939 before World War II halted that competition.<sup>31</sup>

Yet the financial support that the USLTA provided could also sow seeds of discord between the player and the directors of the Association. Earlier in her amateur career, when Marble required hospitalization during the middle of the Wightman Cup team's tour of Paris, not only did the USLTA leadership not console the hurting player, but upon her return to the United States and her subsequent medical treatment there, Wightman Cup Chairman Julian Myrick went so far as to tell Marble and her coach Tennant that the Association wanted nothing more to do with Marble because she had already "cost them a great deal of money" and proved to be a "bad investment." Tennant remained loyal to Marble, however, and provided room, board, and round-the-clock care to her player over the next year as Marble recovered. Feeling strong enough to play again, Southern California Tennis Association Secretary Perry T. Jones, acting on behalf of the USLTA national office, notified Marble that the Association had refused her entry to tournaments in the East Coast lawn tennis circuit. After much pleading, she eventually received a hearing in front of a selection committee that took the form of a four-day tryout under the gaze of five men who begrudgingly admitted she seemed fit enough to play in their tournaments. That audition galvanized Marble to think more seriously about turning professional despite her

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 48-51, 60, 66-67, 73, 77-78, 80, 87, 93, 100, 103-04, 116-17.

renewed success in amateur tournaments in 1940. Wartime service entertaining troops as part of the Bill Tilden, Don Budge, and Mary Hardwick Hare tour in the States and purported clandestine activities in Europe delayed that professional career.<sup>32</sup>

Marble's decision to turn professional infuriated the USLTA directors. They ignored and forgot how they abandoned her during her health struggles, only remembering their sponsorship of Marble's 1938 and 1939 European amateur trips, which they believed deserved the debt of gratitude that she would remain an amateur throughout her playing career. Marble instead diversified her money-making activities to include professional tennis tours, paid consultantships with firms such as Wilson Sporting Goods Company, and clothing design lines. Her willingness to tour professionally with men especially galled the male leaders of the USLTA. Marble set an example of strength for women in her own work life; she also advocated for women in her writing. While most of her writing presented straightforward arguments in favor of women tennis players, on occasion she waded into more controversial waters as when she served as an early editor of DC's *Wonder Woman* comic and wrote "The Wonder Women of History" series that earned her \$50,000. Her personal letters too, like those to Doris Jane Hart, encouraged talented young women players to stick with the game in the face of the uphill challenges they faced.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 118-19, 122-3, 137, 147-8, 157-160, 165-7; Don Budge Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, RI; Alice Marble, *Courting Danger: My Adventures in World-Class Tennis, Golden-Age Hollywood, and High-Stakes Spying* (Boston: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 207-34.

<sup>33</sup> Sarah Palfrey Danzig Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, RI; Marble, *The Road to Wimbledon*, 157; *Alice Marble and Don Budge 1941 Professional Tennis Tour Program*, Pro Tours Case, Area Two, ITHF, Newport, RI; Alice Marble designed "Tennis Themed Scarf," n.d., Tennis and Culture Accessories Case, Area Two, ITHF, Newport, RI; Jill Lepore, *The Secret History of Wonder Woman* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), 220-23, 239, 315; Doris Jane Hart Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, RI.

No player benefited more from Marble's help than African American lady champion Althea Gibson, who faced even more discrimination than Pancho Gonzales. Gibson's parents were South Carolina sharecroppers who migrated to Harlem in 1930, three years after Gibson was born. In this vibrant urban neighborhood, Gibson benefited from a law enforcement and community organizing program called the Police Athletic League (PAL), in which law enforcement officers provided urban youths with sporting goods and coaching. Gibson took to paddle tennis and quickly excelled. Of the PAL programs across major U.S. cities in the mid-twentieth century, Gibson remarked that they "set up these play streets to keep the kids or the youths on the courts instead of in the courts." Community leaders also came around and befriended the young people. In Gibson's case, the Big Band leader and tenor saxophonist Buddy Walker looked after her block in Harlem. He quickly noticed Gibson's racquet skills, her tall and lanky physique, and her athleticism. He encouraged her to practice and practice. In spite of these interactions with authority figures, the games Gibson grew up with in Harlem were more informal and unstructured than recreational officials would admit. The games were of and on the street. For her part, Gibson zealously guarded the concrete paddle tennis court where she had taken to playing a modified game of lawn tennis. The winner stayed on the court. Gibson never lost and did not see any reason to give up the spot she had earned by winning so that someone else could get a turn.<sup>34</sup>

After about two years of playing on paddleball and handball courts, Walker introduced Gibson to friends at the leading New York City athletic club. The Cosmopolitan Tennis Club

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<sup>34</sup> Althea Gibson, Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, RI.

allowed Gibson honorary membership so she could train for the New York State Championships sanctioned by the American Tennis Association (ATA). Upwardly mobile African Americans founded the ATA in 1916 out of necessity because the USLTA sanctioned a de facto color line by allowing member clubs in the organizations to exercise their own discretion in who they did and did not admit to membership at their clubs. For their part, African American exercised far greater racial tolerance in their own tennis organizations. In her first ATA New York State Championship, the girl Gibson defeated in the finals was white.<sup>35</sup>

In 1947 Gibson won her first ATA National Championship. She continued to hold that title for the next decade. In the meantime, ATA officials lobbied the USLTA for Gibson's inclusion in USLTA events. Progress proved slow, but with a little help from Alice Marble, who penned an open letter of support for Gibson's cause, USLTA officials relented and allowed the young African American champion to participate in USLTA-sanctioned events. Gibson's first tournament took place at the 369th Regiment Armory, located just off of Fifth Avenue on 143rd Street in New York City. She won that Eastern Indoor Championship, which secured her entrance into the National Indoor Championships held at another military drill pavilion—the 66th Street Armory on Park Avenue. Gibson did not lift that crown, but through her performance on the court and the tireless behind-the-scenes efforts of her supporters at the Cosmopolitan Tennis Club and in the ATA, she found most tennis tournaments open to her in the following years.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

Marble helped make sure of that. She forcefully spoke out in favor of desegregating tennis competition by allowing Althea Gibson to compete openly in USLTA-sanctioned tournaments over the objections voiced by the individual clubs who hosted these tournaments. In the same July 1950 issue of *American Lawn Tennis* that told readers about Gibson's New York public parks background, her schooling at Florida A & M university, and her dominance of the American Tennis Association tournament circuit, Marble made a persuasive case for Gibson's entrance into the draw of the 1950 United States Championship, despite objections from some members of the West Side Tennis Club that hosted the Forest Hills tournament. Before Marble's letter of support, Gibson's chance of playing on those lawn tennis courts seemed unlikely to happen in 1950, because the other East Coast elite clubs, where a player earned the necessary qualifying points to secure a spot in Forest Hills, used their "invitational" discretion with regularity to tailor-make their tournament to the liking of their membership. Marble's rhetoric appealed to the vanity of those club members—who from the beginning of the game in America had viewed themselves as the stewards of the game. She convinced enough of them that a refusal to allow Gibson to compete with the best players in the country undermined the competitive spirit of tennis where the best players rose to the top of the rankings regardless of their social standing. That such top players were now African American, Marble argued, made sense because African Americans had already broken through as top athletes in "baseball, in football, or in boxing." The editorial concluded with Marble going beyond supporting Gibson with her words by imparting her accumulated wisdom on the tennis court from years of playing in topflight tournaments. Gibson had a practice partner and mentor in Marble almost everywhere she played



because Marble herself also had had to prove herself to the Association's leadership a dozen years before.<sup>37</sup>

Gibson was up to that challenge. Throughout the fifties she made the most of what competitive amateur tennis had to offer. International travel was first and foremost. In addition to Wimbledon, Gibson traveled to Great Britain and the Continent for Wightman Cup matches, where she helped the United States' team capture that hardware in 1957 and 1958. She also became a player in the United States' global struggle against the Soviet Union when in 1955 State Department officials requested that she join Karol Fageros, Bob Perry, and Hamilton Richardson on a goodwill tennis tour throughout Southeast Asia. Gibson agreed, and soon she found herself playing her first match as a representative of the United States government in Rangoon, Burma. Over the next half year, Gibson and her teammates played exhibition matches, visited schools to instruct children, competed against local champions, and spread the message of freedom as President Eisenhower and his foreign policy team feared the region was poised to tip over to communism like dominos. Gibson's teammates were all white: one from the South, one from Florida, and one from California via the Midwest. Richardson was an NCAA Champion and a Rhodes Scholar. The popular press and spectators alike pined for the buxom and blonde Fageros, attention Fageros was happy to encourage when she donned her signature gold lamé panties underneath her short tennis skirt. Gibson certainly stood apart from the rest of the team and understood that her selection carried no small amount of politics as baggage. Pushing this aside, however, she made the most of her time by winning the All Asian Championship in

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.; Howard Cohn, "The Gibson Story," *American Lawn Tennis* 44, no. 3 (July 1, 1950): 6-7; Alice Marble, "A Vital Issue," *American Lawn Tennis* 44, no. 3 (July 1, 1950): 14; Alice Marble, *The Road to Wimbledon*, 148.

Calcutta, India, demolishing Fageros and all other local competition. She did not lose a match until coming to Europe for the French Championship the following year in 1956.<sup>38</sup>

Historians have noted the propaganda role popular entertainments assumed in the Cold War. They have paid particular attention to dance, music, theatre, literature, radio, television, and film. Compared to those topics, with a few exceptions, scholars have overlooked the role sports—especially games like tennis that already held a high degree of popularity the world over—played in the cultural Cold War.<sup>39</sup> In the countries of Western Europe bordering the Soviet Union, for example, the United States Information Agency broadcast sports reporting, the U.S. Army ran athletic events, and American Houses and Information Centers sprouted where European youth could use complimentary sports equipment. In German-speaking countries, the United States' occupation changed both hearts and minds by introducing both the action of and the word for joggers and bodybuilders. The triumvirate of American team sports—most notably collegiate football, professional baseball, and Harlem Globetrotters basketball—projected both American power and values to the rest of the world.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Althea Gibson Oral History Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, RI.

<sup>39</sup> Akira Iriye, eds., *Global Interdependence: The World after 1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 547; Penny M. Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 27; Laura Belmonte, *Selling the American Way: U.S. Propaganda and the Cold War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 5, 7, 71, 176; Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 300 note; Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 127-151.

<sup>40</sup> Reinhold Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War: The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria During the Second World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 96, 114, 161, 276; Kurt Kemper, *College Football and American Culture in the Cold War Era* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 1-2; Robert Elias, *The Empire Strikes Out: How Baseball Sold U.S. Foreign Policy and Promoted the American Way Abroad* (New York: The New Press, 2010), xi, 1-3, 286-9, 291-4; Russ Crawford, *The Use of Sport to Promote the American Way of Life During the Cold War: Cultural Propaganda, 1945-1963* (Lewistown: Edwin Mellen

The Olympics were the most significant but only one of the important international sporting events where the United States and the Soviet Union competed against one another.<sup>41</sup> As a sport whose global popularity grew at the same time as tension between communism and capitalism increased, tennis matches, every month, year after year, played between players of different countries assumed tremendous political significance that rivaled if not eclipsed earlier politicized matches such as the 1937 Davis Cup tie between Germany and the United States. What had changed after World War II was that in the postwar world, tournaments between players of all nationalities assumed the political and diplomatic symbolism previously reserved only for Davis Cup matches that pitted the best of one country against the best of another in team competition.<sup>42</sup>

Tennis players in the Soviet Bloc suffered tougher times compared to their fellow competitors from Western Europe and the United States. A European correspondent reporting on the Davis cup squads of Yugoslavia and Hungary identified two types of Communist players, “those who have gotten out and, alas!, those who haven’t.” What was known of the latter came largely from what the former said, and therefore generalizations should be advanced with caution. Some sensational stories of tennis families executed or sent to gulags for listening to Wimbledon on pirated BBC radio stations lacks credibility, but the fact that, given the

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Press, 2008), 2-3; Damion Thomas, *Globetrotting: African American Athletes in Cold War Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 41-74.

<sup>41</sup> Richard Espy, *The Politics of the Olympic Games* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 3-7; Alfred Senn, *Power, Politics, and the Olympic Games* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 97-110; Jules Boykoff, *Power Games: A Political History of the Olympics* (New York: Verso, 2016), ch. 3; Toby Rider, *Cold War Games: Propaganda, the Olympics, and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016), ch. 2.

<sup>42</sup> William T. Tilden II, “Reminiscences,” *World Tennis* 1, no. 2 (July 1953): 13.

opportunity, most top Yugoslav and Hungarian players defected to the West suggests draconian treatment of Soviet athletes compared to their international peers. Franjo Punčec left Yugoslavia for Egypt in 1948. Pursued by communist enforcers, Vinicius “Vinny” and Magda Rurac escaped from Romania using fake names, claiming they left because after a few years barred by the communist party from competing in Western Europe, their government finally acquiesced to them traveling to the West and playing, where they promptly realized life was better outside the Iron Curtain. They eventually found their way to the United States. Helena Straubeova fled Czechoslovakia for Italy, and Wladyslaw Skonecki left Poland under the threat of execution. In 1949 Jaroslav Drobny and Vladmir Cernik, Czechoslovakia’s two best male players, chose exile when Cernik left his family behind to play and live in Western Europe while Drobny asked Switzerland for asylum before becoming an Egyptian citizen married to the English player Rita Jarvis Anderson. Dragutin Mitić’s flight from Yugoslavia was far more heartbreaking as he left with his wife and son but had to leave his daughter behind. The Hungarian champion András Ádám-Stolpa related how the regime preferred players with dependent children because officials thought them less of a flight risk. Authorities barred Stolpa from competing at the French Championships between 1949 and 1954, despite his having won the tournament in 1947, on account that he might defect.<sup>43</sup>

Soviet players who continued to play for their countries in international competitions did so under the watchful eyes of party chaperones. The Hungarian men’s team was captained by a man whose tennis aptitude was questionable but whose party loyalty was above reproach. Suzy

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<sup>43</sup> Gloria Butler, “The Tennis Story Behind the Iron Curtain,” *World Tennis* 1, no. 1 (June 1953): 24, 29.

Kormockzy, the top Hungarian woman in the late 1940s, reappeared on the international tennis scene at the Monte Carlo tournament in 1952 after having been kept back from competition outside the Soviet Union in the late 1940s and early 1950s. When the American player Gloria Butler saw Kormockzy she found the Hungarian cold, a shadow of her former self. Only in the women's locker room, clear of earshot from the Hungarian player chaperone and party-hardliner, did Kormockzy open up to Butler about her life since they last played. Davis Cup competition, more than individuals traveling to tournaments in other countries, raised the seriousness with which Communist bloc countries took their tennis. In 1949 Hungary hosted the Belgium Davis Cup squad in Budapest. Soldiers ushered spectators to their seats underneath flowing standards of the Hungarian leader Mátyás Rákosi. Except on the tennis court, the Belgian players could not interact with the Hungarian players: guards kept the teams separated in the locker room; at the after-match dinner, each squad had a table kept at such a distance apart that conversation proved impossible. "It is a sad thing to consider that in this world where sportsmen are again getting together to compete against each other in a spirit of friendly rivalry, that there should still be fine talents that are being wasted, and still places where men are not free to take part in the world of sport, how, when, and where they choose," remarked an American player.<sup>44</sup> But what that player missed was that United States' own record on inclusivity and sensitivity in tennis could also have used improvement.

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

Proper projections of gender relations and racial balance were foremost on the minds of Washington powerbrokers fighting the cultural Cold War.<sup>45</sup> That context meant that while amateur tennis offered opportunities for international travel to exotic places and prestigious sporting clubs, players also faced drawbacks. Money was the biggest concern. In Gibson's case, she supplemented her income by teaching gym class in the Department of Health and Physical Education at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri. Gibson felt that such instruction as an un-tenured assistant instructor was clearly below her status as a national champion. She needed the money, however, as well as income out of the prying eyes of USLTA officials who patrolled the boundaries of amateurism with an iron fist in a velvet glove. Having won the French Championship, Wimbledon twice, and the United States Championship twice in singles, in addition to several doubles titles, Gibson had nowhere left to go in the amateur ranks by 1959. Needing money, she signed a contract with Abe Saperstein, the owner of the Harlem Globetrotters. Gibson and Fageros agreed to play warmup matches before the Globetrotters took the court against the Washington Generals. In a year of barnstorming, Gibson won more than one hundred matches to Fageros's four, a feat that exemplified the Washington Generals' team logo featuring a tall and long-limbed Globetrotters star towering over a squat and ineffectual Generals player. Such dominance did not mean financial security, though. After the end of the barnstorming tour, Gibson entered the Professional Indoor Championship in Cleveland in 1960 where she bested Pauline Betz and established herself as the best of the best. But once again she had nowhere to go, as the money for a professional tennis player was to be made in the

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<sup>45</sup> Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), x, 2-3, 6; Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 203-48.

barnstorming tours. Promoters did not think Gibson would draw the crowds. With few options left to her in tennis, Gibson made the remarkable switch to professional golf—which may have had small purses in 1960, but was the only contest in the world of sports where an athletic African American woman could support herself.<sup>46</sup>

During the Cold War, sporting celebrities from developing countries in South America also became pawns in a global struggle between the democracy and capitalism of the United States and the communism and state-centeredness of the Soviet Union. Tennis players predictably gravitated to the West because the United States, Western Europe, and countries closely tied to British Empire such as Australia held the major tennis tournaments open to international competition while the Soviet Union tended to hold athletic competitions within a more close-knit group of countries directly in the Soviet sphere. Maria Bueno, a world renowned champion from Brazil, recalled first coming to the United States for the Orange Bowl Junior Tournament in Florida in 1957. She relished her time there, but soon came to like California even more, which she would make her second home when she was not playing tournaments or visiting family in Brazil. No amateur or professional tennis player in the fifties or sixties placed the Soviet Union in such high regard.<sup>47</sup>

International sports celebrities such as Bueno had an outsized impact on the attitudes of their compatriots, who took great pride in their athletes' success in worldwide competitions. The intensity of local pride shown all the brighter in developing countries that previously experienced

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<sup>46</sup> "Around the World," *World Tennis* 16, no. 11 (April 1969): 93; Althea Gibson Oral History Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, RI.

<sup>47</sup> Maria Bueno Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

little success in international tournaments. When Maria Bueno returned to Brazil after winning her first Wimbledon Singles Championship in 1959, throngs greeted her as their conquering darling. The government issued a special airmail stamp in honor of her victory. Her hometown of Sao Paulo erected two statues of her, each thrice her real size, which they placed in prominent spaces in the city—including one in the city’s main plaza. Even after their champions took up residences in other countries, developing nations in South America embraced the athletic achievements of tennis players born in their country, as was the case of Peruvian-turned-American Alex Olmedo following his 1959 Wimbledon Mixed-Doubles Championship with Bueno.<sup>48</sup>

Pan-Latin American support of brown athletes was the exception rather than the rule. The first truly widespread support for a Hispanic athlete did not appear until the tragic death of Pittsburgh Pirates superstar and Puerto Rican native Roberto Clemente in 1973.<sup>49</sup> At the same time that Pancho Gonzales won the United States Tennis Championship in 1949, a Cuban women’s society called the Lyceum and Lawn Tennis Club met in Havana with seemingly no knowledge of the Hispanic competitor on one of tennis’s biggest world stages. Admittedly, the primary purposes of that group was to empower women through cultural edification and to give Castillian elites a place to meet and mingle in the Cuban capital; nonetheless, the fact that a group comprised of a large number of self-described “Tennis de Señoritas” did not actually

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Charles Mercer, *Roberto Clemente* (New York: Putnam, 1974), 57.



follow a major Latino Champion said something about lawn tennis's lingering ties to elitism and the way women were ignored.<sup>50</sup>

Frustration with the men of the amateur associations controlling much of the money in tennis inspired a new generation of women players and promoters to develop professional tennis on their own terms. The most influential of these women was Gladys Heldman, who grew up Gladys Medalie in New York City, the daughter of the powerful New York Appellate Court judge George Medalie. Unlike most figures who helped usher in professional tennis, Heldman did not play tennis as a junior. After high school she attended Stanford University, where she graduated magna cum laude with a history major. There she met Julius Heldman, and they married in 1942, the day after he finished his Ph.D. in physical chemistry. The young couple went on to Oak Ridge, Tennessee, where Julius Heldman worked to enrich uranium for the United States atomic weapons program. After the war, the couple moved to Berkeley, California, with the nearby National Laboratories in Livermore and Berkeley. The Heldmans resided conveniently next to the Berkeley Tennis Club where the once nationally-ranked Julius Heldman began playing again. Gladys Heldman picked up the game there after the birth of their second child. She struggled at first but took lessons with local teaching pro Tom Stowe, who taught her the fundamentals. With her technique then in place she started playing games with any local lady she could find, as well as frequent sets with her husband. By the time the family moved to Long Beach, Gladys Heldman ranked number twelve in California and improved even faster in Southern California with more frequent tournaments and better competition. By 1949 she felt

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<sup>50</sup> Mañach Conference 1949, Folder 17, Box 4, Series 2, Lyceum and Lawn Tennis Club Collection, Cuban Heritage Collection, University of Miami Libraries, Coral Gables, Florida; El Lyceum, typescript by María Luisa Guerro, n.d., Folder 1, Box 3, Series 1, Lyceum and Lawn Tennis Club Collection, Cuban Heritage Collection, University of Miami Libraries, Coral Gables, Florida.

ready to tour the country on the amateur tournament circuit and played the National Mixed Doubles Championship with her husband. That same year Julius Heldman's work for the Shell Oil Company moved the family to Houston, where they quickly assumed leadership positions in the tennis community there—Julius as president of the Houston Tennis Association and Gladys as publisher of the *Houston Tennis News* bulletin that she quickly grew from sixty-two subscribers to more than one thousand. Two years later she received “Tennisdom's Woman of the Year” award at Boston's Longwood Cricket Club that honored her achievements: putting together a Texas tennis players versus other players in the United States team competition; publishing a Texas Tennis magazine, *The Round-up*; sponsoring junior clinics; organizing the Houston Junior Tennis Association; keeping the Houston city challenge ladder; chairing the Junior Wightman Cup team, and promoting “Tennis Week” across Southeast Texas. All that experience served Heldman well in the national tennis work she soon assumed.<sup>51</sup>

That work took the form of speaking both for women in the sport of tennis and for the vitality of professionalism in the game as a whole moving into the future. Heldman did this first by publishing her own magazine that emphasized vivid images of men and women playing the game, and later by helping found and run what became the contemporary women's professional tennis tour. Under Merrithew's guidance, *American Lawn Tennis* had displayed many illustrations when compared with other sports publications in the first half of the twentieth century, but by the early 1950s many other magazines of general entertainment value featured

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<sup>51</sup> “Tennisdom's Woman of the Year,” *The Racquet* 45, no. 7 (November 1951): 9, 40-1.

better photographs on slicker pages.<sup>52</sup> With the commercial failure of *The Racquet* in 1951, the USLTA abandoned any affiliation with a monthly tennis magazine in favor of an annual yearbook that collated season-ending player rankings, tournament results, and the major business of the association. Heldman welcomed the Association's total break with tennis periodicals because she could then freely publish articles and photographs of edgier women players she correctly assessed her primarily male readership wanted, while at the same time keeping the focus of most pages of *World Tennis* magazine on men's tennis by running roughly double the stories and photos of the men's game compared to the women's game.<sup>53</sup>

Heldman made sure to keep the control of her magazine in the hands of women. As editor and publisher she retained final copy approval for herself, but she rarely exercised veto prerogative on her writers and her staff because she employed so many women who knew all too well the specific challenges women athletes faced in the fifties and sixties. Gloria Butler, for example, covered tennis throughout Europe and worked tirelessly to promote women in the sport in her reporting. Sarah Palfrey Danzig, a former champion who married the *New York Times* sportswriter Allison Danzig, did the same from her account executive position in the *World Tennis* publishing office. From a subscription point of view, what changed with Heldman publishing the top tennis periodical was the number of subscribers, which increased from 4,500 readers of *American Lawn Tennis* to 6,600 readers of the first print run of *World Tennis*. By the

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<sup>52</sup> For the wider context on heavily illustrated magazines such as *Life* and *Look*, see David Abrahamson and Carol Polsgrove, "The Right Niche: Consumer Magazines and Advertisers," in David Paul Nord, Joan Shelley Rubin, and Michael Schudson, eds., *A History of the Book in America: The Enduring Book: Print Culture in Postwar America*, vol. 5 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 108-10.

<sup>53</sup> Content analysis of the magazine's photographs and articles is based on the author sampling the complete run—June 1953 to July 1991—of *World Tennis* held by the ITHF Research Library, Newport Rhode Island.

end of 1953 Heldman counted 15,000 subscribers. Heldman replaced an outmoded two-color journal presentation with a glossy full-color magazine. More significantly she changed the size of the women's photographs, which grew considerably larger and revealed more in capturing women athletes in sexually suggestive poses with each passing year. Every move and muscle of the more recognized female stars was now on display for the reading public, and it was a woman who edited and published those images.<sup>54</sup>

The growing professionalization of the sport also made women players increasingly visible on the court. Prior to 1968, women professionals such as Suzanne Lenglen, Alice Marble, Gussy Moran, and Althea Gibson, occasionally played with the half-dozen professional men who earned a living by barnstorming across the United States, Australia, and Europe, dueling one another rather than being seeded in an amateur tournament draw. The peripatetic touring lifestyle brought with it real dangers: burnout from hundreds of days on the road; low gate receipts that could halt a tour mid-stretch or stillbirth a tour the coming year; and the forfeiture of amateur status, effectively limiting one's competitive tennis outside of the very few professional tour spots. The dangers of turning professional were more acute for women than for their male colleagues; they received little compensation and prize money for their victories and next to nothing for losing a match. Limited opportunities and money explained why women more often than men appealed for reinstatement in the amateur ranks—as Moran did in November 1953.

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<sup>54</sup> Sarah Palfrey Danzig Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, RI; Gladys M. Heldman to Harold Lebar, Dec. 2, 1953, Box 1, Correspondence Folder, Robert Kelleher Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

Heldman tried to counter the inequality in her editing of *World Tennis*. More importantly she put her money and her management skills together in promoting women's professional tennis.<sup>55</sup>

Heldman had a terrific vantage point from which to view the ILTF's and the USLTA's belated experiment with Open Tennis. She reported on the first Open Wimbledon and the first U.S. Open, quickly learning what worked and what needed improvement. By the fall of 1969 she thought the USLTA was moving in the right direction by appointing Joseph F. Cullman III, Phillip Morris Chairman of the Board, to chair the U.S. Open, but the place of women players on the professional tennis tours needed a complete overhaul. Lamar Hunt and World Championship Tennis signed only male professionals, and the faltering position of George MacCall's National Tennis League meant the handful of professional women MacCall signed made only a fraction of their guarantees. Most topflight women players thus tried to straddle professional and amateur tennis by way of the dubious "registered player" classification that ILTF had adopted in order to secure enough votes for Open Tennis. Heldman's voice was one of many opining that any distinction the USLTA, the ILTF, or any tennis organization made that called a person who made money from their tennis game anything other than a professional was unsuitable and unsustainable.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Gonzales, *Man With a Racket*, 114-5; The USLTA Amateur Rule: A Talk by Harold A. Lehair, Chairman, before the Tennis Writer's Association, February 26, 1953, Box 1, Amateur Rule Committee 1953 Folder, Robert J. Robert Kelleher Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Minutes of the Amateur Rule Committee, November 16, 1953, Box 1, Amateur Rule Committee 1953 Folder, Robert Kelleher Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Susan Ware, *Game, Set, Match*, 31-32; Gladys Heldman to George Weissman, February 7, 1974, no folder, Box 8, Gladys Heldman Papers, Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

<sup>56</sup> Gladys Heldman, "Seven Heavenly Days," *World Tennis* 16, no. 4 (September 1968): 20, 22; Gladys Heldman, "Forest Hills," *World Tennis* 16, no. 6 (November 1968): 14, 16; Gladys Heldman, "The Dilemma," *World Tennis* 16, no. 8 (January 1969): 14, 16; Gladys Heldman, "Forest Hills 1969," *World Tennis* 16, no. 12 (May 1969): 16; Gladys Heldman, "Open Tennis, Registered Players, and Confusion," *World Tennis* 16, no. 3 (August 1968): 16, 18.

The concept of the association-approved player was the last vestige of the amateur Association's longstanding attempt to control the flow of money into and out of the game. Heldman further bristled at that control because she saw how classism fused with racism and misogyny into a capricious cocktail of discrimination. In her playing career, Heldman once partnered with Althea Gibson during a Florida tournament, only to find that when the pair tried to play together again in 1952 the Longwood Cricket Club and the Essex Country Club disallowed the partnership because of the color of Gibson's skin. Although she was ranked in the nation's top ten, the USLTA allowed member clubs to bar Gibson's entry in tournaments from 1950 to 1954. Gibson's incredible talent and persistence eventually made her too valuable for the Association and the U.S. State Department to keep off the court. A dozen years later, however, Heldman still had to call on the USLTA to "throw out" member clubs that continued to discriminate against African Americans and women.<sup>57</sup>

One club that never engaged in racial or gender discrimination was the Los Angeles Tennis Club. Those courts served as the setting for an important moment in sports history one final time. Since Pancho Gonzales's regular training at the club in the early 1950s, top male talent played there far less than in previous years. Stan Smith and Bob Lutz were the last two players of any international class to come out of the junior development program led there by Perry T. Jones. By 1970 Jones had spent half a century leading Southern California tennis, and his health was failing. The eighty-year-old felt he had no choice but to relinquish his

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<sup>57</sup> Gladys Heldman, "Mixed Memories," typescript, undated, Box 25, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Gladys Heldman to David Lott, November 16, 1981, Box 25, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Gladys Heldman, "Throw the Rascals Out," *World Tennis* 16, no. 5 (October 1968): 14.

responsibilities in leading the Southern California Tennis Association, the Southern California Tennis Patron's Association, and the Pacific Southwest Tournament—all of which he ran out of his office at the Los Angeles Tennis Club. Always fond of Jack Kramer and rightly aware of Kramer's success running profitable professional tennis, Jones asked Kramer to take over the management of the tournament that brought so much money into the coffers of Southern California tennis. Kramer accepted, and Jones died on September 16, 1970, five days before the forty-fourth start of the tournament he had created. In his last tournament Jones still enforced a short-hair requirement of all the male competitors.<sup>58</sup>

Heldman never knew Jones, but Billie Jean King did, and she did not shed a tear when he passed. As a junior player she fulminated at Jones's paternalistic approach to developing players even though she directly benefited from his tutelage, organization, and the funds his Pacific Southwest Tournament funneled to the Southern California Tennis Association's top young talent. For example, after an afternoon of training at the Los Angeles Tennis Club, Jones gathered the players together for a photograph but kept King out of the picture because she could not afford to wear the white tennis dress he insisted the lady players don. King saw classism mix with sexism during Jones's reign at the Los Angeles Tennis Club, noting that Pancho Gonzales, Jack Kramer, and other top professionals in the world who trained at the Los Angeles Tennis Club when they were not touring, went out of their way to develop male players such as Dennis Ralston without paying the slightest attention to talented women such as King. The replacement

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<sup>58</sup> Kramer and Deford, *The Game*, 31-32, 79-80, 83-86; "Around the World," *World Tennis* 16, no. 6 (November 1968): 84.

of Jones with Kramer at the Club and as the director of the Pacific Southwest simply traded one chauvinist for another in the mind of King and her fellow women players.<sup>59</sup>

Kramer confirmed their view when he set the tournament's purses at \$12,500 for the men's singles champion compared to \$1,500 for the women's singles winner. Those figures insulted the women and hurt the "business" of their "careers," in King's words. No stranger to sexism in the commercial world, Heldman agreed with the women professionals' misgivings. She put her resources to work for them. Through her *World Tennis* company, she offered the so-called "Original Nine" \$1 contracts to compete in an event outside the sanction of the USLTA to be played in Houston where Heldman had recently moved her company's offices. Previously players like King and Rosemary Casals played matches as contract professionals under George MacCall, only to have their registered player status restored by the USLTA that allowed for them to enter Association-sanctioned tournaments. Initially they expected the same treatment because Jack Kramer told them he did not intend to make a fuss over their withdrawals from the Pacific Southwest Tournament. Heldman and the players then received notice that because of opposition raised by the Southern California Tennis Association (in which Jack Kramer held a leadership position), the USLTA decided not to sanction the Houston tournament, meaning that any player who went ahead and played that event would very likely lose a chance to play in any future tournament—including the U.S. Open—under the auspices of the Association. Eight players—Peaches Bartkowiz, Rosemary Casals, Judy Tegart Dalton, Billie Jean King, Kerry Melville, Kristy Pigeon, Nancy Richey, and Valerie Zeigenfuss—decided to defy that ruling and play the

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<sup>59</sup> Billie Jean King, *Billie Jean* (New York: Viking Press, 1982), 43-44, 58; Robert Lipsyte, "Little Myth America," *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 28, 1975, p. Q36; "Around the World," *World Tennis* 16, no. 1 (June, 1968): 78.



Houston event. Heldman called on friend and fellow tennis fan Joseph Cullman III, Chairman of the Board of Phillip Morris, to furnish part of the \$5,000 purse for the players. On Wednesday, September 23, 1970, eight women took to the courts of the Houston Racquet Club to, in the words of one participant, play “professional tennis.” “This is not a women’s liberation movement,” said Billie Jean King at the time.<sup>60</sup> That came later.

The Houston Invitational Tournament proved a smashing success for Phillip Morris, Heldman, and the women professionals. With the example set that a women’s-only field of players could make money and garner media attention, Heldman went to work on Cullman. The two knew each other from their days paired as a mixed doubles team. Later Heldman impressed Cullman with her insights into improving the U.S. Nationals when she used the influence *World Tennis* wielded to help secure the post of U.S. Open chairmanship for Cullman. As a business pair they quickly realized the business opportunity lurking in their partnership. Heldman could advance the cause of women’s tennis while Cullman found a marketing niche for Morris’s women’s line of cigarettes. While roughly a hundred women made a living as tennis professionals, Morris targeted the upswing in public interest for tennis during the late seventies and early eighties. The new women’s tennis tour fit like a glove with the tobacco company’s larger marketing campaign that championed the recent achievements in the women’s movement in order to exploit women as consumers. A year after Houston, women tennis professionals played fourteen tournaments on the Virginia Slims Tour. Fourteen years later, Heldman

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<sup>60</sup> Jack Gallagher, “Eight Top Fem Netters Defy USLTA,” *Houston Post*, September 24, 1970, pp. D1-D2. For a further elaboration on the views King held at the time, see Billie Jean King, “A Role for the USLTA,” *World Tennis* 16, no. 8 (January 1969): 58-59.

remarked with great pride that the partnership between women's professional tennis and Virginia Slims amounted to "the most successful sports sponsorship ever."<sup>61</sup>

Philip Morris first launched their Virginia Slims cigarette line in 1968. They pitched the product as "a new category for women smokers." Through an aggressive advertising campaign in "national weeklies, women's magazines and general interest publications," through targeting young women for free packs, and through broad-based public opinion polling that asked respondents their opinion about "women's role in society," Morris made their Virginia Slims brand into the cigarette most popular with women. Society wanted women slim, and women wanted to think of themselves as trim. Part of this larger marketing strategy to equate their cigarettes with the desires women held for their own bodies helped Morris to see the need for celebrity endorsements of their product. As athletes, women tennis players fit especially well with Morris's plan because of both the glamour of their sport and the high international profile they maintained when compared to other female athletes. The very bodies of these athletes matched Morris's actual product, and it was their slim bodies when compared with those of other female athletes that made women tennis players popular with women (who wanted to be them) and men (who wanted to be with them) alike. When a new line of Super Slims cigarettes debuting in the late 1980s, the already strong link between the athletic female tennis body and the skinny cigarette was further reinforced. That was a win-win from big tobacco's perspective.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Gladys Heldman to George Weissman, February 7, 1974, no folder, Box 8, Gladys Heldman Papers, Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

<sup>62</sup> Virginia Slims History, Folder [no number], Box 22874, Phillip Morris Records, Truth Tobacco Industry Documents, University of California San Francisco Library; Superslims Fact Sheet, Folder [no number], Box 2264, Phillip Morris Records, Truth Tobacco Industry Documents, University of California San Francisco Library.

Tennis as a sport had always rewarded players with youthful proportions. The total athleticism that top-level tennis required seldom made for athletes whose bodies overdeveloped in a specific way. That legacy notwithstanding, champions such as Tracy Austin, Chrissie Evert, and Steffi Graf represented a trend toward younger, leaner, and sexier women players after 1960. Contrary to her more matriarchal and proto-feminist portrayal in the sports media and by historians, Billy Jean King, the mover and shaker in women's professional sports, endorsed this more overt sexualization of young female athletes. King's position first and foremost as a businesswoman, at least in the view of International Management Group founder and her agent Mark McCormack, meant that the major influencer in women's professional sports might not have liked playing into corporate sponsors' demands for sex to sell; however, she also recognized the reality that that approach made for a successful women's tennis tour and for her own pocketbook.<sup>63</sup>

Billie Jean King was the player and promoter who did more to bring about women's professional tennis than anyone else. Her book, *We Have Come a Long Way: The Story of Women's Tennis*, is the standard account packed with details about women in the sport. King's memory, however, slips on several of the key points involving the creation of professional women's sports. Most notably, she does not mention International Management Group, ProServ, Mark McCormack, Donald Dell, or any of the other sports agents who generated so many contract dollars for women professional tennis players—no player more than King herself. King

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<sup>63</sup> Fact Sheet, Billie Jean King 1970 Client Folder, Box M3162 (0190), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts Amherst; Contract Summary for Billie Jean King, June, 1980, Client K Folder, Box M3162 (0190), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

correctly identifies 1970 to 1973 as the key stretch in all of women's tennis. She rightly praises her fellow players and Gladys Heldman as the individuals who did the most to make the women's tour happen, while likewise noting that without Cullman's personal interest in tennis and leadership at Phillip Morris, the Virginia Slims Tour could not have happened. Likewise, while King did not care much for Jack Kramer personally, she does give him some credit for pioneering the circuit format and player self-government that would matter a great deal in open tennis for both men and women. And King, of course, recognizes the signal importance of her Battle of the Sexes showdown with Bobby Riggs—though she's a little harsher here on Bobby than she was otherwise, especially given that sexist showmanship aside, Riggs did understand that a spectacle would help grow women's tennis rather than stymie it.<sup>64</sup>

The glaring weakness of *We Have Come A Long Way* is not omission of key people, fact, or slightly biased interpretation. Rather, King ignores the larger reason why women's tennis succeeded in the public's eye—sex appeal. In nearly two hundred pages, sexuality is never discussed. Private records and other sources reveal the women players knew how important sex appeal was to the financial stability of their tour. Since Victorian times, through Suzanne Lenglen, the barnstorming tours of the 1950s, and into the Open Era, sex always sold women's tennis to the masses. In the 1970s and 1980s the professionalization of the sport made that sexualization more explicit as the game's popularity grew.

In a video she made for the Women's Tennis Association titled "You'll Go a Long Way Baby," King narrated the evolution of women's tennis from the amateur days of earning a dinky

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<sup>64</sup> Billie Jean King, *We Have Come a Long Way: The Story of Women's Tennis* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1988), 120-46.

trophy and “beautiful bus pass” with a sarcastic tone and trophy and pass in hand. The viewer then travels full speed ahead to the final stop of \$14 million in prize money offered by Virginia Slims in 1987. King attributed this success less to Morris and more to players who are “cute” with “great legs.” Moreover, she reminds her player colleagues just how important putting on makeup and jewelry, and sexing-up their outfits are to their careers and their sisterhood as touring professionals. Herself a U.S. Open semi-finalist at the age of sixteen, Chris Evert Lloyd agreed that beauty beat brawns. “Most of the women tennis players are very attractive, and I think people are coming out to see that too,” said Evert in support of King’s advice to the new members of the Women’s Tennis Association.<sup>65</sup>

For the players the reality of a higher public profile came with the commercial stability of a tournament schedule that spanned the globe and lasted the entire year. Since her days playing the Riviera, Frenchwoman Suzanne Lenglen had titillated spectators when her breasts came out on court during her athletic movements. Fifty years later, Billie Jean King did not discourage much the same *faux pas* when she told a sports reporter, “if you’re well endowed, show it.” The difference five decades made was that while both Lenglen and the professional players of the 1970s played in front of a packed Madison Square Garden crowd, the apparatus of the Virginia Slims World Championship Tour and its successor in the Women’s Tennis Association meant that professionals in the 1970s played in those tournaments year after year rather than for only a single night. That happened because players like Billie Jean King smoked Virginia Slims.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> “You’ll Go a Long Way Baby” *WTA Promotional Video*, produced in partnership with Virginia Slims Championship, 1987, [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org) portal for Tobacco Industry Archives, UCSF (accessed May 16, 2016).

<sup>66</sup> Alison Muscatine, “Tennis Dress, Anyone?” *The Washington Post*, September 5, 1989, p. C01; Will Gimsley, “The Neckline that Plunged Too Far,” *Daytona Beach Morning Journal*, June 27, 1979, p. 2C; “A New Dimension

Heldman, by contrast, felt sensitive when people questioned her alliance with the tobacco industry. Virginia Slims initially put up under \$50,000 per tournament in prize money for the first year or two of their sponsorship of professional women's tennis. By 1972 the women professionals played one tournament for \$100,000 in prize money, and a year later the Tour added a second \$100,000 event. After a decade the \$250,000 in prize money per tournament became the norm for Virginia Slims to continue with naming rights for the Women's Professional Tour, and Heldman said she would have preferred they up that to \$350,000 or even \$1,000,000 per tournament. She likewise went after any company who would support women athletics with money. Cosmetics brands, liquor brands, and even Caesar's Palace Casino in Las Vegas contributed sizeable sponsorships to create the Virginia Slims Tour's prize pool. The companies thought their investments bought them good publicity with consumers, especially women consumers, who watched professional tennis in big numbers. Heldman's conviction remained steadfast in bringing women's professional tennis—and women professionals across all industries for that matter—equality with the pay standard men enjoyed. In that she made real initial progress precisely because she did not let criticism dissuade her, admitting she would take money from the National Rifle Association, asbestos producers such as Johns Manville, and even pro-life groups if they wanted to sponsor women's professional athletics. Openness to strange bedfellows delivered the greatest pay equity in professional sports after only two and a half years

of the Virginia Slims Tour. In fact, by 1973 women professionals had the two \$100,000 tournaments on their calendar; the best event their male peers played for offered only \$50,000.<sup>67</sup>

A typical Virginia Slims Tournament was played in Philadelphia in 1973 with thirty-six ladies in the draw competing for \$50,000 in prize money. After two rounds of preliminaries that paid \$270 and \$450 respectively, half of the players remained, each of whom earned at least \$720 for making the second round of the tournament. From there the pay increased exponentially, with the quarter-finals paying \$1,530, the semi-finals \$3,000, \$6,300 for the runner-up, and \$10,800 for the champion. Doubles featured a handful of other players in addition to the singles players, with considerably less prize money paid at only \$900 for the winners. Such pay disparity between singles and doubles was a pattern set during the pre-Open Era professional tournaments by promoters such as Jack March, and that prize money disparity continued during the first decade of open competition. The greater emphasis on singles rather than doubles explains why so many of the top players forgo doubles at tournaments today. Having said that, the structure of the women's professional tour varied somewhat from earlier professional tournaments and the contemporary men's tour in that early round losers in Virginia Slims events earned a comparatively higher dollar amount than a male player who lost in the first round of their tour event. Well-run tournaments on the women's side such as the Philadelphia Tournament also featured a back-draw that allowed first-round losers to compete for additional prize money in a consolation bracket. Players on the women's tour competed every bit as hard as the players on the men's tour, but after years of limited pay compared to their male peers,

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<sup>67</sup> Gladys Heldman, "Cigarettes and Tennis," typescript, n.d., Copyright Folder, Box 27, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

women professionals and the woman who promoted their tour felt an obligation to give one another at least a livable wage.<sup>68</sup>

Along with moderate equity in prize money, another way Heldman structured the Virginia Slims Circuit differently than the men's professional tour was in levying a 5 to 10 percent assessment on money that entered the women's professional tour. Those assessments took the form of a 10 percent withdraw of the tournament purse for Women's Professional Tennis expenses—\$4,920 in the case of the \$50,000 Philadelphia Tournament—and in a 5 percent assessment on Women's International Tennis Federation (WITF) members' earnings from tournament purses, endorsements, and appearance fees. WITF financial records show difficulty in collecting endorsement and appearance fees from the individual incomes players earned as celebrity athletes on their own time, but Heldman managed to get around \$20,000 for the prize monies that she pooled in a surplus account for distribution during tight times on the tournament calendar. Heldman and her husband frequently personally fronted cash for everything from car rentals to telephone calls, to larger expenses such as prize money advances. More than enough deposits came in to keep the Heldmans in their home, but the novelty of running a women's professional tour meant the WITF boss had to accept frequent cash shortages. Ingratitude from former professional players and from friends who knew her best, wrote Heldman after she retired from managing the professionals, was what saddened her the most during her many years involved in tennis. Different than the pre-Open Era barnstorming tours when the promoter Jack Kramer far outpaced his players in terms of personal income,

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<sup>68</sup> Philadelphia -- \$50,000.00 W.I.T.F. financial statements, Folder [no number], Box 22, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.



Heldman's bank balance from her work as tour director tended to sit closer to \$10,000 compared to the six-figure mark Kramer earned.<sup>69</sup>

Women's International Tennis Federation financial records for the 1972 to 1973 financial year reported 750 members who supported women's professional tennis by paying dues. That remarkably high figure for an organization founded just two years earlier by Heldman and nine women professional players owed both to the resonance of Heldman's personal appeal to friends she cultivated over the years who wanted to see tennis grow and to the low dues the WITF collected. Membership came in two varieties: full, which required dues of \$5; and associate, which required dues of \$1. Heldman welcomed men to join as associate members, and many did, including the highest profile professional players such as Rod Laver; however, with the exception of her husband Julius, she tried to keep full memberships to women so that her organization never lost track of its principal mission to promote the visibility and viability of

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<sup>69</sup> WPT Income statement, Women's Pro Tour Income 1972-1973 folder [no number], Box 22, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Philadelphia -- \$50,000.00 W.I.T.F. financial statements, Folder [no number], Box 22, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Women's International Tennis Federation Cash Basis statement, Women's International Tennis Federation Financials Folder [no number], Box 22, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Kathleen Kemper to Gladys Heldman, no date, WPT Receipts – 1973 folder [no number], Box 22, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; World Tennis/Women's International Tennis Federation Expenses Incurred by Julius D. Heldman and Not Otherwise Reimbursed, February, 1973, Bank Account – WITF (1973) folder [no number], Box 22, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; April 1973 Disbursements statement, Bank Account – WITF (1973) folder [no number], Box 22, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Sanction for San Francisco and Los Angeles Tournaments \$2,000 deposit slip, Women's Pro Tour Deposits 1971-1973 Folder [no number], Box 22, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Women's Pro – Tour Income Statement – 1972, Women's Pro Tour Deposits 1971-1973 Folder [no number], Box 22, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Gladys Heldman to George Weissman, February 7, 1974, no folder, Box 8, Gladys Heldman Papers, Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Gladys Heldman to George Weissman, February 7, 1974, no folder, Box 8, Gladys Heldman Papers, Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Women's Pro Tour Financials 1/1/73 to 4/25/73 folder [no number], Box 22, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

women's tennis in the Open Era. The low dues policy, that collected only about \$1,000 per financial year, also meant that a dozen or so key members in the WITF's formative years would shoulder a far greater financial burden than the hundreds on the rolls. The WITF's role as the prime manager of the women's professional tennis tour meant that the most established players fronted cash to Heldman in the form of prize money splits and percentages of their endorsements. Heldman then disbursed what they literally called a "Slush Fund" to aspiring women professionals in need. In the first full season of the women's pro tour, Heldman paid advances to and travel expenses for more than a dozen non-topflight professionals to encourage more robust draws in Virginia Slims events.<sup>70</sup>

Women professionals certainly competed against one another as fiercely as did the men, but in the early years of the WITF, women professionals showed greater solidarity than their male peers. With agents such as McCormack and Dell encouraging their clients to think more and more about money, male stars began to skip tournaments for exhibition matches that guaranteed a high payout simply for showing up. Whether or not the fix was in on those matches remains uncertain, but spectators who attended certainly considered the quality of play at those matches and the effort of the top stars below what they gave in tournaments. Heldman decried the "appearance money that the top men pros and their agents demand and get" as the "worst offense" in the sport. The amounts tournaments paid ranged from \$50,000 to \$300,000 to ensure

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<sup>70</sup> Women's International Tennis Federation Cash Basis statement, Women's International Tennis Federation Financials Folder [no number], Box 22, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Slush Fund memo, undated, Travel & Entertainment, WPT Receipts – 1973 folder [no number], Box 22, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Expenses Paid by WPT typed list beginning April 6, 1971, WPT Receipts – 1973 folder [no number], Box 22, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

the cooperation of the game's best. World Championship Tennis took that a step further by operating a "Bonus Pool" that compensated male professionals with "race horses, diamonds, an oil well, stocks or \$25,000 in cash." Women professionals may not have liked the gimmicks of their male peers, but the WCT never posed a major threat to women's professional tennis. In fact, Virginia Slims tournaments earned better television ratings than most WCT tournaments. Virginia Slims Tour financials compared favorably to Lamar Hunt's WCT and the International Tennis Federation's Grand Prix.<sup>71</sup>

The success of women's tennis infuriated the men who ran the USLTA. They wanted the women professionals back under their control. In 1971 USLTA President Robert Colwell went after the eight women professionals who had withdrawn from the 1970 Pacific Southwest Tournament to play the Houston Racquet Club matches. The USLTA sought to restrict their activities because their ongoing privately funded tournaments kept the Association from collecting the 6 percent sanction fee. Heldman outflanked Colwell by convincing Cullman to pull Phillip Morris advertising dollars from the United States Open if the Association penalized the women professionals. The USLTA quickly removed "experimental" restrictions on the women professionals for the upcoming 1972 season, but that resolved little. Heldman wanted the most

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<sup>71</sup> Gladys Heldman, "Stay Away from Exhibitions," typescript, undated, no Folder, Box 25, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Gladys Heldman, untitled and undated typescript that begins with "The Best pro Event for the...", typescript, undated, no Folder, Box 25, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Mary Prusko, "Gladys Heldman and Slims," *New York News World*, March 24, 1977, pp. B10-11; Virginia Slims Tour Balance Sheets, Women's Pro Tour Financials, 1971-1973, Women's International Tennis Federation Financials Folder [no number], Box 22, Gladys Heldman Papers, Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Women's International Tennis Federation Cash Basis statement, Women's International Tennis Federation Financials Folder [no number], Box 22, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

money for her players while the USLTA wanted the most money for itself. Either paying or avoiding sanction fees meant more for one at the expense of the other. Litigation loomed.<sup>72</sup>

Heldman's position as the head of the tour made her the prime target. She personally put up the initial \$1,000 to incorporate what became the Women's International Tennis Federation and the Women's Pro Tour. The USLTA did not forget or forgive that investment because the Association respected Heldman's knowledge of the game and her ability to make professional tennis profitable. In fact, after the 1970 Houston Tournament the USLTA continued to pay Heldman what amounted to a consulting fee for her guidance when it came to women's tennis. Heldman's interactions with the Association's leadership convinced her that the USLTA did not intend to promote women's professional tennis as vigorously as men's professional tennis. She found her suspicions confirmed when the USLTA ignored her counsel for prize money parity and continued to keep women off the Executive Committee that decided most Association policy.

In 1972 she severed her ties with the USLTA in order to remove any conflicts of interest in making the Virginia Slims Tour totally independent of the Association's influence. At first the USLTA did not seem to mind Heldman's decision to go it alone because the men who ran the Associations did not believe in the popularity of women's sports as Phillip Morris did. They did

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<sup>72</sup> Robert Colwell to Gladys Heldman, December 28, 1971, in Legal – Gladys Heldman, 1973 Folder [no number], Box 2, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Robert Colwell, "Statement Issued to Press," September 8, 1971, in Legal – Gladys Heldman, 1973 Folder [no number], Box 2, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Robert Colwell to Gladys Heldman, December 17, 1971, in Legal – Gladys Heldman, 1973 Folder [no number], Box 2, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; UPI Teletype, "The President Elect of the United States Lawn Tennis..." no date, Articles Folder, Box 1, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

not care about women's professional tennis; they just wanted Heldman and her big-tobacco backers to pay the 6 percent sanction fee. She refused, and the Association sued.<sup>73</sup>

Heldman's plans for the 1973 Virginia Slims Tour required her to shed other responsibilities along with her USLTA work. In 1972 she sold *World Tennis* to CBS in order to focus more of her energy on managing the women's professional tour. She made money in the sale and remained a contributor to the magazine, but without ownership of *World Tennis* Heldman no longer had the public forum or the same access to business capital she leveraged so effectively in getting the Virginia Slims Tour off the ground. With between eighteen and twenty-two tournaments and at least \$500,000 in prize money posted for the start of the 1973 tour, she appeared in a U.S. District Court defending herself against the men who ran the game.<sup>74</sup>

The case came down to the legality of how Heldman had started the women's professional tour. Heldman maintained that she offered the women players professional contracts because the USLTA planned to suspend them for playing at the Houston Racquet Club instead of at the Los Angeles Tennis Club. The court disagreed, maintaining the USLTA never explicitly issued the "threat of suspension" to the players. That distinction justified the Court's ruling that Heldman wrongly manipulated the women professional players in claiming that the USLTA would have suspended them if they played in a non-USLTA-sanctioned event. In reaching the

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<sup>73</sup> William C. Perry to Frederick Leydig, December 5, 1972, WPT Receipts – 1973 folder [no number], Box 22, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Stanley Malless to Gladys Heldman, September 26, 1972, Articles Folder, Box 1, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; *Gladys M. Heldman and Billie Jean King v. United States Lawn Tennis Association* 73. Civ 162, Opinion, for the United States District Court Southern District of New York, opinion issued February 7, 1973, in Legal – Gladys Heldman, 1973 Folder [no number], Box 2, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

<sup>74</sup> Gladys Heldman, "Wimbledon Revisited," typescript, Receipts 1978 Folder [no number], Box [no number, unprocessed] Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

conclusion that Heldman offered “naught but imperfect shadows of self-interested conjecture,” the Court ignored the USLTA’s six decades of suspending players for the smallest of infractions, a history that almost certainly would have resulted in the vindication of Heldman’s claims to player suspensions, especially given the growing popularity and growing dollars entering women’s professional tennis. In a letter dated December 16, 1971, from USLTA President Robert Colwell to “The Top U.S. Women Players” that specifically threatened potential ineligibility for “Wimbledon, Forest Hills, Federation Cup and Wightman Cup competitions” should the USLTA not secure sanction fees from the women’s tour professional tournaments, the Court’s reasoning in refusing to grant a preliminary injunction revealed a fear of gender equality that outweighed the evidence of the case. Incredulity directed at Heldman appeared throughout the opinion with the Court seemingly having no qualms that the professional tournaments the USLTA planned to sponsor offered less prize money to the women professionals than what Heldman had secured for the players.<sup>75</sup>

Heldman and her codefendant King failed in their petition to secure a preliminary injunction against the USLTA’s plans to prohibit Virginia Slims professionals from competing in Association-sanctioned tournaments. The pair discussed the loss with the players. All of them expressed gratitude for all that Heldman had done for women’s tennis while some asked Heldman to release them from their contracts on the Virginia Slims Circuit in order to play USLTA and ILTF-sanctioned tournaments. Heldman decided that women’s professional tennis

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<sup>75</sup> *Gladys M. Heldman and Billie Jean King v. United States Lawn Tennis Association* 73. Civ 162, Opinion, [pp. 18-21, 28 of the Opinion], for the United States District Court Southern District of New York, opinion issued February 7, 1973, in Legal – Gladys Heldman, 1973 Folder [no number], Box 2, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

stood the best chance of growing if she stepped away from managing what she had started. Her resignation as director of the Virginia Slims Circuit appeased the USLTA to the degree that they decided not to ban women professionals from participating in sanctioned tournaments. Women's professional tennis would go on to flourish but without the real founder of that movement and without the acknowledgement in later years of the impact Heldman had on the sport by the athletes whose very careers she had sacrificed so much to make.<sup>76</sup>

At the same time women's professional tennis suffered another set-back. On May 13, 1973, the San Diego Country Estates in Ramona, California, played host to an exhibition match between Bobby Riggs and Margaret Court. The Estates developers believed the spectacle could help sell prospective units. In that they got more than they bargained for as limousine after limousine brought the most prominent entertainers and celebrities from throughout California up an unfinished road, past the unfinished golf course, and to the one finished tennis court for the match. Star running back for the Buffalo Bills O.J. Simpson attended and predicted the number-one woman in the world Court would clean up the crusty old Californian Riggs. Bill Cosby likewise predicted a Court victory, as did Court's colleagues on the women's tour like Rosemary Casals, who remarked on camera that "Bobby Riggs is living on his past...and I'd be surprised if he wouldn't have a coronary right there." When asked the straightforward question, "Do you

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<sup>76</sup> Patty Reese to Gladys Heldman, January 5, 1973, Articles Folder, Box 1, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Patty Anne Reese Contract, signed August 8, 1972, Articles Folder, Box 1, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; USLTA and Virginia Slims Circuits to Combine This Year, Press Release, June 19, 1973, in Legal – Gladys Heldman, 1973 Folder [no number], Box 2, Baker Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island; Shari Barnam to Gladys Heldman, March 28, 1989, no Folder, Box 7, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Billie Jean King to Gladys Heldman, March 17, 1989, no Folder, Box 7, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Shari Barnam to Gladys Heldman, April 10, 1989, no Folder, Box 7, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

have anything nice to say about Bobby Riggs at this point?” by broadcaster Brent Musburger, Women’s Tennis Tour promoter Gladys Heldman answered equally straightforwardly, “No, not really.” Male former professional players disagreed with Bill Talbert and Pancho Segura, who both predicted a Riggs win. After the first set a Riggs victory seemed more and more likely with him “soft balling Margaret to death,” in Segura’s analysis. Riggs completed the so-called “Mother’s Day Massacre” with a straight-set win over the best woman professional in the world.<sup>77</sup> All seemed lost until Billie Jean King won the most talked about match in tennis history.

Contemporary viewers, commentators, and even historians have all pointed to the significance of Billie Jean King’s 1973 win over Riggs in the “Battle of the Sexes” while at the same time largely missing the tennis business context of that famous match.<sup>78</sup> The Riggs versus King showdown was long on sideshow and short on the day-to-day substance of what women tennis professionals had recently achieved. In getting to play for big audiences, the players on the Virginia Slims Tour also benefited from the deep social and cultural legacies that had long considered tennis a sport fit for women athletes. That history meant that women professionals after 1968 found the financial backing and media contracts for a robust tennis tour of their own that, while not equaling the men’s tour in terms of resources, revenue, and returns on the players’ labor, nonetheless rivaled the men’s tour. Women’s professional tennis far outpaced the

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<sup>77</sup>Curry Kirkpatrick, “Mother’s Day Ms. Match,” *Sports Illustrated*, May 21, 1973, pp. 35-37; Richard Muscio [uploader], “Mother’s Day Massacre: Margaret Court vs. Bobby Riggs,” YouTube video, uploaded November 19, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1Ueec50rVw> (accessed March 2, 2017) .

<sup>78</sup> On the standard views, see Selena Roberts, *A Necessary Spectacle: Billie Jean King, Bobby Riggs, and the Tennis Match that Leveled the Game* (New York: Crown, 2005).



professional opportunities for women in other sports, only recently opened to them with the passage of Title IX in the Education Amendments of 1972.<sup>79</sup>

Less recognized is that women tennis players were the only female athletes the major entertainment agencies agreed to represent. That representation reached a turning point in 1983 when the U.S. Women's International Tennis Association (WITA) officially embraced the sexualization of their athletes hitherto commonly practiced but not publicly stated by the player unions. ProServ's success with making Elizabeth Sayers, a tennis champion unknown outside of her home country of Australia, into a global sex symbol prompted that change. Through a "complete beauty makeover" and photoshoot, Sayers saw her exhibition and corporate event income climb from virtually nothing to more than a quarter of a million dollars in just a few months irrespective of any success she enjoyed in competitive tournaments. The WITA noticed the upswing in both Sayers's exposure and more importantly her income, and they worked to replicate that success in many of the other players the union represented. In moving to sex over shots, the WITA did not have much of a choice if they wanted to continue to represent the financial best interests of their player members.<sup>80</sup>

The excitement over women's athletics that came a decade earlier when Billie Jean King beat Bobby Riggs in the Battle of the Sexes helped the fledgling Virginia Slims Circuit expand in the mid-1970s, but by the early 1980s women's tennis needed a new injection of excitement because the expansion of and quality of play on the men's tour had prompted the majority of

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<sup>79</sup> Donald J. Mrozek, "The Military, Sport, and Warrior Culture," in Mark C. Carnes, ed., *The Columbia History of Post-World War II America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 140; Susan Ware, *Game, Set, Match*, 8-14.

<sup>80</sup> Donald Dell, *Minding Other People's Business*, 129-30.

spectators to prefer the faster tennis present at World Championship Tennis and International Grand Prix events. Youth, smooth athletic movements, and beauty became the attributes players now needed—at least more than ever before—to strive for on the court. And off the court, the WITA issued a year-end calendar that displayed the athletes looking their best. Agents, like the Association leaders, also tried to push their player clients to a new level of sexiness because an attractive athlete was easier to sell to advertisers, who themselves believed that sex sold. As the former player-turned-agent Donald Dell remarked about Virginia Slims and WITA players, they were “a pleasure to watch for more reasons than the quality of their tennis.”<sup>81</sup>

The increased visibility in the public’s eye that televised tours gave female players meant that those women could expect to negotiate bigger and better endorsements and licensing contracts with companies. More than their male counterparts on tour, however, women players had to make sure they looked their best each and every time they stepped out onto the court. Agents such as Mark McCormack and Donald Dell noted that a handsome player like Eliot Tetscher stood to benefit in terms of marketability from his good looks. Furthermore, agents told male clients like Jimmy Connors, John McEnroe, or Brad Gilbert that their on-court misbehavior cost them corporate sponsorships, as companies did not like risking a marketing campaign on an athlete known for erratic behavior in the spotlight. But those same agents never told a male player that he needed to change something about his body in order to improve his marketability;

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

the male player's body that produced his on-court performance belonged to the player and, perhaps, his coach.<sup>82</sup>

By contrast, sports agents regularly told women players to shape-up their bodies. The reasons for that double standard were two-fold: first, sports agents knew that when it came to marketing a woman player, companies and sponsors valued attractiveness more than victory. Second, despite not earning a living competing on the court, male sports agents still felt they knew more about sports than the women who actually got paid to play each and every day. In confronting one of his women player clients over her recent weight gain, Dell asked, "How are you going to be a top ten player when you are fifteen pounds overweight?" In that rhetorical question, the agent meant that any change in her appearance that detracted from her on-court sex appeal could cost her even more money with sponsors than a drop in the rankings and subsequent drop in tournament prize money might cost her. "Name one player in the top ten who's even three pounds overweight," asked Dell. With that demand, he drove the point home.<sup>83</sup>

### Tennis and Transition

Looks mattered, but so did a good story in the sport of tennis. For much of tennis history, spectators wanted the underdog to take on the establishment. Since Suzanne Lenglen made the first international professional tour in 1926, anyone who made money in the game before 1968 was treated as a pariah or traitor by the men of the amateur associations who ran the game.

Women, people from the working classes, migrants, ethnic and racial minorities, people from all walks of life became professional tennis players if they had the talent. With the transition of Dr.

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 74-76, 79.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

Richard Raskind to Dr. Renée Richards, professional tennis crossed one final barrier—that of sex itself.

From childhood, tennis, gender identity, and sexuality intermingled. Raskind spent many hours on the courts where the adolescent practiced strokes and found a first girlfriend in a fellow player. Brief and awkward intimate encounters with both a female sibling and a female summer camper contributed to a great deal of gender confusion by the time Raskind turned sixteen. By then one of the only times the teenager felt comfortable was playing tennis, where Raskind's athletic six foot and one inch gave a decisive advantage over the many friends he met through the game. But youth tennis also gave Raskind the opportunity to think about transitioning when, after having played an amateur tournament on the U.S. Military Academy's West Point courts, Raskind found his way to the local bookshop and noticed a copy of Lili Elbe's posthumously published memoir *Man Into Woman*. Raskind bought the book and fled to a hotel bathroom, where he read all about the Danish artist Einar Wegener's transsexual awakening and the first attempt at sexual reassignment surgery. In 1951 Raskind brought this expanded horizon with him to Yale. Freshman year in New Haven challenged Raskind, who felt disoriented save for his amateur tennis career. Regular practice trips to New York to play on the indoor courts of the city also gave Raskind the opportunity to visit Greenwich Village, where the teenager frequented a "transvestite revue" at Club 82. While Raskind had gone out before as Renée, the personal freedom college provided catalyzed that transition. Under the pretense of practicing tennis at

Forest Hills, Raskind left for Manhattan to audition for the Satin Slipper Revue. At the home of the revue's owner, Renée had her first complete sexual encounter.<sup>84</sup>

At the same time, Christine Jorgenson returned to New York City having undergone sexual reassignment surgery in Denmark. Newspaper publicity surrounding Jorgenson's transition catalyzed city and nation-wide conversations about transsexuality. The grace with which Jorgenson embraced her newfound visibility encouraged Raskind to consider his own identity. Over time his story would come to rival Jorgenson's in influencing public discussions about transgender people.<sup>85</sup>

That experience, combined with collegiate tennis triumphs, complicated Raskind's sexual identity. As the top player in a sport very popular on his Ivy League campus, Raskind felt obligated to maintain a heterosexual relationship. At the same time, he attended therapy with a psychiatrist to discuss his sexuality and future plans to play tennis professionally. Toward the end of his time at Yale, he traveled to England and Paris to compete in the Prentice Cup, where he solicited prostitutes with "success." After Europe Raskind began medical school in Rochester, New York, and there Renée reappeared. Tennis touring momentarily suppressed her because on trips to cities such as Miami and Havana, Raskind spent evenings with prostitutes. Sex in committed relationships did not happen for Raskind, and that frustration renewed his need for therapy. Once again a busy schedule, this time as a resident at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City along with his amateur tennis career, left Raskind with little time for Renée. That changed

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<sup>84</sup> Renée Richards, *Second Serve: The Renée Richards Story* (New York: Stein and Day, 1983), 36-42, 54-55, 61-65, 67, 69-73.

<sup>85</sup> Joanne Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 51-97, 277-8.

with the death of Raskind's mother. He mutilated his genitals, cross-dressed more frequently, and encouraged his pregnant girlfriend to have an abortion so that they could avoid marrying. The end of that relationship effectively meant the beginning of Raskind's life as Renée.<sup>86</sup>

Raskind underwent hormonal therapy while also serving in the United States Navy. That treatment ended without Raskind's consent, and incompleteness spurred him to drive across the country stopping in small towns as Renée before returning to New York City to direct the residency program at Manhattan Eye and Ear Hospital. Dr. Dick Raskind excelled as an eye surgeon and as a teacher of eye surgeons, but the surgery the physician wanted for himself had to be completed outside the United States. Raskind left his New York life behind, traveled to Europe, and then on to Casablanca, Morocco, intending to undergo sexual reassignment surgery. As a physician, however, he decided against the procedure there and returned to New York to resume his medical career in Manhattan, where he married and had a son. At the same time, he continued to compete at the highest level of amateur tennis making the quarter-finals and the finals at the U.S. National Championship. Family life did little to solve Raskind's complicated gender identity, however, and he separated from his wife. He also resumed his hormone treatments, dressed as Renée every night, and finally underwent the surgery, this time in America. In 1975 at Physician's Hospital in Queens Dr. Roberto Granato performed what paperwork called a "sex change" to give Richard Raskind the anatomy of Renée Richards. Dr. Richards continued as Dr. Raskind in the medical profession, but over the following months and years Raskind changed all identifying and legal documents to Renée Richards. The paperwork

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<sup>86</sup> Richards, *Second Serve*, 78, 82, 84, 89, 91, 96-97, 101, 103, 106, 110-12, 114, 117, 127, 130, 133, 135, 139, 144.

included changing USLTA tournament registrations from the men's draw to the women's draw, and that change was what made Renée Richards famous.<sup>87</sup>

Most of the women tennis players did not support Richards's right to compete in their tournaments and on their tour. They felt uncomfortable competing against a big and strong player many knew from the men's amateur tennis circuit. Of greater concern to women's professionals was their belief that Richards's presence undermined their own tacit willingness to sexualize their sport in order to appeal to male viewers. They thought Richards a sideshow. Gladys Heldman disagreed and wrote in defense of Richards because she was undergoing similar mistreatment at the hands of the women professionals on whose behalf she worked tirelessly.<sup>88</sup>

Forced out of the tour she founded, Heldman still worked long hours to grow women's tennis and to champion women in the workplace. That her ouster from Virginia Slims came, at least in part, by the established players meant Heldman felt even closer to outsiders than ever before. She pushed Women's 35 Professional Tennis events despite the reluctance of sponsors to pay dollars for what they considered senior tennis. She established the Avon Futures Tour that developed players for the Women's Tennis Association (WTA)—the union of topflight women's tennis professionals founded in 1973 by Billie Jean King after Heldman's departure. The partnership between the beauty products company and women's professional tennis proved so successful that the WTA agreed to Avon replacing Virginia Slims as the premiere players' tour sponsor in 1979 until Virginia Slims renewed their primary sponsorship four years later. That

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 165, 173, 178, 181, 199-201, 203, 211-14, 234, 246, 253, 256-7, 264, 268, 270, 273, 277, 280-1, 289-90, 293.

<sup>88</sup> Gladys Heldman, "Renee Richards," typescript, undated, Articles to CBS 1976 Folder, Box 19, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.

success dovetailed Heldman's new efforts to help talented women secure management positions at major firms. All the while Heldman continued to write about tennis as a guest editorialist for CBS-owned *World Tennis* and in a variety of other publications.<sup>89</sup>

Women's Tennis Association members planned to boycott the 1976 Hawaiian Tournament on their schedule because of Richards's intention to participate, until Heldman stated her intention to play the tournament herself, along with her tennis group from Houston, in solidarity with Richards. The women professionals relented and decided to play alongside Richards. Heldman lost money, though, for her support of Richards. After her \$2.25 million sale of *World Tennis* to CBS in 1972 and her withdrawal from the day-to-day management of the Virginia Slims Tour in 1973, Heldman founded and ran Heldman and Associates, an executive search firm that helped secure women executives upper management or board of director positions for the biggest companies in America. Her willingness to speak out for Richards cost her consultancy at least one corporate client and perhaps more. But for supporting Richards, Heldman voiced no regrets. "Gladys kept silent about Renée Richards, because it might have

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<sup>89</sup> "Proposal for Royal Crown: A Series of Women's 35 Tennis Events," O Correspondence Folder, Box 1, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Gladys Heldman to Charlene Crafton, November 16, 1978, C Correspondence Folder, Box 1, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Gladys Heldman to Herb FitzGibbon, April 7, 1979, F Correspondence Folder, Box 1, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Supplement to the *Savannah News-Press*, "\$25,000 Avon Futures Tennis Championship," March 13-17, 1977, in no folder, Box 8, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; "Gladys Medalie Heldman," *Advantage*, May-June, 1978, p. 7; Ted Tinling to Gladys Heldman, March 26, 1980, no folder, Box 12, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Gladys Heldman to Kay Hutchinson, February 5, 1979, H Correspondence Folder, Box 1, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Anne Hyde to Gladys Heldman, March 23, 1979, H Correspondence Folder, Box 1, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Wendy Overton to Gladys Heldman, February 12, 1979, O Correspondence Folder, Box 1, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas; Ron Bookman to Gladys Heldman, September 26, 1975, Copyright Folder, Box 27, Gladys Heldman Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.



cost her a fee,” Heldman said, that was an outcome she would not accept. Her tombstone could instead list her very real accomplishments: placing women clients on thirty boards of *Fortune 500* companies (a 50 percent increase in the number before Heldman and Associates); building *World Tennis* to a subscriber base of 125,000 at the time of the CBS sale; and shepherding women’s professional tennis through the tumultuous first decade of Open Tennis competition. The fact that a person with such an impressive list of accomplishments recognized the legitimacy of gender transitioning and sexual reassignment surgery of a professional tennis player as an important moment goes a long way in explaining why Heldman herself had such an outsized impact on sports history in the United States. She saw potential where other people did not. She championed causes long kept on the outside. Late in life she even co-wrote a book of tennis instruction with Pancho Segura and Pancho Gonzales. She remained active with various professional tennis projects as well as other causes and avocations. When she had a few quiet minutes to herself at her Houston or Santa Fe homes, she spent them with her cats Virginia and Slim.<sup>90</sup>

Renée Richards became a household name in the United States in the summer of 1977 when she sued the USLTA (by that time the USTA) over their refusal to allow her to enter the women’s draw of the 1977 U.S. Open. The case hinged on how the Association, and by extension professional sports organizations, determined the sex of an athlete. Never in their long history had the USLTA administered a “sex determination test” beyond simply looking at an athlete. On Richards they performed a “sex chromatin test,” the so-called “Barr body test” that

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<sup>90</sup> Patricia Lasher, *Texas Women: Interviews & Images* (Austin: Shoal Creek Publishers, 1980), 63-67; Paula Moore, “Who is Gladys Heldman?,” *Southwest Airlines Magazine*, July, 1980, pp. 61-66.

ruled her genetically more man than woman. The WTA backed the use of the Barr body test, as did various affidavits from professional players who stated they did not want to play against Richards. The history of tennis as a sport in which women had long played dominant roles informed the Supreme Court of New York's decision to rule in Richards's favor. Great tennis players, more than in other professional sports, had never needed the strength men seemed to have when compared to women. Billie Jean King's affidavit that Richards "does not enjoy physical superiority or strength so as to have an advantage over women competitors in the sport of tennis" applied contemporary context to that history. The court noted that King spoke from experience because she had "defeated male tennis professional Bobby Riggs on national television."<sup>91</sup>

Richards retired from professional tennis in 1981 after four seasons of professional tennis. The forty-seven-year-old resumed her medical practice in New York City, where she rose to direct the ophthalmology department at the Manhattan Eye, Ear, and Throat Hospital. At the same time Richards began coaching Martina Navratilova, herself no stranger to ostracism. Communism spurred Navratilova to flee her native Czechoslovakia, and she defected to the West in New York City in 1975 having traveled to the United States to play in the United States Open. During the next half-decade Navratilova established herself as one of the top players on the WTA tour, renowned for her attacking style of play and intense rivalry with Chris Evert. In 1981 the press outed Navratilova and her lover Rita Mae Brown, the author of the classic lesbian Bildungsroman, *Ruby Fruit Jungle*. While Richards and Navratilova always treated each other with courtesy on the professional tour, the shared public vitriol each faced on account of their

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<sup>91</sup> *Richards v. US Tennis Assn*, 93 Misc.23 713 (1977).

sexuality increased the bond between the two that took the form of an athlete and coach arrangement. For the next year Richards traveled with and coached Navratilova to the latter's best season up to that point with singles titles in the Australian Open, the French Open, and Wimbledon. That summer Richards told Navratilova she planned to step away from coaching, and the two parted amicably with Richards returning to practice medicine full-time and Navratilova sitting out the 1982 U.S. Open before resuming her dominance of women's professional tennis. After one of her major finals wins, Navratilova took the microphone and said, "I'd just like to thank one person. I'd like to thank my coach, Renée Richards. Without her, I would never have won."<sup>92</sup>

On the whole women tennis players proved far more successful when compared to their female peers in other professional sports. That trend continues to this day, where half of the top ten highest-paid professional tennis players are women, and seven out of the top ten highest-paid female athletes in the world are tennis players.<sup>93</sup> Before her March 8, 2016, press conference announcing her positive test for performance-enhancing drugs and the subsequent pull of major endorsement contracts with companies like Nike and Cannon Camera, Russian Champion Maria Sharapova had earned more money than any other male or female tennis player. More

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<sup>92</sup> Richards, *Second Serve*, 365-73; Martina Navratilova, *Being Myself* (New York: Grafton, 1986), 179, 220-21.

<sup>93</sup> Kurt Badenhausen, "Roger Federer Tops List of the World's Highest-Paid Tennis Players," *Forbes*, September 10, 2012, [www.forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com) (accessed May 16, 2016); Kurt Badenhausen, "Olympic Stars Top List of the 10 Highest-Paid Female Athletes," *Forbes*, July 30, 2012, [www.fobes.com](http://www.fobes.com) (accessed May 16, 2016). Russian tennis star Maria Sharapova tops the list earning \$27.1 million in 2011. Nascar driver Danica Patrick, South Korean figure skater Kim Yuna, and Taiwanese golfer Yani Tseng are the three non-tennis players on the list. It is also interesting to note that Patrick and tennis champion Serena Williams are the only two Americans on the list.

importantly, no woman entertainer in the world matched her income.<sup>94</sup> In a related vein, in 2007 Wimbledon became the last tennis tournament in the world to offer equal prize money for women and men competitors. That move, long overdue in the minds of many, made tennis the first sport in world history to offer women pay equality.<sup>95</sup>

Contemporary male professionals have on occasion spoken out against that pay equality. In one notable example, the longtime and on-again-off-again world number one, Serbian Novak Djokovic, implied that tournaments and their corporate and tennis federation sponsors do not offer equal pay for equal work. “I think that our men’s tennis world, ATP world, should fight for more, because the stats are showing that we have much more spectators on the men’s tennis matches.” Male players like Djokovic are not wrong when they stress that their matches take longer to play—that is, three out of five sets rather than two out of three sets in many cases—but suggestions from ATP leaders that the greater depth on the men’s tour means that women players “ride the coattails” of their male peers is that of contemporaries not steeped in the cultural legacies and business histories of the game in which they earn a living.<sup>96</sup>

Lack of awareness of those legacies is on the one hand excusable, because even the best sports journalists and historians to examine those histories have missed and misunderstood the

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<sup>94</sup> “Maria Sharapova Provisionally Banned from Tennis after Revealing Failed Drugs Test,” *The Guardian*, March 8, 2016, [www.theguardian.com/sport/2016/mar/07/maria-sharapova-failed-drugs-test-australian-open-2016-tennis](http://www.theguardian.com/sport/2016/mar/07/maria-sharapova-failed-drugs-test-australian-open-2016-tennis) (accessed May 16, 2016).

<sup>95</sup> “War Breaks out over ‘gender pay equality’ spat in tennis,” June 28, 2012, <http://zeenews.india.com/> (accessed December 3, 2012); Robert Orzechowski, “Pay Equity Between Men’s and Women’s Tennis is Pure Communism,” *Bleacher Report*, July 20, 2009, [www.bleacherreport.com](http://www.bleacherreport.com) (accessed December 3, 2012).

<sup>96</sup> Merlisa Lawrence Corbett, “How Novak Djokovic Made Comments from Indian Wells CEO Raymond Moore Worse,” *Bleacher Report*, March 21, 2016, [www.bleacherreport.com](http://www.bleacherreport.com) (accessed May 16, 2016).

devil's bargains women players made in order to make money in the game.<sup>97</sup> The crux of that compromise was a willingness to put themselves out in public in the most sexualized of ways in order to attract the most fans, the most media attention, and the most sponsorship dollars so as to earn the most money from their work on the court. Likewise, physical attractiveness mattered a great deal when entertainment agents at firms such as IMG marketed their clients to potential sponsors. Historians have explored the “emotional labor” of female entertainers from circus performers to the child movie star Shirley Temple.<sup>98</sup> In consciously consenting to the demands of agents, tour sponsors, outfit designers, and tournament officials, women tennis players joined women from other spheres of entertainment in that they put nearly all of themselves on the line each time they played for a public audience.

Women's tennis in the age of professional entertainment was about sex. And it sold better than the men's game. In this, the sport came full circle to its genesis in the late nineteenth century.

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<sup>97</sup> Ware, *Game, Set, Match*, 39, 41, passim.

<sup>98</sup> Janet Davis, *The Circus Age: Culture and Society Under the American Big Top* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 83; John F. Kasson, *The Little Girl Who Fought the Great Depression: Shirley Temple and 1930s America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2014), 234.

## CONCLUSION

### PANCHO'S RACKET AND PROFESSIONAL TENNIS IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

The history of tennis can be understood in the context of three specific eras. Period one began in 1873 with the first lawn tennis match hosted by the British military officer Walter Wingfield in Wales. The game moved from there to America, Australia, and around the world but remained an exclusively amateur sport until the Frenchwoman Suzanne Lenglen and her American promoter C. C. Pyle organized the first international professional tour around the United States in 1926. The cardinal characteristic of the second era—which began in 1926 and concluded in 1968—was competition between tradition-oriented associations that wanted the game to remain exclusively an “amateur pursuit” and professional players and promoters whose embrace of tennis touring was both an attempt to earn a living from the sport and a challenge to the authority over the game exercised by the tradition-minded amateur associations. Finally, after 1968, steady pressure from the professionals and occasional mismanagement by the amateur associations’ leaders spurred the opening of competition between professionals and amateurs that has continued into the present. Money became the defining feature of this third period, but, as this study has advanced, money matters always marked tennis as a sport both apart from, and, in that way, crucial for understanding the history of sports and commercial entertainment in the twentieth century.

Twentieth-century popular culture was structured around radio, motion pictures, television, music, and athletics. Historians have taken sports the least seriously of those five entertainments, while among the sports historians, elite individual sports such as tennis have

received far less attention than other kinds of athletics. Overlooking the game impoverishes understanding of sports in general because tennis's immediate antecedent, royal tennis, set a precedent for modern international sport competitions with the first championship of a world sport in 1740—nearly a century and a half before boxing held the next world championship among a sport in 1882.<sup>1</sup>

Missing the way tennis both shaped and was shaped by broader currents in the history of the United States and world history in the twentieth century is easy to do from my own experience. Having visited the fifty states and all the major cities within those states, I encountered many of the playgrounds, athletic fields, recreation centers, and parks built by the New Deal, though I did not know it at the time. On research trips for this project I often pitched a tent in parks and campsites close to archives in order to keep costs low. I did this, unaware that agencies like the Civilian Conservation Corps and National Youth Administration built or improved many of those grounds. It was only after having returned from those trips with memory cards full of pictures of archival records that I realized I literally lived on the legacy of the New Deal's recreational revolution. The same goes for the sport of tennis. In 2001 I began playing the game on the eight public courts of Reservoir Park, in Quincy, Illinois, without the slightest idea of how rare those courts or a park district program or public high school program would have been seventy years before.

The recreational revolution did not usher in Open Tennis overnight but it did lay the groundwork for professionals and amateurs playing together on the world's largest and most

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<sup>1</sup> Steen, *Floodlights and Touchlines*, 17, 74, 81.

lucrative stages within a generation. Throughout that quarter-century period the USLTA remained stalwart in its opposition to Open Tennis. In October 1955, USLTA President Col. James H. Bishop sat for an interview with the editors of *World Tennis* magazine and spoke for the Association as a whole when he gave the reasons he could never see competition between the likes of the Pancho Gonzales, Jack Kramer, Pancho Segura, and the top amateur players sponsored by the Association. First, Bishop argued, the International Lawn Tennis Federation that governed tennis around the world had no plans for Open Tennis, and the USLTA would never think to step outside the prevailing opinion within that organization. Second, Bishop related that after visiting the scores of private clubs that make up the USLTA, he could not find a single member of those clubs willing to put any effort into the inception and sustainment of Open Tennis. Third, Bishop confided that ticket revenue at USLTA-sanctioned tournaments had dwindled as a percentage of total Association revenue, and that proportional change made the USLTA more beholden to local Tennis Patrons groups to balance the budget of the National Office in New York City. Fourth, any endorsement of professionalism by the association, Bishop feared, would have United States tax agents auditing the Association's books because how could an organization whose charter maintained the promotion of amateur tennis support the entrance of money into the game? After all, no USLTA official, the people who put in the work to grow the game of tennis, in Bishop's view, received any compensation except very limited travel expenses for all of the great work they did, so how could players expect compensation?<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> "An Interview with Col. James H. Bishop: President of the USLTA," *World Tennis* 3, no. 5 (October 1955): 16-7.



Bishop and his peers on the Executive Committee may very well have believed those reasons. The reality of tennis after the recreational revolution took hold, however, differed a great deal from the views of the USLTA leadership. When it came to silence for Open Tennis on his rounds around the country clubs, Bishop heard what he wanted to hear. Just as the USLTA was comprised of member clubs, so too was the International Lawn Tennis Federation made up of member nations. A real push from one of the big three tennis nations—the United States, the United Kingdom, or France—could make Open Tennis happen quickly. Plenty of letter writers opined to *World Tennis* magazine and throughout the sports press in favor of Open Tennis. The current USLTA leadership paid those present views no mind just as they maintained a pall of silence regarding the views of at least one of their former presidents who, during the 49th Annual Meeting of the Association, “urged the adoption of an open tournament.” The silence the Association maintained on the matter even extended to speech they could not but nonetheless tried to control. On one occasion the Executive Committee asked for the proof pages of the forthcoming tennis book, *Kings of the Court*. After reading that work’s last chapter, which endorsed Open Tennis, USLTA officers first tried to prevent the publication. When that failed, they removed their previous support of a work they otherwise found commendable.<sup>3</sup>

If the USLTA really believed in growing the game of tennis at all levels, then they would have done well to listen to the positions advanced by the advocates of Open Tennis whose arguments made more sense. In particular, Open Tennis exponents offered the example of Open

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<sup>3</sup> Ned Potter, “Passing Shots: ‘A Shocking Story’ by Jack Kramer,” *World Tennis* 3, no. 2 (July 1955): 10-11; W.R. Cuthertson to Gladys Heldman, October, 1955, “Letter to the Editor,” *World Tennis* 3, no. 5 (October 1955): 4; Kent Brennan to Gladys Heldman, October, 1955, “Letter to the Editor,” *World Tennis* 3, no. 5 (October 1955): 4; J. Joubert and C. Heldman, “25 Years Ago,” *World Tennis* 2, no. 9 (February 1955): 22.

Golf in America to argue in favor of the positive impact professionals and amateurs competition together would hold if tennis went the same way as golf. The total number of golfers increased three-fold in the years immediately following the sanctioned competition between amateur and professional golfers that began in 1895. Given the similarities between the two sports in terms of venue, economics, and the social position of players, little reason existed not to expect a similar tripling of tennis players in the short-term following Open Tennis. Comparisons with golf went nowhere with the Executive Committee of the USLTA for the simple reason that the men who ran tennis in America were not that interested in seeing the game grow so much as they were interested in seeing the tennis they wanted to see at the private country clubs to which they belonged.<sup>4</sup>

The recreational revolution helped sweep Bishop to the top of the Association because his platform to “make Yakima, Washington feel that they were just as much a part of the USLTA as the West Side Tennis Club” came across to the Eastern country clubbers who ran the Association as a bone they could throw to the sections where tennis was growing and still maintain the key seats in the Executive Committee that controlled the organization’s finances. Bishop could thus point to the most minor reforms of the amateur code—sporting goods company employees were no longer barred from USLTA tournaments, college professors and physical education teachers could now play amateur tournaments, university netters could work for a summer stipend at a seasonal camp, the so-called “eight weeks rule” of tournament play

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<sup>4</sup> Malcolm Purcell, “I Hate Sidney Wood,” *World Tennis* 2, no. 12 (May, 1955): 14; “An Interview with Col. James H. Bishop: President of the USLTA,” *World Tennis* 3, no. 5 (October, 1955): 16-17; Ned Potter, “Passing Shots,” *World Tennis* 3, no. 1 (June 1955): 12; Gardner Mulloy, “USLTA Annual Meeting: Sporting Goods Rule Repealed, Rankings changed in Quietest Meeting of the Century,” *World Tennis* 1, no. 9 (February 1954):10-14; “The Questionnaire,” *World Tennis* 3, no. 4 (September 1955): 26.

ended, and professional athletes from other sports could potentially play in an amateur tennis tournament—while still maintaining the *sine quo non* of the National Office in the “Eastern Grass Court Circuit” for amateur players beholden to those clubs for lodging, meals, and transportation to and from tournaments. Bishop, a patsy president, thus appeased both sides when he called the Davis Cup and National Championships at Forest Hills “necessary evils” far from the “Hinterlands” that became the real “seed-bed for growing tennis.”<sup>5</sup>

Television, transportation, Sunbelt suburbanization, and postwar consumer prosperity took professional sports nationwide in a way and to a degree never before seen in the United States.<sup>6</sup> Individual sports like tennis and golf returned the favor by creating for Americans the illusion, in the words of one historian, of a “classless society” where the poor competed on equal footing with the rich at the very moment where so many different goods were available for Americans to differentiate themselves by class.<sup>7</sup> Whereas women in the twenties, thirties, and forties asserted their own agendas and needs along with that of their spouses, families, communities, and nations, the immediate postwar years saw a new commitment from more or less everyone in the nation to prioritize the needs of returning veterans in front of anyone else.<sup>8</sup> Whether fact or fantasy, traditional manliness and patriarchy were on the skids for decades in the

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<sup>5</sup> “An Interview with Col. James H. Bishop: President of the USLTA,” *World Tennis* 3, no. 5 (October 1955):16-17.

<sup>6</sup> Rader, *In Its Own Image*; Lewis, *Divided Highways*, 84; Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 6, 191, 97-99, 217-18, 274, Gary Cross, *An All-Consuming Century: Why Commercialism Won in Modern America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 88-89, 101.

<sup>7</sup> David Potter, *People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), 98-99.

<sup>8</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 65, 140, 192, 200.

minds of many American men.<sup>9</sup> Military training and martial combat corrected (one could say vastly overcorrected) this trend of emasculation for many men, who suddenly found their lives filled with purpose and their bodies possessed of the ultimate power to decide life and death. With the camaraderie bred in combat and mimicked in physical training, little wonder then that sports became a ubiquitous part of American postwar culture when men returned home, started families, and looked for something physical and associational to mimic what they had known every day for the last four years.<sup>10</sup>

The decade after Americans had celebrated victory in the Pacific by stringing up effigies of the Japanese Emperor along famous streets of entertainment such as Hollywood Boulevard proved a pivotal stretch in the larger history of political economy in the United States. Resisters to initiatives brought about during the New Deal coalesced into a group of conservatives who wanted expanded flexibility for entrepreneurship by loosening government regulation of companies and markets. Some of these conservatives did not object to the expanded “welfare capitalism” established during the New Deal because more money in the pockets of more consumers meant a greater market for the goods and services they sold. While many workers stayed put in the cities where they built military equipment for the War, a great many others left cities such as Los Angeles, Hartford, and Detroit to go back to their previous homes in the rural

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<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth Fraterrigo, *Playboy and the Making of the Good Life in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 10.

<sup>10</sup> Kathryn Jay, *More than Just a Game: Sports in American Life since 1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 5, 11-12, 16-17, 23-25, 37-38.

South and Midwest. They returned with money in their pockets as well as higher expectations for both earnings and the entertainments they had enjoyed in the big cities of their war work.<sup>11</sup>

The tennis professional and sports promoter Jack Kramer saw business potential in the these relocated postwar consumers. He planned a barnstorming tour to bring professional tennis to every part of the United States. Players whose on-court careers the war sidelined, Kramer knew he could sign on the cheap. Enticing up-and-coming amateurs proved crucial to holding the public's interest, just as finding the most exciting names in the sport was in the smaller tours of the twenties and Depression years. The pace at which they traveled from stop to stop put Jack Kramer's Tennis Tour on an entirely new footing from any previous professional sports tour. In that movement, first nationally and then internationally, when Jack Kramer's World Tennis Incorporated went from county to county, tennis promoters and players such as Kramer, Bobby Riggs, Pancho Gonzales, Ted Schroeder, Pancho Segura, and Tony Trabert formed a troupe of athletes and did the equivalent for sports what their contemporaries in literature and jazz did in making "the fifties," in the words of one investigator of American Studies, into "the great expansion of mass and popular culture."<sup>12</sup>

The failure of professional tennis before 1968 to expand beyond the barnstorming tour format first pioneered by Suzanne Lenglen and C.C. Pyle in 1926 was not based on reason but on the raw emotion of International Lawn Tennis Federation members, USLTA officials, and their counterparts in regional amateur tennis associations. That emotion coalesced in a stalwart effort

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<sup>11</sup> Eric F. Goldman, *The Crucial Decade: America, 1945-1955* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), 3-10.

<sup>12</sup> W.T. Lhamon, Jr., *Deliberate Speed: The Origins of a Cultural Style in the American 1950s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 1, 28.

against the democratization of the game brought on principally by the recreational revolution's public park courts that brought so many new players from different backgrounds into the game—players whose sense of deference to the men and whose private country clubs and founded and grew the game in America for the first three quarters-of-a-century did not quite reach the level the old-guard believed they were owed by the newcomers. What the professional players and promoters did was to keep tennis played for money constantly before the public across the United States and increasingly around the world. Those professional tours, far more than the amateur tournaments that took place year after year in the same club venues, increased public interest in the sport. By the time a new generation of entrepreneurs became interested in the profitability of global sports in the late 1960s, Jack Kramer's World Tennis Incorporated demonstrated that professional tennis could turn a profit if organized the right way.

That new generation of sports marketers, who appeared on the scene in 1968, were capable of transitioning amateur tennis into an international professional sport. Sports marketers such as Mark McCormack and Donald Dell, tour promoters such as Lamar Hunt, Association leaders such as Slew Hester, sports publishers such as Gladys Heldman, and player-promoters such as Billie Jean King transformed—some might argue revolutionized—the sport into what the public in the seventies called “the tennis boom.”<sup>13</sup> These men and women appeared on the scene at the historic moment and capitalized on those circumstances. This study has sought to tell the stories of institutions, policies, and, most of all, people who contributed to the preconditions for the professionalization of tennis. Their stories are less well known and generally less happy but

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<sup>13</sup> Wind, *Game, Set, Match*, 130.

altogether necessary if we are to understand why more people come to the United States Open than any other sporting event held year after year.

Most of the money made from the labor of tennis players, as with other professional athletes, took place off the field. Advertising agencies sold the images of players to companies who believed celebrity endorsements helped them sell more of their products, and tennis players served the cause of mass consumerism best when marketers reduced the complicated individual to character traits—determined, fiery, consistent, graceful. Writers of trade-press tennis technique books also favored the same simplification when they argued that each professional player exemplified one unique body movement that translated into a certain style of game. For example, Simon and Schuster's 1967 bestseller *Tennis the Professional Way* emphasized that the player who specialized in one certain style of play stood the greatest chance of making it big: Pancho Gonzales could not win without his serve; Tony Trabert knew strategy; the all-American wonder-boy Jack Kramer possessed the overall game.<sup>14</sup> Such simplistic analysis that attributed a player's professional success to a single attribute helped sales but hurt chances of appreciating who these on-court entertainers were and where they came from.

Sportswriters and fans alike routinely practice their own version of historical obfuscation in proposing hypothetical match-ups between players from different eras. Sports-talkers pit the 2016 Golden State Warriors against the 1996 Chicago Bulls, the 2016 Chicago Cubs against the 1908 New York Yankees, and the 2004 New England Patriots against the 1985 Chicago Bears in anachronistic match-ups. Tennis too has its own fantasy matches where "tennis experts" rank the

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<sup>14</sup> Advertisement for "Tennis the Professional Way," *Tennis: National Magazine of Racquet Sports*, February 1967, p. 39, in Box 34, Robert Kelleher Collection (1932-2002), ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

Greatest of All Time (GOAT).<sup>15</sup> Such imaginative comparisons are fun but of little value beyond friends who share a similar fondness for the distraction from the problems of life that sports have always provided. This work, by contrast, has laid out the circuitous route through geographic space, through social classes, ethnic diversity, and national borders that tennis took in the century that it evolved from a game that forbade professionals from playing a professional game more popular in the world at large than within the United States. In the twenty-first century tennis's popularity with Americans continued to lag far behind that of the ubiquitous team sports of football, baseball, and basketball, according to public opinion polling.<sup>16</sup> Such opinions, however, miss the fact that because the sport of tennis had tried to keep money out of it for so long, when money did finally enter the game in staggering amounts with Open Tennis in 1968, that money came at such a torrent and with such a host of innovations that the influence of professional tennis spilled over into other professional sports.

This study began with the great tennis champion and social activist Arthur Ashe, who had firsthand experience with that influence. In preparing and promoting his history of African American athletes, Ashe also tried to make clear to audiences just how big a business sports was in the United States. For example, at Yale University on February 11, 1991, he told those assembled: "Sports in America is a \$65 billion industry today, and it's still growing. The top ten most watched television shows ever are sports programs with the exception of an episode of

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<sup>15</sup> See, for example, the hundreds of threads posted at "Talk Tennis" hosted by the Tennis Warehouse, December 16, 2016, <https://tt.tennis-warehouse.com/index.php?threads/rankings-of-greats-by-tennis-experts.353974/> (accessed May 1, 2017).

<sup>16</sup> Gallup News Service Poll: June 7, 2013, Gallup Organization, Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.



‘Dallas’ ...Sports are an addiction for us. An astute businessman like Lawrence Tisch, who owns CBS, elected to bet \$1.1 billion that sports would make his network number one.’<sup>17</sup>

Ashe spoke at the end of the Cold War, just months before the collapse of the Soviet Union, the survival of the United States as the world’s lone superpower through cultural rather than military force, and the dominance of a connected world economy with the trade and control of information the lynchpin. In the analysis of senior Cold War and diplomatic historian Walter LaFeber, no figure better represented the ascendance of a “new global capitalism” than an athlete—the Chicago Bulls shooting-guard and cultural superstar Michael Jordan, whose agent David Falk licensed the Airman into the most branded and highest paid athlete in world history.<sup>18</sup> Falk’s early experience in the entertainment industry began when he worked as a junior agent at the ProServ entertainment company during the 1970s. What LaFeber’s account ignores, however, was that Falk gained the marketing, sales, and legal insights he later applied to negotiating licensing on Jordan’s behalf when he worked with tennis players represented by ProServ. During his decade at ProServ, Falk handled accounts in basketball and football, but he also worked as the junior agent for Arthur Ashe and Stan Smith, as well as the lead agent for Gene Mayer. From its founding in 1970 by Yale University All-American turned Davis Cup captain Donald Dell, ProServ, in both a name drawn from the first shot in tennis and in action, stressed the athletes from individual sports over those of team sports. The agency put its most

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<sup>17</sup> Arthur Ashe, Yale University Talk, February 11, 1991, Folder 5/5, Speaking Engagements 1991, Box 5, Arthur Ashe Collection, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, New York.

<sup>18</sup> Walter LeFeber, *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2002), 13-14, 64-65, 94, 134-36, 143.

experienced employees and most promising young hires in charge of servicing the elite athletes from individual rather than those from team sports.<sup>19</sup>

ProServ's agents were not alone in making money by managing the image of the athlete off the field rather than the performance of the athlete inside the ballpark. Just as historians have argued about politicians around 1970, image was everything for professional athletes.<sup>20</sup> ProServ and the upstart Advantage International, which followed in 1983 when Dell's former partners Lee Fentress and Frank Craighill founded their agency, convinced many corporations that attaching an athlete to their brand would help sell more products.<sup>21</sup> But the true pioneer and ultimately more consequential player in commodifying and monetizing sports heroes was a lawyer named Mark McCormack and the International Management Group he founded. That agency, more than any other firm in the latter third of the twentieth century, threaded different strands of entertainment into a single stream of profit. Making the celebrity athlete into the center of that work meant that a form of capitalism—not of industry but of entertainment and leisure—became a highly profitable and fast growing sector in the world economy's broader transition from secondary production to tertiary services in the 1970s. The degree to which sports marketing agencies who worked with global athletes may or may not have influenced firms in

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<sup>19</sup> Rick Horrow, "David Falk Interview" *Keeping Score* (video blog), May 5, 2016 David Falk, <http://Blogs.reuters.com/keeping-score/2016/05/05/michael-jordan-the-businessman/> (accessed May 5, 2016); Donald Dell Biographical File, Biographical Files Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island. Dell's agency ProServ also went by Pro Serv, ProServe, and Pro Serve.

<sup>20</sup> David Greenberg, *Republic of Spin: An Inside History of the American Presidency* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2016), 397.

<sup>21</sup> Evans, *Open Tennis, 1968-1988*, 7, 218.

other economic sectors toward greater capital mobility, creative accounting practices, and tax sheltering remains in need of further research.<sup>22</sup>

Far clearer is that entertainment agents accomplished the triumph of the celebrity athlete over the hearts, minds, and pocketbooks of many in the United States and throughout the world. Professional promoters such as George McCall, Jack Kramer, and Lamar Hunt developed better promoted tours like the Grand Prix and World Championship Tennis, they organized grander tournaments like the WCT Finals in Dallas, and they incentivized the construction of bigger stadiums for the most recognized celebrity athletes to battle in. In terms of tennis, 1968 marked a watershed moment when the oldest and most exclusive amateur tennis tournaments invited long-time touring professionals such as Pancho Gonzales, Rod Laver, and Arthur Ashe to compete on their previously amateur-only courts. The All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, the host for Wimbledon, the most famous of these tournaments, asked Mark McCormack and IMG to turn the Championships into a commercial dynamo. IMG delivered and helped set a precedent for the marketing of later world-class sporting events. A decade later, the United States Tennis Association built the largest tennis complex in the world for their own National Championships that pushed the profitability of individual sports to a new level.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Rondo Cameron, *A Concise Economic History of the World: From Paleolithic Times to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 15, 395; Robert J. Gordon, *The Rise and Fall of American Growth: The U.S. Standard of Living Since the Civil War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 325; Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 519-20; Gabriel Zucman, *The Hidden Wealth of Nations: The Scourge of Tax Havens* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 107-8.

<sup>23</sup> R. E. [Buzzer] Hadingham to Mark McCormack, April 11, 1968, Folder Wimbledon, Historical, Box M0614 (0910) Wimbledon Box, Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Slew Hester Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

The players whose on-court performance peaked in 1968 mostly made a fortune. So too did the agencies who marketed the players' appeal to consumers to a smattering of old-guard and upstart companies who made everything from sneakers to processed beef. Others were not so fortunate. Pancho Gonzales's nearly two-decade run at the top of the game caught up with him. While he still produced dramatic moments on the court, forty years of age and years of strife with fans, tour managers, tennis officials, and other players led agencies like IMG to turn him down when he approached them for representation.<sup>24</sup> Likewise, the growing power of the tennis players' unions also boded poorly for veteran players like Gonzales whose long time in tennis came in the earlier barnstorming days that separated amateurs and professionals and thus differed markedly from the demands and directions mid-career and young players wanted their contracts and negotiations with tournament officials, sponsors, and governing bodies to go.<sup>25</sup>

Other players also struggled to secure their share of the money that poured into tennis with Open Tennis in 1968 and the subsequent boom that lasted for the next decade. In this effort, many individuals from traditionally marginalized groups actually gained a remarkable degree of success. The legacy of women in the sport of tennis combined with the efforts of feminist activists in the sixties and seventies to raise the consciousness of women. Politically these efforts yielded Title IX. Commercially these efforts created the best funded and most publicly visual

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<sup>24</sup> Frank Barclay to Mark McCormack, August 12, 1965, Gonzales, Pancho, Client File, Box M3405 (0002), Mark McCormack Collection, Special Collections, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Slew Hester Interview, Oral History Collection, ITHF, Newport, Rhode Island.

<sup>25</sup> *Richard A. Gonzalez v. The International Professional Tennis Players Association, an Un-Incorporated Association, Its Officers and Members, Earl Buchholz, Jr., as Member of the Association and Individually Kenneth Rosewall, as Officer of the Association and Individually, Anthony M. Trabert, as Officer of the Association and Individually, Jack Kramer, Myron McNamara, Haile Chase, and Adler*, No. 63-CA-689 CC (C.D.C.A. Jun 13 1963) at pp. 1-14, NARA-Riverside.

troupe of women athletes in the world with the Virginia Slims Women's Tennis Tour. But unlike the standard version of the fusion of women athletics and political consciousness told by journalists and historians, the reality of the women's tennis tournament told through previously unexamined sources tells a more complicated story where women players consented to the commercialization of their bodies pushed by entertainment agents, media moguls, tennis promoters, and even their fellow players.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, as the highly publicized and litigated 1977 court case that pitted the transgender ophthalmologist and tennis champion Dr. Renée Richards against the United States Tennis Association, a player's tennis ability was not the only criteria tennis officials used to screen who they thought deserved to play on the game's biggest stage at the U.S. Open.<sup>27</sup> More than the individual players and their personalities, it was the combination of the agent-marketed and -managed athlete, the new tours with robust media contracts, and the larger-than-life tournaments with big stadiums and big lists of corporate sponsors that made tennis and professional sports into commercial juggernauts that scaled the globe.

Open competition between amateur and professional tennis players has now taken place for a longer time than between when Lenglen first toured America as a professional and 1968 when amateurs first played professionals at the French Open. Further developments such as the so-called "car park press conference" and the player-led reform of the Association of Tennis Professionals have taken place after the material studied in these chapters and have received able

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<sup>26</sup> For the conventional "liberal feminist" perspective, see Susan Ware, *Game, Set, Match: Billie Jean King and the Revolution in Women's Sports* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 8-14.

<sup>27</sup> Richards v. US Tennis Assn, 93 Misc.2d 713 (1977) *Renee Richards, Plaintiff v. United States Tennis Association et al., Defendants*. Supreme Court, Special Term, New York County. August 16, 1977.

treatment by sports journalists, but the events of most consequence for professional tennis in the twentieth century took place before the 1990s and the twenty-first century.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Evans, *Open Tennis, 1968-1988*, 246-49.

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