

January 2015

Gladys Heldman and the Original Nine: The Visionaries Who Pioneered the Women's Professional Tennis Circuit

Donn Thomas Gobbie
Purdue University

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**PURDUE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL
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By DONN T. GOBBIE

Entitled

GLADYS HELDMAN AND THE ORIGINAL NINE: THE VISIONARIES WHO PIONEERED THE WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL TENNIS CIRCUIT

For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy



Is approved by the final examining committee:

WILLIAM A. HARPER

Chair

HOWARD N. ZELAZNIK

RANDY W. ROBERTS

ROSEANN M. LYLE

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Approved by Major Professor(s): WILLIAM A. HARPER

Approved by: DAVID B. KLENOSKY

7/24/2015

Head of the Departmental Graduate Program

Date

GLADYS HELDMAN AND THE ORIGINAL NINE:
THE VISIONARIES WHO PIONEERED
THE WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL TENNIS CIRCUIT

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty
of
Purdue University
by
Donn T. Gobbie

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Of
Doctor of Philosophy

December 2015
Purdue University
West Lafayette, Indiana

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ABSTRACT

Gobbie, Donn T. Ph.D., Purdue University, December 2015. Gladys Heldman and the Original Nine: The Visionaries Who Pioneered the Women's Professional Tennis Circuit. Major Professor: William A. Harper.

The purpose of this study was to examine the events that led up to the formation of the women's professional tennis circuit in the United States in 1970, and the political battles of the subsequent three years. Under the guidance of Gladys M. Heldman, the founder, editor and publisher of *World Tennis* magazine – the sport's most influential publication at the time – nine women tennis players decided to leave the jurisdiction of the United States Lawn Tennis Association and form their own circuit. The women broke away from the USLTA in a dispute over the prize money distribution at tournaments, which was heavily weighted towards men players. In order to understand the climate in which these women decided to break away from the USLTA in 1970 form their own tour, this study gives a detailed history of the politics of tennis in the twentieth century, including an examination of how the USLTA controlled amateur tennis players, the practice of "shamateurism," the growth of professional tennis tours since the late 1920s, and the forty-year battle for open tennis, which allowed amateurs and professionals to play in the same events.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

*A pioneer knows exactly what to do at the right moment.*¹

-- *Ted Tinling, 1987*

This is the story of how the first women's professional tennis tour was started in the United States in September of 1970. It is the story of a dynamic tennis magazine founder and nine determined women players who challenged the United States Lawn Tennis Association in order to have more control over their professional careers. The players' decision to break away from the male-oriented national tennis association and determine their own future was, according to *New York Times* sportswriter Neil Amdur, "the single most symbolic act of protest in women's sports."² In order to appreciate the risk these women took, it is important to understand the climate in which they played the sport. A basic history of the USLTA and its methods for controlling amateur tennis players is an important backdrop, as is the practice of shamateurism (in which amateur players were given under-the-table appearance fees), a history of professional tennis tours, as well as the development of open tennis, which permitted amateurs and professionals to compete against each other in tournaments.

USLTA Control of American Amateur Tennis Players

On May 21, 1881, representatives from nineteen private clubs – including the Staten Island Cricket Club, where tennis was first introduced in America, the Orange Lawn Tennis Club, and the Knickerbocker Baseball Club – gathered at the Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York City to establish the United States National Lawn Tennis Association. The purpose of the association was to standardize the game's rules and regulations, promote its development throughout the country, and oversee competitive events,

including an annual national championship. At the meeting, it was agreed that “none but amateurs shall be allowed to enter for any match played by this association.”³ For the next eighty-five years, the USLTA (the word “national” was removed from the title in 1920) attempted to maintain a lofty amateur ideal that was often unpopular with the players.

Sport historian Paul Gallico explained that those who became officials in the national association in the early 20th century insisted on an amateur purity in order to enhance their social ambitions. In his book *The Golden People*, Gallico wrote that “the original tennis fathers (and moms) were ladies and gentlemen who did not look down upon those who did not play tennis. They were pleased with their own society and probably did not bother to look down at all. But there were a great number of Americans shortly before and after World War I who were looking upward and dying to break into the closed circle of the charmed Four Hundred. The game of tennis was a means of entry to some ... these were the new rich, the climbers and the pseudo-socialites who thought that joining a tennis club would bestow upon them a large part of the standing they sought ... Quietly, control of the game passed into their hands as the genuine aristocracy abandoned tennis in favor of polo, a pastime that demanded even more money and more space to be enjoyed ... The Long Island polo set was authentic but by this time the tennis crowd was a phony as a dime-store engagement ring. They formed the backbone of the U. S. Lawn Tennis Association.”⁴

The early USLTA officials – “tennis snobs,” as Gallico called them – hoped to preserve their social standing by making the game inaccessible to the same sort of gamblers, crude participants and unruly spectators who had infested baseball and boxing. “Probably no tennis regulation has caused quite so much trouble,” wrote George McCann in his seventy-five year history of the USLTA, “as the ticklish amateur rule designed to keep tournament players a saintly chalk-white untainted by the merest shadow of commercialism.”⁵ The USLTA adopted an amateur code similar to the one established by the Lawn Tennis Association in Great Britain in 1911. Typically British class-conscious, the LTA emphasized the belief that amateurs were gentlemen and

professionals were not. The USLTA agreed that tennis was a sport for gentlemen and gentlewomen, and it was determined to maintain authority over American players.

One of the earliest instances of USLTA player control was the banishment of Clare Cassel, ranked ninth in the nation for her tournament results in 1915. In the fall of 1916, she was barred from USLTA sanctioned events and stricken from the association's rankings after charging money for ice skating lessons. At the USLTA annual meeting in early 1917, it was determined that Cassel could apply for reinstatement if she refrained from any professional activities for a one-year period. Cassel's amateur standing was restored in early 1918, and by the end of the year she was the tenth-ranked women's singles player in the nation.⁶

Two other players who tested the USLTA's boundaries for amateurism during this time were Californians Maurice McLoughlin and Tom Bundy. McLoughlin won the national men's singles title in 1912 and 1913, and combined with Bundy to win three consecutive national men's doubles. The doubles partners became business associates in 1915, opening a sporting goods store in San Francisco in 1915. Several months later, the USLTA Executive Committee drafted a proposal that would bar any player who was "engaged in the handling, buying or selling of tennis goods."⁷ At the organization's annual meeting in New York in February 1917, the proposal was adopted after some modification and decreed that "any player who proposing to enter the employ of a sporting goods firm or go into the sporting goods business shall before so doing furnish in writing to the offices of the Executive Secretary all the facts relating to such employment or business." Such a player was also required to provide the USLTA with a memorandum that listed how many tournaments were played each year and how much time was spent away from the business to do so, as well as a statement that verified "the extent with which he individually has to do with tennis goods, as compared with other lines of goods manufactured or sold by the firm." The USLTA also determined that players' names could not be used in tennis advertisements, and players could not get paid for articles that were not written by them.⁸

Two years later, 16-year-old Vincent Richards – the winner of the 1918 U. S. National men's doubles championship with Bill Tilden and the most promising young

player of the time – was suspended by the USLTA on May 11, 1919 from all tournament play when an advertisement in *American Lawn Tennis* magazine featured his name. The advertisement, for Alex Taylor & Company, promised customers that “Vincent Richards will select your racquet for you.”⁹ Days after his suspension, Richards paid a visit to USLTA president George Ade and provided a letter from Alex Taylor. “The advertisement,” Taylor explained, “was written by an overzealous member of our publicity department, without the sanction or knowledge of Mr. Richards, who was in the South at the time. I tried to have it corrected, but it was too late.”¹⁰ Satisfied with Richards’ innocence, the USLTA reinstated him a few days later.

Bill Tilden, Richards’ doubles partner, was the next prominent player to run afoul of the USLTA amateur regulations. Tilden loved to write as much as he loved to play tennis, and as the world’s pre-eminent male player of the 1920s he made a significant amount of money by writing newspaper stories, magazine articles and books. He also despised the “tennis snobs” of the USLTA and missed no opportunity to agitate them, often publicly criticizing their decisions about amateur regulations and player rankings. The feelings were mutual; although the USLTA officials realized that Tilden was the greatest player of his time, they detested his enormous ego, his odd mannerisms and eccentricities, and his refusal to conform.

At the USLTA annual meeting on February 2, 1924, held at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City, the amateur code was expanded to forbid players from the writing of tennis articles for money. The rule was scheduled to take effect on January 1, 1925, presumably to allow Tilden to complete his one-year contract with a newspaper syndicate. Until May 1, 1925, he was obligated to write one 800-word article per week for the syndicate, and between May 1 and October 1 he was committed to two 800-word articles per week. In addition, Tilden was contracted to write articles about the Davis Cup Inter-zonal and Challenge Round matches, the national singles championships, the national doubles championships, and the national clay court championships. USLTA president Halcombe Ward estimated that the newspaper syndicate, which included one hundred newspapers paying two dollars per article, most likely collected \$20,000 for Tilden’s work. “If our present champion is half as good a business man as he is a tennis

player,” Ward told reporters from the *New York Times*, “his emolument is most likely a very substantial one.”¹¹

After a discussion with Tilden, the USLTA agreed to a compromise. The new rule was ratified at the annual meeting in February 1925, and it permitted players to continue with the writing of tennis articles as long as the players’ tournament titles were not mentioned in the byline. Although the new regulation forbid players from sending current accounts to newspapers of tournaments in which they were competing, they were allowed to give interviews for money.¹² Tilden took advantage of the situation; newspapers soon began carrying articles that were a lengthy string of quotes from him. Tilden had actually written the articles, but the quotation marks gave them the appearance of being an interview. “It did not take long,” observed Frank Deford, Tilden’s biographer, “for the USLTA to realize they had been had, and by the summer of 1925, when Tilden gave out another syndicated ‘interview’ for pay in St. Louis, he was threatened again with being barred.” It was only Tilden’s written promise to no longer give “paid interviews” during tennis tournaments in which he was competing that saved him from suspension.¹³

Tilden broke his promise three years later, accepting a newspaper assignment to report on Wimbledon while he played his way into the semifinals. USLTA president Paul W. Gibbons announced on July 20, 1928 that Tilden was suspended immediately, which meant an exclusion from an upcoming Davis Cup match against Italy.¹⁴ The American team, without Tilden, easily dispatched the Italians to set up a final round match against France, the defending champions. French tennis officials were outraged when they realized that Tilden, who was very popular in Paris, would not be permitted to play. The construction of a new tennis stadium had been completed just in time to showcase the Davis Cup finals, and Tilden was one of the star attractions.

In order to defuse what was becoming an international incident, United States Ambassador to France Myron T. Herrick had the U. S. State Department pressure the USLTA to temporarily rescind its suspension of Tilden. The USLTA acquiesced, but demanded that Tilden return home immediately following the Davis Cup matches to answer the charges leveled against him.¹⁵ Tilden played to overflow audiences, the

French team retained the Davis Cup, and the USLTA handed down an indefinite suspension when the American star returned home. Tilden's suspension lasted for six months, forcing him to miss the 1928 U. S. National Championships.¹⁶ He came back to win the U. S title in 1929 and Wimbledon in 1930, and when he announced his decision to become a professional at the end of 1930, USLTA officials were happy to be rid of him. "No one before or since," recalled George McCann, "has ever been quite that much of a thorn in the flesh of any official group attempting to administer an amateur sport."¹⁷

Since the USLTA began developing its amateur code in 1914, the debate about tournament expenses for players – cash payments for travel, lodging and food – was always at the forefront. In 1917, the national association decided that clubs hosting tournaments could no longer provide expenses to players; clubs were permitted, however, to fund their own players' participation in events hosted by other clubs as long as permission was obtained from the USLTA Executive Committee.¹⁸ By 1925, these expense payments could no longer be given directly to the player; instead, payments for expenses had to be sent to the host club or USLTA.¹⁹

The players' expense rule became more stringent in 1930 when the USLTA decided that "any club or association indirectly paying the expenses of any tennis player must send a detailed memorandum of such expenses to the USLTA... within ten days after the conclusion of the tournament ... such payments shall cover only actual expenses; such expenses shall be proper, reasonable and moderate and shall in no case exceed \$10.00 per day per player exclusive of railroad fares. Proper charges may include single room with bath and three meals per day, but shall not include such personal expenses as laundry, telegrams, theater tickets, entertaining friends at meals or other similar personal expenses. Traveling expenses may include first-class railroad fare with seat in Pullman car or lower berth."²⁰ The daily amount limit, which was periodically increased over the course of the next thirty-eight years, would become one of the national association's most controversial regulations and resulted in constant violations by players and tournament directors alike.

The International Lawn Tennis Federation (ILTF) was formed in 1913 by twelve of the world's seventeen existing national tennis associations. The USLTA became a

member of the ILTF in 1923, and one year later the ILTF was given authority by its member nations to control lawn tennis throughout the world. At its general meeting in 1933, the ILTF appointed a special committee to study amateur rules in tennis and recommend changes. There was growing evidence that many players throughout the world were enjoying significant financial gain from their tournament expenses; in effect, they were becoming “tennis bums” by making a year-round living from the sport. The committee suggested an “eight-week rule,” establishing the maximum number of weeks in a year that a player was allowed to receive traveling or living expenses. The USLTA ratified this policy at its annual meeting in Cincinnati on February 8, 1935, with some exceptions and not without objections.²¹

The USLTA added a “clarifying rider” for its players, excluding the three U. S. national championships (on grass, clay, and indoors) and the thirteen sectional tournaments from the eight-week limitation. In these situations, players who wanted to be exempt from the regulation needed to be certified beforehand by their sectional associations as “official representatives.” Such an exception defeated the purpose of the rule’s original intent, as William Rowland of Philadelphia, a former member of the USLTA executive committee, observed. “No other similar exception has been made in other countries,” Rowland noted, “and it is foolish to adopt a plan of action by which you don’t expect to enforce it. We don’t need to put ourselves in the position of being a deputy sheriff for the International Lawn Tennis Federation.” The ruling was passed despite Rowland’s objections, and it really was an attempt to curtail American players from collecting large sums of unreported money in overseas tournaments.²²

The USLTA’s restrictions on player travel expenses were tightened at the association’s annual meeting in Miami Beach in February 1938. Lump sum or round figure payments to players were prohibited, since the payments were to “cover only expenses actually incurred,” and clubs and host associations were required to submit detailed expense reports within ten days after the tournament or exhibition. “We want the player to receive all he has to spend for actual expenses,” said Amateur Rule Committee Chairman Louis J. Carruthers, “but we don’t want him to make a profit. We have noted instances where players doubled up, receiving two-way transportation from

some distant point for each of two or more tournaments held in the same locality on succeeding dates.”²³

At the end of 1939, the USLTA Amateur Rules Committee announced that two of the nation’s Davis Cup team members – Gene Mako, the national singles finalist in 1938, and Wayne Sabin, the fifth-ranked men’s singles player – were immediately suspended for violating the eight-week rule and for receiving excessive amounts of expense money through during the year.²⁴ At its annual meeting in New York in early 1940, the USLTA Executive Committee upheld the ruling, suspending Mako and Sabin until September 1940, at which time they would be eligible to file for reinstatement. In the wake of the rule violations by Mako and Sabin, the USLTA further revised the expense regulations. Effective immediately, the presidents of the thirteen sectional associations, in conjunction with the USLTA president, were empowered to rule on a club’s request to pay – as well as a player’s request to receive – travel and living expenses.²⁵

Further player expense restrictions were imposed at the USLTA annual meeting in 1941. Players were no longer allowed to stay at private homes during tournaments without having such hospitality count as “expenses furnished.” Exceptions to the hospitality clause would be granted for participation in the national championships or when a player represented the USLTA in special competitions. “The USLTA finally got around to the problem of taking the racket out of the racquet,” wrote Whitney Martin in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, “and its ruling that if a player wants to be a tennis bum he can’t do it entirely on the company’s time is a step in the right direction... According to the new rules a player can eat on the house only about four months out of the year, and he may be forced to take desperate measures to subsist the other eight months. He may even have to go to work ... (In the past) there was nothing to prevent him from accepting the hospitality of a tournament official and parking his duffle bag as a house guest, and through that loophole a first-class player could squeeze in a year-round supply of beans and bacon.”²⁶

In addition to closing the hospitality loophole, the USLTA enacted regulations that prohibited players from being directly or indirectly associated with the sale of tennis equipment, directly or indirectly associated with a company that manufactures or sells

tennis equipment, and directly or indirectly accepting tennis equipment from any company or manufacturer. Calling the new rules the most drastic USLTA legislation since the player-writer provision of 1925, Allison Danzig of the *New York Times* reported that the results of the annual meeting was “a dark day for the amateur tennis player accustomed to following the sun wherever invitations call almost the year round, with all expenses paid.”²⁷

By the end of 1941, Frank Kovacs finally had enough of USLTA amateur restrictions. The winner of the U. S. National Indoor title several months earlier, the Oakland, California native was suspended on November 25 for violating the player expense limitations. “They always bar me when there are no tournaments,” Kovacs said about the suspension. “They’ve been doing this for years. Chances are they will bar all the ranking first ten players until it’s time for tournaments next year.” Asked if he felt the USLTA decision was warranted, Kovacs responded “Did I take money? Who doesn’t? The only rule I violated was the footfault rule – years ago. At the rate I am worrying, I will have to wear a toupee in six months. Amateur tennis stinks. There’s no money in it anymore.”²⁸ The following day, Kovacs announced that he was leaving amateur tennis – as well as his job as a warehouseman in a San Francisco Bay shipyard – to join a professional tour that was being promoted by Alexis Thompson, the young and wealthy owner of the Philadelphia Eagles professional football team. To accompany the story, several newspapers carried a photograph of Kovacs holding his national indoor trophy in one hand and holding his nose with the other.²⁹

Certainly the strangest case of USLTA player suspension involved Pauline Betz, the winner of nineteen U. S. national titles and the Wimbledon women’s singles crown in 1946, and Sarah Palfrey Cooke, the holder of twenty-five U. S. national titles and a two-time Wimbledon women’s doubles champion. In March 1947, Cooke’s husband sent a letter to tennis clubs throughout the United States and overseas to inquire if there was interest in having the two women play exhibition matches and give instructional clinics. “We believe that an equitable arrangement would be 50 percent of the gate for players,” the letter stated. “What minimum amount, plus traveling expenses, will you guarantee?”

A minimum amount of \$350 for weekday matches and \$500 for weekends and holidays was proposed in the letter.³⁰

Betz was competing at a tournament in Monte Carlo when the USLTA sent a telegram to her on April 2, 1947, just hours before her mixed doubles match with Budge Patty, inquiring if she intended to play on a professional tour and requesting an immediate response. Betz did not respond, and the USLTA Amateur Rules Committee met in New York on April 7 to discuss the situation. The following day, Betz was notified by another telegram that “we cabled you regarding the letter from Elwood Cooke of Sports Tours dated March 21 soliciting professional tennis engagements for you. We requested your prompt reply. Not having received any reply, we have no alternative but to suspend you from all amateur competition pending final action by the Executive Committee.” The suspension meant that Betz could no longer collect expenses while in Europe, and she would be unable to defend her Wimbledon title. Sarah Palfrey Cooke was also notified of her suspension, even though she was no longer active in tournament competition.³¹

I had turned Elwood Cooke down because it wasn't enough money, but I got suspended anyway. They wanted total control of us. I remember that even after I'd already won the nationals I was still working as a waitress. That's just the way things were. I really didn't realize I was being exploited until the suspension.”³²

-- Pauline Betz Addie, 2005

In Paris the next day, Betz told a reporter that the USLTA action “sort of nudges me toward professionalism. I don't want to sit in a corner. I want to play tennis. If I can't play amateur tennis, I'll play professional tennis. But I cannot say now either that I will remain an amateur or turn professional. I really do not know what I will do.”³³ On May 5, 1947 after Betz returned home from Europe, Elwood Cooke announced that the two champions had officially become professionals and would play a series of matches

throughout the United States, opening the tour in Betz' hometown of Los Angeles, California on June 7.³⁴

Four years later, another highly-ranked American woman was suspended by the USLTA for violating the amateur rule. In the spring of 1950, Dorothy Head – the ninth-ranked American woman – embarked on a world tour, financed in part from money she had earned as a realtor in Berkeley, California. Along with seven other players, including Americans Fred Kovaleski and Irvin Dorfman, Head traveled to the French Riviera to play in the famed tournament at Monte Carlo. From there, the group appeared at tournaments in Greece, Egypt, the Philippines and other locations. After being abroad for an entire year, the USLTA ordered the American players to return home immediately. “We have been very lenient with them,” USLTA president Russell B. Kingman told the Associated Press. “If they had been paying their own way they could stay there as long as they wanted to, but living off the sport is an entirely different thing.”³⁵ The American players had to appear before the USLTA Rules Committee before the suspension was lifted, which meant that Head was forced to miss the 1951 French Championships as well as Wimbledon. The trio was eventually reinstated in July, just in time for Head to win the first of her four U. S. national clay court titles.

Later that summer, the USLTA took unprecedented action when it suspended a player for unsportsmanlike conduct. In a fourth-round match at the U. S. National Championships, Earl Cochell – ranked seventh in the nation – won the first set against fourth-ranked Gardner Mulloy. As his forehand became stronger in the second set, Mulloy took a comfortable lead and Cochell blasted a ball out of the court in frustration. Trailing 2-5, Cochell played the entire game with his racquet switched to his left hand, which drew a chorus of boos from the stadium crowd.³⁶

Cochell occasionally served underhand in the third set, and the spectators whistled and jeered his performance while loudly cheering every time Mulloy won a point. After shaking his racquet at the crowd behind him, Cochell went to the the umpire's chair and requested to use the microphone to address the spectators. The umpire refused, and Cochell continued to play half-heartedly. Mulloy easily won the third set 6-1, after which the players walked to the locker room for a ten-minute intermission.³⁷

*When I got behind Gar, my strategy was to save myself for the next two sets. I'd done it before and so had thousands of other tennis players ... I used to serve that way on occasion and even picked up a point now and then. I wasn't clowning. But the fans didn't like it. In all the years I played tennis I'd never been booed. I didn't like it. That's when I really fell apart. That's when I really came unglued.*³⁸

-- Earl Cochell, February 1986

During the break in the locker room, tournament referee Ellsworth Davenport approached Cochell to warn him that his behavior could result in a disqualification from the match. According to Ellsworth, Cochell interrupted the lecture, using "profane and obscene language that was insulting to the referee."

*He could have said, "Earl, what's the matter?" But he didn't. So that triggered me to say something like, "You're taking up my rest time, now you get the hell out of here before I hit you."*³⁹

-- Earl Cochell, 1986

Cochell returned to the court and played listlessly, and Mulloy won the fourth set 6-2 to finish the match. Two days later, the USLTA Executive Committee decided to suspend Cochell for conduct that was "unsportsmanlike and detrimental to the welfare of the game." Cochell left New York immediately after the match, driving home to California and stopping to visit his mother in Texas along the way, where he learned of his suspension. He never played competitive tennis at the national level again, and he never applied for reinstatement with the USLTA.⁴⁰ Although Gardner Mulloy was on the USLTA Executive Committee in 1951, he was not involved in any of the discussions to suspend Cochell.

After the verdict, I contacted Earl and suggested he write an apology to the USLTA, and as a player member of the executive committee, I could probably

have the sentence reduced to one year. Earl's answer was, "To hell with it, I wouldn't give them the satisfaction." ⁴¹

-- Gardner Mulloy, 2009

Three years later, Mulloy – the top-ranked men's singles player in the nation – was suspended for six months for his actions as the tournament director of the City of Miami Tournament in Florida. The USLTA accused him of giving some tournament participants more than the daily allowance of fifteen dollars (the daily expense limit for players was increased from eight dollars to twelve dollars in 1947, and then increased again in 1952 to fifteen dollars). Mulloy was also accused of reducing the expense amounts that were promised to other players in order to make up the difference. His suspension, which ran from September 24, 1954 to March 24, 1955, was called by amateur rules chairman Harold A. Lebar "the stiffest penalty in my memory." ⁴²

The USLTA, our governing body, has always put the fear of suspension in its players and has more rules than a tax form. Thank goodness this is being slowly changed ... I was once suspended from tournaments for six months for not turning in a tournament expenses report on time. Many other players have been suspended because of court behavior. Yet a baseball player is considered a "great competitor" if he violently argues a decision but a tennis player is unsportsmanlike if he lifts an eyebrow to a linesman who gave him a bad call ... But officials are a peculiar bunch – too many get a vicarious thrill out of being unreasonable – always punish the athletes, who can't fight back. ⁴³

-- Gardner Mulloy, 1958

In 1954, the USLTA relaxed its rule about amateurs working for sporting goods firms. Previously, amateur players in the United States who worked for sporting goods firms could remain eligible for competition only if they were past their thirty-fifth birthdays and had worked for the company for at least ten years. The new rule only required that a player, if employed by a sporting good firm, be at least 21-years-old. "It

has been the practice for the Australian players,” wrote Allison Danzig of the *New York Times*, “as well as those of most other nations, to have paying connections with sporting goods firms. By this arrangement, they are able to devote themselves to tennis without worrying about earning a livelihood. Now it will be possible for Americans to make the same arrangements for the years in which they are in their tennis prime.”⁴⁴

The eight weeks rule, which limited the length of time for which players could receive expenses, was rescinded by the USLTA in 1953. In its place, it was determined that “no player may negotiate for expenses to play in any tournament or match outside the United States unless the foreign association or club has been granted permission by the USLTA to pay such expenses. No player may accept expenses to play in any tournament or match outside the United States unless permission to receive expenses shall have been granted by the USLTA.”⁴⁵

Two years later, the rule was made more specific by requiring players to first receive permission from their sectional associations before applying to the USLTA to play overseas. This gave the sectional associations a great amount of bargaining power. For example, 1947 Wimbledon finalist Tom Brown was invited to return to the tournament seventeen years later – at the age of forty-four – and the Northern California Tennis Association decided to send him with the understanding that he would support the section’s most important event later in the year.⁴⁶

May 18, 1964

Dear Mr. Brown,

The Executive Committee of the Northern California Tennis Association met yesterday at the Peninsula Tennis Club in Burlingame. After some discussion, it was decided to approve your player application for international competition at Wimbledon. We were unhappy that you did not compete in the National Men’s 35 Hard Court Championships in Mill Valley. We expect you to play in the Pacific Coast International in Berkeley in September. Your application for

international play has been approved and forwarded to Bill Clothier on this date. Wishing you every success as a representative from Northern California.

Sincerely,
Bill Hoogs, President

If permission was granted to play in foreign tournaments and receive expenses, “no changes or additions to the original schedule may be made without first obtaining to do so from the USLTA.” The rule was revised again a few years later, deeming that “no player, man or woman, seeking or receiving expenses will be granted permission to play in foreign tournaments, prior to April 15th or after the last day of Wimbledon, except under unusual circumstances which must be approved by the International Play Committee. Failure to comply with the above policy will subject player to suspension by the USLTA.” This rule was devised to force American players to return home to play on the summer clay court and grass court circuits. It was also an effort to restrict Americans from negotiating and receiving relatively lucrative under-the-table appearance fees in foreign tournaments, especially in Europe where expense regulations were much more liberal than those in the United States.

Hugh Stewart, the eleventh-ranked American, violated USLTA regulations regarding foreign tournaments twice in the course of four months in 1957. After obtaining permission from the Northern California Tennis Association and the USLTA to play in several spring tournaments in Europe, Stewart broke the rules by adding the Naples International to his itinerary. The USLTA did not learn of his participation until he reached the semifinals of the tournament in Naples, and suspended him immediately. After a series of trans-Atlantic telegrams in which Stewart offered an “abject apology,” the USLTA quickly reinstated the tall Californian with the understanding that he would return to the United States immediately after Wimbledon.⁴⁷

After losing in the third round of Wimbledon, Stewart stayed in Europe to play more tournaments. USLTA officials were not pleased. “Stewart was allowed to play in a full European program preceding and including Wimbledon, for which we got him

expense monies,” said Harold Lehair, chairman of the USLTA International Play Committee. “He was told to come home after Wimbledon. Instead he played at Bastaad, Sweden. When we saw his name in the news reports, we sent him a cable advising him of the violation. He didn’t answer. Instead, he went to Dusseldorf to play. We sent a second cable. No answer. Then he showed up at Gstaad. We dispatched a third cable which we know for certain was received. Still no answer. Then yesterday his name showed up in the tournament in Hamburg.” While Stewart was competing in the four tournaments and remained incommunicative, Lehair recommended that the USLTA Executive Committee suspend him.⁴⁸

*I found out that tennis players were treated humanely in Europe. At Southhampton, on the eastern grass court circuit in the United States, they put you up in a squash court and kicked you out as soon as you lost in the tournament. When I found out how nice things were in Europe, I wanted to stay and play there. The USLTA was awful, it was ridiculous.*⁴⁹

-- Hugh Stewart, 2015

On August 6, 1957, USLTA president Renville McMann announced that Stewart was under suspension, and that the ILTF and other national tennis associations in Europe would be notified to reject his entry for any future events. “Stewart has been violating our policies for a period of two years or so,” Harold Lehair said on behalf of McMann and the USLTA, “but most of the time he has made excuses and we have let him off. This time has gone too far in complete disregard for our instructions.”⁵⁰ Before any USLTA communications reached Europe, Stewart was able to get in one more tournament, losing in the singles final of a small international event in Belgium. When he returned home in August, he was not allowed to play in the U. S. National Championships or any other tournaments in the United States, and he was not listed in the USLTA men’s singles rankings at the end of the year. Stewart’s suspension was lifted in January 1958, after which he resumed played national and international tournaments.

William J. Clothier II, whose father won the men's singles title at the 1906 U. S. National Championships, played the Eastern grass court circuit from 1935 to 1938. In 1948, he took charge of the Pennsylvania Lawn Tennis Championships, held at the Merion Cricket Club in Haverford, Pennsylvania, and transformed the tournament from a local event into a favorite stop on the international calendar.⁵¹ Clothier was named to the USLTA International Play Committee in the late 1950s and became chairman of the committee in 1965. One of the most powerful USLTA officials of the 1960s, Clothier determined which Americans would receive financial assistance for overseas trips in the summer. His committee also enforced the rule that forbid U. S. players from receiving expenses in European tournaments that were held after Wimbledon.

*Aside from the per diem, the USLTA held another whip – the overseas tour. For example, a man named Bill Clothier of Philadelphia was heavily involved with the Pennsylvania Grass Court Championships, and he was also the chairman of the USLTA's International Play Committee, the one that decided which players were allowed foreign trips and which ones weren't. One year he told me he couldn't give me too much money, but if I played his tournament he'd see to it that I could spend a few extra weeks in Europe, or wherever, and really make a bundle. That way he wouldn't have to get his hands too dirty.*⁵²

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

*The thing I remember most is the absolute authority of Bill Clothier. He was from Philadelphia, the USLTA representative for the international circuit, and he could tell you when to go to the bathroom if he wanted. He'd come around the second week of Wimbledon, hand you your fifty pounds, and say, "See you at Merion in three weeks." You showed up at Merion in three weeks. He wasn't a tyrant. I like Bill. He was a nice guy. But those were the rules. You were allowed one week abroad after Wimbledon, and then you had to come home. You were at the mercy of the national association."*⁵³

-- Arthur Ashe, 1978

Mike Belkin incurred the wrath of Clothier when he neglected to seek permission to compete in two foreign tournaments in August 1965. Belkin, the nineteenth-ranked American that year, was competing in the Ontario International Tournament when he decided to withdraw from the following week's Canadian National Championships in Toronto due to a cold. The tournament organizers in Toronto, upset about the loss of their number-two seed, filed a protest with the USLTA. This came as a surprise to members of the International Play Committee, who had no clue that Belkin was playing outside of the United States after Wimbledon. A six-week suspension was immediately imposed, forcing Belkin to miss the Maccabiah Games in Israel as well as the U.S. National Championships at Forest Hills. "I think Mike will come out a better man," said Ralph Belkin about his son. "I believe they could have been more severe... it is a good lesson ... he should realize the importance of following the rules now."⁵⁴

I'll tell you a funny story in passing. The USLTA would force all American players to come back to the States right after Wimbledon and play in the U. S. events – even if we could get more money and a better growing-up experience playing in Europe. It also would have helped someone like me learn to play on clay earlier. But there was one male U. S. player – just some lone guy – who was allowed to stay over and play the full European circuit every summer. He went everywhere. And you know what? He was CIA. He was just like the character Robert Culp played, only fifteen years before I Spy went on TV.⁵⁵

-- Billie Jean King, 1982

William Clothier eventually became the Vice President of USLTA in 1968, and many years later it was revealed – previously unknown to the players and other USLTA officials – that he had been a spy for the U. S. government during World War II, and eventually during the Cold War. After earning a degree in anthropology from Harvard University in 1938, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) sent Clothier to Peru, Chile and Cuba under the pretense of doing archaeological research. From 1952 to 1979, he worked for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), providing informants from Eastern

Europe with new identities and employment in the United States. For one Hungarian spy, for example, he secured a curator position at a Philadelphia museum. Clothier also helped to gather intelligence from foreign countries, and having certain American players remain in Europe to play tournaments alongside competitors from Communist nations was a convenient strategy – even if it raised the eyebrows of other unsuspecting players who were forced to return home after Wimbledon.⁵⁶

Earl Cochell was not the only player to be disciplined by the USLTA for unsportsmanlike conduct. Two of America's brightest young stars, Bob McKinley and Dennis Ralston, were disciplined by the national association in the early 1960s. During a Davis Cup doubles match against Italy – played in Perth, Australia in December 1960 – the 19-year-old McKinley threw his racquet into the crowded stands after losing match point. When he learned about the incident, USLTA president George Barnes told Robert Lipsyte of the *New York Times* that “the boy should be barred from international play for at least six months. We can't let incidents of this nature by without penalty or the game will get out of hand – especially now, with so many younger players representing this country throughout the world.”⁵⁷ McKinley's suspension from tournament play was lifted at the USLTA annual meeting the following February.

McKinley's doubles partner, 19-year-old Dennis Ralston, was suspended in August 1961 for his conduct during a Davis Cup doubles match against the Mexican team of Rafael Osuna and Antonio Palafox in Cleveland, Ohio. Referee Maurey D. Kallie reported that Ralston “forcefully threw his racket four times, pounded the net with his racket, picked up a ball after losing a point and pounded it into the net four times as hard as he could hit it, repeatedly swore quite audibly ... The crowd started to boo and shouted to act like a gentleman.” Ralston was still under a one-year probation that was placed on him by the USLTA for several outbursts throughout 1960.⁵⁸

On August 28, 1961 – one week after the Davis Cup match in Cleveland – Ralston and McKinley won the U. S. National Doubles Championships at the Longwood Cricket Club in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts with a four-set win over Osuna and Palafox. “On the last day of the national doubles, I finished at 7:30 in the evening,” Ralston said later. “I found a letter from an official telling me to be in New York the next morning for

a hearing before the committee on the charges. I was in Boston and had no way of getting to New York. I tried to call three persons on the committee with no luck, and I finally sent a telegram saying I wouldn't be there.”⁵⁹

The next day Ralston was suspended indefinitely, which meant he would not be allowed to play in the U. S. National singles championship at the West Side Tennis Club in Forest Hills, New York. “Ralston's conduct on the court certainly is not angelic. I do not approve of his conduct at all,” said Olen Parks, who umpired the match in Cleveland, “but far too much is being made out of this incident.”⁶⁰ Two telegrams were sent to USLTA president George Barnes in Chicago – one from forty-five men players, including seven of the eight seeds at Forest Hills, and one from ten members of the U. S. National Championships tournament committee, including *New York Times* sportswriter Allison Danzig – imploring the immediate reinstatement of Ralston.⁶¹ On September 1, Barnes polled the other members of the USLTA Executive Committee, who overwhelmingly favored Ralston's suspension.⁶²

On September 9, the USLTA announced that Ralston would be suspended from tournament play until the end of the year. The U. S. National mixed doubles final, postponed at Longwood due to rain and scheduled to be played at Forest Hills, would not be played. Margaret Smith and Robert Mark were the default winners over Ralston and Darlene Hard; it was the only time a major championship final was not played due to a player's suspension. Ralston was preparing to tee off on a California golf course when he was told of the decision by telephone. “This is a funny way to be notified,” he said.⁶³ Ralston had earlier contended that his position as the third-ranked American player put his actions under more scrutiny than lesser-known players, insisting that “all of the players lose their tempers some time. With some of them it is just that no official is around to see and so nothing happens to them.” An article in *Sports Illustrated* magazine indicated that some tennis fans were suspicious about the suspension; the USLTA, they said, “was desperately trying to make amends for its past laxity in condoning behavior that was far worse than Ralston's.”⁶⁴

An editorial in the September 11, 1961 issue of *Sports Illustrated* lambasted the decision, arguing “whether Ralston is guilty or not, the USLTA has added another to its

long list of bungled and misleading decisions. The young rowdies of tennis should be punished when they are indeed guilty of rowdyism, but such verdicts should not come from hurry-up hearings scheduled overnight after maundering delays. It will take an organization with more backbone and better eyesight than the USLTA to straighten out amateur tennis.”⁶⁵ USLTA president George Barnes responded, writing that the editorial “made no mention that Ralston was already under suspension for misconduct in 1960 during the Irish Championships in Dublin, the junior championships at Kalamazoo and the Australian Championships. We of the USLTA are endeavoring to operate a democratic organization, not an autocratic one where hasty decisions are made. Ralston was suspended as promptly as possible after the Amateur Rules Committee was furnished with detailed charges from the official referee at Cleveland. As president, I could not have acted without this committee’s approval. Moreover, the committee and I felt that it would be unfair to Ralston’s doubles partner, Chuck McKinley, to remove him from the doubles, since his own suspension had been lifted only a few months before.”⁶⁶ In the same issue of *Sports Illustrated*, two other letters showed the differences of opinion on Ralston’s suspension.

I don’t know anything about the USLTA, but I do know this guy Dennis Ralston is a spoiled brat. I’ve seen him on many occasions pull some baby act that made him top candidate for a punch in the nose. If the Davis Cup depends on this type of individual, then leave it with the Aussies.⁶⁷

What you say about the ineptitude of the USLTA is true, and many of us tennis players are aware of the situation. Until they oust the small-thinking old-timers from positions of influence, the organization, along with all of U. S. tennis, will remain at a standstill.⁶⁸

1962 Wimbledon women’s singles champion Karen Hantze Susman was suspended by the USLTA after she refused to play her first-round match at the 1965 U. S. National Championships. Susman finished 1964 ranked fourth in the United States and

eighth in the world; despite limited play and mediocre results in 1965, she expected to be seeded at Forest Hills and receive the expense allowance of \$28 per day. The tournament committee disagreed; not only was Susman unseeded and unfunded, she had the misfortune of drawing the number-one seed, Margaret Smith, in the first round.⁶⁹

Susman withdrew from the tournament and returned home to St. Louis, saying later that she needed financial assistance in order to stay in the tournament and that her pride had been “destroyed.”⁷⁰

Richard Sorlien, chairman of the USLTA Amateur Rules Committee, initially recommended that Susman receive a written reprimand from association president Martin Tressel. The Executive Committee, however, determined that her action was “unjustified and detrimental to the national championship and tennis in general.” On December 6, 1965, the USLTA announced that the former Wimbledon champion would be suspended from tournament competition until April 1 of the following year.⁷¹ Susman said the decision was “no real shock. I am familiar with the antiquated methods which the USLTA employs in its retaliatory dealings with players. This will not dampen my interest in tennis nor my spirit to compete in the future.”⁷²

Susman did not play competitive tennis again for the next ten years, deciding instead to devote time to her husband and young daughter. Her reaction to USLTA policy was typical of many Americans who played under the control of the national association from the 1920s through the 1960s. As long as the USLTA continued to be heavy-handed and dictatorial, many of the top players had no reservations about circumventing its regulations regarding financial restrictions.

Shamateurism

Shamateurism – the practice of giving amateur athletes under-the-table payments or excessive amounts of expense money – developed during the growth of organized sports in the United Kingdom and the United States in the nineteenth century. Prevalent in amateur tennis until the late 1960s, shamateurism was synonymous with hypocrisy. In the United States, many of the tournament directors who paid amateur players to play in their events were also USLTA officials at the sectional and national level.

Suzanne Lenglen, the French star of the 1920s, was one of the first tennis players to receive substantial amounts of money as an amateur. If she wanted to play in a particular tournament, she would often wager with the promoter on whether or not she would arrive to play. Lenglen would then show up – winning the wager, usually one thousand pounds – and then she would play her matches and win the tournament.⁷³

Lenglen's successor, Helen Wills of California, insisted that she "never took money for tennis ... I was always strictly an amateur."⁷⁴ However, Bobby Riggs – another Californian who was a prominent amateur in the 1930s – rarely missed an opportunity to make some cash during his amateur career. After Riggs won the U. S. National Clay Court Championships in 1936, nearly every tournament director in the nation wanted his participation.

I now learned about the expenses racket and how it worked behind the hypocritical front put up by amateur officials. Once I got into the ranks of the top ten, I never had a problem supporting myself – and for two years a wife and child – as a so-called amateur player. Tournament chairmen would bid against each other for my services. I can remember being paid \$500 cash, plus full accommodations, hotel and meals, and transportation to a small tournament in Neenah, Wisconsin, as far back as 1937. Sometimes a chairman who was trying to stay technically within the rules would bet me \$100 I couldn't jump over the tennis net two or three times in a row. I never lost any of those bets.⁷⁵
 -- Bobby Riggs, 1973

Riggs successfully defended his title at the U. S. National Clay Court Championships for two years, and his opponent in the 1937 final received a lucrative offer after the match. Gardner Mulloy was a 24-year-old student at the University of Miami who created a stir by defeating second-seeded Wayne Sabin in the semifinals before losing to Riggs in a hard-fought final.

Following the match, in which Riggs beat me in five sets, I was met by two officials in the dressing room who seemed very eager to talk to me. They wanted me to play in the Tri State Championships the following week in Cincinnati, with all expenses paid. Since I had committed to a tournament in Dallas that week, my answer was unfortunately no. Then they offered me a bonus of \$200. Wow! This was during the Great Depression. I had never seen a \$50 bill nor been offered tournament expenses. As tempted as I was, my answer was still no. The ante went up to expenses plus \$250, then \$300. I was stunned and tempted but couldn't accept, and I declined on two principles: the offer was illegal by USLTA rules, and I had given my word to another championship. Finally the men became irritated, but before stomping out they threatened me with sanctions by the USLTA for not participating in a major event. They contended a major event superseded an unimportant smaller tournament! Keeping my word and breaking the rules was obviously meaningless to these USLTA officials.⁷⁶

-- Gardner Mulloy, 2009

As Mulloy became one of the best players in the nation, eventually earning the nation's number-one ranking in 1952, he felt more comfortable in accepting cash from tournament directors. In 1976, long after his amateur career had ended, Mulloy recalled his experiences with shamateurism.

...we got money under the table ... reporters used to question us a lot about it a great deal. We always denied it because we had to ... We ended up with about \$10,000 clear at the end of the year. The USLTA used to fight us on this because it was supposed to be an amateur sport. We can tell this now, of course, but in retrospect, while we denied getting the money I think we were justified in taking it. It was the officials of the USLTA then who were breaking the rules. They were the ones offering the money. If they hadn't offered it to play in their tournaments we wouldn't have gotten it.⁷⁷

-- Gardner Mulloy, 1976

Frank Kovacs left amateur tennis and became a professional in late 1941, the day after the USLTA suspended him for violating the expense limit regulation. “Amateur tennis stinks,” he said at the time. “There’s no money in it anymore.” In March 1946, while competing professionally in Miami Beach, Florida, Kovacs expressed his surprise at the controversy his comments from five years earlier had caused. “I thought everybody knew,” he said. “The Pacific Southwest Championships at Los Angeles put up the most. They paid Riggs eight hundred dollars one time ...I’m a pro now and earn twice as much as I did as an amateur. But I earned plenty as an amateur. I had to, in order to live. I’ve received from two hundred dollars up a tournament – that’s over and above expenses. The tournament committees make no bones about paying it, because they know they can’t get the top players in the tournaments unless they do.”⁷⁸ Tournament directors insisted on paying in cash and not with checks, Kovacs said, so there would be no proof of the transaction.⁷⁹

Kovacs recalled that he never received any money that exceeded allowable daily expenses at the U. S. National Championships in New York. “They don’t have to pay off there,” he said. “They’ve got you. If you don’t go in that tournament, you just don’t rank nationally.” Kovacs asserted that “all top amateur stars are being paid plenty now” and that it was time to “cut out the kidding the public” and consider all tournament players as professionals.⁸⁰

One of the amateur stars of the late 1940s that Kovacs may have been referring to was Jack Kramer. At the time of Kovac’s comments in Miami Beach, Kramer was a three-time U. S. National men’s doubles champion and the winner of the 1941 U. S. National mixed doubles title; a few months later, he would win the Wimbledon men’s doubles and the first of his two men’s singles titles at Forest Hills. As one of the most promising American amateurs, Kramer capitalized on his fame whenever he could.

Sometimes the promoters wouldn’t even have the courtesy to pay you man-to-man. They made the players themselves scrap over a joint fee. Like at Jacksonville one time early in 1941, four of us were given \$750. And just our luck, Riggs is one of the four. Right away he chirps up that he should get \$300.

Kovacs says that if Bobby is worth \$300, so is he. Wayne Sabin, subtracting quickly, demands \$100 of what is left. And what was left of the \$750 after that was \$50 for me.

Early in 1947, a bunch of us were touring Florida again. With postwar inflation, an offer to play Daytona came to \$1500 this time. Naturally we grabbed it and divvied it up, and since I was the champion, I got the lion's share. A few months later on my way to Wimbledon, I was notified to drop by the offices of the USLTA and meet with Holcombe Ward, who was the president ... he pulled out a clipping from a Daytona newspaper which said that I had been among a group of players who had taken \$2500 for playing. He handed me the clipping and said, "Is this true, Jack?" I read it and handed it back. "No sir," I said. "I didn't think so," Mr. Ward said.

Of course the only reason the clipping wasn't accurate was that it had us splitting \$2500 when in fact we had cut up \$1500. I'm not proud that I was just being technically honest. But the truly sad thing is that any tennis official might think the article wasn't true. How did he imagine I managed to eat and travel and support a family? ⁸¹

-- Jack Kramer, 1979

Kramer left the amateur ranks and USLTA jurisdiction two months later, after winning the Wimbledon singles for the first time and defending his title at Forest Hills in 1947. He played professionally for several years and then promoted his own professional tour. In the spring of 1955, he wrote an expose for *This Week* magazine, a Sunday newspaper supplement. In "I was a Paid Amateur," Kramer told a national audience that he "took money for playing tennis – over and above expenses and transportation ... This will be news to the USLTA, whose governing body, had it known I was being paid by tournament sponsors, would have thrown me out of the game on my head." Kramer insisted in the article that he was not trying to embarrass the USLTA, but hoped that his argument for open tennis – in which all players would earn prize money above-the table – would "take the hypocrisy out of amateur tennis." ⁸²

Kramer's article was not received well by the USLTA. "Jack has done tennis a distinct disservice and I am greatly surprised," said one unidentified tennis official who spoke with Associated Press sportswriter Will Grimsley. "He is now a professional and does not fall under our jurisdiction, but there may be other ways to show him our displeasure."⁸³ In July, Kramer told reporters that he had been quietly removed from his position with the USLTA junior development program, popularly known as Kramer Kids, in which a selected squad of boys were chaperoned through the eastern grass court circuit. "I was told I was no longer connected with the program," Kramer said. "The USLTA was afraid to issue a public denial of my comments because they knew they were true. So they did the next best the next best thing. They kicked me out on my ear. The action was not announced officially. I think they wanted to keep it quiet."⁸⁴

Five years later, two young Americans who had previously participated in the USLTA junior development program – Barry MacKay and Earl Buchholz – signed three-year contracts to play on Kramer's professional tour, each worth \$50,000 per year. "I feel wonderful for the first time," said the 20-year-old Buchholz at the tour opening in Sydney, Australia on December 21, 1960. "All our lives we are taught honesty. It gives us a dirty feeling to take money under the table as amateurs. What makes it worse is that amateur tennis officials know that these abuses are taking place and they accept them. It is a real thrill for me to be a pro."⁸⁵

USLTA officials took issue with the comments made by Buchholz. "I feel sure that Mr. Buchholz is referring to world tennis and not to tennis in the United States," said USLTA president George Barnes. "If that is so, then he is correct. Other countries do not observe the amateur rules as we do. I know of no cases in this country where players are paid under the table."⁸⁶ First vice-president Ed Turville was less diplomatic. "If a tennis player wants to take money under the table, by his own act he is showing his dishonesty," he said. "Certainly, he is going to going to speak well of his profession. I am glad they are turning professional."⁸⁷

Shamateurism in tennis received more national exposure five years later when a profile on Roy Emerson of Australia, probably the best male amateur player of the 1960s (after Rod Laver became professional in 1962), appeared in the *New York Times Sunday*

Magazine in the spring of 1965. Harry Gordon's article, entitled "Best and 'Best-Paid' Amateur," disclosed that Emerson made so much money from amateur tennis he had recently rejected an offer to play on the professional tour. Emerson had the stature to command \$1000 or more per tournament, was a "racquet consultant" for Slazenger, and he was given a position by tennis fanatic Joseph Cullman and his Philip Morris tobacco company as a "public relations officer" – even though he did not smoke. "Mostly the job consists of looking good on the court," Gordon wrote, "and carrying packs of cigarettes around." ⁸⁸

When Emerson and his doubles partner Fred Stolle played on the U. S. circuit later that summer, they each received \$500 per tournament. At the U. S. National Championships that year, Manuel Santana of Spain and Cliff Drysdale of South Africa were also given \$500 to play. ⁸⁹ Maria Bueno, the Brazilian who won four singles titles at Wimbledon and four at Forest Hills, commanded the most money among the women; when she played at the U. S. Nationals at Forest Hills in 1966, she was given a \$1000 appearance fee. ⁹⁰ These offers and payments came from each tournament's director or committee, not from the USLTA office; ironically, however, many of the tournament directors or committee members were USLTA officials at the national or sectional level.

Many American players were annoyed that the tournament directors on the Eastern grass court circuit paid only the allowable daily expense amount (if they so desired) while giving the foreign stars more lucrative payments. Americans were required to play in the eastern tournaments if they wanted to be listed in the national rankings, so they had little bargaining power at the national doubles championships in Boston or the national singles championships in New York. At the singles championships, the tournament committee had a policy of giving daily allowable expense money only to the seeded players. If, however, a foreign star wanted to play at Forest Hills, he or she would receive the customary amount of expense money for being a seed, in addition to any under-the-table appearance fees that were negotiated and agreed upon.

We could always make more money in a foreign country than we could in the United States – other national associations were even more lax than the USLTA,

*and foreign players on our circuit, the Europeans, South Americans, and Australians, really cleaned up over here. Especially the Australians, who totally dominated world tennis in those years. It was a standing joke that players like Roy Emerson couldn't afford to turn pro because they'd have to take a pay cut. The foreigners actually used to laugh at us Americans. While we were stuck with our maximum \$28 per diem, they were raking in \$900, \$1000, and up per tournament, depending on their talent and bargaining power.*⁹¹

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

*Emerson and I were getting fifteen hundred a week. We had come to an agreement between ourselves to ask for that and most of the tournaments could easily afford it. When I went to Australia in 1965 to play the Davis Cup final, the Australian Lawn Tennis Association wanted me to play in their championships. But when I told them the price, they refused. So I didn't play ...*⁹²

-- Manuel Santana, 1988

Nancy Richey and Maria Bueno won the Wimbledon women's doubles title in 1966 and played together again at the U. S. National Doubles Championships in Boston later that summer. After winning the title, the American went to collect her allowable \$196 in expense money for the week, carrying the letter that confirmed the arrangement. She was told by the tournament director that since she played with a foreigner (who was certainly receiving a lucrative appearance fee), the expense payment was void. It took Billy Talbert, a well-respected figure in American tennis, to convince the tournament director to honor the agreement.⁹³

American players were able to make better arrangements at tournaments in the Midwest, South and West. Nancy Richey negotiated to receive \$250 to play in the U. S. National Clay Court Championships in Indianapolis and the same amount for the Western Championships in Cincinnati in the late 1960s – only \$54 more per week than what was allowed under the official expense limit.⁹⁴ While Billie Jean King was given the standard allowable expense payment of \$196 for the week when she played at the 1967

U. S. National Clay Court Championships, the tournament committee found a creative way to legally double her payment. The committee entered her husband Larry, who was a club-level player, in the men's singles draw and allotted \$196 for him as well.

*Larry's a pretty good weekend player, but even he'd admit he didn't deserve entry into a circuit tournament, let alone a national championship. When we found out what they'd done, we talked a long time about it. He didn't want to play because he's probably be bumping some deserving junior player from the draw, but on the other hand, it was the recognition of my worth that we'd been striving for, and besides we were in a really bad box financially, so we went ahead ... nothing that was actually illegal. Still, it was pretty uncomfortable.*⁹⁵

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Billie Jean King earned a total of \$20,000 in allowable expenses and under-the-table payments in 1967, her final year as an amateur. She was the world's top-ranked female tennis player and in great demand for tournaments throughout the world. She was always, however, uncomfortable with the shamateur system that rewarded the top players in the sport.

*... when you come from a background of honor and fair labor, as I did, and then are thrust into an environment where "respectable" people of consequence and privilege are cheating and lying as a matter of course, it is a shattering experience.*⁹⁶

-- Billie Jean King, 1982

At the 1967 U. S. National Championships, the outspoken Californian expressed her frustration with American amateur tennis. "I am Wimbledon champion and rated the number one woman player in the world and I get twenty-eight dollars a day in expenses," she said. "We are at a big disadvantage in America. European players in European tournaments make a killing. Maria Bueno, in Brazil, can demand and get anything she

wants. But not us. We aren't allowed to make a private tour and we get our meager expenses and that's all ⁹⁷ ... I've been offered twelve hundred dollars a week to play in Europe. I'd love to do it, but the USLTA insists that I return to America to play our own tournaments for straight expenses and I can't make much doing that. Why shouldn't I make money? Or anybody else? The tournaments make money on us players. The whole amateur-pro situation is stupid. As soon as it opens up for both men and women, the game will be moving ⁹⁸ ... Listen, we should all be pros – the players would like it better.” ⁹⁹ Six months later, with open tennis on the horizon, Billie Jean King signed a professional contract that removed her from the shamateurism system and propelled her on to another cause: a campaign to achieve greater prize money for women professional tennis players.

Arthur Ashe, one of the best amateur players in the United States in the 1960s, also realized how open tennis would eliminate shamateurism and change the sport for the better. “Open tennis would get the game on television,” Ashe said in late 1967. “It would improve facilities because it would pay a club to have first-class courts, it would bring in crowds ... it would deter the Internal Revenue Service from knocking on my door to ask for taxes based on tennis income, and it would allow true amateurs to sleep at night ... If we can continue going on like this, while sleeping at night and holding our heads high, we deserve Oscars for impersonating amateurs.” ¹⁰⁰

Professional Tennis in the Pre-Open Era

Until the 1960s, few tennis players made substantial amounts of money by competing as professionals. Becoming a professional meant leaving the jurisdiction of one's national association, no longer being allowed to enter major amateur tournaments such as Wimbledon and the U. S. National Championships, and hoping to earn a living by teaching the game or playing for prize money in an occasional professional event. Starting in the mid-1920s, a select few of the world's best players rescinded their amateur status to go on professional “barnstorming tours,” which were typically head-to-head one-night stands organized by a promoter who hoped to make a profit.

The first well-known tennis player to become a professional was Suzanne Lenglen, the Frenchwoman who won fifteen Wimbledon titles (six of them in singles) and six titles at the French Championships. During an eight-year period, from 1919 through 1926, Lenglen lost only one once, retiring midway through her second-round match – claiming she was ill – against American champion Molla Mallory in her only appearance at the U. S. National Championships in 1921. Lenglen revenged the loss to Mallory in two subsequent matches, winning 6-2 6-0 in the finals of Wimbledon the following summer, followed by a 6-0 6-0 demolition in Nice, France, in early 1923. In the most famous match of her career, Lenglen narrowly defeated Helen Wills – successor to Mallory as America’s best women’s player – in the finals of a small tournament at the Carlton Club on the French Riviera in February 1926.

While worldwide publicity was building for the impending showdown between Lenglen and Wills at the Carlton Club, famed newspaperman and author Damon Runyon pondered the idea of creating a professional tour in the United States with the world’s greatest female tennis player as its headliner. Several weeks later, during a meeting in Chicago with Charles C. Pyle – the small-time theater owner who became a wealthy sports impresario by promoting the professional career of University of Illinois football star Red Grange – Runyon pitched the idea of bringing Lenglen back to the United States. “No way,” someone said, “People hate her!” In addition, it was argued, she was too temperamental and too eccentric for most Americans’ taste. Pyle was instantly intrigued with Runyon’s idea. “The fact that people hated her,” he recalled, “was enough for me. People will pay to see anybody they hate.”¹⁰¹

Lenglen easily won her sixth French singles title over Mary Browne of the United States in the spring of 1926, and would have surely collected three more Wimbledon titles – in singles, doubles and mixed doubles – a few weeks later. During the first week of Wimbledon, the temperamental and high-strung Lenglen became upset when she felt she was not properly notified about her playing schedule, and she left the club without playing her matches. Tournament officials did not want to default the defending champion, and her matches were rescheduled for another day; in the meantime, however, Queen Mary arrived at the club for the sole purpose of watching the French star. When

Lenglen returned to the to play her matches two days later, the spectators – thinking that she had purposely snubbed the Queen – gave her a hostile reception. She was devastated, and two days later she announced that she was too ill to continue playing in the tournament.¹⁰²

Feeling that she was unfairly attacked for the misunderstanding at Wimbledon, Lenglen was ready to leave amateur tennis and play as a professional. Pyle traveled to France in July to get a contract signed, and he did not correct the unfounded rumors that Lenglen would be paid \$200,000 for the upcoming four-month tour.¹⁰³ USLTA officials were relieved to learn the top two women players in the United States, Helen Wills and Molla Mallory, had no interest in leaving the amateur ranks to play professionally; Lenglen, however, disliked both American players and would not have consented to play on a tour with either of them.¹⁰⁴ Pyle eventually secured 35-year-old Mary Browne, who won her first of three national singles titles fourteen years prior and who won only one game from Lenglen in the women's singles final at the French Championships earlier that summer.

Pyle also signed Paul Feret, the fourth-ranked men's singles player in France, to play on the tour. Feret, whose father was the treasurer of Racing Club of France and an ardent support of amateur sports, created a stir when he said his reason for becoming a professional was to get away from the hypocrisy of amateurism. Feret was also very depressed about the recent death of his 19-year-old bride, and he hoped a four-month tour of the United States would provide a diversion.¹⁰⁵

Lenglen and Feret arrived in New York on September 29 aboard the French ocean liner *Paris*, and on the following night Pyle hosted a dinner party in the ship's magnificent dining room. During the meal, Pyle stood up to make an announcement and the room fell silent. Suddenly, Vincent Richards – the winner of nine major doubles titles – and his wife made their entrance, and the crowd cheered when it realized that the American champion was the latest addition to Pyle's tour. "We've got a baby at our house," Richards explained later, "and I've got to make some money. The fame is very nice, but I have discovered that you cannot feed a wife and baby on old newspaper clippings and pewter cups."¹⁰⁶

Pyle rounded out his stable of players by adding Howard Kinsey – ranked sixth in the United States, the winner of the French Championships men’s doubles title with Richards and the Wimbledon singles finalist – as well as Harvey Snodgrass, a California teaching professional who was once ranked sixth in the United States and the winner of the 1925 U. S. National Clay Court men’s doubles title.

On October 2, Pyle took Lenglen and Richards to the opening game of the 1926 World Series between the New York Yankees and the St. Louis Cardinals at Yankee Stadium. As the spectators taunted their own team for barely beating the Cardinals, Pyle seized the opportunity to teach Lenglen an important lesson. Aware of the Frenchwoman’s short temper and concerned about the possibility of hostile American crowds, Pyle told Lenglen, “That’s what you have to expect in this country. The bigger they are, the harder they’re razzed.” Lenglen nodded and smiled. “Yes, I believe I know what you mean,” she said. “If they give me the razz, I laugh, eh?” Pyle was amused. “We shall see,” he responded. “But perhaps it would be advisable for the mademoiselle to put cotton in her ears or wear ear muffs before she goes on the court.”¹⁰⁷

The forty-city tour opened on Saturday, October 9 at Madison Square Garden in front of 13,000 spectators, which included curious USLTA officials. Richards opened the evening’s program with a straight-set win over Feret, followed by the featured match in which Lenglen made quick work of Browne, winning 6-1 6-1 in only thirty-nine minutes. The crowd began to head for the exits during the concluding mixed doubles match, and Lenglen must have been shocked to see customers walking out on her while she played. Despite lukewarm reviews from the spectators and sportswriters, the tour opener was a financial success with gate receipts of \$24,000.¹⁰⁸

Sunday night’s matches in New York attracted about 6000 spectators, and similar-sized crowds watched the matches in Toronto, Baltimore and Boston. By the time the tour reached Baltimore, the concluding mixed doubles match was occasionally replaced with a men’s doubles contest; Browne was exhausted from constantly getting pummeled by Lenglen in their one-sided singles matches. In an attempt to make the women’s singles matches closer, Pyle promised Browne a bonus of \$100 if she won four games in a set, \$200 for winning five games in a match, and \$300 for winning a set.¹⁰⁹

Although only 1500 people came to watch in Cincinnati, Richards happy with the way the tour was progressing. “Professional tennis is sure to go,” he told John Hallahan of the *Boston Globe*. “The tour has been well received everywhere. You can say for me that professional tennis is going to go big and this tour of ours is going to prove and education and an advancement for the sport.” Richards also talked about Pyle’s plan to stage a tennis tournament that would be open to both amateurs and professionals, something never done before. “Professional tennis also will do much to determine the status of a player,” he predicted. “That is, amateurs who receive something on the side will have to come over to the pro side. There are now things in amateur tennis, as in almost every amateur sport, that savors of professionalism. Of course you know as well as I that there should not be any reason why amateurs and professionals should not play in the same tournament. It is permissible in golf, and why not tennis?”¹¹⁰

The tour continued on to Philadelphia, Montreal, Buffalo, Cleveland, Pittsburgh and Columbus. When it arrived in Chicago in mid-November there was serious trouble; Lenglen had become increasingly unhappy. Before a crowd of 6500 at the Chicago Coliseum, she displayed her legendary temper when a photographer continued to take pre-match flash photographs after she asked him to stop. She told him to leave the court, and then she screamed and cursed at him. Fists were thrown when a Coliseum official attempted to physically remove the photographer, and Lenglen swung her racquet at him. While the audience was thoroughly entertained, the incident unnerved Lenglen; she lost the first four games of her match against Browne before regaining her composure and winning 7-5 6-1. While Browne was thrilled to collect a bonus of \$200 for winning five games, Lenglen was furious. After the match, she screamed at Pyle and said she wanted to go home.¹¹¹

Lenglen did not quit, and there were more problems when the tour arrived in the Portland, Oregon. For the first time in their series, Browne stayed even with Lenglen, and the first set reached 8-all. Browne pulled ahead to 9-8 and was within two points of winning the set before Lenglen composed herself and won three straight games. Before the second set started, Lenglen walked off the court and collapsed in her dressing room –

apparently suffering from a cold. When she recovered, she threw her belongings from the dressing room into the hallway, screaming that she was tired of the tour.¹¹²

The troupe traveled down the west coast for two matches in San Francisco, where Helen Wills came to watch and was reportedly unimpressed with Lenglen's performances, followed by an appearance in Los Angeles. The *Los Angeles Times* predicted that Browne, a native of Southern California, had a good chance of winning after playing Lenglen so many times and becoming familiar with her game. "If she was ever in danger of defeat," the newspaper observed, "Suzanne is tonight when she plays Mary Browne. The Santa Monica girl has groomed her game into as near perfection as it has ever been and will have all the incentive of home ground and thousands of friends to help her game. In all the other times they met, it was just another match for Miss Browne, but a victory here would be the peak of glory for her, and if it's humanly possible for her to beat the French star, it will be done tonight." It was not much of a match. In front of 7000 spectators who were stunned into silence, Lenglen did not lose a point in the first set during a 6-0 6-1 demolition of Browne.¹¹³

Pyle remained in California as the group traveled east for one-night stands in San Antonio, Dallas, Houston, New Orleans, Birmingham, Miami and Havana. In mid-February, the tour ended where it had started four months earlier, with matches in New Haven, New York and Providence. As the tour came to a close, Lenglen's father sent a telegram from France, instructing his daughter to refrain from renewing her contract with Pyle; supposedly, there were more lucrative offers from European promoters. At the same time, Pyle announced in Los Angeles that he was finished with professional tennis "until the players make up their minds with whom they wish to play, and realize they are not entitled to increases in pay." Pyle was referring to Baldwin Baldwin, a married playboy who met Lenglen in Los Angeles and joined the tour as it traveled back east as her "manager." Baldwin was more interested in Lenglen as a financial opportunity than a romantic interest, and with Pyle no longer traveling on the tour, he persuaded her that she was being underpaid and deserved either a better contract or a new tour with a different promoter.¹¹⁴

Despite the problems, the tour was a financial success for nearly everyone. Pyle personally made \$100,000, as did Lenglen, whose contract called for \$60,000 plus fifty percent of the tour's gate receipts, which amounted to \$40,000. Richards earned \$35,000, and the other three Americans - Howard Kinsey, Harvey Snodgrass and Mary Browne - were contracted to receive \$15,000 each. Snodgrass, however, only received \$9000 at the end of the series and had to sue Pyle for the remaining \$6000.¹¹⁵

When the tour ended, Mary Browne went to Cleveland to work in a sporting goods store. As a women's professional tennis player, there were no other competitive opportunities for her, and she retired from the game. She was also, however, one of the nation's best golfers, having reached the final round of the 1924 U. S. Amateur Golf Championships. Any hopes she might have had of resuming her amateur golf were dashed on April 20, 1927, when the Executive Committee of the United States Golf Association ruled that Browne "had acted in a manner was ineligible to compete in any American amateur golf tournaments due to her participation on Pyle's tour."¹¹⁶ Three years later, she was surprised and overjoyed when the USGA suddenly lifted the ban and restored her amateur eligibility.¹¹⁷

Suzanne Lenglen hoped that Baldwin Baldwin would stage a professional series in England in the spring of 1927, but it did not materialize. She subsequently agreed to play on a tour, promoted by Englishman Charles B. Cochran, which was identical to Pyle's successful format. Former German champion Dora Koring was Lenglen's patsy for singles matches, and the male players included Howard Kinsey from the Pyle tour, as well as Karel Kozeluh, a teaching instructor from Prague who would become one of the world's best professionals. Cochran's tour of England was not profitable, playing in front of a disappointing number of spectators each time, and after six dates the remaining exhibitions were canceled.¹¹⁸

At the end of 1927, Lenglen considered asking the French Tennis Association to reinstate her amateur status. She closely followed the case of Paul Feret, one of the men who played with her on the Pyle tour. Feret had applied for amateur reinstatement, and his fellow French players supported his request. Renee LaCoste, Henri Cochet and Jean Borotra argued that Feret's decision to become a professional was hastily made while

grieving the death of his young wife. They insisted that Feret was repentant and willing to surrender the money he earned as a professional. Despite the pleas, the French Tennis Association upheld its policy requiring a waiting period of five years before a request for amateur reinstatement could be submitted.¹¹⁹

One year later, in November 1928, Lenglen's father sent a letter to the French newspaper *L'Auto* announcing that his daughter did not want to wait three more years to apply for amateur reinstatement. "Suzanne does not intend to play again," Charles Lenglen wrote, "and if she should ever do so it would be privately, for she has no desire to re-enter the sport." Ironically, the French Tennis Association relaxed its amateur ruling two months later, indicating that "any tennis player formerly belonging to the federation and disqualified for professionalism may be reinstated if, since the action causing disqualification, he has done no other professional playing."¹²⁰ Paul Feret was reinstated as an amateur in the spring of 1929, two years after his last professional match, and he resumed playing tournaments, including the French National Championships.¹²¹ Lenglen was unmoved by Feret's return to amateur competition; by then, she had made up her mind to never compete again.

During the 1930s, Lenglen occasionally attended Wimbledon, the French Championships and tournaments on the Riviera as a spectator, and she taught the game to youngsters at a training center in Paris that was funded by the French Tennis Association. In June 1938 she was diagnosed with pernicious anemia which required a series of blood transfusions. Although her health quickly deteriorated in the course of three weeks, she insisted on following the results from Wimbledon each day. On July 4, two days after Helen Wills won her eighth singles title and confirmed her position as the greatest player Wimbledon had ever seen, Lenglen lost consciousness and died in her sleep.¹²²

The professional tour promoted by C. C. Pyle in 1926 and 1927 was the first time a series of tennis exhibitions, or one-night stands, had ever been staged. However, it was not the first time professionals competed against each other. From 1920 to 1932, the Bristol Cup was held on the French Riviera in December and usually attracted European teaching professionals who were employed at nearby clubs during the winter.¹²³ In the fall of 1926, two Americans traveled to France play in the Bristol Cup: George Agutter,

who taught tennis at the West Side Tennis Club in New York during the summer and at the Palm Beach Tennis Club in Florida during the winter, and Paul Heston, an assistant teaching professional at the West Side and Palm Beach clubs. In addition to competing in the tournament, Agutter planned to exchange ideas with the European players in the hopes of forming a professional tennis association in the United States and stage a professional tournament in Florida.¹²⁴

In March 1927, one month after the Pyle tour ended, Agutter organized the first professional tennis tournament in the United States. The eight-man event, composed of teaching professionals from southern Florida tennis clubs, was played over the course of two days in front of “small but appreciative crowds” at the Palm Beach Tennis Club.¹²⁵ Agutter and Heston, the only players to have previous professional tournament experience, reached the final on their home courts. Heston won 6-2 6-1 6-4 to secure his place in history as the winner of the first American professional tennis tournament.¹²⁶

Although he claimed he was finished with tennis when his tour ended in February 1927, Charles C. Pyle temporarily changed his mind later that summer when he announced plans to hold a series of professional tournaments in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. Pyle wanted to stage the New York tournament in late September at the West Side Tennis Club in Forest Hills, home of the U. S. National Championships. He contacted George Agutter, who promoted the professional tournament in Palm Beach and was teaching for the summer at the West Side Tennis Club, in the hopes of getting the club committee’s approval to stage the event. The USLTA, however, forbid any of its member clubs from hosting professional tournaments, and as Pyle’s plans diminished, so did his interest in ever promoting tennis again.¹²⁷

George Agutter, however, still wanted to pursue the idea of holding a professional tournament in New York. A site for the inaugural U. S. Professional Championships was found at the Notlek Tennis Courts, a small clay-court club in Harlem that was not associated with the USLTA. The owner, Doc Kelton (“Notlek” was his name spelled backward) also developed a massive athletic facility on Eighth Avenue in Manhattan that spanned an entire city block. Kelton put up \$2,000 in prize money for the tournament and installed seating for two thousand spectators.¹²⁸

Vincent Richards and Howard Kinsey were the tournament's top seeds and advanced to the final on September 25, 1927 in front of 1500 spectators. Although Kinsey's use of the lob was effective, the aggressive play of Richards and his usual brilliant volleys earned him the match, 11-9 6-4 6-3, and the first prize of \$1000.¹²⁹ The following day, Richards and Kinsey departed on a coaching and exhibition tour around the world that also included Karel Kozeluh, the Czech teaching professional who won the Bristol Cup in December 1926.

Before Richards and Kinsey left New York, they attended a meeting at the Spalding's sporting goods building for the purpose of forming the Professional Lawn Tennis Association of the United States. The fifteen attendees elected George Agutter as the organization's chairman, and Harry McNeal was chosen to be the secretary-treasurer. A letter was then sent to teaching professionals throughout the nation, inviting them to join the new association.

For some time past there has been a very strong feeling among lawn tennis professionals that there is a need for some organization to protect and promote their interests, and to assist them in obtaining a proper and recognized status in the tennis world. A meeting was accordingly held September 23, and it was decided to form an Association. This meeting was followed by others, at which the following regulations were agreed upon. An initiation fee of ten dollars will be charged to all new members. Dues are to be five dollars annually.

An executive committee has been elected and a constitution adopted. It is the desire of this executive committee to have all tennis professionals of accepted standards become members of this Association. As one of these, you are cordially invited to fill out the enclosed application blank for membership.¹³⁰

Five months later, at its annual meeting in Chicago in February 1928, the USLTA adopted a resolution that recognized the Professional Lawn Tennis Association. The USLTA decided to permit its member clubs to host professional tournaments if a request

for a tournament sanction was submitted and approved.¹³¹ Certainly the financial success of the Pyle tour and the professional tournament at the Notlek Tennis Courts caught the attention of the USLTA, and it hoped to capitalize on future professional events by requiring member clubs pay sanction fees for hosting them.

In the three years following the Pyle tour, Vincent Richards was the key figure for professional tennis in the United States – as a player and a promoter. In the summer of 1928, he traveled to Europe to play against Karel Kozeluh in Prague and London, followed by a tour of twenty cities in the United States. On September 24, three thousand spectators paid two dollars apiece to watch Kozeluh defeat Richards for the third time at the Rip Courts in Manhattan. During the match, Richards was speechless when police officers served summonses on the players and facility staff for staging a sporting event, at which admission was charged, on a Sunday.¹³² Three days later, a judge in the West Side Court dismissed the charges.

Richards finally gained revenge against Kozeluh in the final of the U. S. Professional Championships, played at the West Side Tennis Club with twenty-seven entrants and sanctioned by the USLTA, winning 8-6 6-3 0-6 6-2. Afterwards, they embarked on a two month tour that traveled throughout North America. When the tour concluded in December 1928, Kozeluh had won eighteen matches and Richards had won only five.

The following spring, Richards competed in the second edition of the professional tournament in Palm Beach, Florida. Inaugurated by George Agutter in 1927, the event was not held in 1928 but was resurrected the following year as the Southern Professional Championships. Richards reached the final against Brian Norton, a South African who had relocated to Texas. Norton came very close to winning Wimbledon in 1921, holding two match points against Bill Tilden in the final. After being listed in the USLTA top-ten national singles rankings between 1923 and 1926, Norton decided to relinquish his amateur standing and play as a professional.

Norton easily won the final, hitting forehand and backhand passing shots whenever Richards approached the net. He received \$300 for the victory, but was not entirely happy about his accomplishment. In the course of the four-day tournament,

Norton began to have second thoughts about being a professional. After the final, he traveled to New York and gave his winner's check to USLTA president Holcombe Ward, along with an application for amateur reinstatement. Norton was eventually reinstated, but a chronic knee injury prevented him from playing competitively again and he resumed his professional status by teaching tennis in California.¹³³

Karel Kozeluh was clearly the best professional tennis player in the late 1920s. He won the Bristol Cup for the third time in early 1929, followed by a magnificent match against Richards in the final of the U. S. Pro Championships in September. In front of 6000 enthusiastic spectators, Kozeluh won the first two sets before Richards rebounded to level the match with his exceptional volleying skills. Serving at 5-4 in the fifth set, Richards barely missed a service ace at match point and then netted his shots on three more match point opportunities. Kozeluh leveled at 5-5 and then quickly won two more games from a tiring Richards to complete the 6-4 6-4 4-6 4-6 7-5 victory. Many veteran tennis observers felt it was one of the best matches ever played at the West Side Tennis Club, comparable to the spectacular 1927 U. S. National Championships final in which Rene LaCoste defeated Bill Tilden.¹³⁴

Kozeluh won his fourth Bristol Cup in early 1930, as well as the inaugural French Professional Championships in Paris in June, beating Polish professional Roman Najuch in both finals. Hoping to defend his title at the U. S. Professional Championships, Kozeluh won the first set with the loss of only two games and took a second set lead in the championship match against Richards. The American, however, was determined in his net attack and wrestled the second set from his steady opponent, 10-8. Richards won the next two sets, 6-3 and 6-4, to complete one of the most satisfying wins of his professional career.¹³⁵

Richards and Kozeluh then embarked on a short tour of U. S. cities, with the Czech winning three out of five matches. In October 1930, Richards announced the he was finished with competitive tennis. "I am entering business the first of the year," he told a reporter from the *New York Times*. "It will be brokerage or hotel management. I have not decided yet. I played the best tennis of my life when I won back my crown from Kozeluh last month. I am at the top now, but my legs won't stand the gaff of nine solid

months of play and teaching much longer. I am retiring when I can still break into another field of livelihood. From now on I shall swing a racquet only for exercise.”¹³⁶ Richards’ departure was a significant loss to professional tennis in the United States; with no other American professional to take his place, the future looked bleak.

Two months later, Bill Tilden reinvigorated professional tennis in the United States when he announced his departure from the amateur ranks. The thirty-seven year old Philadelphian had just been ranked number one in the United States for the eleventh time, following a year in which he won Wimbledon for the third time. His decision to become a professional, however, was the result of an offer that Tilden – who had aspirations of a stage and film career – could not refuse.

I had every intention of defending at Wimbledon the following year, and was planning to take another crack at the United States Championships. But one day, in early October, my telephone rang. A voice informed me that Bert Cortelyou was speaking. I knew Cortelyou as a former theatrical promoter in good standing, but had no idea that he was in any way concerned with sports. “Are you interested in turning professional?” he asked ... I was still uncertain; I could not make up my mind to take the leap. “How about movies?” he asked. “Have you ever considered making educational pictures?” This was less than two weeks before the formal announcement that Bobby Jones had been signed by Warners to make a series of golf pictures. I have often wondered since if Bert didn’t know of it. Still, his question about movies really intrigued me. Here was something I had always wanted to do! I had made three silent pictures but now the talkies presented a opportunity irresistibly beckoning. “If you can get me a contract to make pictures, I’ll sign it,” I told Cortelyou. ‘It’ll professionalize me, but if it’s good enough I don’t care.’”¹³⁷

-- Bill Tilden, 1948

In late December 1930, after receiving an offer from the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer film studio to make tennis instructional films, Tilden telephoned USLTA president

Holcombe with the news that he had decided to become a professional.¹³⁸ On January 1, 1931, professional wrestling promoter Jack Curley announced that he was in the process of arranging a nationwide tour for Tilden and Karel Kozeluh, with the first match scheduled to be played at Madison Square Garden in February. The tour would eventually travel to California in March, allowing Tilden to work on his film projects at MGM between match dates.¹³⁹ Tilden Tennis Tours, Inc. was formed, with Tilden as president and Cortelyou as vice president. Bill O'Brien, who was Suzanne Lenglen's personal masseur on the Pyle tour, was hired as a trainer, and Curley was the tour's booking agent.

*Jack Curley, the famed boxing and wrestling promoter who had an "in" at virtually every big stadium, was signed as our booking agent. I want to emphasize the Curley served as my employee – nothing more ... Curley's connection with the grunt and groan circuit inevitably placed us in an ambiguous position. But while Cortelyou and I allowed Curley to front the tour, all contracts were with us and Jack had nothing to do with management or playing arrangements.*¹⁴⁰

-- Bill Tilden, 1948

More than 13,000 spectators arrived at Madison Square Garden to watch Tilden's professional debut on February 18, 1931. The evening opened with a match between Frank Hunter, a three-time Wimbledon singles finalist and winner of numerous major doubles titles, and Emmet Pare of Dayton, Ohio. Hunter won the first set 6-4 and battled Pare to 5-5 in the second before the match was halted to make way for the headliners. Tilden and Kozeluh entered the court to a huge ovation, and after the national anthem of each contestant was played, the match began. In what *New York Times* sportswriter Allison Danzig called "the perfect foil – the man of flamboyant attack against the man of Gilbraltaresque defense," Tilden overpowered his steady opponent in straight sets, 6-4 6-2 6-4.¹⁴¹

Tilden Tennis Tours, Inc. then worked its way throughout North America, traveling from the east through the Midwest to California, with packed audiences at most of the stops. By the time the tour returned to the east and ended its spring segment in Montreal in early May, Tilden had won twenty-seven matches and Kozeluh had won only six. During the tour, Curly announced that Vincent Richards, the previous year's professional champion, had decided to come out of retirement to play Tilden in a series of nine matches; whoever won five of the matches would claim the world professional title. The first match was once again played at Madison Square Garden, with 14,000 spectators in attendance. Tilden defeated Richards in New York in four sets, followed by comfortable wins in Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago in front of full houses. With Tilden leading the series 4-0, plans for a deciding fifth match in New York were abandoned.¹⁴²

A four-man round robin was then played at the Longwood Cricket Club outside of Boston, with Tilden emerging undefeated against Richards, Kozeluh and Frank Hunter. After the event at Longwood, the touring professionals and numerous tennis teachers assembled at the West Side Tennis Club in New York in early July for the U. S. Professional Championships. In a rematch of the 1930 final, Richards easily defeated Kozeluh in the semifinals, and Tilden won against Californian Howard Kinsey in the other half. The championship match was played in front of 4000 spectators, and Richards took a 4-2 lead in the first set. Then, according to Allison Danzig of the *New York Times*, Tilden "turned on as devastating and demoralizing a barrage of drives as a Forest Hills gallery ever witnessed." After his 7-5 6-2 6-1 victory, Tilden admitted that he had never played better.¹⁴³

The series of matches between Tilden and Kozeluh – with Frank Hunter, Albert Burke of Ireland and other professionals in secondary roles – continued across the United States continued until early October, followed by a month of matches in Europe. In Paris, local professional Martin Plaa joined the troupe for the European debut at the newly built Palais des Sports with 9000 fans in attendance. As the tour swung through Europe, 21-year-old Hans Nusslein, the recent winner of the German Professional Championships, extended Tilden to five sets in Hamburg and Berlin. Although Tilden

easily defeated Nusslein on the final night of the European tour in Paris on November 9, 1931, many observers believed that the young German had the potential to become the next professional champion.¹⁴⁴

Tilden brought Nusslein to the United States in early 1932 for a tour of fifty cities, with Kozeluh joining the troupe in late spring. The U. S. Professional Championships – organized each year by the Professional Lawn Tennis Association – were played on the clay courts of the South Shore Country Club in Chicago, Illinois in July. Kozeluh defeated Tilden in four sets in the semifinals, and won the title in straight sets over Nusslein in final. Another tour of Europe followed in the fall, with Martin Plaa of France winning the World's Professional Championships – formerly known as the German Professional Championships – by scoring a rare straight set win over Tilden.¹⁴⁵

Tilden and Nusslein opened 1933 with another tour of North America, along with Albert Burke, Emmet Pare and Bruce Barnes. By this time, Jack Curley was no longer the booking agent for the tour. He was replaced by Bill O'Brien, who traveled on the Pyle tour as Suzanne Lenglen's personal masseur. O'Brien started on the Tilden tour in 1931 as a trainer, and two years later he became the group's business manager. Although the tour drew 5000 spectators in Los Angeles in May, many of the other engagements played to sparse crowds. Due to the worsening financial crisis, the income from the tour was twenty percent less than what was made the previous year.¹⁴⁶

In October 1933, Tilden announced that Ellsworth Vines – the undisputed world's best amateur in 1932, with victories at Wimbledon and Forest Hills – would join the professional tour in 1934. Vines' professional debut was scheduled for January 10 at Madison Square Garden, with Vincent Richards and Bruce Barnes as additional players. Tilden Tennis Tours, Inc. enjoyed a profitable year in 1931, but was not so successful in the two years that followed, due to lower attendance at matches and the unfolding financial crisis in the United States.¹⁴⁷ In addition, Tilden was a notoriously poor businessman who was often wasteful with his own money. In need of capital, Tilden allowed business manager Bill O'Brien to invest in the tour and gain ownership of 25%.

Vines' professional debut drew the largest crowd ever to watch a tennis match at Madison Square Garden. 16,000 spectators, many of them standing in the aisles, saw

Tilden put pressure on his opponent's backhand and win the first set 8-6. As Vines' confidence dissipated and his errors increased, Tilden continued his backcourt attack and closed out the match 6-3 6-2. Afterwards, Vines admitted he had not properly prepared for Tilden's groundstroke onslaught, and he promised to do better on the tour. He did just that; after the tour traveled west and back to New York City one month later, Vines had won eleven matches and Tilden had taken nine.¹⁴⁸

As Vines got used to the rigors of professional tennis and its one-night stands, he became suspicious that he was not receiving his proper share of the gate receipts, and he turned to his racquet company for help.

Jack Harris worked for the Wilson Sporting Goods Company in Chicago, the firm whose racket I used. Harris was in charge of Wilson's golf and tennis promotion. He had moved into the tennis tour business ... when Ellie Vines, another Wilson representative, was touring with Tilden. Vines felt that he was being cheated at the gate, and he so called up L. B. Icely, who was then president of Wilson. Mr. Icely was a wonderful gentleman who looked after his boys ... when Vines called up Mr. Icely and told him he thought there was some hanky-panky going on behind his back, Mr. Icely immediately dispatched Jack Harris to join the tour and look out for the interests of the Wilson man. Vines had not been deluding himself either. Harris casually sat in when it came time for divvying up, and sure enough, it looked as if all kinds of items were being taken off the top by Tilden's cronies before Vines' percentage was figured. Since Ellie had contracted to be paid his percentage of the gross, he was apparently getting robbed. Harris stayed with the tour awhile to get the matter straightened out ...¹⁴⁹

-- Don Budge, 1969

In February 1934, French professionals Henri Cochet and Martin Plaa joined Vines and Tilden in New York for another appearance Madison Square Garden, which drew 24,000 fans over the course of two nights. The foursome played two-night stands in nine more cities, including Boston, Montreal, Chicago, Baltimore and Indianapolis. The

tour then split in half, with Tilden, Vines, Keith Gledhill and Alfred Chapin toured smaller towns in the East and Midwest, while Cochet, Plaa, Vincent Richards and Bruce Barnes followed a different itinerary. Both tours concluded in the middle of May, shortly before the inaugural Professional Lawn Tennis Association circuit.¹⁵⁰

The Professional Lawn Tennis Association, in collaboration with Tilden Tennis Tours, Inc. hoped to develop a circuit of week-long events, similar to the tournament schedules in golf and amateur tennis. All eight members of the Tilden tours, plus leading teaching professionals, would play in twelve tournaments staged at clubs in the East and Midwest and culminating with the U. S. Professional Championships in Chicago. By the time Vines won the first three tournaments – in New York, Philadelphia and Boston – it was apparent the circuit was in serious trouble. Only 648 spectators came to watch for the entire week at the Longwood Cricket Club, and only 350 watched the final between Tilden and Kozeluh in Detroit two weeks later. During the stop in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Tilden announced that the final four stops on the circuit – in Memphis, Louisville, Cincinnati and Indianapolis – would be canceled. “I still think pro tournaments can be made successful,” he told a local reporter, “but perhaps we are a little ahead of our time.”¹⁵¹

The U. S. Professional Championships was played in Chicago in August 1934 as originally scheduled, although Tilden and Vines did not participate. In their absence, Nusslein earned one of his best tournament victories with a four set win over Kozeluh in the final. For the final four months of 1934, the professionals played a series of one-night stands and week-long tournaments in Europe. Vines won the two biggest tournaments, defeating Nusslein in the finals of the World’s Invitation Pro Tennis Championships at Wembley Arena in London, and also in the finals of an indoor clay court tournament in Paris.¹⁵²

When Tilden returned home to the United States in December 1934, he told a reporter that the recent formation of the International Tennis Players Association in Paris would permanently establish professional tennis throughout the world. The association was formed by the leading professional players of the United States, France, Germany, England and Ireland. It did not include the teaching professionals, whom Tilden felt

added little to the success of professional tournaments. Albert Bonnardel, a wealthy French sportsman, was elected honorary president and the Bonnardel Cup, a nationalistic professional team event, was scheduled to be played in Europe the following summer. “It was something of this nature that professional tennis has needed,” Tilden said. “In a few years, the Bonnardel Cup will carry as much significance to professional tennis as the Davis Cup does in the amateur game.”¹⁵³

Tilden may not have been as pleased with the news that George Lott was joining the tour in 1935. Lott was the best amateur doubles player in the United States, having won twelve major doubles titles as well as the singles title at the 1932 U. S. Clay Court Championships. When Lott was playing a practice match in Paris in order to earn a spot on the U. S. Davis Cup team in 1928, team captain Tilden sat in the stands and lectured the chair umpire about his line calls. “I don’t care who you are, captain of the Davis Cup team or what,” Lott said, “you’ll have to get out of the stands and stop calling shots on me.” Tilden left, but remarked, “You’re still a ruffian, in Europe or at home.” Since that time, bad blood existed between the two players, and Lott referred to the effeminate Tilden as “Tillie.”¹⁵⁴

By the end of 1934, Bill O’Brien owned a greater portion of the tour, thanks to the careful management of his finances and Tilden’s wasteful spending. Eventually, O’Brien would own the entire tour and Tilden would have nothing. Tilden asked O’Brien to put clauses in Lott’s contract, demanding at all times to be treated like a gentleman, which meant no longer being addressed as “Tillie.” Tilden also insisted that Lott be fined \$100 for not reporting on the court before any match, \$300 for intoxication, and \$500 for missing any of the seventy-five tour stops. Lott’s contract also indicated that he would be paid 12 ½ percent of the tour’s gross gate receipts.¹⁵⁵

Lester Stoefen, who won the doubles titles with Lott at Wimbledon in 1934 and at Forest Hills in 1933 and 1934, was also added to the tour for 1935 for the salary of 12 ½ percent of the gross gate receipts.¹⁵⁶ Since Vines was clearly superior to other professionals on an indoor court, O’Brien realized that a series based on head-to-head matches with Tilden would not draw large crowds. O’Brien decided to make doubles matches the centerpiece of the 1935 tour, with Vines and Tilden facing Lott and Stoefen

each night. All four of the professionals would also take turns playing each other in singles matches.¹⁵⁷

In addition to being a savvy businessman, O'Brien was a master of publicity and promotion, perhaps learned from his experience on the Pyle tour. He opened his tour's practice sessions to the press and offered to pay \$500 to any amateur doubles team that could beat Lott and Stoefen.¹⁵⁸ He created more publicity for his tour when he announced that Helen Jacobs, one of the world's best female amateurs, was on the verge of signing a professional contract with him. "Mr. O'Brien made me an offer last summer as well as in the summer of 1933," Jacobs said, "but I told him both times that I was not ready to consider such a move. His statement that he offered me \$15,000 and I demanded \$20,000 is ridiculous."¹⁵⁹

The tour was scheduled to be played in seventy-five cities, and before the opening night in Madison Square Garden on January 9, 1935, O'Brien told reporters that his aim was to "make the United States tennis conscious. We're going to stage tennis exhibitions wherever possible, hoping, of course, we can have the proper facilities." Tilden interrupted O'Brien with the stipulation that "the playing surface and lights have to be the way I want them or there will not be any match." George Lott was in earshot and told Tilden, "Nuts! You'll play and like it. What do you think of that?"¹⁶⁰

Madison Square Garden was almost filled to capacity with 14,000 spectators present to watch Tilden defeat Lott in straight sets in the first singles match, followed by a spectacular doubles match in which Tilden and Vines vanquished Lott and Stoefen by the score of 3-6 12-14 13-11 8-6 6-4. The doubles match ended well past midnight, too late to put on the singles match between Vines and Stoefen. Still, the spectators were enthralled with Tilden's performance in the doubles, as he was clearly the best player in the last two sets of the doubles match. "It was tennis carried to the highest possible point," wrote George Daley of the *New York Herald-Tribune*, "and the best of all time was on display."¹⁶¹

The tour then went across North America, from the East through the Midwest to the West Coast before returning to New York City in April. Stoefen left the tour in late February due to illness, and he was replaced by Hans Nusslein. The young German

proved to be Vines' toughest competition, winning about one-fourth of their matches. Vines rarely lost to Tilden in singles, and Lott had only an occasional singles win over Tilden and Nusslein.¹⁶²

Touring with Tilden only increased Lott's dislike for the American star. During a match in New Haven, Connecticut, Tilden yelled, "George, please!" after Lott threw his racquet at him. In Cleveland, Lott served and Tilden caught the ball. "I wish you would give me time, George, to get ready," Tilden complained. The chair umpire agreed, and Lott exploded. "You son of a bitch, I'll punch you in the nose if you catch another one of my serves. You may bluff that umpire but you can't bluff me." Lott also tended to mimic Tilden's effeminate walk, causing audiences to laugh. On several occasions, Tilden threatened to quit the tour the next time Lott insulted him before a crowd.¹⁶³

When the tour ended, Tilden prepared to stage the inaugural American Championships of the International Tennis Players Association at the Orange Lawn Tennis Club in South Orange, New Jersey. Tilden was involved with the formation of the international association in late 1934 while he was in Paris, and he felt that the Professional Lawn Tennis Association – with its majority of teaching professionals – was not doing a sufficient job in promoting and helping the touring professionals. Tilden resigned from the PLTA but was unable to convince the other touring professionals, including Vines, to follow suit; they remained members of both associations. On April 19, USLTA president Walter Merrill Hall settled the rift in a meeting at the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City. Hall convinced Tilden to remain a member of the PLTA and have the touring professionals appear at the PLTA-organized U. S. Professional Championships in the fall, and he convinced PLTA president George Agutter to have his association sanction Tilden's tournament at Orange.¹⁶⁴

For the American Championships, Tilden determined that prize money would be based on the gate receipts; the winner of the men's singles would be given ten percent of the gate, and the singles finalist would earn six percent. Tilden easily reached the final, squaring off against George Lott for the title. With 1500 spectators on hand to watch the match, Tilden asked Bill O'Brien to go through the stands and inquire if any spectators had entered without paying. O'Brien refused, and an undeterred Tilden went through the

audience to see if anyone was cutting into his profits. Some of the younger professionals expressed their displeasure with Tilden's difficult personality and talked about staging a future tour without him.¹⁶⁵

Bill O'Brien tolerated Tilden for one more year, promoting two tours in 1936. He gathered eight professionals for an opening night on January 11 at Madison Square Garden. The troupe included Tilden, Vines, Lott, Bruce Barnes, Berkeley Bell, Lester Stoefen, as well as two women: Ethel Burkhardt Arnold and Jane Sharp, both of California. Arnold was the second-ranking woman player in the United States behind Helen Jacobs, and she was the heroine of the 1935 Wightman Cup matches when she won the deciding match against Kay Stammers. Sharp was the sixth-ranked American woman and the winner of the 1935 U. S. National Indoor Championships.

The announced attendance at Madison Square Garden for the opening night was 14,800, with gate receipts of \$21,725. Four nights later, under the promotion of Chicago Bears owner George Halas, all eight professionals appeared at the International Amphitheater in Chicago before 5,500 spectators. The group then split up, with Tilden, Barnes, Sharp, and Arnold touring the Midwest before traveling to California, and with Vines, Bell, Lott and Stoefen going out to the West Coast before swinging back to Florida.¹⁶⁶

Each of the players had different salary agreements with O'Brien. Jane Sharp was the lowest paid member of the tour, earning \$150 per week. Bruce Barnes, Ethel Arnold and Berkeley Bell each collected \$300 per week. George Lott and Lester Stoefen collected 12 ½ percent of the gate, the same arrangement that earned them \$20,000 each for the previous year's tour. Vines earned 20% of the gate receipts. All of the players paid for their own food and lodging, and O'Brien paid for all transportation. After salaries and tour expenses were paid, the remaining amount was evenly split between O'Brien and Tilden.¹⁶⁷

The group led by Vines did reasonably well with attendance, drawing about two-thirds of the numbers who came to watch the previous year. The program usually opened with a singles match between Lott and Bell, followed by Vines versus Stoefen, and concluding with a doubles match. The other group fared much worse, with only one

thousand fans showing up in Pittsburgh and only five hundred in Philadelphia, Tilden's hometown. The women's singles matches between Arnold and Sharp were moderately entertaining, but could not compare to the level of Helen Wills and Helen Jacobs, the nation's two best amateurs. The dismal revenues began to take a toll on Tilden, whose impatience with umpires, photographers, and spectators worsened as the unsuccessful tour progressed. In Cleveland, Tilden stopped play in the middle of his mixed doubles match to leave the court and argue with the local promoter for forty-five minutes about the gate receipts.¹⁶⁸

In late April 1936, Sharp needed to be hospitalized in St. Louis and never rejoined the group. Tilden hired Jimmy McClure, one of his young protégés, to replace her. McClure was the junior doubles champion of Indianapolis and a world-class table tennis player, but he was no match for Ethel Burkhardt Arnold in singles. Teaching professional Al Chapin was then brought in to partner with Barnes in men's doubles matches against Tilden and McClure. Several engagements had to be canceled, after which O'Brien decided to end his partnership with Tilden. With O'Brien no longer involved, the two groups reunited for a tour finale at the Orange Lawn Tennis Club in New Jersey in late May.¹⁶⁹

Tilden attempted other professional tennis promotions, unwisely spending much of his own money to keep his projects afloat. In the fall of 1936, he took Vines and Sharp on a one-month tour of Japan that was very well received. After a massive welcoming parade through the Ginza district of Tokyo, the trio played matches in a newly-built 12,000-seat outdoor stadium. Sharp defeated Japan's leading female player, Sanae Okada, who had recently become a professional, and Vines needed five sets to get past Tilden. Another match the following day, with more than nine thousand spectators, was followed by a tour of seven more Japanese cities. At the end of the series, Sharp sailed home to California while Tilden and Vines played additional exhibitions in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Manila.¹⁷⁰

While Tilden and Vines were traveling the Orient, it was announced that Fred Perry accepted an offer to play professionally. Perry was the world's best amateur player from 1934 through 1936, having won Wimbledon three consecutive years and Forest Hill

on three occasions. Two former players – Howard Voshell and Frank Hunter, who was Tilden’s doubles partner in amateur tournaments in the 1920s and played on the professional tour in 1931 – organized a group of investors who offered Perry a minimum guarantee of \$25,000 plus a percentage of the gate receipts.¹⁷¹ Before the deal was finalized, Perry made sure that Vines agreed to play against him on the tour.¹⁷² A tour opening at Madison Square Garden was set for January 6, 1937 with George Lott and Bruce Barnes as supporting players; Tilden, surprisingly, was not mentioned as a regular member of the group.

The tour opener between Vines and Perry was watched by the largest crowd ever assembled at Madison Square Garden for a tennis match. 17,630 spectators, paying a total of \$58,000, saw a disappointing match in which Perry comfortably defeated Vines, who was ill with a fever and sore throat.¹⁷³ A report in *Newsweek* magazine described the event as “a black eye for pro tennis.” After losing his next two matches, in front of large crowds in Cleveland and Chicago, Vines announced he would not play again until he felt better. Once Vines recovered his health, he won three consecutive matches against Perry, and by the end of March the series was tied at 19-19.¹⁷⁴

In the meantime, Tilden was playing on his own tour with Al Chapin, Martin Plaa of France and Hytaroh Satoh of Japan, mostly at private clubs in the Northeast, Florida and California. In late February, Frank Hunter and Howard Voshell announced that Tilden would play a series of five matches against Perry, starting with an engagement at Madison Square Garden on March 24. 15,000 fans gathered the arena, hoping for an exciting match, but after the first four games they fell silent. Allison Danzig of the *New York Times* wrote that the match was “hopelessly uneven,” and Grantland Rice lamented that Tilden was “a shadow of the past” and his loss signified “the end of the golden era of sports.” Tilden, however, did win one of the next four matches – after Perry had to drive through the night from Milwaukee to Pittsburgh – and two more when he was called in to substitute for an injured Vines.¹⁷⁵

Vines ended the winter-spring segment of the tour with a 32-29 lead against Perry, and the series was a financial success with gross revenue of \$412,000. Perry earned \$91,000 and Vines collected \$34,000, leaving a profit of \$57,000 for the investors.

Perry and Vines then played nine matches in Great Britain, along with Tilden, Plaa, Hans Nusslein and Lester Stoefen. Afterwards, Tilden stayed in Europe to play numerous exhibitions and tournaments, followed by a tour of India in December with Henri Cochet. He would not return home to the United States for nearly two years.¹⁷⁶

In the fall of 1937, the Greenbrier Tennis Club, on grounds of the historic Greenbrier Hotel in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, defied the tennis world by hosting an open tournament that included professionals and amateurs. Six months earlier, the hotel staged an exhibition featuring Bill Tilden and Vinnie Richards. Permission was not granted by the United States Professional Lawn Tennis Association to hold the event, and as a result the hotel threatened to withdraw its membership from both the USPLTA as well as the USLTA. An unsanctioned open tournament was then held in October 1937 – with Karel Kozeluh becoming the first U. S. Open champion, although unofficially – and the six unranked and unheralded amateurs who competed in the thirty-two player draw were subsequently suspended by the USLTA when the association held its annual meeting three months later.¹⁷⁷

Another series between Perry and Vines took place in 1938, with Jack Harris – the Wilson Sporting Goods tennis and golf promotions person who shadowed the 1934 Bill O'Brien tour to make sure Vines was not getting short-changed in his payments – now in charge as the tour manager. Perry and Vines knew that the winner of the tour would be invited back the following year to play Don Budge, the world's best amateur who planned to become a professional at the end of the season. The second Perry-Vines tour opened at the Pan Pacific Auditorium in Los Angeles on January 11 in front of only 7500 spectators. The itinerary took the players from California through the South, and eventually to the Midwest and Northeast. The tour was one again a profitable venture, with Vines winning the series 49-35, but the players were exhausted when it finished. Perry said on several occasions that he wished he had never become a professional, and Vines promised he would quit tennis if Budge defeated him on the 1939 tour. Vines also said he was more interested in golf than tennis, and indicated that he hoped to compete at the U. S. National Amateur Golf Championships.¹⁷⁸

Three professional tournaments were held in the United States in 1938. The inaugural North and South Professional Championships were held at the Pinehurst Country Club in North Carolina, and the Greenbrier Hotel in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia once again hosted an open tournament in defiance of the USLTA. The top seeded players in both events were George Lott, Vincent Richards, Karel Kozeluh and Bruce Barnes. Spectator attendance at both tournaments was minimal, prompting Fred Hawthorne of the *New York Herald-Tribune* to argue that Vines and Perry “owe it to the game to appear as contenders in these events.” Hawthorne explained that the two superstars could make much more money playing one exhibition match than competing for an entire week at a tournament, and as a result “the game of professional competitive tennis has reached the point where it cannot go much farther without drastic changes in the management of the professional association.”¹⁷⁹

Hawthorne proposed that the Professional Lawn Tennis Association acquire the services of Robert Harlow, the golf professional at the Pinehurst Country Club, as a general manager and tournament promoter.¹⁸⁰ Harlow was the manager for golf great Walter Hagen for ten years, and he later managed the Professional Golf Association tournament bureau, establishing a year-round circuit of prize money events. On July 16, 1938, PLTA president Henry Geidel announced that Harlow was hired as the association’s tournament manager, with the responsibilities of developing a circuit of professional tennis tournaments.¹⁸¹

While he did not play at Pinehurst or White Sulphur Springs, Perry did appear at the U. S. Professional Championships later that year. Two dozen professionals played indoors at the Chicago Arena for total prize money of \$4800. Perry was the class of the field, earning \$450 for winning the singles title and another \$240 for winning the doubles with Vincent Richards.¹⁸²

Tilden did not play in Chicago, or any of the other American summer tournaments, because he was staying and playing in Europe – and keeping his distance from his creditors in the United States. The years of wasteful spending had finally caught up to him, and he reportedly owed a substantial amount of money in unpaid income taxes. On November 16, 1938, the Algonquin Hotel in New York City obtained a

judgment against Tilden for \$2329 in unpaid rent.¹⁸³ For fifteen years, Tilden maintained a suite at the hotel for \$120 per month and had not paid his bill for several years. Vincent Richards, who did not squander the money he earned as a professional and had a successful career with the Dunlop Tire and Rubber Company, paid off the hotel bill and settled Tilden's tax debt to the government. He then flew to London and set up some events in England, giving Tilden several thousand dollars in advance of his guarantee.¹⁸⁴

In 1938, Don Budge achieved something never before accomplished in tennis – he won the Grand Slam, capturing the four major amateur titles of Australia, France, Wimbledon and the United States in the same year. Jack Harris had offered him \$50,000 to become a professional in late 1937, but Budge held off and made his mark in tennis history the following year. After his Grand Slam achievement, Budge was able to command \$75,000 plus a percentage of the gate to play on a professional tour in 1939.

*The Vines-Perry tour had ended up pretty evenly, so while Vines had held a slight edge and kept his world title, Fred had hardly been disgraced ... Harris hit on the idea of back-to-back tours. Instead of playing all the tank towns, we would hit the bigger cities twice. The first time around I would play Vines. That, after all, was the hotter attraction. But then, after our tour finished, I would come back on a similar circuit against Fred, assuming I beat Vines ...*¹⁸⁵

-- Don Budge, 1969

As was the tradition, the tour opened at Madison Square Garden on January 3, 1939, with Budge facing off against Vines with more than sixteen thousand spectators watching. The fans were impressed with Budge but disappointed to see Vines offer little resistance. Budge won in straight sets again in Boston before Vines turned the tables and took the matches in Philadelphia and Chicago. When the tour with Vines ended in early March, Budge finished with a 22-17 record. He then opened his series with Perry at Madison Square Garden in front of only 8000 fans, the smallest crowd yet for a tour opener. Budge again won easily, and attendance was down at nearly every city on the

schedule. By early May, Budge had won twenty-eight of his matches against Perry and lost only eight.¹⁸⁶

None of the stars played in the three professional tournaments in April, despite the efforts by PLTA tournament manager Robert Harlow to develop circuit similar to professional golf. Bruce Barnes won the North and South Professional Championships at Pinehurst, Joe Whalen won the inaugural Virginia Professional Championships in Richmond, and Dick Skeen won the Greenbrier Open at White Sulphur Springs. Vines, Budge and Harris sailed for London and a series of indoor and outdoor matches that would also include Tilden and Nusslein.¹⁸⁷

Budge earned five hundred pounds for winning a four-man round robin event played indoors at Wembley Stadium. He swept past 46-year-old Tilden with the loss of only two games, after which the former champion gasped, “he is perfect!” Budge also defeated Vines in straight sets before a near capacity crowd of 6000 before his final match of the event, a first-time encounter with Nusslein. The German absorbed the power of Budge with his counter-punching skills, and pushed the first set to 11-11. Budge won two games to finish set, lost the second, and closed out the third set by coming in on Nusslein’s serve and punching away three superb volleys. Hamilton Price, honorary secretary of the Lawn Tennis Referees’ Association, felt the match was one of the best ever played in the history of the game.¹⁸⁸

Harris then took Budge, Vines, Tilden and Lester Stoefen on a tour of Great Britain and Western Europe. Some of the matches were played outdoors on a portable wood court that was laid out at soccer fields and rugby stadiums. In late June, all four Americans reached the semifinals of the French Professional Championships in Paris, highlighted by Tilden’s five set win over Henri Cochet that earned both veterans a standing ovation. Eleven thousands fans watched Budge win his first major professional title with a straight set victory of Vines, on the same court he had won the second leg of his grand slam one year earlier.¹⁸⁹

The group’s remaining scheduled engagements in Italy and Scandanavia were canceled due to the impending war, and after several more appearances in Great Britain, the Americans returned home in late September 1939. Budge did not play in the final

major professional tournament of the year, the U. S. Professional Championships at the Beverly Hills Tennis Club, setting the scene for a Vines-Perry final. In soaring temperatures, Vines won the first set 8-6 and Perry won the second set by the same score. Vines won the third, 6-1, and led 5-2 in the fourth. Suddenly he ran out of energy and Perry pulled even at 5-5. A stubborn battle ensued, and Perry served for the set at 15-14. Vines answered with searing winners to the corners of the court and finally broke Perry's serve to win the set 20-18. Observers felt the four-hour match was the best of their rivalry, and both players agreed.¹⁹⁰

Jack Harris decided not to stage a professional tour in 1940, as Vines was no longer interested in touring and there were no viable challengers for Budge. Since international tennis was non-existent in Europe during the war, a half dozen prize money tournaments in the United States comprised the entire professional schedule for the year. Budge defeated Perry in the finals of the \$2500 Southeastern Professional Championships in Miami in February, and Perry got revenge by winning the six-man round robin West Coast Professional Championships in April. Budge won three more professional titles during the year, at the North and South Professional Championships at Pinehurst, the unofficial U. S. Open at White Sulphur Springs and the U. S. Professional Championships in Chicago. The most surprising result of the year was the victory by Ben Gorchakoff, national collegiate runner-up in 1927 and 1928, at the Pacific Coast Invitational in early October. Played at Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles where he was the resident teaching professional, Gorchakoff's victims included Perry, Stoefen, and Tilden in the six-man round robin.¹⁹¹

Harris returned to the business of promoting professional tennis tours in November 1940 when he announced that Alice Marble, the world's best female player with five major singles championships and thirteen major doubles titles, had signed a professional contract with him for \$25,000 plus a percentage of the gate receipts. Marble's opponent on the tour would be Mary Hardwick, a member of British Wightman Cup team from 1936 to 1939. Harris also announced that Budge and Tilden would complete the ensemble, with the opening match to be held at Madison Square Garden on January 6, 1941.¹⁹²

The opening match had a smaller crowd than other tour debuts at Madison Square Garden, with 12,000 spectators on hand. Marble had an unexpectedly difficult time against Hardwick, winning 8-6 8-6, after which Budge easily defeated Tilden. Marble and Tilden then partnered to win three sets against Budge and Hardwick in mixed doubles. Later that evening, L. B. Icely, the president of Wilson Sporting Goods (whose company sponsored the tour), angered Marble when he suggested she intentionally kept the match against Hardwick close. In Chicago two nights later, Hardwick proved that her previous performance in New York was legitimate when she won the first set and held three match points before Marble prevailed.¹⁹³

The pro tour was exciting, at the start. Then, at our third stop, Chicago, I discovered that Don Budge was making seventy-five thousand dollars for the tour, plus a percentage of the gate ... I went to see Icely alone. "I'm not playing," I told the head of the world's largest sporting goods company, pointing out the discrepancy in pay. Tilden was on salary to Wilson, as was Mary Hardwick, whose (future) husband was the vice-president of the company. I was the lowest paid player on the tour. "You will play," he replied, "or we'll sue you." I said, "Go ahead" and walked away ... An hour before we were scheduled to play, Icely capitulated. We were booked for seventy-five matches all over the country, and he knew I had him cornered. "Here's your new contract," he said. "It's just like Budge's." I signed the papers, and shook the hand he proffered.¹⁹⁴

-- Alice Marble, 1991

The tour appeared in sixty-one cities throughout the United States, and most of the matches were well-attended. There were, however, some challenging playing conditions along the way. In Los Angeles, the canvas court was stretched over an indoor ice rink, and at either end of the court children were ice skating during the tennis matches. The match in El Paso, Texas was played in a cow palace with the court stretched over a dirt floor. Every time Marble put her foot down, a small impression was

left on the court. “God knows what’s under there,” she whispered to Hardwick on a changeover.¹⁹⁵

*In Trenton, New Jersey, we were booked into a basketball court so short that when Mary tossed up her serve, a boy in the balcony caught it. She turned to stare up at him and said, in her British accent, “I say, young man, we both can’t play, you know.”*¹⁹⁶

-- Alice Marble, 1991

*Budge, who campaigned against Tilden in 1941, remembers an evening in Elizabeth, New Jersey, when Tilden entered the hall, quickly surveyed it and went promptly to the microphone. The gym was so small that the court fit snugly, with little room for the players to maneuver past the baselines. Jack Harris, the promoter, was hard of hearing and couldn’t make out what Tilden was saying, so he asked Budge. “Oh, Bill’s just telling them they can have their money back.” Budge said. Harris swooned.*¹⁹⁷

-- Frank Deford, 1975

When the tour finished in Birmingham, Alabama on May 10, Budge had compiled a 43-5 record versus Tilden and Marble was 58-3 against Hardwick. Suffering from malnutrition and exhaustion, Marble needed to take glucose for several days under a doctor’s care. It was, however, only a minor annoyance; when the tour concluded, Marble had earned \$100,000 from the tour.¹⁹⁸

Budge underwent cosmetic surgery on his face as soon as soon as the tour finished, leaving him weak and underprepared for the upcoming summer professional tournaments. Fred Perry dominated the circuit, winning the North and South Professional Championships at Pinehurst, the renegade open tournament at the Greenbrier Hotel in White Sulphur Springs, the U. S. Professional Championships in Chicago, and the inaugural Eastern Grass Court Professional Championships at the Westchester Country Club in Rye, New York. Perry, Tilden, Vincent Richards and Karel Kozeluh then

embarked on a thirty-nine city tour of the East and Midwest from late June to early September, playing exhibitions at private clubs in front of small crowds. By the time the tour concluded at the New York Athletic Club's Travers Island, Perry clearly was the number-one male professional of the year.¹⁹⁹

Budge was eager to regain the unofficial world championship title from Perry, and he convinced Alexis Thompson, the young and wealthy owner of the Philadelphia Eagles professional football team, to promote a tour for 1942. At Toots Shor's restaurant in New York City on November 26, Thompson announced that the tour would include Budge, Perry and two new professionals – Bobby Riggs, the winner of the U. S. National Championships at Forest Hills in 1939 and 1941, and Frank Kovacs, a finalist to Riggs at Forest Hills in 1941 and the winner of the U. S. National Indoor Championships earlier that year. Salaries for the four players would be based on their final win-loss percentages, with the player who finished the tour with the best results receiving the most money. Thompson told reporters that he guaranteed each of the four players a minimum of \$100,000.²⁰⁰

*Arrangements were made to have us open at Madison Square Garden on December 26, 1941 ... Lex Thompson bought up five thousand dollars' worth of the highest-priced tickets for that opening show, feeling sure that all his friends would be eager to grab them. He wound up giving them away to taxi drivers and pedestrians on Eighth Avenue. The Japs bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, and even on the day after Christmas nobody seemed to care very much about who beat whom on an indoor tennis court ... There's not much profit for a promoter when he has to buy his own tickets. We could see the handwriting on the wall.*²⁰¹
-- Bobby Riggs, 1949

Kovacs made an impressive professional debut, actually overpowering Budge during his three-set win. Perry was down 4-5 to Riggs in the third set when he ran for a shot, caught his foot on the court and fell heavily. He was taken off the court on a stretcher, and x-rays taken at a hospital revealed nerve damage to his arm that would

force him to miss the next five engagements. Gene Mako was brought in as a temporary replacement for Perry, and the tour had more bad luck when Kovacs injured his arm on January 17. To make matters worse, the four principal players did not always get along. Kovacs, known as the “clown prince” of tennis, often irritated Budge with his playful on-court antics, which included doing somersaults after a point. Perry, who had a long history of making condescending remarks about his opponents, threatened to crack a racquet over Riggs’ head. On several occasions, Riggs was angered by Kovacs’ imitation of his duck-like walk.²⁰²

The tour was also battling poor attendance, war-time gasoline and tire shortages, and the loss of several venues that were needed to support the war. On April 6, 1942, Thompson announced that he was halting the tour after seventy-two engagements. He absorbed the tour’s financial losses and honored all of the players’ contracts. Budge, with a match record of fifty-two wins and eighteen losses, finished in first place.²⁰³

As the Thompson tour was winding down, a circuit of seven professional tournaments was held in Florida, each offering a total of \$1000 in prize money. Wayne Sabin, the sixth-ranked American who became a professional for the occasion and claimed five of the tournaments, earning \$360 at each one. Sabin later said that the level of play at the professional tournament was better than recent amateur events, and the opportunity to win prize money motivated him and improved his concentration. Sabin won a larger tournament in April, the North and South Professional Championships at Pinehurst, which offered a total of \$2000 in prize money. In the final tournament of the year, Budge easily defeated Riggs to win the U. S. Professional Championships at the West Side Tennis Club in Forest Hills, New York in early July.²⁰⁴

From 1943 to 1945, there were a handful of professional tournaments and many charity exhibitions to raise money for the war effort. Mary Hardwick, who married former British Davis Cup player Charles Hare in early 1943, joined Alice Marble on a summer tour of Women’s Army Corps bases in the United States that was sponsored by the United Services Organization (USO). In early 1944, they toured the Canal Zone and the Caribbean, giving clinics and exhibitions and playing mixed doubles with

servicemen. During the war, Marble was also served as a spy for the United States government.²⁰⁵

The top male professionals served in the military during the war, with Budge and Kovacs in the U. S. Army, Riggs and Sabin in the U. S. Navy, and Perry – now a naturalized citizen of the United States) in the U. S. Air Forces. None of them played in the 1943 U. S. Professional Championships, which was staged at Fort Knox, Kentucky and attracted 11,000 spectators. U. S. Navy Lieutenant Bruce Barnes, making his tenth appearance in the event, defeated John Nogrady in five sets in the final. Kovacs, who was stationed in Australia and was the director of athletics at a U. S. Army replacement center, received permission from the USLTA to play a number of exhibition matches against Australian amateurs Jack Crawford and Adrian Quist in front of thousands of spectators.²⁰⁶

In early 1944, *New York Times* sportswriter Allison Danzig arranged an exhibition with professionals and amateurs at the Seventh Regiment Armory in New York to raise funds for the Red Cross. On January 28, 5000 spectators watched Budge, on leave from his post in Texas, defeat 23-year-old Jack Kramer, 7-5 7-5. Two months later, a rematch was played at Madison Square Garden – also a fundraiser for the Red Cross – and 8000 fans saw Kramer serve and volley his way to a easy 6-3 6-1 victory. In July, Tilden was the top attraction at Red Cross benefit at West Side Tennis Club, along with fellow professionals Kovacs, Van Horn, Marble and Hare, as well as top amateur players Don McNeill and Doris Hart. Kovacs won the men's round robin event, but many were impressed by the play of the 51-year-old Tilden.²⁰⁷

In March 1945, Irish professional George Lyttleton-Rogers announced that he had formed the World Professional Tennis Association, which hoped to bring the world's top players under contract to play a series of periodic head-to-head matches. The plan was to have the winner of the inaugural match proceed to the following month's match against another challenger. The winner of each monthly match would be proclaimed as the current "world's champion." Tilden supported the idea, and the initial match was played on March 11 at the San Francisco Civic Auditorium. Five thousands spectators watch Frank Kovacs – on leave from the Army – defeated Welby Van Horn, 14-12 6-3, to

become the first WPTA World Champion. The plans to find a challenger for Kovacs were postponed until after the war.²⁰⁸

While the war in the Pacific was winding down in the summer of 1945, Bobby Riggs was enjoying his time in the U. S. Navy while stationed in Guam. He became the daily practice partner for Vice Admiral John Hoover, who had a court built on the military base made from crushed coral and sand. With Hoover's support, a team competition between Navy and Army was developed, based on the Davis Cup format. Riggs and Wayne Sabin played for the Navy, and Budge and Frank Parker – the reigning U. S. National men's champion – represented the Army. The team matches, which were played on numerous islands in the South Pacific, attracted large, boisterous crowds and heavy betting, with Riggs winning four of his five singles matches against Budge.²⁰⁹

When the war ended in September, the players were eager to resume their tennis careers. Riggs was practicing at the Los Angeles Tennis Club when Tilden suggested the staging of a large professional tournament for charity. "Nothing doing, no charity," some of the players said. "We've been away a long time, and we could stand a little cash in the bank. In this case, charity begins at home." Tilden then organized the \$5000 World's Professional Hardcourt Championships and secured the commitments of Riggs, Budge, Perry, Kovacs and Stoefen. Tilden scored a remarkable win over Stoefen in the quarterfinals before he lost to Budge in the semifinals. Riggs defeated Budge in the final, but Tilden provided another surprising result when he upset Perry in a third-place playoff. While the players were in town, Tilden hoped to form a player's organization since he was unhappy with the unfulfilled promises of the World Professional Tennis Association and the Professional Lawn Tennis Association.²¹⁰

After that tournament in Los Angeles, Bill promoted the idea of forming a new professional tournament organization so we could all have a means of making some money. Everybody went along with the scheme, so we set up the Professional Players Association, with Perry as president, Budge and myself as vice-presidents, and Bobby Harman as secretary-treasurer. Tilden became the tournament manager, and proceeded to do a job that I personally will never cease

*admiring. Bill showed he could work just as hard off the court as he always did on. He went out and sold the tournaments to various cities, making all the deals and arranging all the conditions. Some of the boys seemed to think he was a poor businessman, but I thought he was great. He was a ceaseless worker, making constant radio appearances, luncheon talks, and so on. He could hold a crowd absolutely spellbound, and the missionary work he did for our struggling new organization was invaluable.*²¹¹

-- Bobby Riggs, 1949

*Vincent Richards, Tilden and I hit on the idea on a series of tournaments around the United States, rather than city-to-city appearances by a troupe of four. Between the three of us, we knew every pro in the country, so we devised a thirty-week tour, spending a week in each place – a luxury after those years of one-night stands. We played for no guarantee and 75 percent of the gate, which was the only way we could interest any promoters.*²¹²

-- Fred Perry, 1984

Tilden went to Omaha, Nebraska in February 1946 to promote the circuit, and he told a local reporter that the new group was not at odds with the Professional Lawn Tennis Association. “We have no desire to injure it,” he said. “We’re ready to cooperate as coaches. This is purely a playing matter. I’ve tried for a long time to get the association to take this step, but since they won’t we have to do it for ourselves.” Tilden felt the PLTA had “done a fine job for the coaching professionals, of which there are about one hundred and fifty, but it has neglected the thirty or so top flight playing pros, who have had to rely largely on tours during the winter months for an income. Somehow the public never really took these tours seriously. Maybe it was the influence of the pro wrestling game. Whatever the reason it was difficult to make the public believe that the tennis tours were not a ‘you win today and I’ll win tomorrow’ proposition.”²¹³

The series of weekly professional tournaments – something Tilden first attempted to organize in 1934 in conjunction with the PLTA – was scheduled to begin in California

in early April, continue through the Southwest and Texas in May, and appear at a number of grass court clubs in the East in the summer before concluding in the Midwest during the months of August and September. Three “world’s championships” – the World Hardcourt Championships (already played a few months earlier in Beverly Hills), the World Clay Court Championships in June, and the World Grass Court Championships in July – were to be the signature events on the circuit, offering the most prize money. Tilden organized all the tournaments, in addition to playing singles and doubles each week.²¹⁴

*To get enough professionals to make up the numbers for a thirty-two man draw we had to recruit teaching pros from the Los Angeles area for the Western part of our tour. Then, when we got as far east as Texas, we recruited another bunch of Eastern pros to fill out the draw ... At the end of each tournament Tilden, who ran everything, would ask the promoter or the committee involved how it had gone. If they had not taken much at the gate he would give them a few hundred dollars off the top, just to keep them sweet in case we ever passed that way again.*²¹⁵

-- Fred Perry, 1984

*Bill arranged the draw for each tournament, and it always made me smile to see how he'd try to fix it so he'd last until the highest possible round before going out. A lot of boys didn't like that, and they finally made him stop it, but I always understood Bill's attitude and found no fault with it. I realized his prolonged presence in each tournament meant money in everybody's pocket, anyway. But when the guys ganged up on him and made him stop planting himself comfortably in the draw, Bill just shrugged his shoulders and took his chances like everybody else. Furthermore, he did very well, too. Every once in a while he'd talk to me about it, shaking his head impatiently. "Bobby," he'd say, "why don't they see how important it is for me to stay in?"*²¹⁶

-- Bobby Riggs, 1949

The circuit eventually adopted the U. S. Professional Tennis Championships as its “world grass court championships.” Organized annually by the PLTA, in 1946 the tournament returned to Forest Hills in a partnership with the Professional Player’s Association and the West Side Tennis Club. P. Schnyder Van Bloem, chairman of the club’s national tournament committee, announced that the event would be held at Forest Hills for five years. “The West Side Tennis Club is setting out to put pro tennis on the map,” Van Bloem said about the agreement. Thirty-two professionals were expected to compete in the men’s singles event, and a women’s singles division would be offered if there were enough entrants.²¹⁷

The U. S. Professional Tennis Championships opened on Sunday, July 7 with Riggs, Budge, Kovacs and Perry as the top seeds; there were not, however, any women players. 54-year-old Bill Tilden played the feature match on opening day, defeating New York teaching professional Bill Godwin without the loss of a game on the Stadium Court in front of 1500 spectators. In his second round match against Wayne Sabin – a player nearly twenty-five years younger – Tilden “gave one of the classic performances of his unparalleled career,” wrote Allison Danzig of the *New York Times*. Tilden won the first two sets, 6-4 9-7, as “the spectators thrilled to the show and cheered and shrieked in enjoyment.” After losing the third set, Tilden’s legs tired in the fourth and he was unable to win a game in the final set. “It was pathetic to see him to helpless,” Danzig observed about the fifth set, “but those first two sets had been his glory and lasting memory for those privileged to see them.”²¹⁸

After getting past Tilden, Sabin upset Fred Perry before losing to Riggs in the semifinals. With 9000 fans watching in the stadium, Riggs defeated Budge in a disappointing final, losing only five games in a match that lasted only fifty-six minutes. The two stars played a series of exhibition matches to benefit the Red Cross during 1946, and on that tour Riggs learned how to dominate his rival. Budge injured his shoulder muscle while doing an exercise in the Army, and although the injury eventually healed it caused him to lose confidence in his serve and overhead. Riggs capitalized on Budge’s insecurity on any shot over his head by employing the lob as often as possible. With his victory, Riggs proved that he was the world’s premiere professional tennis player.²¹⁹

*My straight set, 6-3 6-1 6-1 victory over Budge in the crowded West Side Tennis Club Stadium represented the greatest achievement of my career. If I never hit such a peak again, at least I had done it once. I had made myself the No. 1 tennis player in the world.*²²⁰

-- Bobby Riggs, 1949

The tournament was a financial success, finishing with a net profit of \$28,267. Half of that amount was kept by the club, and ten percent of the other half was given to the Professional Players Association and the Professional Lawn Tennis Association. The remaining amount, approximately \$13,000, was divided among the players. Riggs received 18% of the player pool, which equaled \$2300. Budge earned \$1500 for reaching the singles final, and Fred Perry and Frank Kovacs each received \$1200 for winning the doubles title.²²¹

Thanks to Tilden's efforts, there were many more professional tournaments scheduled throughout September, with the circuit playing throughout the Northeast and the Midwest, including a \$5000 event in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Tilden continued to organize and play in all the events, and some of his results were remarkable.

*I remember playing him at Kalamazoo, Michigan, in one of our tournaments in the fall of 1946. I had already won the world professional championship at Forest Hills, and I was at the peak of my game. Furthermore, this was a tournament match, and there was cash money at stake. I was not only playing well, I was trying hard ... Tilden built up a 5-2 lead in the third set after we split the first two. Remembering the wins he'd scored on the tournament circuit, I knew the danger I was in. But I was also pretty sure he was tiring ... From there on in, it was easy. But I certainly knew I was in a match. The thing that made the match remarkable is that I was then playing the finest tennis of my life, while Bill's great days were far behind him.*²²²

-- Bobby Riggs, 1949

... that 1946 tour was real pioneering stuff. It marked the start of the men's professional circuit as we know it today. We didn't make a fortune, but we had the satisfaction of getting things started again after the war. ²²³

-- Fred Perry 1984

When the circuit concluded in September 1946, the players were pleased with it and looked forward to more tournaments and increased prize money the following year. All of that changed, however, on November 23 when Tilden was arrested in Beverly Hills, California for fondling a teenage boy in his car. Tilden did not deny the charges, and on January 16, 1947 he was sentenced to one year in jail; upon his release, he would be required to receive psychiatric counseling and would be forbidden from associating with any juveniles. After one week in the Los Angeles County jail, Tilden was transferred to the Castaic Honor Farm, a minimum security facility forty miles north of the city. ²²⁴

Tilden's absence left the professional tournament schedule for 1947 in doubt, and a new organization was founded in an attempt to fill the void. On March 15, a luncheon was held at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York to announce the formation of the World Professional Tennis League. "We plan to operate as a service organization for the players," said Tony Owen, the president of the organization. "Our aim is not only to promote the interests of the men at the top but to see that the players of the lower flight benefit financially to a greater extent than they have in the past. Our eventual goal is to put every player under contract and guarantee him a living wage." Owen also announced that former great Vincent Richards would serve as the organization's first commissioner. The World Professional Tennis League managed a tournament in Philadelphia in May, a \$10,000 event that had been set up by Tilden the previous year. After only nine months, the organization folded, leaving professional tennis once again without any direction and open to any promoter who made the best deal with the top players. ²²⁵

While men's professional tennis was trying to reorganize, two of the best American women players were preparing to embark on their own tour. In early May 1941, former Wimbledon finalist Elwood Cooke announced that his wife, Sarah Palfrey

Cooke, and Pauline Betz would make their professional debut at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel in Los Angeles on June 7. After a series of matches in California, the tour planned to travel to the Midwest and further east during the summer. Unlike previous professional tours, which were played in arenas and other venues with large seating capacities, the two women were scheduled to play at tennis clubs and schools. At each stop on the tour, Betz and Cooke planned to give instructional tennis clinics for adults and youngsters.²²⁶

With professional tennis in Europe not yet recovered from the war, the two most important prize money tournaments of 1947 were held in the United States. The \$10,000 Philadelphia Inquirer Charities tournament (originally conceived by Bill Tilden as the World Professional Indoor Tennis Championships) was staged in March and won by Riggs over Budge, and the U. S. Professional Tennis Championships (referred to by some as the World Professional Grass Court Championships) returned to the West Side Tennis Club in Forest Hills, New York. Riggs was the defending champion at Forest Hills, and one of the interested spectators was Jack Harris, who promoted several professional tours for Ellsworth Vines and Don Budge in the late 1930s and early 1940s. It was common knowledge that Harris was in negotiations with Jack Kramer, the current amateur champion, to turn professional at the end of the year and play on an upcoming tour.

*Harris let it be known that the winner of the 1947 Professional Championships at Forest Hills would get the chance to play Kramer on the next tour ... I thought of myself as the obvious opponent for Kramer. But Harris was a lifelong supporter of Budge. To him, my long series of victories over Budge was some kind of fluke. He still felt Budge was the better player – and the better box-office attraction. So Budge had a chance to reinstate himself as the top professional in a single tournament which would wipe out all the defeats of the past two years. I didn't see the justice of this, but arguing with Harris got me nowhere.*²²⁷

-- Bobby Riggs, 1973

In searing temperatures that reached 95 degrees, Riggs defended his title with another win over Budge, this time by the score of 3-6 6-3 10-8 4-6 6-3. Two weeks later, Jack Kramer won his first Wimbledon title and then successfully defended his title at the U. S. National Championships in New York. On his way home to California, Kramer stopped in Chicago to begin negotiations with Jack Harris for a professional contract, as well as a deal with Wilson Sporting Goods Company to have his name used on a line of tennis racquets. During his time in Chicago, Kramer played Dinny Pails, winner of the 1947 Australian Championships, in an exhibition match promoted by Harris at the Saddle and Cycle Club.²²⁸

On November 12, Harris announced that Kramer had officially agreed to play professionally for 35% of the promoter's gate receipts (each venue typically kept one-half of the gate receipts), with a guaranteed minimum of \$50,000. "I'm glad the announcement finally came out," Kramer said. "I held out as long as I could, trying to get the best terms possible. I am very happy about the whole matter." Riggs, named as Kramer's opponent on the tour, agreed to play for 12 ½ percent of the promoter's gate. Dinny Pails was named to join the tour as a secondary player, along with Francisco "Pancho" Segura, an Ecuadorian who won the national collegiate championships for three straight years while attending the University of Miami, in addition to winning the 1945 U. S. National Clay Courts title and the 1946 U. S. National Indoor Championships. Harris told news reporters that Pails and Segura would each receive a guaranteed minimum of \$20,000. The sixty-five city tour was scheduled to open at Madison Square Garden on December 26, and Harris said that another tour throughout South America, South Africa and Australia would be played in the summer and fall.²²⁹

*Harris talked me into becoming a pro ... he gave me three hundred dollars a week, out of which I had to pay my expenses. I played a whole year and made about ten thousand dollars.*²³⁰

-- Pancho Segura, 2009

On the day of Kramer's professional debut at Madison Square Garden, a massive snowstorm paralyzed the city. Since there was no transportation, the players had to walk through two feet of snow from the Hotel Lexington to the arena. Expecting empty seats that night, they were amazed to see that more than 15,000 people had braved the inclement weather to watch them play. Riggs won that match in straight sets, and took an early lead in the tour series, motivating him to ask Harris to renegotiate their contract. The two stars played evenly for the first thirty matches of the tour, until Kramer realized that he needed to develop a kick serve that would expose the vulnerability of Riggs' backhand. The change of strategy worked, and as Kramer pulled away in the series, Riggs became demoralized and gave up. Kramer finished the tour with 69 wins and 20 losses.²³¹

Harris planned to take Kramer, Riggs, Segura and Pails on a foreign tour during the summer, causing them to miss the U. S. Professional Tennis Championships at the West Side Tennis Club in Forest Hills, New York. He did not want them to play at Forest Hills, since he believed a loss by Kramer or Riggs in that tournament would diminish the value of his tour. The West Side Tennis Club's tournament chairman, P. Schuyler Van Bloem, threatened to evict the tournament from the club unless Harris released Kramer and Riggs from their contracts and allowed them to play. Additional pressure from sportswriters and other tennis professionals forced Harris to acquiesce.²³²

At Forest Hills in 1948, Kramer played one of the most memorable matches of his career against Don Budge in the semifinals, falling behind two sets to one. Budge led 4-3 in the fourth set, needing only to hold serve twice to finish the match. By then, however, the 31-year-old Budge had no more energy, and Kramer ran out the last eight games to win 6-4 8-10 3-6 6-4 6-0. Kramer played another exciting match in the final against Bobby Riggs, winning 14-12 6-2 3-6 7-5.²³³

After the tour in the United States ended, Jack Harris took Kramer, Riggs, Segura and Pails to South America, where the tour began to fall apart.

We were all put out with Jack Harris to start with because he was getting Pails and Segura for such low wages - \$300 a week and their own expenses ... Pails

and Segura hung on at the low wages because their deal was that once we left North America, they moved up to a percentage – 10 percent apiece. There was more trouble with Harris in South America. He kept assuring us that he was putting a fantastic tour package together for Australia, but by chance a telegram meant for Harris was delivered to Riggs, and it revealed that there was nothing at all set for Down Under. We really blew up. “Everything okay for Australia?” Riggs asked him, setting the trap. “Great boys. We’re going to clean up down there.” And then we sprung the telegram on him. Obviously we couldn’t work together any longer, and he agreed to take his profits and go back home.²³⁴

--Jack Kramer, 1979

Decisively beaten in the 1948 series against Kramer, Riggs was no longer a top drawing card and he did not want to be a secondary player in future tours. A new challenger was needed, and with Harris out of the picture, Kramer convinced Riggs to promote the next tour.²³⁵ There was no tour in 1949, which gave Riggs time to find a viable opponent for Kramer and schedule a series for 1950. In the meantime, Riggs continued to play in professional tournaments, reclaiming his title at the 1949 U. S. Professional Tennis Championships with a four-set final round win over Budge (a tournament in which Kramer did not play due to injury).

Riggs hoped to secure Ted Schroeder, winner at Forest Hills in 1942 and at Wimbledon that summer, for his upcoming 1950 tour against Kramer. When the deal with Schroeder did not transpire, Riggs signed 21-year-old Pancho Gonzalez, the 1948 and 1949 U. S. National champion, to play a strenuous 123-match tour against Kramer that would open at Madison Square Garden in late October. Gonzalez was offered thirty percent of the promoter’s gate receipts, with a minimum guarantee of \$30,000. Pancho Segura and Frank Parker, winner at Forest Hills in 1944 and 1945 and at the French Championships in 1948 and 1949, were announced as the supporting players. Kramer defeated Gonzalez in four sets in their opening match at Madison Square Garden, and then continued to dominate him as the grueling tour traveled across North America

for six months. Both players tired from the constant traveling and playing, and it began to affect their performances.

Bobby's problem was that he didn't have any direction. Tour dates were like women – he would take a shot at them all... Finally, one night in Palm Springs, I cracked. I started belting balls over the fence and then I started screaming, "I'm losing my mind! I'm losing my mind!" ... Riggs came into the locker room to see me afterwards. "All right, kid, I'll end it," he said. "But I gotta fill a few dates through Dayton." He had some top guarantee at Dayton, and that was still weeks away. Pancho and I kept stumbling along. ²³⁶

-- Jack Kramer, 1979

The tour finished on May 21, 1950 in Dayton, Ohio – eight months after it started in New York City. Kramer finished the series against Gonzalez with ninety-seven wins and only twenty-six losses. Two months later, Pancho Segura – one of the secondary players on the Kramer-Gonzalez tour – defeated Kramer en route to winning his first professional title at the U. S. Professional Tennis Championships, played for the first time in Cleveland, Ohio. Gonzalez was devastated when Riggs told him that the next tour would have Segura challenging Kramer. "Pancho, you're dead as a drawing card," Riggs said. "All the public really cares about is the champ and the challenger. Mainly the challenger. The stamp of amateurism hasn't fully dried on him yet, so he's a knight in shining armour, the people's choice, a fresh new personality ... You're past tense now. Your name's worth nothing. You came, you saw – and Jack Kramer conquered. Perhaps some day we can build you up again. Keep playing, keep in condition, keep your weight down, save your money, and stand by." ²³⁷

For his next tour, Riggs included two women in addition to Kramer and Segura. Gertrude "Gussy" Moran, winner of the 1948 U. S. National Hard Court Championships and 1949 U. S. National Indoor Championships, created a sensation at Wimbledon in 1949 when she wore lace panties designed by famed British dress designer Ted Tinling. Moran signed with Riggs for twenty-five percent of the gate, with a minimum guarantee

of \$35,000, agreeing to play one hundred matches against Pauline Betz. Most tennis observers believed that Betz would not be challenged at all, but Riggs was hoping to cash in on Moran's sex appeal.²³⁸

The series opened on October 27, 1950 in front of 6500 spectators – the smallest crowd to watch a tour opener at Madison Square Garden. The women players opened the program, with Moran coming onto the court wearing a Ted Tinling creation and Betz making her own fashion statement.

*I realized that Pauline was a better player than Gussie. But I wasn't prepared for Pauline trying to upstage Gussie in the glamour-panties department. But that's what happened. On opening night at Madison Square Garden, Gussie trotted out in her famous lace panties. But Pauline got louder applause when she ran out into the spotlight in a pair of bright leopard-spotted shorts.*²³⁹

-- Bobby Riggs, 1973

As expected, Betz won easily. Everyone was surprised when Segura easily dismissed Kramer in the next match, giving up only five games in the course of three sets. After the men's singles match, the women came back onto the court to play mixed doubles. Moran had changed outfits and wore a light blue halter style dress, which drew whistles from the men in the audience. Betz, however, stole the show when she appeared in shorts emblazoned with a zebra stripes print.²⁴⁰

Bouncing back from his opening night loss, Kramer began to dominate Segura on the tour just as he did with Gonzalez the previous year. The matches between Betz and Moran were even more one-sided, to the point of Riggs and Kramer realizing it might have been a mistake to include the women. They devised a plan to get rid of them, hoping to bring in two other men players as replacements.

Our solution was to try and get rid of Pauline ... Bobby and I went to her room, and Bobby said, "Kid, isn't there something we can do to get you to sprain an ankle?" Pauline looked at us bewildered. So Riggs, the hustler himself, figured

*she must be negotiating. "All right kid, we'll give you a car if you'll sprain an ankle," he said. In response to this Pauline broke down and cried. At this point Bobby caught on that his direct tack was not working exactly as he had hoped, and so he apologized for being so blunt and told Pauline to forget everything he had just said. But as we left, Bobby couldn't help but adding, "But look, kid, at least try and make it close." Which Pauline was nice enough to try and do. But in doing so, all she really succeeded at was steadying her game. Before, Gussy might have had a shot at Pauline on one of her bad nights, when she was going all out shooting for the lines. Now Pauline was concentrating and damn near unbeatable. Poor Gussy, who was not much of a drinker, starting taking a slug of bourbon to relax herself before she went on the court. Plus Pauline was furious at Bobby and me. When Gussy finally did beat her in Milwaukee, Pauline left the court in tears, screaming at Riggs, "Well, I guess you're satisfied now!" It was a disaster ...*²⁴¹

-- Jack Kramer, 1979

Moran eventually left the tour due to illness, returning home to California one month before the series was scheduled to conclude in March, 1951. Betz remained and occasionally played singles matches against the men. Kramer finished the tour with sixty-four wins and twenty-eight losses against Segura. That summer, Riggs promoted the U. S. National Professional Tennis Championships in New York, installing flood lights for evening matches at the West Side Tennis Club. Despite the innovation of lights and a championship match between Pancho Segura and Pancho Gonzalez, attendance figures for the week were poor and Riggs ended up losing \$7000 on the promotion.²⁴²

Undeterred by the disappointing experience with Gussie Moran and the loss of money at Forest Hills, Riggs wanted to promote a third professional tour, this time with Kramer and Frank Sedgman, a two-time Australian national champion. Kramer, however, felt that Riggs was not a capable promoter and wanted nothing to do with it. Riggs continued to pursue Sedgman, who won the U. S. National Championships later in

the year and completed a men's doubles grand slam with Davis Cup teammate Ken McGregor.

*Riggs was itchy to promote, so at Forest Hills he met with Frank Sedgman and Ken McGregor and convinced them to turn pro with Gonzalez, Segura and himself. Bobby squeezed me out simply by telling the kids "Kramer's retired."*²⁴³
 -- Jack Kramer, 1979

As the tour dates and player contracts were getting finalized, Gonzalez changed his mind and told Riggs he wanted a larger percentage of the gate receipts. Riggs, however, was recently divorced from his first wife and had fallen in love with Priscilla Whelan, an attractive and wealthy woman he had met in Florida. Wanting a less complicated life and no more aggravation from Gonzalez, Riggs informed the other players that the tour was canceled. He then went off to get married and dabble in his new passion: hustling unsuspecting victims on the golf course.²⁴⁴

Kramer was in Australia in the fall of 1951, assisting with the U. S. Davis Cup team, when Sedgman learned that the tour was canceled. Sedgman was still interested in playing professionally, and Kramer told him he was definitely not retired and could certainly do a better job than Riggs in the promotion of a tour. It was, however, too late to organize a series of matches for the winter. Kramer and Sedgman agreed to meet at Wimbledon the following summer to discuss plans for a tour that would start later in the year.²⁴⁵

Sedgman won Wimbledon in 1952, and Kramer agreed to pay him \$75,000 for a five month tour that would start in December and appear in ninety-five cities across the United States. Kramer wanted the tour to have a United States versus Australia theme, so he enlisted Pancho Segura to be his doubles partner. Kramer would play Sedgman in singles, Segura would play McGregor, and then Kramer and Segura would play against the Australians. For his new role as a professional tour promoter, Kramer formed World Tennis Incorporated and invested more than \$100,000 of his own money in the business.

The first match of the series was scheduled to be played on January 9, 1953 in Kramer's hometown of Los Angeles.²⁴⁶

*I was so scared I was going to botch a sure thing as a rookie promoter that I had trouble sleeping before the tour, but I hired a terrific secretary, Esther Koff, away from Wilson and brought in Bobby Riggs' ex-wife, Kay, as business manager. We sailed from there.*²⁴⁷

-- Jack Kramer, 1979

A capacity crowd of seven thousand spectators filled the Pan-Pacific Auditorium to watch Sedgman make his professional debut against Kramer, winning 3-6 6-4 6-4. After that first match, Kramer took an 11-6 lead in the series, ultimately finishing with fifty-four wins and forty-one losses to Sedgman. "The Big Tour," as Kramer named it, played in front of nearly half a million spectators around the world and brought in more than \$860,000. Sedgman completed the tour with double the amount of his minimum guarantee, and McGregor finished with \$60,000. Kramer's company grossed more than \$300,000, and his position as the world's premiere professional tennis promoter was established.²⁴⁸

For his second tour the following year, Kramer decided to remain off the court and focus on his promotional duties. He would have preferred to acquire the services of the world's two best amateur players, Ken Rosewall and Lew Hoad. Since the sensational Australian teenagers were not yet ready to play professionally, Kramer built the tour around Gonzalez, Sedgman, Segura and Budge. Instead of having an opening match followed by a featured match, Kramer elected to stage a small tournament over the course of two nights in each city. Two singles matches would be played on the first night, with the winners and losers playing on the next night. Prize money was also at stake each time. For the tour opener at Madison Square Garden in January 1954, Gonzalez earned \$4000 for winning the event, and Segura collected \$2500 for his runner-up finish.²⁴⁹

I tried something different. Instead of an animal act and feature attraction which was traditional, I thought maybe the fans would go for a mini-tournament format ... But it was apparent from the first that tennis fans were only interested in traditional tournaments, which the amateurs had ... Our two dates in the Garden drew less than 5,000. ²⁵⁰

-- Jack Kramer, 1979

Gonzalez won the four-month tour comfortably, with thirty wins and twenty losses against Sedgman and Segura. With Gonzalez so dominant – he also defended his title at the 1954 U. S. Professional Tennis Championships in Cleveland, defeating Sedgman in the final – there were no other tennis players, professional or amateur, who could challenge him on a tour the following year. Kramer decided to wait and set his sights on a tour for 1956 that would include some new faces. ²⁵¹

In 1955, pro tennis turned down a dead-end street. I followed the same discouraging road. There was no pro tour. No national pro tournament. No future to speak of. I had run out of competition ... Seeking out Jack Kramer, I argued with him long and futilely. I insisted he find an opponent for me ... He was pessimistic. “I haven’t any solution,” he said. “Hoad and Rosewall seem two years away. They’re only twenty, you know. It all adds up to one final conclusion, Pancho. You’re too good.” ²⁵²

-- Pancho Gonzalez, 1959

Kramer tried to get the remarkable young Australians, Ken Rosewall and Lew Hoad, to become professionals at the conclusion of the 1955 amateur season. He had already signed a contract with Tony Trabert, giving the American star from Cincinnati, Ohio a minimum guarantee of \$75,000. Trabert had just completed one of the most successful seasons in tennis history, winning the singles championships at Paris, Wimbledon and Forest Hills to add to his two previous major titles. ²⁵³

Kramer flew to Australia in October 1955 in an attempt to entice Rosewall and Hoad to join his tour. Unsuccessful with his offers to Australians, Kramer returned home to Los Angeles and announced that Pancho Segura would join Trabert in the series, along with Rex Hartwig, an Australian who won the men's doubles title at Wimbledon in 1954 and 1955. Kramer said that he would fill in as the fourth player on the tour, which was scheduled to open at Madison Square Garden in New York City on December 9.²⁵⁴

*... one day a couple of months before the tour was scheduled to start, I was working out at my office, when I got a call from Henrietta Gonzalez, Pancho's wife at the time. She started telling me how wrong it was that I should be playing Trabert, that Pancho was younger, in his prime. He was probably the best player in the world but had no way to prove it if he couldn't play. Pretty soon, she broke down and started to cry, and it occurred to me that almost everything she said was true ... The instant I hung up with Henrietta Gonzalez, I was through as a tennis player ...*²⁵⁵

-- Jack Kramer, 1979

Kramer signed Gonzalez to a five-year contract, running from December 1955 to December 1960. Despite being the best player in the world, Gonzalez stood to earn only one-fifth of what Trabert would make on the tour.

*I played for peanuts. My share for the toil and sweat was fifteen thousand dollars, plus a percentage of the foreign gate. The foreign gate was a short South American tour. Tony was to receive a minimum of eighty thousand dollars. The players had to pay their own traveling expenses ... I was second money, and my thoughts on that matter were bitter.*²⁵⁶

-- Pancho Gonzalez, 1959

Gonzalez needed five sets to defeat Trabert in front of ten thousand spectators at Madison Square Garden on December 9, 1955. Kramer's hopes of having a closely

contested series were quickly dashed as Gonzalez pulled away from his opponent, winning seventy-four of their one hundred matches. After the tour finished, Gonzalez added two more major professional tournament titles to his collection, defeating Pancho Segura in the finals of the U. S. Professional Tennis Championships and beating Frank Sedgman in the finals at Wembley Arena. Gonzalez' loss to Trabert in the finals of the French Professional Tennis Championships was the only stumble in an otherwise flawless year.

In late 1956, Kramer convinced Ken Rosewall to leave the amateur ranks and become Gonzalez' next challenger. In addition to a guarantee of \$55,000 for the year, Rosewall was promised twenty-five percent of all gate receipts in excess of \$300,000. Gonzalez was given better terms than what he had received the previous year; instead of a flat salary, he would be given twenty percent of the gate receipts. The tour opened on the grass courts of Kooyong Stadium in Melbourne, Australia on January 14, 1957. Twelve matches were scheduled to be played across Australia, followed by the American debut at Madison Square Garden on February 18.²⁵⁷

Before the first match in Melbourne, Kramer was suddenly worried that he might have made a mistake in convincing the slightly-built Rosewall to play a grueling eighty match series against the powerful Gonzalez.

I panicked with Rosewall ... I was afraid that Gorgo would eat him alive and put us out of business the rest of the way ... Just before we opened in Melbourne, I went to Gonzalez and offered him a deal ... I said, "Look, Gorgo, if you find some way to carry the kid, it's worth another five percent of the gross to you." Gorgo agreed ... But then, after the first four matches went three to one for Gonzalez, he came to me and called it off. "You gotta let me out of this, Jack," he said. "I can't play when I'm thinking about trying to carry the kid. I can't concentrate. It just bothers me too much." ... So I told Gonzalez to forget the whole thing and play it straight, still at 25 percent.²⁵⁸

-- Jack Kramer, 1979

Just as he did against Tony Trabert the previous year, Gonzalez developed a mastery over his opponent and finished the tour with fifty-one wins and only twenty-six losses. Upset that Trabert and Rosewall had more lucrative deals, Gonzalez took Kramer to court when the tour concluded in an effort to get out of his five-year contract. Gonzalez attempted to use his secret pay increase, given by Kramer in return for making the matches against Rosewall appear more competitive, as the grounds for a contract violation.

His lawyer argued that Gorgo's contract wasn't valid anymore because I was paying him 25 percent instead of the 20 percent that had been stipulated. The judge, Leon T. David of the California Superior Court, considered that argument and then he declared for me. He said he was sorry, but he's never heard of anybody claiming an injustice because somebody wanted to pay them more.²⁵⁹
 -- Jack Kramer, 1979

Kramer continued on his quest to find a challenger who could dethrone Gonzalez. Two days after defending his Wimbledon men's singles title in 1957, Lew Hoad flew to New York and signed a contract to play against Gonzalez on a tour that would open in Australia in early 1958 before coming to the United States. Kramer agreed to give Hoad twenty percent of the tour's gate receipts, with a minimum guarantee of \$125,000. Gonzalez, with no guarantee in his contract, once again felt he was getting short-changed and attempted to negotiate better terms with Kramer.

Lew Hoad signed for a guarantee of \$125,000 matched against 20 per cent gross over a two-year period. The sum involved is fifty thousand more than has ever been offered in a pro contract before. I asked Jack for 30 per cent of the Hoad tour. His answer was "20 per cent." Finally, I tried to arbitrate and agreed to settle for 25 per cent, to which Jack still said no. My feeling is that no professional champion in any sport should earn less than the promoter. Kramer's

*cut is 50 per cent of the gross in the United States, 55 per cent if the tour goes over three hundred thousand dollars ...*²⁶⁰

-- Pancho Gonzalez, 1959

Gonzalez was also upset that Kramer wanted to capitalize on Hoad's recent Wimbledon victory. Kramer was promoting the Tournament of Champions round-robin at the West Side Tennis Club in New York, followed by another round robin in Los Angeles, and he entered Hoad in both events. Gonzalez threatened to withdraw, arguing that any losses by Hoad would dampen spectator interest for their upcoming head-to-head tour. He also wanted a bonus, since his contract committed him to several seven-day tournaments and the event in New York actually ran for nine days. Gonzalez eventually played and won both events; Hoad, however, did not fare as well.

*It was sickening, he had no defense at all. He won a couple, then lost nine straight matches. Then I took him out of circulation. I made myself into a sparring partner, and with Rosewall and Segura we took off from the U. S., going to Europe, then to Africa and Asia ... I was going to build him up, patch up the weak spots, get him so he could knock off Gonzalez. Gorgo knew exactly what I was doing, and he was furious ...*²⁶¹

-- Jack Kramer, 1979

*I'm not a mind reader as I have often discovered in poker games with Jack, yet this time I had a piercingly clear picture of what went on inside his head. Lew represented a \$125,000 investment and was a genial, easy-to-handle chap. I'm not a genial fellow and, as Jack will tell you, even if you don't ask him, I'm hard as hell to handle. So if Lew beat me all would be rosy for Jack. I'd be out of the pro picture and out of Jack's hair. Lew would be in his rear pocket where he'd peacefully rest, coming out only for money.*²⁶²

-- Pancho Gonzalez, 1959

Kramer rebuilt Hoad's game in the fall of 1957, making him into a better percentage player. The tour with Gonzalez began with thirteen dates in Australia and New Zealand in January 1958, and attendance records were set at ten of them. Gonzalez took a 5-4 lead in the series before Hoad won four matches in a row. Hoad won again in San Francisco, and after losing in Los Angeles and New York he won nine of the next eleven matches to forge ahead 15-8.

*Near the end of February, they flew out to the Coast again for some matches, and I went out to the L. A. airport to touch base with them. When Gorgo got off the plane, I could see in his eyes he was a beaten man. I'd seen it before when I beat him on tour ... The longer they played, the more certain it was that Hoad would win. I had a new champion, and he was blond and handsome and popular, and very cooperative too ...*²⁶³
 -- Jack Kramer, 1979

On March 1, 1958, Gonzalez and Hoad played at The Tennis Club in Palm Springs, California before a sellout crowd that included entertainment stars Lana Turner, Fernando Lamas, Elizabeth Taylor and Frank Sinatra. On a cool, desert evening, Hoad was never able to loosen up and Gonzalez won. The next morning, Hoad awoke with a stiff back – he had battled back problems earlier in his career – and as the tour progressed the injury only worsened. As Hoad's strength deteriorated, Gonzalez regained his confidence and won thirty-three consecutive matches, finishing the series with a 51-36 record.

*Of course I didn't know it at the time, but the era that Cash-and-Carry Pyle had started thee decades before came to an end on March 1, 1958 in Palm Springs. The amateurs were starting to go after me, I had nothing to fight back with.*²⁶⁴
 -- Jack Kramer, 1979

Kramer's two subsequent tours – in 1959 with Gonzalez, Hoad, and Ashley Cooper and Mal Anderson of Australia, and in 1960 with Gonzalez, Rosewall, Segura and Alex Olmedo of Peru – were four-man round robin events and financial failures, losing approximately \$75,000. Kramer believed that a 1960 tour with the American champions Maureen Connolly and Althea Gibson could have been profitable, but Connolly had not fully recovered from the leg injury that ended her amateur career in 1954. Instead, Gibson and Karol Fageros turned professional and played for meager salaries as a warm-up act on the Harlem Globetrotters basketball tour in the United States. When the tour finished, promoter Abe Saperstein asked the women to accompany the Globetrotters to Europe. Gibson, however, wanted to organize her own tour in which she would be the star; it was a failure, and she lost a substantial amount of her own money on the venture.²⁶⁵

For Kramer's tour in 1961, U. S. Davis Cup players Barry MacKay and Butch Buchholz joined Gonzalez, Hoad, Segura, Cooper, Olmedo, Andres Gimeno of Spain and Mike Davies of Great Britain. During the course of a twenty-five city tour, spectators did not see full matches; instead, "pro sets" were played, with the first player to win eight games (by a margin of two games) winning the "match." A total of \$125,000 was at stake, with the eventual winner of the series earning \$35,000. The traveling and series of one-night stands was, as usual, extremely grueling on the players.²⁶⁶

*I'm a veteran of the Texas death march. My first year as a pro, 1961, somebody scheduled us throughout the state on a tour that meant about five hundred miles a day driving. We were in towns that nobody had heard of, playing the worst buildings and courts, for short money. Every night I wanted to quit and go home, try to get reinstated as an amateur. I was only twenty. But I was a pro and stuck it out ...*²⁶⁷

-- Butch Buchholz, 1971

Kramer hoped the format of the 1961 tour would make the tour more appealing to fans and profitable for him. "Sometimes I wonder if it's worth it at all," he told Arthur

Daley of the *New York Times*. “It certainly isn’t to me personally. The overhead eats up everything and I draw nothing out of my corporation because it needs all the money to support itself. I’m not making a nickel from pro tennis. If I had a brain in my head, I’d let someone else take over ... But tennis is too much a part of me to quit, and I’d like to put back into it some of the things it gave me. The one sure solution for present ills is open play. Maybe I’m viewed with suspicion by the amateur fathers, but sooner or later they have to reach the same solution I’ve reached.”²⁶⁸

Kramer believed that amateur and professional tennis declined throughout the 1950s and into the early 1960s. In the United States, there were no new and exciting male amateur stars on the horizon, and in many instances the West Side Tennis Club stadium would only be half-filled for the finals of the U. S. National Singles Championships. According to Kramer, the five most prestigious U. S. tournaments – the national singles in Forest Hills, the national doubles at Longwood, the national clay courts, the national hard courts, and the national indoors – were all profitable at the beginning of the 1950s. By the end of the decade, only the national doubles tournament was financially solvent. The situation was the same at many of the other major international tournaments, with only a few hundred spectators coming out to watch the opening rounds of the national championships in Australia and France. Kramer felt that open tennis, allowing amateurs and professionals to compete in the same tournaments, was the only remedy. A proposal for open tennis was narrowly defeated at the ILTF annual meeting in 1960, in part a result of some tennis administrators’ reluctance to deal with Kramer.²⁶⁹

*Tennis was in trouble and we all had to work together. But instead, the amateurs and the establishment press – led by Gladys Heldman – turned on me.*²⁷⁰

-- Jack Kramer, 1979

Gladys Heldman, founder and editor of *World Tennis* magazine, had criticized Kramer in several of her publication’s editorials. In the March 1961 issue, Heldman explained that Kramer objected to the proposal of “authorized players” in tennis –

allowing amateurs to receive payments from tournament without endangering their eligibility status – because it diminished his power as a promoter of professional tennis. “During the last year, in his war against the amateur game” Heldman wrote, “his personality has changed. This is a war, and the amateur game is his enemy.” One year earlier, Heldman recalled, Kramer told reporters that if open tennis was approved, the world’s major championships would be required to meet his demands if they wanted the participation of his contracted players: the tournament dates would need to conform to his schedule, he would need to approve the seeds, and he would require a minimum guarantee of \$15,000 per tournament for his players’ appearances. “I still haven’t answered the question,” Heldman concluded. “Am I for the open? I’m not sure.”²⁷¹

Kramer planned to organize a professional tour in 1962 that featured reigning Wimbledon champion Rod Laver of Australia and Roy Emerson, another Australian who won the U. S. National Championships in 1961. Unable to convince Laver and Emerson to become professionals for a yearly guarantee of \$33,600, Kramer announced in February 1962 that he would no longer be financially involved in the promotion of professional tennis. Tony Trabert, vice-president of Kramer’s tennis promotion corporation, told the Associated Press that Kramer “felt he was being used as an excuse for blocking open tournaments. So he decided to step aside. The waiting game that the international association has played in the past is no solution to the problem. We are still in a strong position to sign the amateur players who interest us.”²⁷²

After bowing out of the promotion of professional tennis, Kramer had other projects to keep him busy. He had recently become the owner of a golf course near Los Angeles, was in the process of building a tennis and swim club in Rolling Hills, California, and each summer he worked for the BBC as a television commentator at Wimbledon. Two years earlier, Kramer and his players had formed the International Professional Tennis Players Association (ITPTA) for the purpose of advocating the approval of open tennis. The players were given complete control of the ITPTA and responsible for all tour finances (although Kramer agreed to remain as an advisor). Tony Trabert was selected as the association’s paid executive director and began the process of organizing professional tournaments in the United States and Europe in the spring and

summer, followed by two months of events in Australia. Trabert told Robert Daley of the *New York Times* that the group hoped to have Rod Laver, the world's best amateur player, become a professional after the Davis Cup competition at the end of the year.²⁷³

Laver captured the Grand Slam in 1962 – winning the championships of Australia, France, Wimbledon and the United States – and after Australia won the Davis Cup in December, he signed a professional contract. Although Pancho Gonzalez offered him a guarantee of \$50,000 minimum and \$100,000 maximum for a one year head-to-head tour, Laver decided to play for Trabert's group. He agreed to a salary of 25% of the gate, and Ken Rosewall and Lew Hoad promised to pay Laver the difference if he did not earn \$110,000 in three years. For the U. S. portion of the tour, six players – Laver, Rosewall, Andres Gimeno, Barry MacKay, Luis Ayala, and Butch Buchholz – played sixty matches in eighty days at events that offered prize money of \$5000 to \$10,000.²⁷⁴ Pancho Gonzalez was not a regular member of the group; he wanted to choose his tournaments and be able to negotiate additional appearance fees with local promoters.

*We made a rule that nobody could play the tournaments unless he was a member. It seemed reasonable to us, and Pancho was the only one who refused to join. Pancho always got his own way. He insisted we let him play any time he wanted, and we refused. Suddenly I was subpoenaed. So were Buchholz, Rosewall, Gimeno and the others. Pancho was suing us for \$250,000 for violation of anti-trust laws ... It took two days and cost us \$7000 in legal fees. We didn't have to pay Pancho any money, but he won, getting the right to negotiate his own deals with any tournament.*²⁷⁵
 -- Rod Laver, 1971

Gonzalez negotiated an appearance fee of \$5000 to play in the 1963 U. S. Professional Tennis Championships, an event he had previously won eight times. Tournament promoters Don Good and Bill Gruman staged the event at the West Side Tennis Club in Forest Hills and offered him \$10,000 in appearance money. Good and Gruman hoped that the participation of Gonzalez – who had not played a tournament

match for nearly two years – would attract large crowds and result in substantial gate receipts. The promoters conveniently arranged the eight-man draw so that Gonzalez would play an out-of-shape Trabert in the first round before a must-see first-time encounter with Laver in the semifinals.²⁷⁶

When Trabert and the other IPTPA professionals saw the “rigged” draw, they all threatened to withdraw unless the pairings were revised. The promoters reluctantly allowed Trabert, in his capacity as tour director, to change the seeds and make a new draw. Gonzalez was drawn to play 1959 Wimbledon champion Alex Olmedo, a superbly conditioned athlete who was just as strong in the fifth set of a match as he was in the first. On a hot and humid summer afternoon, with Trabert happily watching from a courtside seat, the 35-year-old Gonzalez tired in a four-set loss to Olmedo.²⁷⁷

Trabert and the other ITPTA professionals were still upset with Gonzalez for filing a law suit against them earlier in the year and for commanding such a high appearance fee in New York. The players were glad that Gonzalez was eliminated, even if it meant reduced spectator attendance for the remainder of the tournament. “We were delighted that Gonzalez lost,” Trabert told Cincinnati sportswriter Jim Schottelkotte. “You can bet your boots our guys will try to beat him and bury him once and for all. He’s proved beyond a shadow of a doubt he’s had it. He’s not anything the player he used to be.”²⁷⁸

Five months later, Trabert resigned as ITPTA Executive Director to take a lucrative position with a company that manufactured men’s socks. With Trabert gone, the players asked Kramer for help, and he agreed to return to the administration of professional tennis as the temporary director of the ITPTA until a suitable replacement was found.

In early 1964, Kramer received a telephone call from Edward Hickey, a public relations executive at the New England Merchants Bank in Boston. Hickey was a tennis fan, and he told Kramer that his bank was willing to provide \$10,000 for a professional tournament at the Longwood Cricket Club later that summer. “These guys are such great players,” Hickey told Bud Collins of the *Boston Globe*, “that I felt somebody should

present them attractively, in a tournament on grass. The one-night stands at the Garden left me cold.”²⁷⁹

Kramer was thrilled to accept the offer, and it inspired him to organize a series of prize money tournaments. “When the word got around that a solid sponsor like that was interested, other sponsors – like Volkswagen and Schlitz – got interested, too,” he told Collins. “Suddenly we lined up eight tournaments, climaxing in Boston. We now have a pro circuit that will give the boys a summer in the United States playing for interesting money. Hickey and the Merchants Bank put pro tennis back in business.” All of the tournaments had prize money ranging from \$10,000 to \$15,000, and the world’s twelve best professional players were committed to all of them – including Pancho Gonzalez.

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After his disastrous loss to Alex Olmedo in the first round of the professional tournament at Forest Hills the previous year, Gonzalez retired from competitive tennis for the second time in his career. The prize money circuit that Kramer assembled was enough to make Gonzalez reconsider, and he was uncharacteristically subdued when he talked to Collins about his expectations. “I have no idea how much money’s in it for me,” he said. “All the players on the tour will decide how the prize money’s gonna get cut up, and whatever they decide is good enough for me.” Gonzalez was determined to make a better showing than he did against Olmedo nine months earlier.²⁸¹ “Pancho is practicing hard right now in California,” Kramer told a reporter, “to make sure that doesn’t happen again.”²⁸²

Gonzalez won the first tournament of the circuit, defeating Andres Gimeno 6-2 15-13 in the finals of the Pepsi-Cola World Pro Championships in Cleveland, Ohio. On the circuit’s next stop, played in the Cole Fieldhouse on the campus of the University of Maryland, Gonzalez and Laver had their first career meeting in the quarterfinals, with the Australian winning 6-2 10-8.

When I first played him in a pro tournament at College Park, Maryland, he was a very savage man ... He seemed to hate the rest of us, and himself as well when he lost. It absolutely killed him to lose. He fought you for everything, intimidating

everybody in the place if he could – opponent, linesmen and umpires, ball boys, spectators ... ²⁸³

-- Rod Laver, 1971

The following week, at the inaugural U. S. Professional Indoor Championships in White Plains, New York, Gonzalez got his revenge. Playing at the Westchester County Center, he defeated Laver in the quarterfinals, 1-6 6-3 6-3 and then won the title and first prize of \$3000 with a 5-7 3-6 10-8 11-9 8-6 final round victory over Ken Rosewall. The three-hour match was one of the greatest matches of Gonzalez' career; unfortunately, it was witnessed by only five hundred spectators, who gave the weary players a standing ovation as they left the court.

Rosewall won three of the next four events on the circuit, and as a result he was the number-one seed for the tour's finale, the U. S. Professional Grass Court Championships at the Longwood Cricket Club in Boston. Laver defeated Rosewall in the semifinals, winning comfortably in four sets, setting up another encounter against Gonzalez in the final. The match was played in a steady rain, which did not dampen the enthusiasm of the 2300 spectators who were in attendance.

... it was wet and greasy, a slippery court. Of course, I had spikes which I used as an amateur, and I had them in my suitcase, thinking "Well, I am going to put them on if it's this slippery, and the umpire said, "Yes, go ahead," and I'm sure

Pancho was not happy with me for doing that because he was slipping and sliding. ²⁸⁴

-- Rod Laver, 2007

Richard was looking at the crowds, screaming "What are you idiots doing in the stands? This is not tennis!" ²⁸⁵

-- Ralph Gonzalez, 2007

*Pancho was furious because he was playing for the title he owned. It was incredible, the shot making they made in that storm, and it was an incredible match. Laver won in four sets, Pancho was furious ...*²⁸⁶

-- Bud Collins, 2007

*It was a long walk back to the locker room, and as he walked in there his racquets went in one direction and his other stuff went in another direction, and he was just screaming and hollering, he was so mad. And the first person through the door, before I could stop him, was a reporter, and I was trying to close the door and the reporter blurted out, "Pancho, do you think the weather bothered you?" And with that, my brother came over a couple of benches and I just closed the door to save the guy's life, I swear ...*²⁸⁷

-- Ralph Gonzalez, 2007

With the U. S. segment of the professional tour finished, most of the players went overseas for more tournaments and exhibitions. Rosewall defeated Laver to win the French Professional Championships; Laver won the other important international professional title, beating Rosewall in the final of the London Professional Championships at Wembley Arena. In the meantime, Kramer made plans to stage another circuit in the United States in 1965. Hoping to have a tournament in New York City, he contacted Freddie Botur, who had recently leased the 71st Regiment Armory on 34th Street and Park Avenue and converted it into a tennis club.

Jack Kramer approached me and asked me to put up fifteen thousand dollars in prize money for a tournament he wanted to organize ... he had eight professionals set to go, but no place to host the tournament and no prize money to offer.

"Freddie, nobody wants us," Kramer said. "Madison Square Garden does not want us, White Plains does not want us." ... I thought about it for little less than a minute, knew instantly that we would accommodate nearly four thousand people in the armory, and determined that I would make it happen ... We just needed to

*come up with the prize money. Since we did not have anyone who could sponsor us, I put up five thousand dollars myself and asked two of my friends – Herbert Lieberman, vice president of a gas company, and Zdenek Capek, the engineer friend who helped me design the roll-up mats for the armory – to invest five thousand dollars each ...*²⁸⁸
 -- Freddie Botur, 2013

With the assistance of Barry MacKay, hired as the ITPTA Executive Director, Kramer assembled another series of professional tournaments to be played in the United States in 1965. In addition to Freddie Botur's event in New York, tournaments were scheduled for Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, St. Louis, Boston, and Newport, Rhode Island. Each one offered prize money ranging from \$10,000 to \$15,000.

The tournament in Newport came as a surprise to Kramer. In early 1965, James Van Alen telephoned Kramer with an offer to contribute \$10,000 for a professional tournament on the hallowed courts of the Newport Casino – if the players were willing to play the matches according to radical new scoring system. Van Alen began experimenting with tennis scoring in 1960, and he invented a tiebreak that would quickly decide the winner of a set that reached 6-6. He also devised the VASSS – Van Alen Simplified Scoring System – in which the first player to win thirty one points was the winner. In the Newport tournament, the players not only used VASSS, but they also had to serve from three feet behind the baseline. The serving rule was an attempt to create more opportunities for rallies, something that was usually lacking when powerful servers played on grass courts. In addition, the system used for awarding prize money at Newport was unique: players earned five dollars for each point won.²⁸⁹

Some tennis officials were not pleased with Van Alen's offer to sponsor the tournament. "You do more harm to the cause of the amateur game by aiding these professionals," wrote Bill Clothier, the chairman of the USLTA International Play Committee. The players initially were not thrilled about the rules – Pancho Segura joked "It seems half-VASSS to me" – but they were grateful to play for the money. Eventually, most of the players' complaints subsided, with the exception of Gonzalez, who disliked

the serving restriction. The tournament, however, was a success with large crowds as well as national publicity.²⁹⁰

Laver once again dominated the U. S. segment of the professional circuit, winning five of nine tournaments. Rosewall won the finale, defeating Laver to win the U. S. Professional Grass Court Championships at Longwood, and then he defended his title at the French Professional Championships when the players went to Europe for the summer. Laver rebounded with a victory at the London Professional Championships at Wembley Arena, and he finished the year with \$65,000 in prize money earnings.

Mike Davies, a former British Davis Cup player who competed on ITPTA circuit, was pleased with the steady growth of professional tennis. “We had more prize money than ever before this season, some \$145,000 for nine tournaments in the United States,” he told Bill Letwin of the *Milwaukee Sentinel* in August 1965. “Next year, we hope to raise this total to \$250,000 for ten tournaments. With the week-long tournaments we now play, we could guarantee everyone one thousand dollars a week, even if he doesn’t win a match for ten weeks of play in America.” Davies also felt the VASSS scoring system was “great for the fans. A match doesn’t last longer than half an hour. At Newport, a spectator saw six matches in one afternoon involving all twelve players in the tournament. This was the most interesting type of event the pros have ever staged.”²⁹¹

At the end of the 1965 season, Barry MacKay resigned from his position as ITPTA Executive Director to accept with a financial firm. He was replaced by Wally Dill, the longtime manager for golf star Billy Casper. Kramer and Dill put together a ten-city circuit in the United States for 1966, highlighted by a \$25,000 event at Madison Square Garden in March. Fred Podesta of the Madison Square Garden Corporation offered the prize money and wanted to establish the lucrative tournament as an annual event.²⁹² “This is what we’ve been waiting for,” Kramer told sportswriter Sandy Padwe. “Anything that ever went good in pro tennis started in the Garden. If we have a successful tournament, maybe that will convince promoters in Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia or any other city to duplicate the Garden tournament. Then we would be on our way.”²⁹³ Kramer’s hopes for a successful event were realized; spectator attendance was impressive, with a total of 35,000 fans coming to watch during the course of four

days. More than 12,000 were in attendance to see Rosewall defeat Laver in the final, 6-3 6-3 and collect \$5000 – the largest first-prize ever offered in a professional tennis tournament.

The success at Madison Square Garden prompted Ed Carter and Tommy Burke to stage a \$30,000 event at the West Side Tennis Club in June. The VASSS scoring system was used in conjunction with a round robin format, with each of the thirteen professionals playing at least six “matches” up to 21 points or 31 points. Evening matches were played under dim lights, causing Pancho Gonzalez to lose 18-21 to Luis Ayala in his first match. After his loss, Gonzalez stormed off the court, loudly announcing to Wally Dill that he was finished with professional tennis. “VASSS is tough enough,” he said later, “without playing it on soft grass under bad lights.” Gonzalez remained in the tournament, but did not make it to the championship match; Laver defeated Rosewall 31-20 in front of a disappointing gathering of 5000 fans to earn the first prize check of \$6070 – another new record amount in professional tennis.²⁹⁴

At the end of the year, two more amateurs became professionals – Dennis Ralston, the United States’ top-ranked player from 1964 to 1966, and Fred Stolle of Australia, the winner of the French Championships in 1965, the U. S. National Championships in 1966, as well as sixteen major men’s doubles and mixed doubles titles. For 1967, the professional tennis circuit expanded to include eighteen tournaments in the United States, with total prize money of more than \$250,000.²⁹⁵ In addition to the numerous Australian and European professional events, an inaugural professional tournament was to be held at Wimbledon in the summer. One year earlier, several Wimbledon officials told Kramer and BBC tennis executive Bryan Cowgill that they wanted to host a professional event to showcase the world’s best players. Cowgill suggested an eight-man tournament and agreed to contribute \$25,000 for the singles division, and the Wimbledon officials promised to provide \$10,000 for the doubles matches.

*This total made the tournament the largest prize money event in history. My assignment was to line up players and I certainly had no trouble. The eight were Gonzalez, Laver, Rosewall, Segura, Gimeno, Buchholz, Sedgman, and Hoad.*²⁹⁶
 -- Jack Kramer, 1979

One month before the Wimbledon professional tournament, an article about the U. S. professional tennis circuit appeared in *Sports Illustrated* magazine. “Compared to what pro golf produces,” Kim Chapin wrote, “tennis must be satisfied with peanuts ... Since the sponsor contracts in the various cities are not long-term, there is no guarantee that there will even be a circuit in two or three years.” Wally Dill told Chapin that professional tennis still “had a long way to go, but consider this. We’ve got twelve touring pros now. Three years ago, there were four. And it wasn’t too long ago that a couple of guys would play for two hundred dollars and expenses in a supermarket parking lot.” Mike Davies, one of the regulars on the professional circuit, also spoke with Chapin and offered his ideas for making professional tennis more popular. “Listen,” he said, “give me \$500,000 and I’ll get the top twenty amateurs in the world. That would give us thirty-two players. Then we’d form a league, with four players in each of eight cities, and play a regular schedule for three months. Then the fans wouldn’t be rooting for Rosewall or Gimeno, they’d be cheering for New York against Los Angeles or San Francisco against Chicago or whatever. The players could even wear red or blue uniforms. Why all this white stuff? Tennis tradition is like an old grandmother. Bloody ridiculous.”²⁹⁷

Dave Dixon was sitting in the living room of his home in New Orleans when he read the *Sports Illustrated* article. Dixon was forty-four years old and had made a significant amount of money from real estate. He was also the chairman of the Louisiana Stadium and Exposition District, a commission that wanted to bring a domed stadium to New Orleans. Visiting at his house that day was Bob Briner, who had worked as a promotions assistant for the Miami Dolphins before moving to New Orleans to help Dixon with the stadium project.

I was watching baseball on TV over at Dave's house and he was leafing through a magazine and saw a very small article about the pro tennis tour. The guys were sort of on their own – basically floundering. All of a sudden, Dave looks up and says, "Bob, you and I are going to take over tennis and make a fortune at it." And I said, "Yeah, good, what inning is it?" At that time, neither of us had seen a match. Anyway, we spent the rest of that day and almost all night talking about it and basically what we decided was to take what we knew about management and promotion, mainly from pro football, and bring it to bear on tennis.²⁹⁸

-- Bob Briner, 1978

The plan was to sign up the existing professional players and stage two three-day tournaments per week in indoor arenas across the nation. As a result, eighty tournaments would be staged during the course of forty weeks.

By the time I left his house, we had the principles of the coup laid out sufficiently to have arrived at the conclusion that we could make \$17,000 profit every week from the venture. As a starter, \$17,000 per week ... Dave gave me the job of finding out where the pro tour was. On this occasion, I was literally unable to locate pro tennis for three days. At last I discovered that it was hidden out in the mountains near Binghamton, New York. The first person Dave and I saw (there being precious few spectators) was Dennis Ralston. Neither of us had the slightest inkling of who he was ...²⁹⁹

-- Bob Briner, 1971

I went up to Binghamton and it was appalling. Had to look around town almost two hours just to find out where the tournament was. It was at a private club, practically a secret. You had to sit on wooden bleachers. But the tennis was wonderful. I had forgotten how great it was to watch ... I realized they were having organizational problems ...³⁰⁰

-- Dave Dixon, 1968

Dixon made plans to travel to London and make contract offers to the players during the professional tournament at Wimbledon in late August. In the meantime, Wally Dill resigned as executive director of the ITPTA, complaining that the lower-ranked players demanded a weekly minimum guarantee of \$750 per week plus travel expenses. Dill told sports columnist Hack Miller that he should have focused on two-man or four-man tours instead of larger tournament formats. "I could have made a quarter of a million dollars if I stayed strictly to the exhibition programs," he said, "but I thought open tennis would go and everybody would have an interest in the big-time tournament play."³⁰¹ With Dill's resignation and Kramer's waning involvement with the men's professional circuit in the United States, the International Professional Tennis Players Association faded away.

George MacCall saw an opportunity when he learned of Dill's resignation. A Los Angeles insurance executive and avid senior player, MacCall was the current U. S. Davis Cup team captain. He flew to the Wimbledon professional tournament in late August and secured the commitment of eight players for a \$500,000 worldwide tour that would start in March 1968. Dennis Ralston, however, did not sign with MacCall; after losing in the first round of the Wimbledon professional tournament, Ralston returned home to California to have a cyst removed from his foot. When Dixon arrived at Wimbledon, he discovered that most of the professionals had already signed with MacCall.

*Dave called me from London where he'd gone to meet with the players. He told me we'd had it. Rod Laver, Ken Rosewall, Andres Gimeno – they'd all signed with MacCall. All but Dennis Ralston, who was concerned about MacCall's management abilities. But Dave was and is one of the most imaginative guys in the world. He said, "You know what we might do? Get Ralston and then go out and sign up the top amateur players to play."*³⁰²

-- Bob Briner, 1978

Although Dixon was a relatively wealthy man, he realized he would need a substantial amount of money to acquire Ralston. He thought of his friend Lamar Hunt,

an oil tycoon in Dallas, Texas who almost placed his American Football League team in New Orleans before deciding on Kansas City.

We jumped on a plane, talked to him, he was immediately interested and he was “in” after twenty minutes. That’s the way we formed World Championship Tennis. ³⁰³

-- Bob Briner, 1978

Dixon and Briner then went to New York City during the U. S. National Championships, taking a hotel suite and extending invitations to all of the top male amateur players to meet with them.

I was staying at the Roosevelt in New York just prior to playing Forest Hills. It was 1967 and I had just won Wimbledon. One morning (doubles partner Tony Roche) calls me up from his room and says, “How’d you like to make a million dollars?” Well, I was clearing about \$15,000 a year as the number-one amateur in the world at the time, so it sounded pretty good. I was getting five hundred dollars to play at Forest Hills and that was supposed to cover two weeks of expenses in New York for my wife and myself. I used to have brown toast and beans for breakfast, and at night Angie and I would often eat at the Horn & Hardardt cafeteria. So when Roche said two guys called Dave Dixon and Bob Briner wanted to meet us, I said, “When?” ³⁰⁴

-- John Newcombe, 1988

We had presumed that our most difficult task would be in convincing the top amateurs to turn pro ... We were stunned – it was ducks in a barrel. Most of them, from John Newcombe on down, were so angry at amateur authorities they gave us their word on the spot. ³⁰⁵

-- Bob Briner, 1971

Without consulting a lawyer, Newcombe and Roche immediately signed contracts with Dixon for \$45,000 and \$40,000, respectively. Dixon gave each of them a one thousand dollar down payment, and as a bonus he opened an account at Brooks Brothers on Park Avenue and told the players to order some suits at his expense.³⁰⁶ With Ralston, Newcombe and Roche committed, Dixon and Briner had no problem adding Cliff Drysdale, Pierre Barthes, Butch Buchholz, Roger Taylor and Nikki Pilic at annual guarantees of \$25,000 each.

*We wondered whether Nikki Pilic from Communist Yugoslavia would sign. We finally decided he would not, but we approached him anyway. He reached for the pen faster than Rick Barry. That gave us eight players, whom Dave, envisioning a larger distaff appeal, promptly christened The Handsome Eight ... Dave himself went out and purchased a toupee ...*³⁰⁷
 -- Bob Briner, 1971

Dixon wanted to make World Championship Tennis modern and appealing to the masses. The VASSS scoring system would be used, no service lets would be called, fans were encouraged to cheer and boo during points, and – perhaps inspired by Mike Davies’ comments in the *Sports Illustrated* article – each player would wear a unique color combination of shirts and shorts. Matches were scheduled to be played in indoor arenas on a portable court that was specially designed and manufactured by the Monsanto Company.

The single greatest mistake made with our game was the playing surface. Artificial turf was coming into fashion then, and Dixon decided that it was just the stylish sort of thing to help bring tennis up to date. He worked a deal with Monsanto to make us a court, and Dave and I went down to Miami to inspect it. Now, neither one of us could play very well, but on this occasion he tapped a little serve toward me and the ball hit the turf and skidded past like a meteor. Monsanto had invented a rally-free court. Although Dixon came to admit that the

*surface might be a trifle slick, he would not abandon it; he had decided that a certain number of people would pay, in every town, just to come out and see the artificial turf and walk on it after the matches ...*³⁰⁸

-- Bob Briner, 1971

The Handsome Eight assembled in the Sydney, Australia suburb of Epping in early February 1968 to tape a round-robin event for television. All of the matches were played in four ten-minute quarters, started and ended by a loud horn. Each point in the first three quarters was worth ten dollars, and in the fourth quarter the players multiplied the cash value of a point by up to five times. In the event's opening match, John Newcombe elected to multiply the fourth-quarter point value by four times (\$40) and Cliff Drysdale opted to increase it by five times (\$50). As a result, each point in the fourth quarter was worth \$90 – an amount that was added to the winner and subtracted from the loser after every point. “I found myself dragged in by the roller coaster style fluctuations in scoring and the sheer intensity of the battle for dollars,” wrote veteran tennis correspondent Frank Rostron. “I am not suggesting the grafting of some of this freak show biz entertainment stuff into serious championship tennis. But some of the innovations, particularly the Astroturf carpet court brought from the United States, proved a success with players, spectators and groundsmen.” The event was a success, and Tony Roche earned a total of \$15,130 for playing against four opponents.³⁰⁹

In deference to Lamar Hunt, Dixon decided to stage the American debut of WCT in Kansas City, the home of Hunt's professional football team. When that city's Municipal Auditorium was not available, Dixon booked the event at the smelly and rundown American Royal Arena, a facility more commonly used for livestock shows.

... we came to the United States and it was a disaster. We started off in Kansas City. We knew we were in trouble because in the afternoon, our clothes outfitter brought over plaid shorts and sport shirts, instead of tennis clothes. They put the court down over an ice rink, but the carpet wasn't quite as long as the ice. The crowd was maybe five hundred, if that. Dennis Ralston was playing in the first

match. He went back for a shot, then his momentum carried him off the carpet and he just kept going and slid into a linesman. Then the ice started to seep through the carpet. You can imagine the bounces. Pierre Barthes announced he was quitting the tour. He said we were all clowns. We talked him into staying, but it only got worse. ³¹⁰

-- Tony Roche, 1976

After the tour's dubious American debut in Kansas City, matters got progressively worse. \$30,000 was lost in St. Louis when few spectators came to watch, and then the portable court did not arrive for the next stop in Shreveport, Louisiana. Only eighty-seven spectators showed up for one of the sessions in Orlando, Florida, and the event in Tampa was canceled when advanced ticket sales totaled only \$500. Sportswriter Bob Chick of the *St. Petersburg Evening Independent*, was skeptical when Dixon gave a news conference in Tampa several weeks earlier and announced that he would fill Curtis Hixon Hall at \$7.50 per person for five sessions. "Apparently he has fallen back to regroup for a more realistic approach," Chick wrote. "Tennis does not need another failure. Too bad the realistic approach was not taken from the beginning." ³¹¹

By the time the tour arrived in Tulsa, Oklahoma at the beginning of March, the players were ready to revolt. Dixon brought in Mike Davies, a former touring professional who was teaching tennis at a club in Milwaukee, as a consultant. Davies asked Dixon about the tour's logistics. "It's easy," Dixon replied. "We run the whole show. We rent the arena, put up the prize money, promote the tournament, advertise it, pay for the officials, pay for the transportation ..." Davies interrupted him. "I see your whole problem, Dave," he said. "You pay them. Before, they always paid us." ³¹²

Dixon, Briner and Davies flew to Dallas to have an emergency meeting with Hunt and evaluate the situation. In light of the month-old tour's financial losses of \$100,000, drastic changes were made. Dixon stepped aside, selling his 50% interest in the corporation to Hunt. The WCT headquarters was moved from New Orleans to Dallas, and Al Hill Jr., a nephew of Hunt who played tennis at Trinity University in Texas, replaced Dixon as president. Briner remained with the company and was given the

position of executive director, and Davies was hired as a tournament liaison. “Mike will go to the cities in advance and work with tennis people to develop a sponsor relationship,” Briner told Neil Amdur of the *New York Times*. For the time being, the VASSS scoring system would be kept, but the schedule of three-night tournaments was replaced with week-long events in each city. After postponing the events that were scheduled for the first half of March, the tour planned to resume on March 22 in San Diego.³¹³

*Poor Dave, who had lost a great deal of money, dropped out and Lamar took over. Dave was in tennis less than six months and left, statistically, a failure. Let the record show, instead, that he changed the game more than any other man ... Dave’s signing of the Handsome Eight was a significant factor in tilting the balance in favor of open tennis. The game was changed by Dave Dixon, and that is his legacy.*³¹⁴
 -- Bob Briner, 1971

While WCT was regrouping and preparing to resume operations, George MacCall’s professional tour opened in South America with several four-man tournaments that included Rod Laver, Ken Rosewall, Pancho Gonzalez and Andres Gimeno. While they were competing in Bogota, Columbia on March 31, MacCall signed Australian Roy Emerson, one of the world’s best amateurs, to a two-year contract that guaranteed him \$75,000 per year.³¹⁵ Four women also joined MacCall’s group: Billie Jean King and Ann Jones, who each signed two-year contracts for \$40,000 per year, and Rosie Casals and Françoise Durr for a guarantee of \$25,000 per year. MacCall’s tour, christened the National Tennis League, was co-sponsored by the Madison Square Garden Corporation. The NTL was scheduled to make periodic appearances at Madison Square Garden, per a five-year contract that superseded a previous agreement that the venue had made with the recently defunct International Professional Tennis Players Association.

Emerson made his professional debut in Hollywood, Florida in mid-April at the \$10,000 Burger King Pro Tennis Challenge Cup. He surprised many tennis observers by

defeating Rod Laver in the semifinals, 6-4 6-1, and then thoroughly dominating Ken Rosewall in the final, 6-1 6-1. Emerson also won the doubles title with Laver over Pancho Gonzalez and Rosewall. During the same week, the four NTL women professionals, along with Fred Stolle and Andres Gimeno, opened a European tour with an exhibition in Cannes, France. King won the first professional match of her career with a 10-7 win over Jones, and Casals scored a 10-3 victory over Durr. The following day, King defeated her good friend and doubles partner Casals, 10-6, for a winning start to her new professional career.

For the rookie professionals on the National Tennis League, the decision to leave the amateur ranks was made easier when the ILTF approved open tennis on March 30, 1968. They would all still be able to play – and earn additional money – in the world’s major tournaments that were finally open to professionals and offered prize money. Emerson could still try to add to his collection of thirteen grand slam singles championships, King could defend her title at Wimbledon, and Durr could defend her title at the French Open. The advent of open tennis was a welcome development for King, a long-time outspoken critic of the shamateur system. Her hopes for more opportunities for other women tennis players in the promising new world of open tennis, however, would soon get dampened.

The Forty-Year Battle for Open Tennis

Plans to stage the first open tennis tournament, with professionals and amateurs competing against each other, were announced by Charles C. Pyle in October 1926. Pyle wanted to hold the event in Los Angeles in early 1927, envisioning \$50,000 in prize money for the professionals who competed – including his tour stars Suzanne Lenglen and Vincent Richards – and medals for the winning amateurs.³¹⁶ The proposal was based on the format that had been used in open golf tournaments since 1861, and professional golfer Walter Hagen felt that an open tennis tournament would create many more tennis fans. “C. C. Pyle is doing a lot to help not only tennis, but sports in general,” he said.³¹⁷ Pyle, however, was unable to garner enough of the necessary support from

the USLTA. After his professional tour ended in early 1927, he lost interest in professional tennis and moved on to other sports promotions.

An influx of progressive-thinking officials in the USLTA in the late 1920s and early 1930s made open tennis a possibility, and for several years the association advocated to allow amateurs and professional to compete together. The USLTA wanted to hold an open tournament at the Germantown Cricket Club in Germantown, Pennsylvania in September 1930.³¹⁸ The plan was rejected at the annual meeting of the ILTF in Paris in March, when all of the other member nations – twenty of them – voted to reject the proposal. Chevalier Paul De Borman, president of the Belgian Tennis Federation, addressed the assembly, arguing that if the motion was approved, “tennis matches would become spectacles analogous to prize-fighting shows.” De Borman also stated that the work of tennis professionals should be confined to teaching the game, and the approval of open tennis would be the “death knell” of amateur tennis.³¹⁹

Three years later, the USLTA once again awarded an open tournament to the Germantown Cricket Club.³²⁰ When the British Lawn Tennis Association learned of the plan, it warned that any player who competed in such an event would be barred from Wimbledon.³²¹ The ILTF agreed with the British, and once again the idea of open tennis was thwarted. When Bill Tilden and Ellsworth Vines set a record for tennis attendance at the opening of their tour at Madison Square Garden in January 1934, the USLTA was convinced that the world’s major tennis tournaments would benefit tremendously from the inclusion of professionals. The association, however, was the only supporter of open tennis when the ILTF held its annual meeting in Paris later that year.³²² By the end of the decade, as more conservative USLTA officials came to power, the association fell into line with the rest of the world and no longer supported the concept.

While the amateur tennis associations hindered the adoption of open tennis, the Greenbrier Tennis Club, located at the historic Greenbrier Hotel in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, took action. Several club members decided to stage a tournament that was open to amateurs and professionals, an accepted practice in the sport of golf. Defying the USLTA’s refusal to grant a sanction, the club offered \$2000 in prize money and attracted thirty-eight professionals and six amateurs to White Sulphur Springs in

October 1937. None of the amateurs advanced past the first round, and Karel Kozeluh won the men's singles title while Vincent Richards and George Lott took the doubles crown.³²³

After the tournament, the USLTA sent a letter to each of the amateurs, asking them why they believed they should be allowed to play in future USLTA sanctioned tournaments. When none of the amateurs responded, the association suspended all of them during its annual meeting in Miami, Florida in January 1938. Greenbrier Tennis Club official R. B. Parker was undeterred by the suspension. "As far as we're concerned," he said, "we're out of the United States Lawn Tennis Association, and we have already scheduled the second annual U. S. Open tournament for two thousand dollars in prizes on April 25. Our official poll of clubs last fall showed overwhelming favor of amateur-pro competition. If the USLTA continues to ignore popular feeling and sentiment among U.S. clubs and individuals on the open question, its membership in the international federation is empty and meaningless. Under such circumstances the U. S. tennis overlords might just as well represent Eskimos."³²⁴

The open tennis tournament at the Greenbrier Hotel lasted for five years, with a handful of unheralded amateur players entering each year and subsequently losing their amateur status. Don Budge won the tournament in 1940, and Fred Perry was victorious in the following and final year. The Greenbrier Tennis Club remained outside of the USLTA membership rolls for fifteen years, eventually rejoining the national association in 1955.³²⁵

Many of the sport's best-known professionals urged the official adoption of open tennis. In 1937, Fred Perry wrote that open tennis would not be realized "for another fifteen years or so, by which time the game will be in the hands of people who are actually playing the game today."³²⁶ Bruce Barnes, who played on the traveling professional tours in the late 1930s and won the unofficial U. S. Open at the Greenbrier in 1939, predicted that amateur tennis was "headed for the ash heap" unless it was cleaned up by allowing everyone to accept money at open tournaments.³²⁷ Don Budge agreed with Barnes, arguing "what tennis needs is an open tournament, as in golf. Whether the amateur tennis fathers realize it or not, that's going to be the final solution."³²⁸ In 1948,

Bobby Riggs suggested that the United States “was a little shy about taking the lead in promoting tournaments between amateurs and pros, but they must come ... it would look as if America was dictating to the rest of the world if she made the first move.” Riggs believed that England would most likely be the first to adopt open tennis since the “standard of tennis there has deteriorated so much that something must be done to revive interest in the game.”³²⁹

Ned Potter, who each month wrote an opinion column for *World Tennis* magazine, proposed in 1957 that the “regulations of the International Lawn Tennis Federation should be amended to permit each nation to decide whether or not it wished to hold an open tournament.” Potter also urged the professionals to form an association that would work closely with the USLTA and would stage and manage tours and exhibitions. In a rebuttal, Percy C. Rogers contended that allowing open tennis “would not strengthen amateur tennis, would reduce the income of the USLTA which is needed to carry on its junior tennis development program, would make Davis Cup competition second class, and that no satisfactory method of implementing such a proposal has been presented.”³³⁰

At its annual meeting in July 1959, the ILTF appointed a special committee to study rules governing amateur tennis.³³¹ The committee included ILTF president Jean Borotra, the 1924 and 1926 Wimbledon champion, who suggested that tennis follow the lead of table tennis and adopt an “authorized player” or “registered player” category, which would permit tennis players to accept prize money in open tournaments while remaining under the jurisdiction of their respective national associations. Jack Kramer called the proposal “the biggest hypocritical set-up in the world. Anyone who goes for that should look at himself in the mirror.”³³² According to Kramer, and other tennis observers, the concept of a registered player was directed at diminishing his control by making amateur tennis more attractive to top players and preventing them from becoming professionals.

At the end of the year, the ILTF special committee also proposed that only eight major tournaments, including Wimbledon and the U. S. National Championships, be allocated for open status in 1961, another idea that did not sit well with Kramer.³³³ “All the plan means,” he said, “is that amateurs put up a stake for the professionals and still

retain control of the tournament. Unless the ILTF consults the pros and gives us some say in their organization, my boys will not be taking part.” Kramer indicated that he expected the ILTF to allocate another ten or twelve open tournaments, and that he and his players would need to share in each tournament’s proceeds. In addition, Kramer expected to be designated as the director of open tournaments with the authority to select dates and sites; otherwise, he warned, his players would not participate in open tournaments.

During its annual meeting in Scottsdale, Arizona in January, 1960, the USLTA Executive Committee voted to approve the ILTF proposal to hold eight – and possibly thirteen – open tennis tournaments in 1961.³³⁴ The USLTA officials, however, did not approve the concept of establishing an “authorized player” or “registered player” category. Despite this rejection from the USLTA, Jean Borotra attempted to convince other ILTF member nations to adopt the registered player concept, sending letters to the numerous tennis federations. Many of the federations originally opposed open tennis for financial reasons; they were exempt from income taxes if their players retained their amateur status. Borotra suggested that an effort be made to relieve any tax burden on those tennis associations that recognized the registered players. More importantly, Borotra said, the establishment of a registered player category would rid the game of shamateurism.

The tennis world looked forward to the upcoming ILTF annual meeting, to be held in Paris in July 1960, at which the delegates would once again vote for or against open tennis. Although he had some reservations regarding the administration of open tennis, Jack Kramer still wanted to have some amount of control in the matter.

In my own living room, nine professional players and I formed the International Professional Tennis Players Association. The big vote on open tennis was coming up at the meeting of the International Lawn Tennis Federation in Paris the following month. I was sure the game would be approved, and I knew we’d need an organized body, rather than an individual, to deal effectively with the

amateurs. My plan was to pull out of pro tennis and let the association hammer out the details of open tennis. ³³⁵

-- Jack Kramer, 1962

World Tennis magazine observed that the international gathering “was one of the most important meetings of the ILTF since its formation, and the press of England, the United States, Australia and France, as well as the important news agencies, sent a strong contingent to wait at cafes, bars, and even on chairs in the hallway of the Racing Club of France, where the meeting was held, to break the news first to a waiting world.” ³³⁶ With eight of the ILTF’s most influential member nations prepared to vote for open tennis at the annual meeting, it was a foregone conclusion that the proposal would be approved.

The ILTF, however, required a two-thirds majority to make any changes to its constitution, and the proposal for open tennis was defeated. Even though France, Great Britain, the United States and Australia each had twelve votes, it was not enough to outnumber the votes of the smaller nations – including Denmark, Spain, Norway, Poland and Sweden – which saw no advantage to themselves if open tennis was adopted. Czechoslovakia also voted against the proposal, while all of the other Communist nations abstained. The final tally was 134 votes cast in favor and 75 votes against – only five votes short of a two-thirds majority. ³³⁷

Many tennis observers were stunned by the result. “We want the public in the United States to know that their delegates followed instructions and not only voted for the open tournaments, but did their utmost to have it passed,” said USLTA treasurer Harold Lehair. “Ireland tried to have action on it put off for two years, but we got the meeting to have a vote on it.” USLTA second vice president James Dickey predicted that “tennis officials probably will be pilloried all over the world for the defeat of the open tournament. Our delegation carried out its instructions to the extent that none worked harder to have it passed than we did. We got every vote we could for it. I personally have a feeling of disappointment.” ³³⁸

It was later revealed that several representatives who were in favor of open tennis were not present when the vote was taken. One delegate left the meeting for a business

appointment, one of them was out making a reservation for a boat cruise on the Seine River, and another one was in the men's restroom. "The Mexican representative," reported famed sports columnist Red Smith, "got his 'ouis' and 'nons' mixed up and voted against the proposition, which his national association favored." Most of the dissenting member nations felt that open tennis would diminish their own low-budget tournaments. Officials in the Irish Lawn Tennis Association were concerned that open tennis would discourage players from competing in a small event in Dublin that was traditionally staged the week after Wimbledon.³³⁹ "Spain was against it because they knew I was trying to sign up Andres Gimeno," Kramer said. "And now, I'm going to do just that."³⁴⁰

The USLTA continued to advocate for open tennis, proposing at its annual meeting in 1961 that each ILTF member nation should be able to decide whether or not it wanted to stage such events.³⁴¹ Herman David, who became chairman of the All England Lawn Tennis Club in 1959, was more blunt, indicating that Wimbledon might become an open tournament with or without ILTF approval. "The international federation must take some decisive step this summer to allow open championships," David said. "Each national association should be given the right to hold one if it wishes. If they don't, the British Lawn Tennis Association and Wimbledon will have to consider seriously their own position in relation to world lawn tennis."³⁴² When the ILTF met in Stockholm, Sweden, in July 1961, the subject of open tennis was not discussed and deferred until the following year.³⁴³

One year later, nothing had changed. For the third time, at the ILTF annual meeting in Paris in July 1962, a proposal for open tennis was defeated, with 120 votes cast in favor and 102 votes cast against. Once again, the ILTF determined that the proposal could not be re-submitted for two more years.³⁴⁴ Philippe Chartrier, a French tennis journalist who would later become the president of his nation's tennis federation and later the ILTF, believed that open tennis would never be realized as long as amateur tennis officials feared Jack Kramer's potential control of the sport.

*... in 1962, I decided to get out. Philippe Charrier of France was the one who convinced me that amateur federations would never deal with me but they might deal with the players. So I volunteered to leave the sport, to free pro tennis of Jack Kramer so that amateur tennis couldn't hold me up as the bogeyman anymore.*³⁴⁵

-- Jack Kramer, 1979

With Kramer seemingly self-exiled, the odds for the adoption of open tennis should have improved. Several officials in the USLTA, however, started a new political battle, and stalled the game's development for several more years. In a move that surprised USLTA president Ed Turville and many others, sectional delegates at the 1963 annual meeting passed a resolution opposing open tennis.

*The story boils down to the fact that three men – Martin Tressel of the Middle States, Harrison Rowbotham of New England, and Cliff Sutter of the Eastern – would like to be president of the USLTA. They held caucuses in between the meetings to discuss a slate for next year ... So three ambitious men, playing party politics, convinced enough people that a vote against open tennis was a vote against Ed Turville. Why they chose this method of destroying the game to serve their own political ends is beyond the reasoning of ordinary mortals.*³⁴⁶

-- Gladys Heldman, 1963

The convention adopted a recommendation jointly adopted by the Texas Association and the Middle States which called for the USLTA not only to oppose the principle of open tennis but even to oppose consideration of the matter in committee. The recommendation was carried by a vote of 49,856 to 36,481, with 322 not voting. Many of us who had been laboring for years for a more progressive viewpoint were stunned by this action. The move was so detrimental to the future of American tennis and to tennis generally that I could only conclude that the vote was made not on the merits of the open question but in part as a slap

at me. It was a blow at my zealousness in perhaps going too far in trying to get the old guard to accept modern concepts. ³⁴⁷

-- Ed Turville, 1963

I'll never forget the stunned look on Turville's face as he left the meeting room at the Sea Ranch Hotel in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. "I can only conclude that the vote is in part a reproof to me," he said. "That jacket looks like it's got some real blood on it now," I said, trying to inject a slight touch of humor to our conversation. "Yes, and it's more than mine," Turville said. "The sport will bleed until we can patch up the wounds." It did, too. ³⁴⁸

-- Neil Amdur, 1978

It would take an article in *Sports Illustrated* magazine, printed in July 1966, to restart the momentum for open tennis. In "A Working Wage for Amateurs," Bud Collins informed readers that the USLTA was paying each of the six members of the United States Davis Cup team between \$7,000 and \$9,000 annually. Since amateur rules allowed a country to pay its Davis Cup team up to \$196 per week while in training – and U. S. Davis Cup team captain George MacCall insisted that his players were in continuous training throughout the year – the expense payments were perfectly legal. ³⁴⁹ Herman David, chairman of the All England Lawn Tennis Club, was dismayed with the situation. "Quite frankly," he said in early 1967, "I am amazed that America is holding out for amateurism when their Davis Cup team members are paid expenses which virtually amount to a salary. If anything is professional, I would say that is. I simply cannot understand how they can do this and at the same time oppose open lawn tennis, Surely, this is the quintessence of hypocrisy." ³⁵⁰ To my mind, the amateur game today is a living lie. Everyone knows that amateurs are earning their livings from the game and, frankly, earning their livings dishonestly. The only straight people left in tennis are the professionals who earn their money honestly and openly." ³⁵¹

Later that summer, after yet another failed attempt to pass open tennis at the ILTF annual meeting, the All England Tennis Club hosted its first professional tennis

tournament. One year earlier, plans for tournament were initiated by club chairman Herman David, BBC sports programming executive Bryan Cowgill, and Jack Kramer, who had worked for several years as a television commentator for the BBC. The eight-man, three-day event was held in August 1967 and telecast in color on the BBC.

*The BBC agreed to put up the singles purse of \$35,000 and Wimbledon sprang for the doubles money of \$10,000. This total made the tournament the largest purse-money event in history. My assignment was to line up players and I certainly had no trouble. The eight were Gonzalez, Laver, Rosewall, Segura, Gimeno, Buchholz, Sedgman and Hoad. It was an absolute smash. The matches were sold out every day and the BBC ratings were high – and all this less than two months after the amateur Wimbledon.*³⁵²
 -- Jack Kramer, 1979

The success of the tournament convinced British LTA officials that future Wimbledon Championships needed to include professionals and amateurs in order to determine a true world champion. On October 5, 1967, the LTA Council overwhelmingly agreed to place a proposal for open tennis – effective January 1968 – on the agenda at the association’s annual general meeting in December.³⁵³ While some tennis federations disapproved of the move, USLTA president Robert Kelleher told Gerald Eskenazi of the *New York Times* that his association was not happy with the ILTF, “in which many of the smaller countries get together and have a bloc vote.”³⁵⁴ In early December, after a two-day meeting in Paris, the ILTF issued a statement, warning that “if the British LTA takes the action contemplated, it will be suspended forthwith by the committee of management until the next general meeting of the ILTF.”³⁵⁵

The British LTA annual general meeting was held at Queen’s Club on December 14, and the proposal to eliminate the distinction between professionals and amateurs was passed with only five dissenting votes. The only modification to the proposal was the official starting date for open tennis in Great Britain; instead of January 1, 1968, open tennis was scheduled to begin on April 22, 1968 at the British Hard Court Championships

in Bournemouth. The delay was a strategy to give the British four months' time to convince other nations to join their cause.³⁵⁶

At the USLTA annual meeting in Coronado, California in early February 1968, Kelleher told the delegates, "this isn't an empty threat, nor is it merely a vote saying we favor open tournaments ... our resolution directs me to say to the ILTF, 'You have failed to promulgate and enforce realistic and practical amateur rules.' Therefore the time has come to take away from the ILTF all but small responsibilities." The seventeen USLTA sections, whose members were polled before the annual meeting, comprised a total of approximately 112,000 votes, and two-thirds of them – at least 74,000 – were needed to pass the resolution. After Kelleher's address, the USLTA delegates overwhelmingly voted to join the British and endorse open tennis with 102,064 affirmative votes. The only resistance came from the Middle States section (Pennsylvania and Delaware) with its 9,978 votes.³⁵⁷

With Great Britain and the United States threatening to break away and form another international federation, the ILTF convened an emergency meeting in Paris on March 30, 1968. Open tennis was unanimously approved by all the member nations, even by the Eastern European tennis associations that had blocked the proposal for ten years. The Communist member nations finally acquiesced with the assurance that the federation would retain "the notion of amateurism in the rules of the ILTF, as its removal would indisputably weaken the ideals which the ILTF has the duty to protect and develop." As such, the ILTF promised to create officially recognized amateur tournaments, such as a European Championships. When a news report of the unanimous vote in Paris reached Moscow, it was immediately discounted by local observers on the grounds that the Russian delegate could not possibly have agreed to such a proposal. In truth, the Russians were delayed on their way to Paris, and arrived at the meeting just after the vote had taken place.³⁵⁸

To placate the British demands to remove the distinction between amateurs and professionals, the ILTF allowed each nation the right to determine the status of its players according to four categories, with the first three under the authority of the respective national association:

Amateurs could not accept prize money but could receive expense payments for travel, food and lodging.

Authorized or **Registered Players** could choose to receive prize money or expense payments at each tournament.

Players were any combination of amateurs and registered players (a concession to the British LTA).

Professionals (contract, touring, or teaching) were not under the jurisdiction of their national associations and were defined as those who “gain pecuniary advantages either from the teaching of the game or from taking part in events which are not organized by the national association of the country where they are held.”

The ILTF also determined that there would be four categories of tournaments:

Amateur tournaments could not provide prize money but could offer expense payments for players’ travel, food and lodging, and were prohibited to professionals.

Open tournaments needed to provide at least \$10,000 in prize money and allowed the inclusion of amateurs, authorized or registered players, and players; contract and touring professionals, and teaching professionals were prohibited from participating.

Open-to-All tournaments also needed to meet the minimum prize money requirement \$10,000 and allowed the participation of amateurs, authorized and registered players, players, contract and touring professionals, and teaching professionals.

Professional tournaments, such as those events staged by WCT or the National Tennis League, were not under the jurisdiction of the ILTF or any national tennis association; any amateur, authorized player or registered player, or player who competed in one of these would automatically be considered a professional and no longer under the jurisdiction of his or her national association.

For the first year of open tennis, the ILTF agreed to grant a limited number of open-to-all tournaments; the United States, Great Britain and Australia were each given permission to stage four of them in 1968.

Not everyone was pleased with the results from the meeting in Paris. The inclusion of an authorized or registered player category did not sit well with British LTA officials. “The authorized player is the quintessence of hypocrisy,” said LTA official Derek Hardwick. “It is no cure for shamateurism as we shall still get players who are not authorized but are still receiving money under the table.”³⁵⁹ George MacCall, the promoter of the professional National Tennis League and former U. S. Davis Cup captain who two years earlier negotiated year-round expense payments for his amateur players, agreed with Hardwick. “A registered player is a pro because he can still receive money under the table,” he said. “This allows him to be eligible for open tournaments, but he is not permitted to accept any invitations to our events. We want to invite the amateurs. After all, they do it in golf don’t they? I thought open tennis was going to bring an end to something like this. That’s one reason why I’m in the pro game now. At least it’s an honest game. Everybody knows where the pros stand when it comes to how much money they make.”³⁶⁰ Other tennis observers disagreed with the ILTF decision that authorized or registered players be allowed to participate in Davis Cup competition while professionals would be barred from the event. Despite the criticisms, USLTA president Robert Kelleher called the adoption of open tennis an “incredible result ... you have to creep before you can crawl, and the evolutionary process will take time.”³⁶¹

With each ILTF member nation permitted to determine the status of its own players, the USLTA decided not to recognize the registered player or player categories. In effect, all American tennis players who were under USLTA jurisdiction were

considered amateurs and unable to collect prize money in open tournaments; they could, however, receive expense money that was no longer limited to twenty-eight dollars per day and needed only to be “proper and reasonable.” The decision by the USLTA to not recognize registered player or player categories was “a big laugh,” J. L. Manning wrote in the *London Daily Mail*. “American universities recruit tennis squads all over the world with the bribery of tennis scholarships. The explanation is that the USLTA has surrendered to that most aggressive sports organization, the National Collegiate Athletic Association.”³⁶² The handful of Americans who were contract professionals – Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals, Pancho Gonzalez, Butch Buchholz, and Dennis Ralston – were not under USLTA control and could play in their own events or open-to-all tournaments. As expected, the British LTA recognized only the player category, while the French Tennis Federation decided to recognize the amateur, registered player and professional categories.³⁶³

The world’s first authorized open tennis tournament was the British Hard Court Championships, played on the red clay courts of the West Hants Club in Bournemouth, England in late April 1968. None of the world’s top ten amateur players participated, nor did any of the WCT troupe that included John Newcombe, Tony Roche and Dennis Ralston. George MacCall sent the male members of his group – Rod Laver, Ken Rosewall, Pancho Gonzalez, Fred Stolle, Roy Emerson and Andres Gimeno – while choosing not to send his women professionals, including Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals and Ann Jones, a former four-time women’s singles champion at Bournemouth.

Despite the absence of so many top players, a large gathering of photographers and cameramen gathered around the center court of the West Hants Club to watch Peter Curtis of England play against the contract professional Stolle. “We pros are bloody nervous,” Stolle said after his win. “We’ve got reputations to uphold, and the amateurs have nothing to lose.”³⁶⁴ The honor of the first point played at Bournemouth, however, belonged to Australian professional Owen Davidson and John Clifton of Scotland, who started their match on the clubhouse court. After a modest five-stroke rally, Clifton became the first person to win a point in the open era.³⁶⁵ Another player from Great Britain, however, created the biggest sensation of the tournament. Twenty-four year old

Mark Cox defeated Gonzalez, nearly forty years old, in the first round 0-6 6-2 4-6 6-3 6-3, securing his place in sport history as the first non-professional to beat a professional in open tennis. “It had to happen,” Gonzalez commented after the match. “One of us had to lose to an amateur some day, and it might as well have been me,” he said, confusing the fact that Cox was actually a registered player and not an amateur.³⁶⁶ Cox then notched another significant win, defeating professional Roy Emerson in straight sets before losing to Rod Laver in the semifinals.

Ken Rosewall won the men’s singles title over Laver, earning \$2400 – an amount that counted towards his professional contract guarantee with George MacCall and the National Tennis League. Virginia Wade won the women’s singles and mixed doubles titles, and like Mark Cox and most other British registered players, she elected – before the tournament began – to receive \$120 in expense money for the week. If the British star had opted to play for prize money, she would have earned \$600 for winning the singles and \$120 for the mixed doubles, and Cox would have taken home \$480 for reaching the men’s singles semifinals. For those players who decided to compete only for expense money, the difference from what they would have earned in prize money was given to the players’ national tennis associations.³⁶⁷

The open tournament at Bournemouth was a financial success, with attendance of 20,000 spectators for the week and total gate receipts of nearly \$20,000 – three times what the tournament had made in the past. The tournament exposed the confusion created by the ILTF when it permitted each nation to determine the status of its players and the creation of the registered player category. “Many of the rules are confusing or preposterous or impossible of enforcement, and it is hoped that the ILTF will clarify and revise and repeal such regulations as necessary,” Gladys Heldman wrote in a *World Tennis* editorial entitled “Open Tennis, Registered Players and Confusion.”³⁶⁸ Perhaps due to the excitement of finally witnessing open tennis become a reality, the vast difference in prize money between the men’s and women’s events at Bournemouth – four times greater for the men’s singles champion than the women’s winner – raised only a few eyebrows. For the next two years, however, the prize money disparity in men’s and women’s professional tennis tournaments would only worsen. In a tennis world that had

changed so quickly and suddenly become so confusing, the need to chart their own courses and demand fairer treatment would alter the lives of Gladys Heldman and nine women players.

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CHAPTER 2: GLADYS HELDMAN AND THE ORIGINAL NINE

Gladys Heldman

Gladys Medalie Heldman, born in Manhattan in 1922, was the product of a wealthy and prominent New York City family. Her father, George Zirden Medalie, graduated from Columbia Law School in 1907 and took a position in the district attorney's office in 1910. Five years later, Medalie returned to private practice and represented such large corporate clients as Safeway and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. He also accepted a number of controversial cases and clients, including Arnold Rothstein, the notorious gambler who convinced eight Chicago White Sox baseball players to intentionally lose the 1919 World Series against the Cincinnati Red Stockings, William Anderson, the superintendent of the Anti-Saloon League of New York who was convicted of forgery, and Jack "Legs" Diamond, a liquor smuggler and slot machine operator who was a defendant in the Hotsy Totsy Nightclub murder case of 1930. Despite his defense of such unsavory characters, Medalie's reputation was not tarnished and his ethical standards were not compromised.¹

From 1926 to 1928, Medalie served without compensation as a special assistant attorney general in ferreting out and prosecuting illegal registration of voters by Tammany Hall in Manhattan and the Bronx. In 1928, he was designated as a special deputy attorney general in the prosecution of former Secretary of State Florence E. S. Knapp on charges growing out of the administration of the \$1.2 million State Census Fund. In the next two years Medalie was a counsel to the investigation of former judge Francis Mancuso, whose City Trust Company was a five million dollar failure, a counsel to the Bar of the City of New York in its ouster of Magistrate Albert Vitale, and a counsel to a joint committee of the state legislature appointed to investigate the Albany tax

frauds. In 1931, U. S. President Herbert Hoover appointed him as the United States Attorney for the Southern District.²

As United States District Attorney, Medalie assembled a staff of talented young men, including Thomas Dewey, chairman of the board of directors of the New York Young Republicans Club. Medalie subsequently cleaned out the bail bondsmen who had infested the Federal Building, smashed an alien smuggling ring, and went after the racketeers. When Dewey succeeded him in 1933, Medalie was instrumental in bringing about the nomination of Fiorello La Guardia for New York City mayor. In 1938, he was the behind-the-scenes manager in Dewey's unsuccessful bid to become the governor of New York, and two years later he managed Dewey's attempt to secure the Republican Party's nomination for the United States presidential campaign. By 1943, Dewey had ascended to the New York governor's office, and in 1945 he gave Medalie an interim appointment as an associate judge of the New York Court of Appeals. The following year, when the sixty-two year old Medalie unexpectedly died from acute bronchitis, Dewey ordered the flags on state buildings to be flown at half-staff.³

Gladys' mother, Carrie Kaplan Medalie, graduated from Barnard College in 1905 with Phi Beta Kappa honors. During her senior year, she taught in New York City's evening school, and then continued her education at the Teachers College at Columbia University. "C. K.," as she was later called by family members, began her teaching career as a substitute before accepting a position in the Latin Department at Erasmus Hall High School. After marrying George Medalie and taking time off from work to become a mother, she resumed her teaching career for eight more years, serving on her local school board and as the treasurer for the Association of Local School Boards. In 1938, New York City mayor Fiorello LaGuardia appointed her to the Board of Higher Education, on which she served until 1950. With the death of her husband in 1946 and her college-age daughter no longer living at home, C. K. traveled frequently. Fluent in several languages, she loved to study abroad; late in her life, nearing age eighty, she took courses at some of the best universities in Europe.⁴

*She went to the University of Heidelberg last summer, and she wrote me, "Darling, I'm in the top quarter of my class," but I can't remember now what she was studying. The year before, she studied politics at Oxford. The year before that she went on safari. She had a Zulu guide, and she stayed in a mud hut. Just a looking safari. She became a vegetarian when I was about ten, but I think she's started to cheat. She's been to Russia twice and to France about twenty-five times. She's never stayed in the same hotel there twice. She went to India, just to see the little towns; she had her Kleenex and bottled water and her soap. Tuesday nights she goes to French class. Her French is superb, but her accent is atrocious. She knows Latin, Greek, German, Italian – aside from that, she's no damn good.*⁵

-- Gladys Heldman, 1964

Growing up in such an intellectually stimulating home, it was no surprise that Gladys thrived in the history program at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, where she earned perfect grades. Her time at Stanford was also personally fulfilling, as that was where she met her future husband, Julius Heldman. The son of struggling Polish immigrants who settled in Los Angeles, Julius Heldman was completing his doctorate in physical chemistry. Although Julius was the best young tennis player in the nation in the mid-1930's – he won the USLTA National Junior Tennis Championships in singles and doubles in 1936 at the age of seventeen – he had already completed two years of undergraduate courses at UCLA, and he decided to pursue a career in chemistry instead of tennis.⁶

Gladys and Julius married on June 15, 1942, the day after Gladys graduated from Stanford. Julius was awarded a National Research Fellowship, and he continued his research and teaching career at the University of California-Berkeley. Gladys also furthered her education, earning a master's degree in medieval history at Stanford and intending to pursue her doctorate there.

I saw an ad, saying “Wanted: Full Professors.” It was a little college, the Williams Institute in Berkeley. Well, Julius was an instructor, so of course I wanted to be a full professor, so I became a full professor of mathematics, and I taught a course in the history of Western Civilization and second year math – calculus and differential equations – and I hadn’t had first-year math. I would assign problems blithely that I couldn’t do, and my husband had his Ph.D in physical chemistry and he wouldn’t help me. That’s how I learned mathematics.⁷

-- Gladys Heldman, 1964

Their first child, Carrie, was born in 1944, and soon after that they moved to Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Julius, along with other instructors from Berkeley, was drafted to work for the Manhattan Project. His research on the photolysis of acetaldehyde required him to blow his own scientific glass, and he was one of only two glassblowers at the Oak Ridge laboratory.

Acetaldehyde is a very fussy, touchy material, and if you don’t treat it very carefully, funny things happen to it.⁸

-- Julius Heldman, 1964

None of the researchers at Oak Ridge knew they were working on an atomic bomb, since they were prohibited from discussing their particular assignments. Julius knew many of the scientists from Berkeley, including Dr. Ernest O. Lawrence. The inventor of the cyclotron and winner of the 1939 Nobel Peace Prize in physics, Lawrence was the chief civilian in the electromagnet separation project. Julius was petrified one day when he was informed that Dr. Lawrence wanted to see him.

I trotted out thinking, ‘What have I done? My God, I’m a spy!’ But it turned out that Dr. Lawrence was a tennis nut. They drove me home to pick up some tennis clothes, and I played with him about every two weeks at the high school.⁹

-- Julius Heldman, 1964

Returning to Berkeley in late 1945, Julius considered teaching a university class in glass blowing, but since there was no text book on the subject, he decided to write one. His *Techniques of Glass Manipulation in Scientific Research* was published by Prentice Hall; for years, it was considered the definitive book on glassblowing and used in college courses. After finishing the book, however, Julius decided to leave academia and accept a position in the Development Department at the Shell Oil Company, working with process development and evaluation.

Right after the war, all of the oil companies were considering how to expand, what new processes to put in. A number of plants built during the war had been subject to catalytic cracking and alkylation. There were all kinds of proposals for process improvements, which needed technological and economic evaluation, which is a critical part of an engineer's evaluation.¹⁰

-- Julius Heldman, 2002

Living only two blocks from the renowned Berkeley Tennis Club, Julius began to play more tennis, and after a second daughter, Julie, was born on December 8, 1945, Gladys developed an interest in the game.

My husband deserves a solid gold cup for what next took place. I was a complete beginner and really lousy. He would rally with me every Saturday and Sunday for four or five hours at a time. This doesn't sound like a husband, but anyone at the Berkeley Tennis Club can vouch for it. At the end of a few months, I showed great enthusiasm but no promise. Undaunted, I decided to take lessons from Ton Stow. He was great! He has a knack of teaching the most beautiful and soundest strokes by combining compliments with insults. I went out on the courts every morning and I didn't come home until six. I started as number thirty-nine on the women's ladder, and at the end of the year I was ranked number twelve in California.¹¹

-- Gladys Heldman, 1951

A man came up to me and told me, "You shouldn't be playing tennis seven hours a day, seven days a week. You should be home taking care of your two children. I asked him, "Did your mother stay home and spend all her time taking care of you?" He said yes, and I said, "See?" ¹²

-- Gladys Heldman, 1977

The Shell Oil Company transferred Julius to Long Beach, California in 1948, and Gladys continued playing tennis, entering any tournament she could find.

Those were the days when I couldn't wait to go to bed so it would be time to get up again and play tennis. I played eight or nine sets a day. I would often play two tournaments at the same time. I remember once in Long Beach, I played on a Sunday morning in the finals of the singles, doubles and the mixed, and then I drove to Santa Monica and in the afternoon I played in the first round of the singles, doubles and mixed. And then, if there had been a vacant court, I assure you I would have practiced. ¹³

-- Gladys Heldman, 1964

Gladys and Julius began playing mixed doubles tournaments in Southern California, winning the titles in events held in Long Beach and Palm Springs. At the Arizona State Open in Phoenix, Gladys reached the finals of all three divisions she entered: she lost in the women's singles final to Jean Doyle, lost in the women's doubles final with partner Alice Wanee to Doyle and Pat Jacskon, and lost in the mixed doubles final with Julius to Doyle and Tom Van Fleet. Improving rapidly and consumed by her passion, Gladys decided to test her abilities in the larger tennis tournaments on the Eastern grass court circuit in the summer of 1949, leaving her two young daughters in the care Julius and the family's live-in housekeeper, Laura Haywood.

Playing in such established tournaments as the Eastern Grass Court Championships, the U. S. National Clay Court Championships, the U. S. National Doubles Championships in Boston and the U. S. National Singles Championships in

Forest Hills, New York, Gladys did not win many matches, usually losing in the first round at each event. During the national doubles tournament, Julius telephoned her with the news that he was being transferred to the Shell Oil refinery in Deer Park, Texas, outside of Houston. After winning only two games in first round loss to Betty Rosenquest at Forest Hills, Gladys returned home to Long Beach to make the move to Texas.

Mom decided she wanted the nicest possible house to rent, so she looked for places that were for sale, and she offered to live in them until a buyer was found. That's why there were no leases, and why she was able to find the large living quarters in Genoa, with house, barn, fields, and guest house.¹⁴
 -- Julie Heldman, 2010

We lived first at a ranch in Genoa, then moved to Kemah. Both properties were rentals, and they were on opposite sides of the refinery – the commutes were in different directions. After a year in Kemah, they had no lease, and they knew they were going to move to New York, although it was a secret. They made a temporary move to Houston, where they took two apartments side by side. The kids and Laura had one, and Gladys and Julius had the other. The apartments were in south Houston, which had been built up in the post-war expansion.¹⁵
 -- Trixie Merkin (nee Carrie Heldman), 2010

As soon as they moved to Texas, Gladys and Julius quickly assimilated into the local tennis community. Houston was the most vibrant tennis city in the state, due in large part to the annual River Oaks Invitation, the nation's best spring tournament which attracted many of the world's best players. Former British Davis Cup player Charles Hare visited the tournament at the River Oaks Country Club in 1946 and was impressed with the potential of Texas tennis. "You people here in Texas have a great climate," he observed. "Why, you can play tennis ten months out of the year. But to develop ranking players, you must plan tournaments for the kids: novice opens for boys, girls, juniors and

right on down the line. But the main thing is to keep them playing under careful supervision. That way, and only that way, will you realize the fruits of labor.”¹⁶

Heeding the advice given by Hare, Bob Nesmith, a young tennis instructor who gave lessons on Houston’s municipal courts, founded the Houston Tennis Association. Nesmith organized numerous tennis tournaments throughout the year, and the Houston Tennis Association was soon paying expenses for the most promising young players to attend out-of-state tournaments. By 1949, Houston was the home of the state’s three best young male players: Sammy Giammalva, Alan Graham, and Karl Kamrath.¹⁷

In late 1949, shortly after the Heldmans arrived in Texas, Julius was elected president of the Houston Tennis Association. The three-year old association offered a complete assortment of programs: lessons, tournaments, team matches, challenge ladders and social events. Gladys helped with the administration of these programs, and she also made arrangements for “Tennis Week,” a publicity campaign that included radio and television appearances. Retail stores in downtown Houston were also recruited, at which tennis apparel, racquets, and other equipment was displayed in their windows. Gladys also organized the Houston Junior Tennis Association and became the chairwoman of Houston’s Junior Wightman Cup program, a team competition for girls that also included squads from Austin, Dallas, and San Antonio.¹⁸

With so many tennis activities sponsored and planned by the Houston Tennis Association, Gladys published *The Houston Tennis Association Bulletin* in January 1950. Hand written on both sides of the paper, the newsletter was photocopied and mailed to all members of the association. As the premiere source of tennis news in the Houston area, the mailing list for *The Houston Tennis Association Bulletin* grew steadily during the first few months of 1950.¹⁹

In the spring of 1950, Gladys resumed traveling to out-of-state tournaments. She played in the Good Neighbor Championships in Miami Beach, Florida, one of the stops on the Florida-Caribbean-Texas circuit. In Miami Beach, Gladys won the mixed doubles title with Dr. Arnold Beisser over another Houstonian, Peggy Eby and her partner, Sid Schwartz, a member of the University of Miami tennis team. The following week, Gladys returned to Houston to play in the River Oaks Invitational. In the women’s

singles quarterfinals, she played a competitive match against Pat Todd, the nation's fourth-ranked player, before bowing 7-5 6-3. In the women's doubles, Gladys and Peggy Eby lost in the semifinals.

In June, the Texas Sectional Championships were held in Houston, and Gladys was given a budget by the Texas Lawn Tennis Association to produce the tournament's official program, a six-page typeset publication. The tournament attracted some of the nation's best male players, including U. S. top-tenner Herb Flam of Southern California and Tom Brown of San Francisco, a finalist at Forest Hills and Wimbledon three years earlier. The men's singles trophy was donated by Glenn McCarthy, the flamboyant oil tycoon who built the spectacular Shamrock Hotel in Houston the previous year.²⁰

Although Gladys lost in the women's singles semifinals of the Texas sectionals, she was not too disappointed because she discovered another talent. She enjoyed the process of publishing the tournament's program so much that she decided to expand the hand-written *Houston Tennis Association Bulletin* into a four-page, typeset publication under the new name of *The Houston Tennis News*. The monthly newsletter was still mailed free of charge to anyone who joined the Houston Tennis Association for three dollars per year.²¹

After the 1950 Texas sectionals, Gladys and her doubles partner Peggy Eby drove to several tournaments on the U. S. summer clay court circuit. At the Southern Championships in Louisville, Gladys had one of the best singles wins of her career, defeating sixteen-year old Laura Lou Jahn, ranked twentieth in the nation, 6-1 7-5. At the Tri-State Championships in Cincinnati, Gladys lost to Peggy, 0-6 8-6 10-8 in marathon match that lasted three hours and forty minutes. After playing in the Western Championships in Indianapolis, Gladys and Peggy drove to River Forest, Illinois for the U. S. Clay Court Championships, losing to one of the nation's best doubles teams, Doris Hart and Shirley Fry, by the scores of 6-0 6-0. The pair then returned to Houston, in time for Gladys to publish another issue of *The Houston Tennis News*.²²

After a brief time at home – it took only three days for Gladys to write and paste-up *The Houston Tennis News* – she traveled east to play several tournaments on the Eastern grass court circuit. First round losses at the Essex County Championships and

the Eastern Grass Court Championships were followed by another appearance at the U. S. National Championships. Gladys lost a competitive match to eleventh-ranked Barbara Scofield, 6-2 7-5, and she played with twenty-four year old Arnold Beisser in the mixed doubles, losing 6-3 6-4 to the strong team of Ham Richardson and Laura Lou Jahn. With the tennis season traditionally ending on September 30, the Texas Tennis Association placed Gladys at number four in its women's singles rankings and number six in the women's doubles with Betty Gray for 1950.²³

One of the hotspots for Houston tennis in the early 1950s was the Cork Club, a two-court facility on the grounds of the legendary Shamrock Hotel. Opened in the spring of 1949, the Shamrock Hotel was located three miles from downtown Houston in what was then an almost country-like setting. With eighteen stories and 1100 rooms, it was the largest hotel built in the nation during the 1940s. The Shamrock had a resort-like atmosphere, complete with a lavishly landscaped garden and an outdoor swimming pool, described as the world's largest. The 165-foot-long pool was large enough to accommodate waterskiing exhibitions and featured a three-story diving platform with an open spiral staircase. In the late summer of 1950, to celebrate the official opening of the Cork Club tennis courts, an exhibition match was staged, featuring Julius, Gladys, Peggy Eby and former national intercollegiate doubles champion Felix Kelly.

Nearly everything at the Shamrock Hotel – the name, the building's green roof, the green furnishings and décor, the green Laykold tennis courts at the Cork Club – was a tribute to the Irish ancestry of its flamboyant owner, Glenn McCarthy. Sometimes referred to as “Diamond Glenn” and “The King of the Wildcatters” by the media, McCarthy was a college drop-out who claimed he had less than \$1.50 to his name at the age of twenty-three, when he married sixteen-year old Faustine Lee. McCarthy convinced his father and brother to drill for oil in rural Texas, and they eventually succeeded near the small town of Anahuac. Between 1931 and 1942, he struck oil thirty-eight times, and during the 1940s he established eleven of his own oil fields and expanded several others that he purchased. McCarthy's rags-to-riches life story was the basis for the fictional character Jett Rink in *Giant*, Edna Ferber's sweeping novel about life in oil-rich Texas. When a film version of the book was made in 1955, with James

Dean playing the part of Jett Rink, several scenes were shot on location at the Shamrock Hotel.

McCarthy was also an outstanding athlete. He played collegiate football at Tulane University and Rice University, he was the state's Golden Glove boxing champion, he was on the five-man team that won the U. S. National Skeet Shooting title, he was an excellent golfer and he competed in the 1950 Texas Lawn Tennis Association sectional tournament – for which he donated the men's singles trophy. During the tournament, McCarthy asked Gladys if the Houston Tennis Association would be interested in organizing an event at the soon-to-open Cork Club as part of the Shamrock Hotel's second anniversary celebration. Gladys suggested that McCarthy could sponsor a men's team match competition, pitting the best male players from Texas with some of the best players from Mexico. McCarthy loved the concept, and soon Gladys was making plans to hold the McCarthy Cup at the Cork Club during the St. Patrick's Day weekend in March of 1951.²⁴

Gladys quickly lined up the Texas team, which included Julius, Felix Kelly, Bob Kamrath and Howard Startzman, with college players Chick Harris and Jason Morton as alternates. The opposing team featured Mexican Davis Cup player Francisco Guerrero-Arcocha, veteran Rafael Ortega, and two younger players, Alfredo Millet and Frederico Cervantes. Dr. Daniel Allen Penick, the president of the Texas Lawn Tennis Association for the past thirty-two years, was named honorary referee, with former British Davis Cup team member Charles Hare acting as official referee.²⁵

McCarthy paid one thousand dollars to have Joseph Putz design and create the McCarthy Tennis Cup, a massive silver cup adorned with a large green shamrock. The three-day event, with two matches played each day, was scheduled to begin on Friday, March 16. Tickets, available at the Shamrock Hotel, numerous Houston department stores, and all of the city's tennis courts, were priced at \$1.20 per day or \$3.00 for all three days. For spectators who wished to be seated at courtside, box seat tickets were available for \$9.00 for the three-day series.²⁶

The Texas team spent several weeks practicing at the Cork Club in order to get accustomed to the playing conditions. Unlike concrete or clay, the green Laykold

composition court surface was a relatively new innovation. With an asphalt base covered with a paint-like porous material, the courts were faster than a clay court and slower than a concrete court. The Mexican team was also scheduled to arrive in Houston several days before the event for practice sessions on the courts.

On Monday, March 12 – four days before the event was scheduled to begin – Gladys received the unsettling news that Mexican players were not in good standing with their national association. They were under suspension from the International Lawn Tennis Association, and if the match was played, the Texas players risked suspension from the USLTA. Apparently, a crisis was developing in the Mexican tennis political landscape. Unhappy with the Mexican national tennis association’s choices for the 1950 Davis Cup team, a rival tennis organization was formed and was officially recognized by Mexico’s National Sports Confederation. When the rebel organization – under the direction of the Sports Confederation – held a tournament to select team members for the 1951 Buenos Aires Olympiad, the national association notified the ILTF that all 23 players in the tournament were to be suspended. The suspension list included all four Mexican players scheduled to compete in the McCarthy Cup. Since national associations honored each other’s rulings, the USLTA notified Gladys that the Texas team would not be able to compete against players who were under suspension by their national association.²⁷

In less than twenty-four hours, Gladys resolved the crisis and made the McCarthy Cup a competition between Texas and the rest of the United States. By Tuesday afternoon, she was able to get commitments from Gardner Mulloy, Billy Talbert, Frank Shields and Sidney Wood to travel to Houston. All were former and current U. S. Davis Cup team stars; in addition, Mulloy and Talbert were four-time U. S. National Doubles champions and Wood was the 1931 Wimbledon singles champion. “These four tennis stars are considered the ‘Charm Boys’ in tennis circles,” Gladys told Harv Broughton of the *Houston Post*. “They are all handsome, suave and I think they’re just wonderful for coming down here on such short notice.”²⁸

On a cold and windy St. Patrick’s Day weekend at the Cork Club tennis courts, the U. S. Davis Cup team members defeated the Texans by winning five matches and

losing one. Felix Kelly, the top-ranked player in Texas, opened the competition on Friday afternoon with an easy win over an ailing and error-prone Sidney Wood, 6-2 6-2. After a short rest, Wood leveled the team score when he partnered with Frank Shields to defeat Julius and Howard Startzmann, 6-3 4-6 6-4. Later that evening, the players from both teams were honored at a cocktail party on the terrace of the Shamrock hotel. A large contingent of Hollywood celebrities – who were brought to Houston as guests of Glenn McCarthy for the celebration of the hotel’s second anniversary – were also present at the party.²⁹

The following day, Shields put the U. S. team ahead 2-1 with a 8-6 2-6 6-4 win over Startzman. In an exhibition doubles set, Billy Talbert teamed with film star Bill Bakewell to defeat Gardner Mulloy and actor John Howard, 6-2. The day included more than tennis, as Jack Gallagher of the *Houston Post* reported that “the Riders of the Purple Sage, Monte Hale, and Chill Wills pleased the large and appreciative gallery between sets with hillbilly songs.” After the musical entertainment, Mulloy barely got past Julius in the best match of the event, winning 10-8 9-7. The U. S. team wrapped up the 5-1 win on Sunday, with Talbert beating Karl Kamrath and then pairing with Mulloy to win against Kamrath and Felix Kelly.³⁰

The McCarthy Cup was a successful event, and Glenn McCarthy lavishly hosted his guests. The Texas team members were given expensive cashmere sweaters, and both teams had all expenses paid at the Shamrock Hotel. Dr. Daniel Allen Penick, a professor and tennis coach at the University of Texas who was the honorary referee for the McCarthy Cup, was impressed with the hospitality. “That room I’ve got,” he told Gallagher, “is big enough for me to house my entire tennis team.” Gardner Mulloy was asked if he would play in the event the following year. “You invite me in the morning and I’ll be here in the afternoon,” he responded.³¹ The McCarthy Cup, however, would never be held again. By 1952, McCarthy began to have financial problems; he defaulted on a number of loans and the Shamrock Hotel was acquired by the Equitable Life Assurance Society, eventually getting sold to the Hilton Hotels Corporation.

In addition to staging the McCarthy Cup in early 1951, Gladys continued to produce the monthly tennis publications. The four-page *Houston Tennis News*, published

from July 1950 to April 1951, expanded once again in May 1951 to sixteen pages. Renamed *The Roundup*, the publication – with nearly one thousand subscribers – promised to provide “complete coverage of all tennis events in Texas.” During the next two years, *The Roundup* would eventually become national and international in scope. As Gladys played tournaments throughout the nation, she became friends with a number of prominent players, including Art Larsen, Gardnar Mulloy and Billy Talbert, who contributed columns and articles to *The Roundup*. Gladys worked on the publication from home, staying up late at night to make address plates on a typewriter and then, once a month, hand-stamped copies of *The Roundup* with a clunky Elliott addressing machine.

*I hand stamped them ... The people in the apartment below used to complain. I could hear them with the broom, going “clonk!”*³²
 -- Gladys Heldman, 1964

Gladys played another series of tournaments in 1951, having modest results on the Texas-Florida-Caribbean circuit in the spring and the Eastern grass court circuit in the summer. At the Eastern Grass Court Championships, played at the Orange Lawn Tennis Club in South Orange, New Jersey, she played doubles with Althea Gibson. One year earlier, Gibson became the first black player to compete at the U. S. National Championships, nearly defeating reigning Wimbledon champion Louise Brough in the second round. Despite that breakthrough, Gibson could not easily find doubles partners.

*... even after Althea proved herself a talent too great to exclude, one club on the Eastern grass court canceled its event rather than invite a black woman ... I first met Althea Gibson in the early 1950s when Mom invited her doubles partner to dinner. Other players shied away from playing with “Big Al” because of her color; my mother was overjoyed to find such a good partner.*³³
 -- Julie Heldman, 1978

Gladys and Althea lost in the quarterfinals of the Eastern Grass Court Championships, dropping a 9-7 6-4 decision to Rosemary Buck and Margaret Varner. The following week, Gladys partnered with Jean Clarke at the U. S. National Doubles Championships at the Longwood Cricket Club in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, losing 6-3 6-1 in the first round. During the week at Longwood, Gladys was honored with the Service Bowl, an annual award given to a woman player who “makes the most notable contribution to the sportsmanship, fellowship and service of tennis.” In addition to staging the McCarthy Cup and producing *The Round-Up*, Gladys was recognized for giving free tennis clinics throughout Houston, starting a tennis library at the Municipal Courts, organizing local tournaments for adults and juniors, forming the Houston Junior Tennis Association and volunteering as the Junior Wightman Cup chairwoman for the Houston area.³⁴

At the presentation ceremony, USLTA Treasurer Ellsworth Davenport, representing the national association, told the audience that “there is an old Chinese proverb which, being translated, says ‘There are five directions: north, south, east, west and the spot where you are standing, and the last is the most important, for it determines where the others are from your point of view.’ Mrs. Heldman stands most of the time on some spot in Texas, but she has spread her deeds and accomplishments north, south, east and west, and therefore has benefited the entire country.”³⁵

At the U. S. National singles championships in Forest Hills, New York the following week, Gladys played Althea Gibson on the grandstand court of the West Side Tennis Club, losing 6-1 6-0. She continued to play sectional tournaments for the next two years, having her best year in 1952 by winning the singles and doubles titles at Texas Sectional Championships, as well as the women’s singles at the River Oaks Invitational with a 6-3 6-2 final round win over Lucille Scoggins. At the U. S. National Championships that year, she played defending champion and top-seeded Maureen Connolly on the stadium court, winning one game from the phenomenal eighteen-year old who would go on to win the title again. In recognition for her results in 1952, Gladys was given the top ranking in women’s singles by the Texas Lawn Tennis Association, as

well as the top ranking in doubles with Loucille Scoggins and the number three ranking in mixed doubles with Julius.³⁶

More tournaments followed in 1953, and a chance conversation at one of them spun Gladys' life in another direction. While she continued to publish *The Roundup* each month, a larger publication entitled *Racquet* was also on the market. It evolved from *American Lawn Tennis* magazine, founded by S. Wallis "Pops" Merrihew in 1907 and for many years the pre-eminent source for tennis news and commentary. After Merrihew's death in 1942, *American Lawn Tennis* changed ownership four times. In November 1951, Oliver Rea changed the publication's name to *Racquet* to reflect an additional emphasis on badminton, squash, and court tennis. For the first time in more than forty years, there was no nationwide magazine devoted exclusively to tennis. At the San Antonio Country Club Invitation in the spring of 1953, U. S. Davis Cup team member Gardnar Mulloy made a casual comment to Gladys about the decline of tennis journalism since the demise of *American Lawn Tennis*.

*... thumbing through a current copy of Racquet, we both remarked how badly the tennis magazines were done these days. No interest, old-fashioned, incomplete and dull. I remember saying, "Isn't it a shame? Somebody should do something about it." With that she jumped to her feet, grabbed me by the shoulders, shook me and shouted, "That gives me an idea! We'll put out the best magazine ever!" I knew nothing about the publishing business, and at first refused to get involved but was soon persuaded.*³⁷

-- Gardnar Mulloy, 1953

*Gladys and Gar Mulloy got to talking about producing a really good tennis magazine. Gladys said she would put it out if Gar could get advertising.*³⁸

-- Julius Heldman, 2011

Gladys immediately began assembling a roster of domestic and international sources. Correspondents were established in six areas of the United States and seven

foreign locations. Wilma Smith and Dorothy Head, correspondents for *The Roundup*, were assigned to cover the West Coast and Europe, respectively, and Billy Talbert and Gardner Mulloy would be contributing writers. A new title was in order, one that reflected an international scope. Starting with the title *American Lawn Tennis* as an inspiration, the word “Lawn” was dropped for being archaic and outdated, and “World” was substituted for “American.” The new magazine, *World Tennis*, was scheduled to make its debut in June, 1953.

*We all had jobs with the magazine. I used the addressograph to stamp all the stencils for that issue. I was seven.*³⁹

-- Julie Heldman, 2011

Since *World Tennis* was going to be written by and for players, many current and former competitors were eager to be contributors. Art Larsen, Hugh Stewart, Vinnie Richards, and Wilmer Allison offered to write articles for the inaugural issue

*One of Gladys' great triumphs as an editor was almost instantaneous mobilization of a far-flung network of correspondents who forwarded great amounts of data monthly.*⁴⁰

-- Ron Bookman, 1978

In addition to being a player's magazine, *World Tennis* used other marketing strategies to create its niche. The newsstand price was twenty-five cents an issue and subscription was three dollars per year; in comparison, the *Racquet* cost fifty cents on the newsstand and four dollars per year. The timing for the first issue of *World Tennis* was good, since the summer U. S. tournaments were coming up. The magazine could be marketed to spectators and players at the California hard court tournaments, the Midwest and Southern clay court tournaments, and all of the events on the Eastern grass court circuit, including the U. S. National Doubles Championships in Massachusetts and the U. S. National Championships at Forest Hills, New York.

There were, however, few advertisers interested in the new magazine. Only two companies – Ethicon Suture Laboratories, the manufacturer of gut tennis strings, and Feise Construction, the builder of tennis courts – purchased full-page advertisements. Julius was able to secure a half-page advertisement from Victor-Davis, primarily because he was a longtime friend of the Davis family and had used Davis tennis racquets for years. Gardner Mulloy sold two quarter-page advertisements, one from the South Florida Tennis Patrons Association, one from his alma mater, the University of Miami. In addition to a half-page advertisement for Dunlop tennis balls, the remaining advertisers for the first issue of *World Tennis* were three upcoming tennis tournaments.⁴¹

The first issue of *World Tennis*, dated June 1953, was published in Houston, with Gladys working out of the apartment at 1819 West Capitol Avenue. Tennis great Bill Tilden wrote an article for the magazine shortly before he died, and a photograph of him with the caption “End of an Era” was placed on the cover. *World Tennis* was mailed to all the subscribers of *The Roundup*, with the hope that the mailing list would grow each month. The first issue included tournament results, a tournament schedule, reports on numerous tennis tournaments. 1950 U. S. National champion Art “Tappy” Larsen displayed his offbeat personality by writing a humorous article explaining his rituals and compulsions, and the issue also included a short story, a puzzle, and a collection of short news items in a section entitled “Around the World.”⁴²

The tennis world was just one extended family then, and nothing reflected it better than Around the World, the newsy, gossipy compendium of notes and quotes that appeared in every issue of this magazine. For years, it was a family album and newsletter, never missing a marriage, divorce, or birth. When a tennis person was betrothed, forwarding a wedding photo to WT was almost as important a part of the ceremony as exchanging rings...ATW, as the column was known, told you who was jitterbugging with whom on the Caribbean circuit, who was likely to be jealous about it, and which tennis couples were expecting a new addition to the Junior ranks – “infanticipating,” in the Hedda Hopper jargon of the period.

*Everything you needed to know to gossip across the net was here.*⁴³
 -- Ron Bookman, 1978

Even though the premier issue of *World Tennis* lost several thousand dollars, Gladys was determined to keep the publication afloat. As soon as it was published, the Heldmans and their housekeeper Laura Haywood relocated to New York City, since the Shell Oil Company had promoted Julius to the position of Assistant Manager of Research.

*In the summer of 1953, C.K. was traveling in Europe. We stayed at her apartment until our own apartment was ready, probably a total of two months. Then, when we moved into 200 East End Avenue, there wasn't enough room for family plus magazine ...*⁴⁴
 -- Julie Heldman, 2011

Gladys found a home for *World Tennis*, for forty dollars a month rent, at 356 East 89th Street, a street-level location that had once been a candy store. Since the store was only three blocks from her apartment building, and since parking spots for car were difficult to find in the area, Gladys walked to and from the *World Tennis* office everyday.

*I used to go there at six in the morning, and get home at four the next morning. For the first year, I never went out at night, and I worked weekends.*⁴⁵
 -- Gladys Heldman, 1964

*Gladys worked enormously long hours, and I did, too. Often I didn't get home in time to see the kids into bed. Often the kids were left alone between Laura's leaving and my arrival.*⁴⁶
 -- Julius Heldman, 2002

... I have no idea how she did it. She edited and published the magazine, wrote articles for it, got the ads, contacted the photographers, did the paste-ups, got Dad to proofread it, and got every issue out on time – she was very proud of that. She was a bear when she was going to press, often staying up for forty-eight hours putting the magazine to press ... we subscribed to the following newspapers, from which we gleaned tennis results: New York Times, New York Journal, New York Herald, New York Herald Tribune, Chicago Tribune, Houston Post, San Francisco Chronicle, London Times overseas edition, Melbourne Herald ... that was one of Dad's jobs, with occasional help from us. When we were young, we sorted the newspapers into piles and he looked for the tennis results.⁴⁷

-- Julie Heldman, 2011

More papers: Philadelphia Inquirer, Miami Herald, L'Equipe ... Gladys printed every result she could get her hands on, and naturally the papers carried some local scores.⁴⁸

-- Trixie Merkin (nee Carrie Heldman), 2011

In the basement of the building that housed the *World Tennis* office, a man sold ice in the summer. He also sold fuel oil in the winter months, and the fumes would rise up through the flooring.

You were afraid to light a match, and I reeked of it. I'd come home and ask my husband, "But why don't you want to kiss me?"⁴⁹

-- Gladys Heldman, 1964

When Gladys came home from the candy store, she smelled awful. I immediately recognized it as the nitrogen bases in liquid fuel oil, which deaden the olfactory nerves.⁵⁰

-- Julius Heldman, 2002

In the fall of 1953, the *Racquet* ceased publication. The owner of the magazine asked Gardner Mulloy if *World Tennis* would like to purchase the subscription list for \$10,000, claiming he had several thousand subscribers. Gladys did not want to go through with the deal, but Mulloy insisted on it. After the purchase was finalized, it turned out that the subscription list for the *Racquet* was only slightly larger than that of *World Tennis*, and many of the subscribers of the *Racquet* were already receiving *World Tennis*.⁵¹

A few months later, in early 1954, Sidney Wood visited *World Tennis*. Wood was the 1931 Wimbledon champion and played in the McCarthy Cup that Gladys organized in Houston in 1951; he also owned a laundry business at 316 East 61st Street in partnership with former great Donald Budge. Wood was not impressed with Gladys' office, and he invited her to move the magazine's operations to his laundry building.

*It was really spacious! The laundry trucks came and moved us, and we were there for two years, until they tore it down. We got into the office by the freight elevator, and we shared the space with a glove dryer, Mr. Imburgia ... There was a partition, but it didn't go all the way up, and when he was dyeing gloves this great cloud would rise.*⁵²

-- Gladys Heldman, 1964

World Tennis continued to lose a significant amount of money each month, often several thousand dollars at a time. Gladys' wealthy mother helped to underwrite the losses, which led to frequent arguments.

*One month it would lose four thousand dollars, and the next month it would lose six thousand dollars. Gar and I were putting out so much money! ... he said, "Let's quit. I just can't afford this." But I couldn't quit.*⁵³

-- Gladys Heldman, 1964

When the July 1954 issue of *World Tennis* was published, Gardner Mulloy was no longer listed on the masthead as the co-editor.

*The partnership didn't last more than a few months. Gar was unable to deliver advertising, as nobody was willing to put money into the new magazine. Even though Gar was on the Spalding free list, he couldn't deliver Spalding. He managed to score one ad for the magazine, from Wilma, a women's retail designer shop.*⁵⁴

-- Julius Heldman, 2002

*Mom told us Gar was involved because he said he could get advertisers. He couldn't. Mom wanted him out after a few months, but kept him on the masthead out of loyalty or out of the feeling that his name added some gravitas. I don't think Gar put much – if any – money into World Tennis.*⁵⁵

-- Julie Heldman, 2011

With Gladys working nearly non-stop on the struggling magazine, she no longer played in the tournaments on the Eastern grass court circuit. During the summer of 1954, however, Gladys and Julius found some time to join the Century Country Club, located outside of the city in Purchase, New York.

*The club was for elite members of the Jewish community. It was very exclusive. My parents probably got in because my mother's father was so famous, and because my father was such a good tennis player ... My mother met many of her advertisers at the club. She and my father played tennis with many members, many of whom were pretty awful tennis players, and had lunch with them at the club.*⁵⁶

-- Julie Heldman, 2011

One of the wealthy club members that Gladys became friends with was Joseph Cullman III, the president of Philip Morris, a tobacco company founded by his father. Cullman's wife, Sue, was the granddaughter of Sigmund Lehman, one of the founders of the Lehman Brothers Investment Bankers. The relationship between Gladys and Joe Cullman would eventually become very close, and would be instrumental in changing the face of women's tennis in 1970.

*When I first met Gladys, the game was handled by a relatively small group of people. Their thinking was more in the traditional country-club attitude and they did not envisage the wider opportunities Gladys foresaw for the game. She deserves all the credit for realizing the great potential of tennis and the interest it could develop if properly exposed to the public.*⁵⁷

-- Joe Cullman, 1979

Although Gladys curtailed her tournament appearances in 1954, she managed to compete in a few tournaments, more for pure enjoyment than any aspirations of winning titles. She and Julius vacationed in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and both of them played in the Caribe Hilton Invitational, a popular stop on the Caribbean circuit. Gladys defeated Josefina Cabrerias in the first round, 6-2 6-2, before losing to Shirley Fry, one of the nation's best players, in the quarterfinals, 6-0 6-1. Gladys also realized a lifelong dream when her entry into the Wimbledon women's singles tournament was accepted. It was going to be a working vacation; she could write a Wimbledon story for *World Tennis*, and try her luck in the world's most famous tournament. On an outside court, in front of only three spectators, Gladys sat down and cried after she lost 6-0 6-0 to Heather Robson of New Zealand. Later that summer, she played in the Eastern Grass Court Championships for the fifth and final time, losing in the second round to Connie Bowman, 6-3 6-1.

In November 1956, the tennis world was shocked and saddened by the news that Art Larsen, the 1950 U. S. National men's singles champion and the eighth-ranked player in the country, was critically injured in a traffic accident in California. After visiting a friend in San Lorenzo, Larsen was driving home on the East Shore Freeway when a

splash of water from a passing truck caused his small motorcycle to lose control, throwing him onto the side of the road. When police happened upon Larsen several hours later, he was bleeding profusely and barely conscious.⁵⁸

As he was rushed to the hospital, Larsen convulsed so violently he had to be restrained, eventually becoming rigid and comatose. His brain had hemorrhaged, and a neurosurgeon needed to drill a hole in his skull to relieve the massive swelling. When he awoke from a coma fifteen days later, Larsen could not speak, he was partially paralyzed and blind in his left eye. The thirty one-year old former amateur tennis champion, psychologically scarred from his experiences in World War II, was still living with his parents and was unable to pay his mounting hospital bills.⁵⁹

On December 12, 1956, Donald Budge announced that a benefit for Larsen was scheduled to be held at the Seventh Regiment Armory on Park Avenue and 66th Street in New York on January 11. “Doris Hart first got the idea of Larsen Day,” Budge told reporters at Toots Shor’s restaurant. “She got quick support from other tennis people and we ironed out the details with the United States Lawn Tennis Association to stage this tournament. Professionals and amateurs will be in the performance – with no danger to the status of those amateurs ... Larsen’s situation is grave, but not many people know about it. His daily doctor bills come to about one hundred dollars and his parents have used all available funds. Larsen may be in the hospital another eight months.”⁶⁰

I’m old enough to remember this ... This event was Gladys’ idea, and she was 100% responsible for recruiting the players and volunteers, scoring the donations, and making it come off successfully, but many parts of the way she went about it are indicative of the modus operandi that has made it difficult to establish an accurate record of her endeavors. She correctly perceived that the name of a famous tennis player would be more interesting to the public than her name. In addition, she had some strange inhibitions about putting herself forward. She didn’t like to be in the public eye, and so she would do such things like saying that this was Doris Hart’s idea ... many of the other tennis players

*were participants in the benefit and not organizers.*⁶¹

-- *Trixie Merkin (nee Carrie Heldman), 2015*

The Seventh Regiment Armory donated the use of the courts, and some of the world's best amateurs and professionals – including Savitt, Budge Patty, Pauline Betz, Gussie Moran, Fred Perry, Vic Seixas and Sammy Giammalva – were flown to New York free of charge on Trans World Airlines. Boxing champion Gene Tunney paid for the installation of bleachers, Billy Talbert underwrote the printing of the programs, and Jack Kramer – whose players were touring in Australia and unable to participate – sent a check for one thousand dollars. Donations were accepted at the *World Tennis* office, and in the weeks leading up to the exhibition, over six thousand dollars was mailed to the magazine.⁶²

The Seventh Regiment Armory was filled to capacity on January 11 with 2500 spectators, and another one thousand fans had to be turned away. The opening match between Pauline Betz and Gussie Moran was delayed for one half hour while additional seating for the overflow crowd was installed. In addition to the opening exhibition with Betz and Moran, the spectators were treated to an entertaining singles match between Savitt and Patty, followed by another good-humored contest between Budge and Perry. The evening concluded with a men's doubles match between Seixas-Giammalva and Patty-Talbert, and a mixed doubles set between Budge-Moran and Perry-Betz. In the next edition of *World Tennis*, Gladys called the successful benefit “the most unusual event in tennis history” and reported total proceeds of \$20,000.⁶³ With speech therapy, Larsen learned to talk again and regained the use of his legs, a few years later, while briefly attending Hayward State University, he played on the varsity tennis team at number five singles with modest results.⁶⁴

Gladys took a leadership role with another event at the Seventh Regiment Armory two years later. The U. S. Men's National Indoor Championships, one of the association's four premier events, was usually played at the armory each February. It was a treasured part of the New York City tennis scene, dating back to 1903 with such champions as Bill Tilden, Vincent Richards, Jean Borotra, Renee LaCoste, Jack Kramer

and Pancho Gonzalez. Despite its history and significance, the event rarely made a profit greater than one thousand dollars. In late 1958, the Seventh Regiment Armory notified the USLTA that the rental fee for the 1959 tournament would be \$3500. Under the impression that none of the U. S. Davis Cup team players wanted to participate, the USLTA Executive Committee felt the tournament was bound to lose money. At a meeting in Chicago in December 1958, the committee determined that the event needed to be canceled.⁶⁵

Within days of learning the news, Gladys devised a plan. *World Tennis* would sponsor the tournament, and along with two anonymous individuals, guaranteed to cover any deficits incurred. The members of the Seventh Regiment Tennis Club would run the tournament, and any proceeds would go directly to the club for lighting improvements at the dimly-lighted facility. A full-page advertisement appeared in the next issue of *World Tennis* promoted the tournament, although there was no mention of which players were scheduled to play. When fan-favorite Dick Savitt decided to defend the title he won the previous year, and when U. S. Davis Cup player Barry MacKay changed his mind and agreed to play after all, the tournament's success was almost guaranteed.⁶⁶

Gladys realized that the participation of Alex Olmedo – the hero of the 1958 U. S. Davis Cup team that had almost beaten Australia, and the winner of the 1959 Australian Championships – would greatly increase the gate receipts. There were, however, several hurdles to clear if the tournament hoped to get Olmedo. His Davis Cup captain, Perry T. Jones, did not want Olmedo to play if it meant missing classes at the University of Southern California. With the chance to win an important national title – not to mention complimentary airfare and a suite at the Vanderbilt Hotel – Olmedo was eager to play in the tournament. When the university granted Olmedo permission to miss two days of classes, Jones withdrew his objection, and the young star accepted the invitation to play in New York.⁶⁷

First-round matches started on Thursday, February 19 at 6:00 pm. Olmedo was scheduled to depart Los Angeles on Wednesday evening and arrive in New York on Thursday at 6:00 am. A luncheon at Leone's restaurant to honor Olmedo was planned by *Sports Illustrated* magazine, after which Olmedo could relax at the Vanderbilt before his

opening round match that evening. Heldman and *World Tennis* contributor George McGann arrived at the airport on Thursday morning to meet Olmedo, but his flight was delayed due to mechanical problems and it did not depart Los Angeles until later that day.

With eighty members of the press waiting for Olmedo at the luncheon, fellow players Barry MacKay, Jaroslav Drobny, Warren Woodcock and Gardnar Mulloy handled reporters' questions. Former U. S. Davis Cup captain Billy Talbert opened the gathering with the quip, "I knew Perry Jones wasn't too keen on Alex playing in the National Indoors, but I never thought he would go so far as to remove a wheel from the airplane!" When one of the reporters asked what kind of grades Olmedo had at the university, MacKay answered, "I think he got an "A" in Spanish."⁶⁸ When Olmedo finally arrived in New York in the mid-afternoon, he was gracious enough to stop by the Armory for photographers. Before his Thursday evening match, Olmedo had time for only three hours of sleep.

Olmedo won comfortably in each of his first three matches, defeating Henry Jungle, Julius Heldman and Hugh Stewart in straight sets. Three thousand spectators jammed the Seventh Regiment Armory on Sunday afternoon to watch Olmedo defeat Davis Cup teammate Barry MacKay, 6-2 8-6 6-4. The same number of fans turned out on Monday evening for finals, in which Olmedo fended off Dick Savitt by the scores of 7-9 6-3 6-4 5-7 12-10. Sportswriter Allison Danzig reported that the match "truly ranks with the great matches played in this country, indoors or outdoors."⁶⁹ The tournament was a financial success, with a profit fifteen times greater than what was earned the previous year. Thanks to Gladys' determination and marketing abilities, the U. S. Men's National Indoor Championships survived the crisis and successfully continued for many more years.

By the end of the 1950s, the list of writers who contributed to *World Tennis* included former players Wilmer Allison, Don Budge, Dorothy Knode, Jack Kramer, Gardnar Mulloy, Vincent Richards, Dick Savitt and Billy Talbert. Another occasional contributor was Arnold Beisser, with whom Gladys played mixed doubles at the 1950 U. S. National Championships. Shortly after that tournament, the twenty five-year-old Beisser was stricken with polio and needed to be confined to an iron lung for months.

Afterward, bound in a wheelchair for the rest of his life and stripped of many of his physical capabilities, Gladys gave him hope by insisting that he write articles for the magazine.

*An old friend helped in a surprising way. She was publisher of the largest tennis magazine, and desiring to be helpful, invited me to write for it. I became the book reviewer, since I could not attend tournaments as they were happening. I wrote scathing criticisms of a number of tennis books, unconsciously expressing my grief and rage over my lost involvement as a player. I was a spurned lover who hated the love I could no longer possess. I raged against innocent writers telling athletes how to become winners. The reviews were so negative that my friend frequently had to ask me to tone them down. Later, when I was able to get around in a wheelchair, I covered a couple of important tournaments for the magazine. I was still in the process of mourning, though, and neither the winners nor the losers escaped my callous comments about the play. It was an important cathartic expression for me, and helped me to begin to recognize that losers were as human as winners. I fear this unusually public process of mourning did not help the circulation of my friend's magazine. But I am happy to say the magazine survived and flourished in spite of my writing.*⁷⁰

-- Dr. Arnold Beisser, 1988

In 1961, an accountant was working on the financial reports for *World Tennis* and told Gladys, "What are you doing this for? It's impossible. You'll never make any money." The next time the accountant returned, he was surprised to discover that the books had finally balanced.⁷¹ The magazine's subscription list was steadily growing, and Gladys' persistence and creative strategies with potential advertisers was finally paying off. She established a number of *World Tennis* awards for players and administrators, named after such regular advertisers as Mary Chess, Marlboro and Germaine Monteil, and she announced the award winners in local newspapers as well as in the magazine. In addition, although some companies such as Wilson Sporting Goods

and Victor Sports (which was promised the inside front cover in perpetuity) had become faithful monthly advertisers, Gladys was always searching for more advertisers to bring on board.

*Magazines make money from their ads. My mother sold all the ads in World Tennis. She'd invite prospective advertisers to lunch at a fancy French restaurant, and then pitch them her ideas of how to connect the advertiser's name to an event or an award or a column. She was a pioneer of modern sports marketing. If my mother failed to sell the ads she was pitching, she took herself to Tiffany's to buy a consoling treasure.*⁷²

-- Julie Heldman, 2006

One of the reasons for the growth of *World Tennis* in the early 1960s was the fact that it had become increasingly opinionated, thanks to the monthly editorials written by Gladys. Her first editorial, entitled “The Open Tournament and the Spectre of Jack Kramer” in the March 1961 issue, was a criticism of Jack Kramer’s stranglehold on professional tennis, and how his monopoly was the reason why the world’s amateur associations were resistant to the adoption of open tennis.

Jack is a unique personality ... During the last year, in his war against the amateur game, his personality has changed. This *is* a war and the amateur game *is* his enemy ... it is no longer possible to discuss the game with Jack since any proposals not agreeable to him will immediately cause him to bare his fangs ... Jack’s statements on the part he would play in the world of open tennis are strong enough to make anyone reconsider his stand on favoring a meeting between amateurs and pros. At a press meeting a year ago, Kramer made his view public. He stated that the major open events would have to conform to his schedule. When pressed on this question, he confessed that if the dates of Wimbledon did not conform, he would change them ... He announced also that if the tournaments wanted to have his “boys” participate, that he, as their representative, would have

to be consulted about the seedings and that each tournament would have to offer a purse of at least \$10,000... Jack, the self-appointed ruler of the open is a question mark to the many amateur officials who donate their time at no charge to putting on tournaments. Will these officials continue to work free in tournaments dominated by Kramer and his \$10,000 purses? ⁷³

Gladys sent Kramer a preview of the editorial before it was published, and she offered him space in *World Tennis* for a rebuttal. Kramer felt that Gladys was “meddling” and confirmed his desire to write a response. The rebuttal, however, was never written and the relationship between Gladys and Kramer was permanently strained. One year later, shortly before another vote regarding the adoption of open tennis was scheduled to be taken at the ILTF annual meeting, Kramer announced that he was stepping down from the promotion of professional tennis for the good of the game. “As long as I’m around,” Kramer wrote in the May 28, 1962 issue of *Sports Illustrated*, “amateur officials all over the world can use me as their excuse for not going ahead with open tennis.” He announced his plans to continue as a consultant for the International Professional Tennis Players Association, a group he had formed with other professional players as a means for collaborating with amateur tennis. Kramer also took a parting shot at the top amateur players, writing that stars such as Rod Laver and Roy Emerson were making “more money out of tennis than I could afford to pay them as pros.” ⁷⁴

Gladys gave her opinions about Kramer’s *Sports Illustrated* article in the July 1962 issue of *World Tennis*. “Unfortunately,” she wrote in an editorial, “he used his resignation to take another unfair swipe at his rivals, the world’s leading amateurs ... Today, the world’s best amateurs are Laver and Emerson ... Jack made several offers to both these players. His bids were rejected. Had they signed up with him, Jack would have built them up to the skies. They didn’t, so he proceeded to tear their tennis reputations apart ... the battle between the pros and the amateurs has left him with an anger for the latter which he does not choose to conceal.” ⁷⁵

Kramer’s resignation from the promotion of professional tennis was questioned several months later, when Gladys reported that Rod Laver was considering to play as a

professional. “Jack Kramer is trying to get him to turn pro,” she wrote in the November 1962 issue of *World Tennis*. “Only a few months ago, Kramer declared he had ‘retired’ from pro tour promotions and that Laver was not good enough to beat the top eight pros. Jack now admits he has made pro offers to Laver but says he does not want a Laver-Gonzalez tour. This declaration may be designed to get Gonzalez’ price down, or perhaps Jack really wants a ‘world series’ with six players.”⁷⁶

Kramer broke his two-year silence with Gladys by sending her a lengthy letter, which appeared in the January 1963 issue of *World Tennis*. “Because you are apparently still very skeptical about my position in professional tennis,” he wrote, “I felt that I should drop you a line to try, if possible, to straighten out any misconceptions you may have, and so that you can look at the International Professional Tennis Players’ Association in its true light, it being that is in complete control of all the responsibilities necessary to running a good program.” Kramer explained that his discussions with Rod Laver about becoming a professional were done on behalf of the IPTPA, not himself, and that as of November 1962 he was no longer financially or legally responsible to any professional tennis player except Pancho Gonzalez (whose contract was due to expire soon). He also wrote that he was looking forward to opening a tennis club in California and managing the golf course he owned. “Because I feel that, for the last few years, when I have written things or been interviewed, lots of my statements have been misconstrued because sentences were taken out of context, I am asking that you please print the whole letter or none of it.”⁷⁷

Gladys printed Kramer’s entire letter, and then added her own comment at the end. “WT’s dispute with Jack Kramer was never based on the fact that Jack and/or the professional tour made money, but on Jack’s criticisms of the amateurs and amateur tennis. Players such as Rod Laver, Roy Emerson and Vic Seixas have been the targets of Kramer’s blasts. We hope the blasts have ended and that Jack will have nothing but success in his new ventures.”⁷⁸

During the course of her public feud with Kramer, Gladys spoke with Charles Friedman of the *New York Times* about her role in the promotion of tennis. “If the International Lawn Tennis Association votes in favor of a trial period for open

tournaments, I hope to do everything possible to support them,” she said shortly before the ILTF annual meeting in the summer of 1961. “If the opens are voted down, I will continue to do everything I can to promote players and their competitions, whether amateur or professional.”⁷⁹ At the ILTF meeting in Stockholm, Sweden in July 1961, the subject of open tennis was not discussed and deferred until the following year. With the world’s major championships closed to professionals for the immediate future, Gladys found another use for her promotional skills – elevating the U. S. National Championships at the West Side Tennis Club in Forest Hills, New York, into a first-rate tennis tournament.

The national championships, Gladys observed, suffered from limited USLTA funds, a lack of European entries, sparse spectator attendance, minimal gate receipts, cursory media exposure and an indifferent West Side Tennis Club. Especially alarming was the news that Perry T. Jones and the Southern California Tennis Association – perhaps inspired by the recent relocation of the Brooklyn Dodgers to Los Angeles – notified the USLTA that they were interested in hosting the tournament in 1962. If Jones was successful in securing the event, the City of Los Angeles proposed to build a three million dollar tennis complex in Griffith Park.

Gladys offered a solution to revive the national championships in the September 1961 issue of *World Tennis*. She proposed that the travel expenses for thirty or forty top European players should be paid, even though such an undertaking might cost as much as \$10,000. At the very least, the increased gate receipts created by an international field would return the investment, and Gladys suggested some possibilities for raising the travel expenses.

There are four ways in which to provide the dollars to make Forest Hills the world’s best tournament. A forward-looking and aggressive USLTA could simply underwrite the expense, which would be returned out of profits; a patron of the game, and there are a few generous, tennis-minded individuals who have contributed \$5000 on occasion, could undertake to be the sponsor; the People-to-People Sports Committee through the State Department might be interested

enough to provide a world-wide tennis competition at Forest Hills; or failing any of these, *World Tennis* would be willing to put up the dollars and to extend the invitations.⁸⁰

Two months later, West Side Tennis Club president Robert Lambert, tournament chairman Augie Millang, incoming USLTA president Ed Turville, USLTA Secretary-Treasurer Harold Lehair and Gladys met in the office of People-to-People Chairman Colonel Edward Eagan to work out the details. The plans called for the raising of \$18,000 to charter an airplane for a round-trip flight from Europe for eighty players. Ten people would be asked to each contribute \$1800 for Operation Tennis Airlift. If the profits of the 1962 tournament exceeded the 1961 profits by \$18,000, the contributors would get all of their money returned. If the 1962 tournament profits were equal to or less than what was made in 1961, the ten contributors would not get any refunds. In addition, it was determined that the cost of housing and feeding each player for the two-week tournament would be \$125, and additional contributors would be needed to underwrite these expenses.⁸¹

Millang and Lambert later met with tournament referee Dan Johnson to discuss Gladys' other ideas. It was agreed that the 1962 U. S. National Championships would, for the first time, include a qualification tournament. To accommodate the increased number of matches, the tournament would be expanded from ten days to two weeks. Especially gratifying to Gladys was the agreement that the organizational abilities of former U. S. Davis Cup captain Billy Talbert would be utilized. Afterwards, incoming USLTA president Ed Turville telephoned Lambert to offer his congratulations and say that he heartily endorsed the plan.⁸²

In the January 1962 issue of *World Tennis*, Gladys urged overseas players and European national tennis associations to immediately contact *World Tennis* for entry information.

There will be room for 55 men and 30 women, which means that any player who ranks in the Top Ten of a major tennis nation or in the Top Four of a lesser tennis

country, who is National Champion of a small State, or who has won a major international title in the last ten years, will have an excellent chance of being accepted on the plane.⁸³

Gladys also asked New Yorkers who had enough space in their homes to host one or more players, or to underwrite a player's lodging at the Manger Vanderbilt hotel for the cost of \$125 for two weeks. Hosts would be given their choice of player, or preference for a man, woman or junior, or preference for a particular nationality.⁸⁴

By February 1962, ten contributors each promised \$1800 for the chartered plane, including Mitchell Cox, Vice President of Pepsi-Cola, Joseph Cullman III, President of Philip Morris, Frank Hunter, President of 21 Brands, Dan Johnson, Tournament Referee of the U. S. National Championships, Henry Kramer of L'Aiglon Apparel, Marvin Levy of Lehman Brothers, Jules Manger, President of Manger Hotel Chain, Alastair Martin, President of Eastern Tennis Patrons, and M. H. Ronbinau, President of Frontier Refining. Always more than just an idea person, Heldman was also one of the ten contributors.⁸⁵

Eight months before the tournament was to begin, accommodations for 53 of the 85 competitors – at the cost of \$125 each – were already arranged. Lodging and meal sponsors included for U. S. Davis Cup captain Billy Talbert, past USLTA president George Barnes and former players Abe Segal, Dick Savitt, and Frank Hunter. Four of the players were sponsored by *World Tennis*, and Gladys chose to personally sponsor two more players. In addition, many of those who contributed either \$1800 or \$125 also purchased courtside box seats in the stadium marquee for \$400.

Not all of those who contributed \$125 were corporate executives or personal friends of the organizers. In the July 1962 issue of *World Tennis*, Gladys told readers the efforts that Mel Goldsmith had made to sponsor a player.

America's No. 1 tennis fan is Mel Goldsmith of New York City, age 17. Mel, who is wildly enthusiastic about everything connected with the game, including old tennis magazines and retired tennis players, became the hero of the tennis

world by one of the most unusual and generous gestures ever displayed by an aficionado. He decided to “sponsor” one of the 80 overseas players who will be competing in the Nationals. A sponsor is one who puts up \$125 to provide hotel and meals for two weeks for one of the guests. Every rainy afternoon when he couldn’t play tennis, Mel worked at \$1.25 an hour. At the end of a few weeks he had \$14.00. He decided he could never reach his goal in time, so he solicited his friends to be co-sponsors. He marched into WT one day with \$125 in small change and singles. In one hand was the money and in the other was a list a mile long of 82 people who had contributed 25c, 50c, \$1.00 or even more. Mel & Co. will be the sponsors of either Maria Bueno or Margaret Smith. Any player wishing Mel’s autograph may write to him care of *World Tennis*.⁸⁶

The plans for a reinvigorated U. S. National Championships faced a disheartening setback when the West Side Tennis Club elected Walter Hoag as its new president in the spring of 1962. Hoag told several journalists and Colonel Eagen that if any of the people who contributed \$1800 expected to get their money back, they were being “presumptuous.” Hoag asked why the West Side Tennis Club “needed all these foreign players,” and he could not understand why the contributors did not just make an outright donation of \$1800. Perhaps Hoag did not realize that many, if not all, of the contributors had also committed to house and feed players, and had purchased box seats as well.⁸⁷

USLTA president Ed Turville was quick to assure the contributors that the national association would not take its 50% take of the gate receipts until after the contributors were refunded. Hoag then asked Turville to write a letter to Colonel Eagen, informing him that no money would be returned to the contributors unless the West Side Tennis Club made a profit that was \$30,000 greater than what was made in 1961. Of the remaining amount, the club wanted to keep fifty cents on each dollar and the contributors would be paid back with the other fifty cents per dollar. The suggestion infuriated Turville, who refused to write the letter.⁸⁸

On August 27, 1962, a chartered KLM Airlines flight departed from Amsterdam on August 27, 1962, bound for New York’s Idlewild Airport with eighty-nine passengers.

On board were Rod Laver, who was hoping to complete the final leg of a Grand Slam in New York, Roy Emerson, Maria Bueno, and Margaret Smith, who was creating some controversy by electing not to tour as part of the Australian national team. Many of the passengers would be competing at Forest Hills for the very first time, including self-exile Pole Andrez Licis, Hungarian Suzie Kormoczi, who won the French Championships in 1958, Swiss champion Ruth Kaufman, Indian Davis Cup player Jaydeep Mukerjea, Czechoslovakian Vera Sukova, who had reached the final of Wimbledon that summer, and British Wightman Cup player Elizabeth Starkie. Players from the Soviet Union – including national women’s champion Anna Dmitrieva and 17-year old Alex Metreveli – would be making their first-ever appearance in the U. S. National Championships.

Three reserved seats on the plane were empty, which greatly disappointed Gladys. Nicola Pietrangeli of Italy, famous for winning the French Championships in 1959 and 1960 and one of the seeded players in the men’s singles draw, changed his mind about playing in the tournament at the last minute. Two other Italians, Lea Pericoli and Sylvana Lazzarino, had both contracted the measles and were under quarantine for forty days. It was too late to fill the empty seats.⁸⁹

Qualifying matches started on Monday, August 27, with winners advancing to the main draw of the tournament, which began on Friday, August 31. After Maria Bueno and Roy Emerson won their first-round matches, an opening ceremony was held on the stadium court. The flags of thirty-five nations, accompanied by the respective competitors, passed in review in what Allison Danzig of the *New York Times* called “the most international tournament in the eighty-two year history of the championships.” Colonel Edward Egan of the People-to-People Sports Committee told the audience that “this is an historic moment. It will be looked upon as the morning star of a great continuing event. We hope to have forty-six or even fifty-four nations next year.” Other speakers included Henry Benisch and Clarence Davies, members of the USLTA Championships Committee, and Walter Hoag, president of the West Side Tennis Club. In addition to thanking Egan, they all expressed their gratitude to Gladys for organizing all the players and raising the funds to bring them to the United States.⁹⁰

Over the first weekend of the tournament, the overflow crowds watched Rafael Osuna of Mexico defeat Swedish Davis Cup stalwart Ulf Schmidt of Sweden in five sets in the stadium, followed by Rod Laver's second-round win over a qualifier from Ecuador, Eduardo Zuleta. "I couldn't believe it," said Laver, "when I looked up and saw rows of people up to the sky. It was the first time I had played before a full stadium at Forest Hills." Thousands of more spectators thronged around the numerous field courts to watch competitors from all over the world. For the first time, Forest Hills was inviting comparisons to Wimbledon.⁹¹

During the tournament, Gladys hosted a party for the competitors of the U. S. National Championships at the Heldman residence in Manhattan. The previous year, the family moved from the apartment they were renting at 200 East End Avenue to a penthouse they had purchased at 180 East End Avenue. Their new home was complete with a parking garage – a luxury in New York City – in addition to an outdoor swimming pool and recreation room on the top of the building. For the next eight years, until 1970, Gladys' rooftop party would be one of the social highlights of the U. S. National Championships.

*The USLTA did not provide entertainment for these players, usually 124 men and 96 women, so I began to arrange entertainment for them during the week of the U. S. Championships. This included chartering a boat and taking the players around the island of Manhattan and inviting all 124 men and 96 women to our New York apartment for dinner.*⁹²

-- Gladys Heldman, 1973

The spectators who came to the West Side Tennis Club were treated to some of the best tennis seen in New York for years. Playing on the stadium court, Judy Tegart of Australia held four match points against the number six seed, Renee Schuurman of South Africa before losing in three sets in the first round. In the men's singles semi-finals, Laver gave one of his greatest performances in crushing Osuna with the loss of only eight games. Margaret Smith, enroute to becoming the first Australian woman to win the U. S.

Nationals, defeated Brazilian Maria Bueno in one of the finest women's matches ever played at the Forest Hills. On the tournament's final day, Laver made history by becoming only the second man to win the Grand Slam with his win over Roy Emerson.

It was the most successful U. S. National Championships since 1933; records were set each day of the tournament for attendance and ticket sales. Gladys and the other organizers were thrilled. "On the final Sunday," she wrote, "the people most closely involved in putting on the Championships were having lunch on the terrace of the West Side Club. Clarence Davies, the USLTA Chairman of the Championships, could hardly eat. He was watching the crowds seep into the Stadium two hours before the match was scheduled to begin. Henry Benisch, the West Side Chairman, was all smiles. Ed Turville (the USLTA president), Walter Hoag (the West Side president) and Col. Eddie Eagan (People-to-People Chairman) were in a gloriously happy mood. It was a day to remember." ⁹³

I want to let you know how much I appreciate everything you did to make this year's National Singles Championships such a success. I am fully aware that without your interest and complete cooperation, it would have been impossible to have staged the tremendous event that was held at Forest Hills. When I left Sunday evening, I was assured that there would be sufficient funds to repay each of the individuals who put up the money for the chartered plane. This certainly is extremely encouraging to me and I am hopeful that as a result of this refund it will not be too difficult to arrange a plane for next year. I am certain that every one of the foreign players who had never before visited the United States will have left with a better feeling towards our country. All of this will result in better understandings between people all over the world. ⁹⁴

Edward A. Turville
President, USLTA

My sincerest thanks to you for the great success of the USLTA Singles Championships, which could never have been accomplished excepting for your

personal efforts. You sold the idea, you raised the money, and you carried out many of the important details with your wonderful energy and enthusiasm. The hats of everyone should be off to you for the successful accomplishment.⁹⁵

Harold Lebair

Treasurer, USLTA

In early October, the USLTA hosted a luncheon for the ten contributors and repaid \$1800 to each one. The tournament made \$55,000 more than the 1961 event, and after the contributors were refunded, the USLTA was still ahead by \$37,000. Attendance figures were estimated at 42,000, twice the number of spectators who came the previous year. Despite the success, Gladys was already contemplating improvements for the 1963 tournament. The other New York area grass court tennis clubs should be made available for player practice sessions, the mixed doubles draw should begin earlier to avoid a scheduling jam later in the tournament, and the consolation events needed to be run by someone with knowledge of tournament procedures. Gladys also felt that the method for making the draws could be improved, as could the way in which spectators were admitted through the gates. To ensure continuity of management, Gladys emphasized that the same group of people who organized the 1962 event should do it again in 1963.⁹⁶

The next year, the USLTA decided to do the airlift by itself, but instead of asking only the world's best players, they took two from each country, whether or not the country had any good tennis players.⁹⁷

-- Gladys Heldman, 1973

Not involved with player airlift for the 1963 U. S. National Championships, Gladys used her energies to assist with the first annual International Tennis Ball. The dinner-dance was held at the New York Hilton during the tournament and honored the eighty-five foreign players who competed in the tournament. It was sponsored by the Lawn Tennis Writers Association, to which Gladys was elected as secretary-treasurer. She continued to help with the housing of players who were competing in the tournament

each year, and many of the players attended the party that she hosted annually at her penthouse on East End Avenue.

Sports Illustrated magazine printed a profile of Gladys in its June 22, 1964 issue, entitled “Busiest Voice in a Busy, Busy Clan.” Barbara La Fontaine, the writer of the article, traced Gladys’ life from her college days at Stanford, her marriage to Julius and becoming a mother of two daughters, learning to play tennis at the age of twenty-four, starting the tennis newsletter in Houston that eventually evolved into *World Tennis*, and her organizational abilities in promoting McCarthy Cup, the 1959 U. S. Men’s National Indoor Championships and the 1962 U. S. National Championships. After ten years of doing every aspect of producing *World Tennis* – including writing articles, selling advertisements, editing, and doing layouts and paste-ups – Gladys’ persistence had finally paid off with a record number of subscribers. “This last year has been the very, very best,” she said about the publication. “Forty-three thousand is the most any tennis magazine ever was.” Julius told La Fontaine, “You’re dealing with a mind, remember. I never expected her to sit around like a lump.”⁹⁸

My mother’s stories weren’t always accurate. In fact, she sometimes exaggerated and fabricated. The Sports Illustrated article has a number of fabrications by Mom, to make a good story. An example of a fabrication: a reporter in the 1950s called Mom at World Tennis, wanting to know how many people in the United States played tennis. Without missing a beat, she said “Twelve million.” She completely made that number up. It was quoted for years as if it were a fact.⁹⁹
-- Julie Heldman, 2011

“Fabrications” sound as though the intention to deceive might be part of the motivation. I prefer the word “inventions” – she tended to get swept up in the moment, and although she was scrupulous about numbers (subscriptions, salaries, tennis scores), she could be contemptuous of facts. And everything was sacrificed at the altar; if something made a good one-liner, it was in the mix.¹⁰⁰
-- Trixie Merkin (nee Carrie Heldman), 2015

Throughout the 1960s, Gladys did not shy away from criticizing the USLTA in her *World Tennis* editorials. In the March 1963 issue, she told readers that the reason behind the USLTA's decision to prohibit open tennis was due to three men who were playing "party politics" in order to get elected the office.¹⁰¹ The following month, Gladys satirically wrote that if a large corporation like the Ford Motor Company was run like the USLTA, "it would have a new president every two years, important posts would be assigned by the president, and a group of officers would fight the new trends tooth and nail, urging a return to the good old days of the Ford Model T."¹⁰²

In March 1965, Gladys listed a series of "blunders" the USLTA had made in recent years, including the wasting of \$100,000 on an ineffective public relations campaign, the removal of former doubles champion Billy Talbert from his position as U. S. Davis Cup team captain, the overreaction of USLTA officials and subsequent suspensions of Chuck McKinley and Dennis Ralston in 1960 and 1961, and the inexplicable decision to prohibit open tennis when a vote was taken at the 1963 USLTA annual meeting.¹⁰³

Four years later, during the first few months of open tennis, Gladys ridiculed the national association for recognizing five categories of players – Amateurs, Contract Professionals, Registered Players, and Players – and for holding the U. S. National Championships at Longwood and the U. S. National Open at Forest Hills two weeks later. "The USLTA is absolutely right," she wrote. "Why make anything easy when, with a little ingenuity, it can be made complicated?"¹⁰⁴ In another editorial that year, she urged a total overhaul of the USLTA organizational structure by abolishing such "unwieldy" and "foolish" committees as the Executive Committee, the Administrative Committee, the Ex-Presidents Committee, the Committee on Films, and the Honorary Membership Committee, among many others, and replacing them with five Managing Directors who would serve for five years. She also suggested that the election of officers should not be based "on an inside group of badge wearers who have worked for twenty years in USLTA committee rooms in order to become a Sectional Delegate or a Second Vice-President with secret hopes of making the presidency. Pick out the best men, not the oldest, for the key jobs, and throw out those who have failed."¹⁰⁵

*By the middle 1960s, she had instilled so much fear in the amateur establishment that on one occasion the president of the USLTA imagined that she was planning to destroy the national association and asked me personally what I knew of her "plot." Thereafter every issue of World Tennis became a prospective nightmare to the administration.*¹⁰⁶

-- Ted Tinling, 1979

Gladys' influence in tennis extended beyond the pages of *World Tennis*. In 1968, Philip Morris became a television broadcast sponsor of the U. S. Open, due in large part to her close friendship with Joseph Cullman, who was promoted from President to Chairman of the Board at the tobacco company two years earlier. Cullman was one of the ten contributors who provided \$1800 to bring the foreign players to the national championships in 1962, and he housed Roy Emerson during the tournament. Thanks to Gladys, he quickly became a tennis enthusiast; he hired Emerson and several other players as "public relations consultants" and he produced a tennis film entitled "Great Moments in the History of Tennis," with Emerson as a narrator and Gladys as a consultant.

In early 1969, Cullman became the U. S. Open tournament chairman. Gladys convinced incoming USLTA president Alastair Martin that her friend was the best person for the job, and Cullman decided to undertake the non-paying position only if he were allowed to run the tournament as he saw fit. Martin agreed, and Cullman subsequently hired South African tournament promoter Owen Williams and Wimbledon referee Mike Gibson to give the 1969 U. S. Open a complete overhaul.¹⁰⁷ Cullman also acted on several proposals that Gladys had made in a *World Tennis* editorial several months earlier; including the installation of an electronic scoreboard on the stadium and the addition of more spectator seating.¹⁰⁸ The 1969 tournament was a rousing success, and Martin agreed to serve as the tournament chairman for the following year.

In addition to Joseph Cullman, the USLTA also acquired the services of Bill Riordan. A tournament promoter who relocated the U. S. Men's National Indoor Championships from New York City to Salisbury, Maryland in 1963, Riordan's

promotional abilities made the event a financial success each year. A series of men's indoor tournaments had already been established in the United States in early 1968, and two years later Riordan was put in charge coordinating the events in such cities as Omaha, Richmond, Pittsburgh, Macon and Philadelphia. The tournaments offered prize money ranging from \$10,000 to \$30,000, culminating with Riordan's \$50,000 event in Salisbury.

The women players, however, were not as fortunate. Only two indoor women's tournaments were scheduled during the winter months of 1970 – the U. S. Women's National Indoor Championships and the New England Women's Indoor Championships – and the prize money for both of these events totaled only \$5,000. Gladys felt the disparity in prize money was “bizarre,” and she contacted Marilyn Fernberger, the director of the men's Philadelphia Indoor Open, to inquire if she wanted to include the top women professionals in the tournament.

*Marilyn Fernberger ran the pro indoors. I asked her to do the women's tournament. She said, “We have no sponsor.” I told her I'll be the sponsor.*¹⁰⁹
-- Gladys Heldman, 1987

Gladys contributed \$7,500 to have the World Tennis Magazine Luv Cup become part of the Philadelphia Indoor Open, and she secured the participation of eight of the world's best women players. Margaret Court won the first prize of \$3000 with a crowd-pleasing 6-3 7-6 win over Billie Jean King, with the second set tiebreak reaching 14-12. Other players in the eight-woman draw included Nancy Richey, Rosie Casals, Francoise Durr, Julie Heldman, Virginia Wade and Peaches Bartkowicz.

The following week, Gladys helped to organize a women's-only prize money tournament at the Vanderbilt Athletic Club, a one-court facility located on the third floor of Grand Central Station in New York City. Club owner Geza Gazdag, who staged a men's professional tournament on the court in 1967, offered \$5000 in prize money for the Vanderbilt Ladies Invitational and attracted most of the women who competed in Philadelphia, in addition to 1969 Wimbledon champion Ann Jones. Margaret Court

defeated Virginia Wade to win the \$1500 first prize in front of capacity crowds of 1200, and the women then proceeded to Dallas to play for free in a tournament that benefitted the Maureen Connolly Brinker Memorial Foundation.

The lack of women's winter tournaments scheduled by the USLTA and Bill Riordan, and the successful women's events in Philadelphia, New York and Dallas convinced Gladys that an extensive women's indoor circuit was needed in the United States. She told USLTA vice president Bob Colwell about her plans, and he responded favorably. "With regards to the women's open indoor circuit next year," Colwell wrote to Gladys, "I would appreciate your corresponding with Stan Malless, with copies to Bob Malaga. Stan is chairman of the Sanction and Scheduling Committee and we have to go through proper channels or we get everything fouled up to the extent that we aren't efficient. I am always and will always be glad to help on something special or where there are special problems."¹¹⁰ Seven months later, in September 1970, the USLTA policy about tournament sanctions would become the center of a controversy that profoundly impacted the history of women's tennis.

Julie Heldman

Julie Heldman's tennis career began in 1954 when Jean Hoxie placed an advertisement in *World Tennis*. Jean was employed as the tennis director for the town of Hamtramck, Michigan – a Polish immigrant enclave on the southeast side of Detroit – and had access to the six concrete tennis courts at Veterans Memorial Park and the adjacent handball courts. Since she wanted to start a residential tennis camp that attracted children from out of town, Jean and her husband Jerry rented a mansion on the banks of the Detroit River that had enough space to house a dozen or more children. Each residential camper was charged a rate of seventy-five dollars per week, and they were integrated with the local children who were also in the summer tennis program.¹¹¹

... I was working 18 hours a day, 7 days a week on World Tennis magazine. We had just moved to New York, and my children were going to day camp in the country. The activities at day camp were limited, and I was thinking in terms of

*sending Carrie and Julie to a Western camp or a French camp the following summer. At that time, there were no tennis camps ... there were no accessible courts in New York City, and I had almost no time to hit with them.*¹¹²
-- Gladys Heldman, 1985

Julie and Carrie, ages eight and nine, became immersed in tennis for eight hours each day at the Hoxie Tennis Camp. Jean was actually rarely in attendance, instead spending her time teaching tennis at the Orchard Lake Country Club in Detroit. The camp was completely directed by Jerry, and he was only capable of giving the most basic instruction. Campers were told, when first learning the forehand, to “put the racquet at your side, open the door, then close the door.” They were then required to hit tennis balls against the concrete wall of the handball courts. Each child had to hit twenty consecutive forehands above a line that was painted at a height of three feet (to simulate a net); if a mistake was made, the child went to the end of the line and waited for his or her next turn. If the goal of twenty consecutive forehands was finally accomplished, the camper went around to the other side of the wall and had to hit twenty consecutive backhands. After that, twenty consecutive volleys needed to be hit off the wall without error. The final hurdle was a sequence of two drives followed by a drop shot. Once all four of these wall drills were successfully completed, a camper was allowed to proceed to the tennis courts.¹¹³

On the tennis courts, sets were played in which winning was an absolute necessity; losers of these contests were berated and told to try harder. After lunch, all the campers were required to execute the wall drills again. Despite the camp’s minimal instruction, a surprising number of players were able to develop their games and achieve success in state, sectional and national tournaments. Jerry crammed the best players into a large station wagon and drove them to junior tournaments throughout the Midwest and Canada. The Hoxie campers achieved success in tournaments because they practiced relentlessly and were constantly prodded to win.¹¹⁴

*The Hoxies had an unusual operation. They mixed the paying customers, who were housed at their riverside mansion in Detroit, with the Polish and Ukrainian children who played at Hamtramck Memorial Park, the Hoxie headquarters. The Hoxies emphasized instant success. Their charges learned tennis to earn their way out of the ghetto with tennis scholarships to college. Hamtramck kids were pushed unmercifully. Jerry Hoxie used to tell them, “You don’t win, you don’t eat.”*¹¹⁵

-- Julie Heldman, 1978

Julie spent seven summers at the Hoxie Tennis Camp, during which time she won the Kentucky State Championships Girls’ 13 singles and the Girls’ 15 singles, as well as the Girls’ 13 singles at the Western Championships in Indianapolis. She created a stir in 1958 when, at the age of twelve, she became the youngest player to win the Canadian National Junior Championships, saving three match points in the final against 17-year-old Barbara Seewagen. The remarkable feat resulted in her photograph making the front page of the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, as well as an article about her and Carrie – who won the Girls’ 15 title in Ottawa – in the *New York Times*. “My husband and myself play singles against them every summer when they return from Hamtramck,” Gladys told reporter Howard Tuckner. “We try to beat them by big scores. That keeps them in line. Anyway, we couldn’t stand losing to such little girls.”¹¹⁶

In 1960, during her final stay at the Hoxie Tennis Camp, Julie won the USLTA Girls’ 15 Championships in Cincinnati, Ohio. Later that summer, at the age of fourteen, she was the youngest player in the women’s singles draw of the U. S. National Championships at Forest Hills, losing in the first round to Billie Jean Moffitt, 6-4 6-2. At the end of the year, the USLTA placed her at the top of the national rankings in the Girls’ 15 singles division.

Realizing that the camp could not help her game anymore, Julie decided to concentrate on tournament play. In 1962, she won the women’s singles titles at the Southern Championships in Atlanta, in addition to the Tennessee Valley Invitational in Chattanooga, the Tri-State Championships in Cincinnati, and the Kenwood Women’s

Invitation in Kenwood, Maryland. In junior tournaments, she won the Southern Girls' Championships and reached the semifinals of the Delaware Girls' Grass Court Championships and the U. S. National Girls' 18 Championships, losing both times to Janie Albert. Julie's successful tournament campaign earned her a national women's singles ranking of fourteen, and at the end of the summer she entered Stanford University in Palo Alto, California – at the age of sixteen – to study history.

After winning a national women's intercollegiate invitational in Ojai, California in April 1963, Julie returned home to New York City with a mild case of the mumps – perhaps contracted on the airplane ride from California.¹¹⁷ She missed all of the summer clay court tournaments, and was barely recovered when she went to Philadelphia to compete in the USLTA Girls' 18 Championships. She won the tournaments, defeating Janie Albert – who had beaten her in the previous year's semifinals – by the score of 6-3 7-5. Carrie, no longer playing competitive tennis, wrote a tournament summary for *World Tennis*, and she reported that “Julie dropshotted, lobbed and whacked her forehand, which is one of the wonders of the game today.”¹¹⁸

*I won the juniors in 1963 by sheer force of personality. It was the fulfillment of my goals in tennis and from then on it didn't seem there was much more to go after.*¹¹⁹

-- Julie Heldman, 1976

Julie then won a handful of matches on the Eastern grass court circuit and lost to Judy Alvarez in the second round of the U. S. National Championships. At the end of the season, she earned her first national ranking in women's singles – at number ten – but her win at the junior nationals was the highlight of her year.

In the spring of 1964, Julie won the Northern California Intercollegiate Championships and reached the finals of three other college events, losing to Billie Jean Moffitt at Ojai and finishing second to Janie Albert at the AAWU in Palo Alto, California and the National Women's Collegiate Championships in Greensboro, North Carolina. Later that summer, she took the women's singles title at the prestigious Western

Championships in Indianapolis and upset fourteenth-seeded Justina Bricka in the third round of the U. S. National Championships; earning a year-end women's singles national ranking of number seven.

During her third year in college, Julie studied at the Stanford campus in Tours, France, and she remained in Europe during the spring of 1965 to play the clay court circuit. She won the titles in Valencia, Spain and Brussels, Belgium, in addition to tournaments in the Italian towns of Reggio Calabria and Naples. The win at Naples was highlighted by a final-round victory over Helga Niessen of West Germany, an expert clay court player, by the scores of 8-6 4-6 6-3. Julie followed up those results with an impressive run at her first Italian Championships in Rome, getting past local favorite Lea Pericoli, 6-3 1-6 7-5, and then drop-shotting Helga Schultze of Germany to the point of exhaustion during the course of a 4-6 6-2 6-1 win. In the semifinals against Nancy Richey, the top-ranked American woman, Julie was not patient enough and lost 6-1 6-4.

Quickly rising up the ranks of the world's elite women players, Julie advanced to the fourth round of her first Wimbledon in 1965, narrowly losing to British heroine Christine Truman, and she reached the finals of the U. S. National Clay Court Championships at River Forest, Illinois, against two-time defending champion Nancy Richey. In what Mary Hardwick, writing for *World Tennis*, called "the best final seen at River Forest since the war," Julie mixed high lobbs and deft drop shots with scorching forehands to win the first set, 7-5. She led 3-1 in the second set before Nancy countered by responding with high lobbs of her own, winning five consecutive games to level the match. The two players battled to 5-5 in the third set, and Julie had her chance when she served for the championship at 7-6. She fell behind love-30 when two net cord shots fell back onto her side, and the match was soon level at 7-7. Nancy held serve to lead 8-7, and Julie was unable to hold her serve again, double faulting on match point as her serving hand was seized with muscle cramps.¹²⁰

Semifinal showings at the Western Championships in Indianapolis and the Eastern Grass Court Championships in Orange, New Jersey, in addition to a successful run at the Canadian National Championships in Toronto – where she defeated Canadian Faye Urban in the final by the score of 6-3 8-6 – earned Julie a USLTA national women's

singles ranking of number eight at the end of the year. She was also listed at number two in the women's doubles ranking with Tory Fretz, based on their semifinal finish at the U. S. National Doubles Championships.

Julie had another good year in 1966, beating Helga Niessen enroute to defending her title at Reggio Calabria and losing to the German in the third round of the Italian Championships. A last-minute replacement for Nancy Richey in the Federation Cup competition, Julie won all four of her singles matches in Turin, Italy, helping the U. S. team to win its matches against Sweden, France, Great Britain and West Germany. At the French Championships two weeks later, she reached the quarterfinals against Margaret Smith and was quickly dismissed, 6-2 6-2, after suffering a bout with food poisoning a few days earlier. "When you've been crushed like I was," she told William Wallace of the *New York Times*, "you're in a poor mood."¹²¹ The novelty of playing international tennis was beginning to wear off. Two weeks later, before walking onto the court for a first-round match at the London Grass Court Championships at Queen's Club, Julie had already made up her mind that she no longer wanted to continue playing tennis.

*I was trying to learn, play tennis and grow up, all at once. I was idealistic in those days ... Mom was always telling me not to work so hard. She worked hard as hell, she was Phi Beta Kappa, she'd say "where did it get me? If you don't want it, quit."*¹²²

-- Julie Heldman, 1975

After losing in the first round of Queen's Club to Elly Krocke of the Netherlands by the scores of 6-1 6-3, and after winning only two games from Australian Judy Dalton in a second round loss at Wimbledon, Julie withdrew from the upcoming summer tournaments in the United States and returned to Stanford University. She graduated from Stanford in December 1966 and then spent a month with her sister, who had left Radcliffe College before graduation, changed her name to Trixie, joined a commune in Northern California and was playing the bass guitar in a rock band. Living in a commune, however, was not for Julie, and after a month she returned to New York City

with the hopes of finding a job. Family friend Joseph Cullman helped her to secure a secretarial position at Wells Rich Greene, an advertising agency on Madison Avenue.¹²³

*I hated being indoors so much that I envied the delivery boys. They could at least be outside.*¹²⁴

-- Julie Heldman, 2006

Three months later, still looking for a direction in her life, Julie resigned from her corporate job and traveled with friends throughout Canada, the Pacific Northwest and California.

*It was the first summer I ever had free in my life. I had a choice of what I could do – lie in the sun, whatever. Previous to that, it was always go hit tennis balls. Playing tennis was the way I had directed myself and had been directed by other people.*¹²⁵

-- Julie Heldman, 1976

Julie eventually made her way down to Los Angeles and the home of Dennis and Linda van der Meer, who had started a series of tennis camps throughout California. Linda was a former tournament player who stayed with the Heldman family several times in New York over the years. Julie decided to remain in California and work as an instructor in the van der Meer camps; Dennis helped improve her serve and backhand, and Linda persuaded her to give competitive tennis another try.

*I worked with Dennis and Linda van der Meer. Linda suggested I play a little and stop when I felt like it. No one had ever talked to me like that about playing the game. I rediscovered how much fun tennis could be.*¹²⁶

-- Julie Heldman, 1976

The mindset of “playing for fun” erased all of the pressure that Julie had felt for years, and she entered two California tournaments in the fall of 1967. She reached the quarterfinals of the Pacific Southwest Championships in Los Angeles, losing in three sets to Rosie Casals, and then upset reigning Wimbledon and U. S. National champion Billie Jean King in three sets in the quarterfinals of the Pacific Coast International in Berkeley. The win against Billie Jean made Julie realize that she was good enough to beat anyone and travel the world while doing so.

I returned in 1968 determined to use my racket as a ticket to travel and have a good time ... I took every trip that was offered and canvassed South America and Western Europe, with side trips to South Africa, Russia and Israel ... I enjoyed traveling nonstop because even if I practiced most of the day, there were always interesting people to meet, new towns to explore, and new languages to learn.¹²⁷
 -- Julie Heldman, 1978

Julie enjoyed the best year of her career in 1969 and was arguably the world’s best woman player during the months of March and April that year. She won three tournaments on the Caribbean circuit – in Curacao, Barranquilla, and Fort Lauderdale – with wins over the likes of Margaret Court, Nancy Richey, Chris Evert and Virginia Wade. At the Italian Open in Rome, a major international championship, she defeated contract professional Ann Jones in three sets, just two months before the British player would win the Wimbledon singles title. In the championship final, which was delayed until Monday afternoon due to a rainy weekend – and played on a side court in front of only four spectators – Julie made effective use of the lob in defeating Kerry Melville of Australia, 7-5 6-3.

As the number-one singles player on the 1969 U. S. Federation Cup team, Julie won her matches against players from Yugoslavia, Italy and the Netherlands. In the final round between the United States and Australia, Nancy Richey defeated Kerry Melville and then Julie lost to Margaret Court, who was pushed to her limit in a lengthy match that went to 8-6 in the second set. The combination of a marathon match with Julie and the

heat had tired Margaret, and she played poorly in the subsequent and deciding match against the U. S. doubles team of Nancy and Peaches Bartkowicz. “The girl who won the cup for the Americans,” said Australian team captain Wayne Reid after the match, “was the girl who lost her singles.”¹²⁸

At the Wightman Cup competition in Cleveland, Ohio, in August 1969, Julie won all three of her matches to lead the United States to a 5-2 victory over Great Britain, and afterward her teammates chose her as the team’s most valuable player. Additional singles titles in Moscow, the Maccabiah Games in Tel Aviv, and the Palace Covered Courts in Torquay, England on the Dewar Cup Circuit earned Julie year-end rankings of number two in the United States and number five in the world.

The following year was not as joyous for Julie. Plans for a spring wedding were called off, and the broken engagement affected her motivation and concentration on the court. The highlight of her year was a win at the Belgian Open; she then fell one match short of retaining her title at the Italian Open, and she lost a critical encounter with Helga Niessen in the semifinals of the Federation Cup. Although she reached the fourth round of Wimbledon, she suffered three unexpected losses on the English grass court circuit. Adding to her frustration was an injured elbow, caused from using the Wilson T-2000 tennis racquet – a metal frame that was notorious for its lack of vibration dampening.¹²⁹

During the rain-plagued Midland Open in Leicester, England, Julie dropped out of the tournament and announced that she had decided to take an indefinite break from the game. “I have reached the point where I cannot take defeat,” she told a reporter on July 26, 1970. “The smallest thing upsets me, and that is the time to get out. I am no longer enjoying my tennis. I am playing badly and it is getting me down. I know that I can go on earning money from guarantees, but I feel I should play for prize money only and there has not been much of that coming along lately.”¹³⁰ Julie did not know it at the time, but the women’s prize money situation would change drastically two months later, and it would inspire her to eventually end the second retirement of her career and stage another comeback.

Jane “Peaches” Bartkowicz

In 1948, the Bartkowicz family – Jan, his wife Eugenia, and their four-year old son William – emigrated to the United States with very little money from war-ravaged Germany. Jan, of Polish descent and knowing hardly any English, found work in a Detroit machine shop as a welder. One year later, Jane was born and eventually the Bartkowicz family moved into a small frame house in the “Little Poland” neighborhood of Hamtramck, Michigan. The house was located on Berres Street, a dead-end block that was adjacent to Veteran’s Memorial Park.¹³¹

Each summer, a tennis program was held in the park, organized by Jean and Jerry Hoxie. There was a handball court nearby, and all the Hoxie students were required to hit tennis balls against it before being allowed to play on the tennis courts. From the backyard of the Bartkowicz home, Jane could see the handball court and hear the activity of tennis players in the park.

*I must have been five or six when I first knew what the wall was about. There were always kids playing tennis in the park, I remember that.*¹³²

-- Peaches Bartkowicz, 1965

One day in the summer of 1956, seven-year old Jane found a discarded, broken tennis racket in the alley behind her house. With the damaged racket in her hand, she walked into the park and toward the wall that would soon change her life. She noticed that all the players were keeping count of how many times they hit the ball in succession. Richard Sunday, an assistant tennis instructor in the program, noticed the skinny little girl observing the other children and asked her if she wanted to play. Sunday handed her a steel tennis racket with wire strings and invited her to start hitting tennis balls against the wall. After a few hits, Jane immediately fell in love with the game.

No one showed me anything. It was all very informal. From the minute I started to play tennis I loved it; I would practice from early in the morning until you

*couldn't see anymore. That's where I lived. I just went home to sleep.*¹³³
 -- Peaches Bartkowicz, 1978

*Boys in the neighborhood kept telling me about this fabulous little girl. I heard so much about her that I had to go out and see her. When I did, I knew that I was looking at a future champion.*¹³⁴
 -- Jean Hoxie, 1965

Jean Hoxie, an elementary school physical education teacher, was rarely at Memorial Park. Instead, she spent her summers at the more luxurious Orchard Lake Country Club, where she brought several of her more advanced students give tennis lessons on her behalf. At Memorial Park, Jerry Hoxie and Richard Sunday made sure that Jane was getting plenty of practice. Sunday liked to give the youngsters unique nicknames, and one day Jane received hers.

*He just told me one day I would be "Peaches" because it would give me more color than "plain Jane."*¹³⁵
 -- Peaches Bartkowicz, 1969

During the winter, Jean Hoxie had her more affluent students hit tennis balls against a wall in the gymnasium of Pulaski Elementary School, charging each of them fifteen dollars for the opportunity. Peaches participated at no charge, and by the following summer she was ready to play in her first competition, a local tournament in the park. Putting the ball into play with an underhand serve, Peaches plugged away with her groundstrokes and won her first tennis trophy.

*I ran home to show it to my parents, but they didn't know what it was. They didn't know what tennis was.*¹³⁶
 -- Peaches Bartkowicz, 1978

Within two years, Peaches was winning junior tournaments across the Midwest, earning a Western Tennis Association sectional ranking of number two in the Girls' 11 singles division and number six in the Girls' 13 singles division. In the summer of 1959, Jean made the unusual move of entering her ten-year-old pupil in the U. S. National Girls' 18 Championships in Philadelphia. Playing on a grass court for the very first time, and still using an underhand serve, Peaches made a respectable showing by pushing Joyce Davenport to 7-5 6-2 in a first round loss. At the end of the year, she had climbed further up the sectional ranking list, finishing with a sectional ranking of number one in the Girls' 11 singles and number three in the Girls' 13 singles.

Peaches continued to spend hours hitting tennis balls against the gymnasium wall at the elementary school whenever the weather was cold or rainy. In January 1960, according to the boastful Jean Hoxie – who tended to use the Hamtramck players' accomplishments as testimonies to bolster her coaching abilities, which were actually non-existent – Peaches set a “world record” for continuous hits off of one bounce.

*It was 1,775 consecutive shots. I could have gone on, I think, but it took almost an hour.*¹³⁷

-- Peaches Bartkowicz, 1965

Each summer, Jean's husband Jerry would select the best players from the summer program, cram them into a large station wagon and take them to tournaments throughout the Midwest, the South and Canada. Jean did not go on the long road trips; on the occasions she attended tournaments, she would arrive by airplane and usually just in time for the finals. In July 1960, Jerry took a number of players to the inaugural U. S. National Championships for 11 and under and 13 and under age divisions in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where Peaches was the number-one seed in the Girls' 11 singles division and had also been entered in the Girls' 13 singles event.

At first, the tournament committee was not going to let me play in the 13s, but somebody on the committee said, “She won't win it anyway, so why not let her

play.” And so they let me play both age groups. ¹³⁸

-- Peaches Bartkowicz, 2010

Peaches easily won the Girls' 11 singles and doubles titles, and surprised everyone by adding the Girls' 13 singles trophy. It was an impressive series of accomplishments, and a wire service reported that “a tiny Midwestern girl captured three tennis crowns and hundreds of hearts this week.” ¹³⁹ Returning to home to Hamtramck with three national titles, Peaches' life would never be the same. When her prediction that the young girl would become a champion was realized, Jean Hoxie became increasingly demanding.

From that very first tournament it was always put on me the responsibility, it seemed, to win. And the farther along it went, the worse it got. ¹⁴⁰

-- Peaches Bartkowicz, 1978

By the age of twelve, Peaches had accumulated more than sixty tournament titles and began to travel more extensively. She successfully defended her national Girls' 13 singles title in Chattanooga in the summer of 1961, and at the end of the year was ranked number one in the nation for that age division. The USLTA restructured the tournament age divisions in 1962, and Peaches had no problems dominating the Girls' 14 and under division, winning her fifth national title in Chattanooga in July. In December of that year, she made her first appearance at the Orange Bowl in Miami, one of the world's most prestigious international junior tournaments, and won the Girls' 16 singles and doubles titles. The USLTA rankings committee awarded her the top position in the Girls' 14 singles and placed her at number four in Girls' 16 singles, and the Western Tennis Association put her at number one in Girls' 14 singles, number two in Girls' 16 singles, and number four in Girls' 18 singles.

Returning to Chattanooga in 1963, Peaches defended her Girls' 14 singles title, losing only ten games in five singles matches and winning the Girls' 14 doubles with Ginger Pfeifer. One week later, she played in the U. S. National Girls' 16

championships, coasting through her early round matches to set up a final against Patsy Rippy of Oklahoma. Before a capacity crowd at the Lake Bluff Bath and Tennis Club, Peaches was in her most relentless mood. Described by *World Tennis* magazine as “a character out of a Russian novel, the impassive type who never smiles on court and hardly ever says a word except to mumble to herself when she misses a shot,”¹⁴¹ Peaches only lost four games in winning her eighth national junior title. In its year-end rankings for 1963, the Western Tennis Association made the unprecedented move of placing Peaches at the number one position for Girls’ 14 singles, Girls’ 16 singles and Girls’ 18 singles. Nationally, Peaches received the top ranking for Girls’ 14 singles and Girls’ 16 singles, in addition to the number one Girls’ 16 doubles ranking with Ginger Pfeifer.

In early 1964, Jean Hoxie received confirmation that Peaches was selected to compete in the invitational junior tournament at Wimbledon, England in July. She told Pete Waldmeir, a sportswriter for the *Hamtramck Citizen* who had come to watch Peaches practice against the wall at Pulaski Elementary School, that she was confident about her protégé’s chances of winning what was considered the junior championship of the world.¹⁴² “She’s going to be the greatest player they’ve ever seen. She’ll clean up,” Jean predicted. “Peaches is going to be a great one ... because she’s tough. She trains and works and she’s the greatest strategist in the game today. And she’s relentless and she never lets anyone up. She fights the game and she never makes mistakes. She’s disciplined and that’s why she wins.” Jean asked Peaches how many trophies she had won throughout her career, and when the answer was inaudible, she commanded, “Come on. Speak up. How many?” The mild-mannered girl quietly repeated that she had won a total of 105 tournaments.

While Peaches slammed forehands and backhands against the wall, Jean warned Waldmeir not to be fooled by the girl’s placid demeanor. “She’s mean,” she cautioned. “You hold up a tennis racket and she’ll knock it out of your hand from across the court. And if you hold it too tight she’ll break your wrist.” Waldmeir was skeptical about Jean’s outlandish claims, seeing only a talented and soft-spoken girl who was intimidated and bullied by her coach. “The girl doesn’t have much personality,” Jean added, “and I do most of the talking for her.” Waldmeir then asked the girl what her interests were.

Peaches quietly answered that liked to have fun, and that she used to play the accordion. Her busy tournament schedule, she said, no longer allowed for that anymore.¹⁴³

Jean's prediction that Peaches would win the Junior Wimbledon championship came true, but the victory was not as easy as the coach originally thought. She struggled in a three set opening round win over Anna Ivanova of Russia, and then lost a close first set in each of her next two matches before rebounding. In the final, Elena Subirats of Mexico made the tactical mistake of trying to avoid Peaches' two-handed backhand. Given the opportunity to hit plenty of powerful forehands, Peaches took the first set 6-3 and raced to a 4-0 lead in the second set. Elena won the fifth game of the second set, which only delayed the inevitable. Peaches held service to lead 5-1, and then broke her opponent's serve with a series of blistering forehands to become the Junior Wimbledon champion.

A heroine's welcome waited for Peaches upon her return home to Hamtramck. There were front-page headlines and photographs in the *Hamtramck Citizen* and congratulatory telegrams from Michigan governor George Romney and U.S. Congressman Harold M. Ryan. Later that week, the Merchants Association of Hamtramck announced plans to sponsor a testimonial dinner in her honor at the Polish-American Century Club. In conjunction with the dinner, Hamtramck mayor Joseph J. Grzecki announced that July 22, 1964 was officially proclaimed as "Jane Peaches Bartkowicz Day."¹⁴⁴

Peaches had little time to relish her Wimbledon victory. The U. S. National Clay Court Championships in River Forest, Illinois started in less than a week, and then she played in the U. S. National Girls' 16 Championships in Lake Bluff, Illinois. Between the two tournaments, Peaches went home for the Merchants Association dinner. Street light poles on Joseph Campau Avenue, the main street of Hamtramck, were decorated with pennants that read "Peaches." At the Polish-American Century Club on Holbrook Street, a large banner was displayed across the width of the hall and proclaimed, "The Merchants Association and the People of Hamtramck congratulate Peaches Bartkowicz, Tennis Queen of the World!" Nearly 500 people paid five dollars each to attend the

dinner, which was decorated with place settings of miniature tennis rackets and ripe peaches. ¹⁴⁵

After an array of accolades from the Mayor Grzecki and other local figures, Jean Hoxie was introduced to the crowd. She basked in the standing ovation that was given to her as she said, "We never realize how green our own pastures are. Well, they always looked green to me." When Peaches was introduced, the crowd rose to its feet again. Almost before the applause had subsided, she had finished thanking the Merchants Association and the people of Hamtramck. Fidgeting uncomfortably at the lectern, she bowed nervously and sat down amid more applause. As soon as the dinner was finished, Peaches was driven back to Lake Bluff, since she had to play her first-round match in the National Girls' 16 tournament the following morning. ¹⁴⁶

Losing only three games in her first three matches on the clay courts of the Bath and Tennis Club, Peaches allowed Pixie Lamm of California a total of seven games in the quarterfinals. A routine semifinal win over Becky Vest put Peaches in the championship match against Pasty Rippey, a repeat of the previous year's final. As the match was played in temperatures that exceeded 90 degrees and was televised live on television, Peaches defeated Pasty, 6-2 6-3, and collected her ninth national junior title. For the remainder of the summer, she played in several grass court events, almost defeating number-two seed Mary Ann Eisel in the quarterfinals of the U. S. National Girls' 18 Championships in Philadelphia, and losing to Janie Albert in the second round of the U. S. National Championships in Forest Hills, New York. After Christmas, Peaches returned to Miami Beach to successfully defend her Girls' 18 singles title at the Orange Bowl Junior Championships.

Jean took Peaches to Mexico City in April 1965 to play in the Mexico International tournament. A second round 6-2 7-5 win over Frenchwoman Michelle Boule set the scene for a quarterfinal encounter with Australia's Margaret Smith, the best female player in the world. Not intimidated by her opponent's reputation and ranking, Peaches clinched the first set 6-4 before Margaret reasserted herself and closed out the match, 6-1 6-3. It was the toughest match the Australian had all week. When Jean and Peaches returned home, George Puscas of the *Detroit Free Press* interviewed them for a

feature story. While acknowledging her numerous accomplishments on the court, the reporter noticed that Peaches' commitment to tennis was taking a toll on her. "She has spent most of her life belting a tennis ball against that wall, then carrying what she learned there onto the adjoining courts at Memorial Park or wherever there is competition to be met," Puscas wrote. "Such unwavering devotion to a game and a purpose has left its mark. A relaxed Peaches, taken away from the tennis courts, is not a young girl who caresses a telephone, gossiping of dates and boys and styles, or dallies with friends in a sweet shop. Dates are few, and social life outside the tight little band of coach Jean Hoxie is limited. The result is predictable. Peaches, who has played before princes and queens and shown her great talent on the finest courts, is painfully shy and withdrawn, almost uncommunicative. The words come slowly and quietly, unsure, as if they had not been bounced off that wall often enough."¹⁴⁷

The following summer, Peaches played another full schedule of junior and adult tournaments, along the way setting a record for winning her third consecutive U. S. National Girls' 16 singles title. In the doubles final, Peaches and Valerie Ziegenfuss lost the first set against Patti Hogan and Peggy Michel. Positioned in uncomfortable territory at the net, Peaches decided to play from the baseline and blast forehands and backhands. The change in strategy worked, and Peaches and Valerie won the next two sets, 6-1 6-1.

More grass court tournaments in the East followed, highlighted by the U. S. National Girls' 18 Championships in Philadelphia. A final round encounter against second-seeded Rosie Casals was anticipated, but the talented Californian lost to Julie Anthony in the semifinals. Jean Hoxie arrived in Philadelphia in time for the finals, and she gave Peaches strict orders to refrain from showing any reactions or acknowledgement of Julie's efforts during the match. Peaches won, 6-3 6-3, and later added the doubles title, once again partnering with Valerie and playing from the baseline. In winning her thirteenth national junior title, Peaches achieved another record. It was the first time anyone won the singles and doubles titles of the U. S. National 16 Championships and U. S. National 18 Championships during the same year.

At the end of the year, Peaches received a number of awards and recognitions. Her photo appeared on the cover of the October 1965 issue of *World Tennis*,

accompanied by the caption, “The Fabulous Peaches.” That same month, she appeared on a local television show as the first female athlete to receive the “Teenage Athlete of the Month” award from *Sport* magazine. She established another record by winning three consecutive Orange Bowl championships, and the USLTA awarded her the top national ranking spot for girl’s 16 singles, girls’ 16 doubles, girls’ 18 singles and girls’ 18 doubles, in addition to her first national ranking in women’s singles, at number twenty. For the fifteen-year –old Peaches, however, all of the attention was starting to overwhelm her. She began to get severe headaches, and she soon came to realize what was causing them – the intense pressure and constant control that Jean Hoxie was exerting on her.

*After a match out of town, you had to call her to tell her whether you won or lost. The kids who lost would wait around for hours, afraid to call ... I was terrified of her. To me, it seemed that when she said something, you had to do it. I remember once giving an interview without her permission. She screamed at me in front of the kids. “I put you where you are,” she yelled, “and you do something behind my back.”*¹⁴⁸

-- Peaches Bartkowicz, 1978

*I think Mrs. Hoxie latched onto Peaches as the way for her to make it big as a coach. Peaches was her ego trip. What she did wrong was to make Peaches’ tennis no pleasure and all pressure.*¹⁴⁹

-- Julie Heldman, 1983

Another busy summer was planned for Peaches in 1966, with three clay court tournaments and six grass court events on her schedule. In the third round of the Pennsylvania Grass Court Championships in Haverford, Pennsylvania, she had a 2-6 11-9 win over Mary Ann Eisel, ranked fifth in the nation and the tournament’s number one domestic seed, and she then defeated the number-three foreign seed Kerry Melville of Australia in the quarterfinals, 10-8 13-11. A straight set win over Donna Fales, the number-four domestic seed and tenth ranked U. S. woman, put Peaches in the final of a

significant women's tournament for the first time. Her final round opponent was Karen Krantzcke, whom she had had beaten in three sets on clay in Indianapolis. In a listless performance that drew little reaction from the crowd, Peaches only managed to win three games. "I think I got Peaches on an off day," said Karen after the match. "She had some great wins up to today."¹⁵⁰

A final round meeting between Peaches and Rosie Casals was once again expected at the 1966 U. S. National Girls' 18 Championships in Philadelphia. Although Peaches was seeded number one, Rosie Casals had beaten Wimbledon winner Billie Jean King two weeks earlier. Peaches advanced easily through the early rounds, losing only seven games in her first four matches. In the other half of the draw, Rosie stumbled in the semifinals for the second year in a row, this time to Patsy Rippy of Oklahoma. With Rosie out of the tournament, Peaches won the singles title with a 9-7 6-2 win over Patsy. After a short rest, she and Valerie Ziegenfuss fought off four match points to win the doubles against Rosie and Lynn Abbes by the scores of 5-7 8-6 6-2.

Two weeks later, Peaches and Rosie finally played each other for the first time in the third round at Forest Hills. Rosie, drop shotting and attacking the net at every opportunity, dominated the rallies and won 6-1 7-5. Just before the match, Jean Hoxie attempted to give Peaches some coaching advice.

She told me, "Watch out, she comes to the net." I thought to myself. "No kidding. A blind person could have told me that."¹⁵¹
 -- Peaches Bartkowicz, 2015

Playing an increasing number of adult events in 1967, Peaches won the women's singles titles at tournaments in Atlanta, Sacramento and Cincinnati. After four routine matches at the U. S. National Girls' 18 Championships, Peaches was almost upset by California's Kristy Pigeon in the semifinals, escaping by the score of 9-7 7-5. With her most difficult match behind her, Peaches easily defeated Vicki Rogers, 6-1 6-3 for her third consecutive national junior singles title. She then teamed with Valerie Ziegenfuss to win the doubles title for the third consecutive time, setting a record that may never be

broken. Peaches ended her junior career with an unprecedented seventeen national singles and doubles titles, and she never lost a singles match to anyone in her own age group. She played, and won, the final junior tournament of her career at the Canadian Junior Championships in Ottawa.

*The pressure to win got worse and worse in the 18s, and it was such a relief to win that third 18s title and be out of the juniors.*¹⁵²

-- Peaches Bartkowicz, 2010

At the U. S. National Championships a few weeks later, Peaches and Rosie Casals met in the fourth round. While Peaches had dominated all the junior tournaments, Rosie had better results in women's events, earning a higher USLTA women's singles ranking and getting named to the U. S. Wightman Cup team. Rosie was the number seven seed at Forest Hills, having beaten Billie Jean King twice and reaching the semifinals of Wimbledon with wins over Maria Bueno and Judy Tegart. For their second career match, Peaches was determined to give Rosie a better battle than when they played at Forest Hills the previous year.

Playing in front of a packed audience on the grandstand court, Rosie won the first set by hitting drop shots and luring Peaches to the net. Peaches won the second set by answering the drop shots with accurate placements and careful volleys. She took a 5-3 lead in the third set, finally finishing off the match by the scores of 4-6 6-3 7-5. Peaches walked off the court with tears in her eyes, saying "I don't believe it, I just don't believe it." Later, she told a reporter from the *Hamtramck Citizen* that Rosie was her "toughest opponent ever. I played her last year and she just wiped me off the court." This time, Peaches explained, "she was always in a hurry. She would serve and charge the net, but I started to pass her. Then she had to move back and play me deeper. That's the kind of game I like."¹⁵³

In the quarterfinals, Peaches faced second-seeded Ann Jones of Great Britain. More than 8000 spectators gathered to watch what would later be called the best match of the entire tournament. It was the first time that Peaches ever played on the stadium court,

and Ann had to call on all her retrieving abilities to win the first set as she pushed from corner to corner during the lengthy rallies. Peaches dominated the second set, taking a 3-0 lead and closing it out at 6-2. At the start of the third set, a tired and concerned Ann called on all her experience to pull ahead 3-1. At this point, all of the timing and accuracy disappeared from Peaches' shots, and Ann took advantage of the errors to win three more games for a 7-5 2-6 6-1 victory. The match lasted nearly two hours and confirmed Peaches' rightful place among the world's best women tennis players.

After Forest Hills, Peaches decided to take a break from tennis. After ten years of intense dedication to the game, she began to wonder if there was more to life than just playing tennis. Although she achieved all her goals in junior tennis, she questioned if the commitment was worth it.

*I was the best tennis player in the country, but I had never been on a date. I never had a chance to just hang around other kids. For a teenager, I was under tremendous pressure.*¹⁵⁴

-- Peaches Bartkowicz, 1983

Peaches had several tennis scholarship offers from schools in California, Texas and Florida, but elected to attend Michigan State University. The Lansing campus was only a short distance from Hamtramck, and she was awarded an academic scholarship based on her excellent high school grades. Studying for a degree in Elementary Education, Peaches told the *Hamtramck Citizen* that she had very little time for tennis. She did, however, plan to start playing tennis again the following spring, and was thinking about playing the European clay court circuit for the very first time.¹⁵⁵

At the beginning of 1968, Peaches transferred to Marymount College in Boca Raton, Florida, where a tennis-playing friend of hers, Peachy Kellmeyer, was attending. Away from home and the pressure of competitive tennis for the first time, Peaches finally began to have fun. She experienced all the social aspects of college life, and as a result, lost her edge for tennis. She played tennis only occasionally, representing Marymount College at the Women's Collegiate Invitation in Jacksonville in March 1968.¹⁵⁶

Based on her USLTA women's singles ranking of number four, Peaches was named to the U. S. Wightman Cup team in 1968. She competed in England for the first time in four years, reaching the third round at Surbiton and the quarterfinals at Manchester. In her Wightman Cup debut, playing at the number three singles position with the U. S. team trailing the British 1-2, a nervous Peaches defeated an equally nervous Winnie Shaw, 7-5 3-6 6-4, to level the team score. The British, however, won two of the following three matches to win the event for only the seventh time since 1923.

At the London Grass Court Championships at Queen's Club, Peaches played her first match against Francoise Durr, the 1967 French champion who had just become a contract professional. Peaches won the first set and quickly dropped the second set before putting her French opponent away, 6-2 1-6 6-3. At Wimbledon the following week, Peaches challenged defending champion Billie Jean King, another contract professional, in a first round match on Centre Court, losing only at 7-5 6-4.

After an unexpected loss to Linda Tuero in the quarterfinals of the U. S. National Clay Courts in Milwaukee, Peaches rebounded by winning the Canadian Open over Faye Urban. At the U. S. Open, three straight-set wins put her in the quarterfinals for the second year in a row, where once again her opponent was Ann Jones. Peaches was typically worried before the match, and Jean Hoxie – who was in attendance at Forest Hills – instructed her to take some “pep pills.” The pills were amphetamines that a doctor had prescribed for Jean after a recent stomach surgery, and she took them frequently. Peaches declined the offer, reminding Jean that she had taken one in the past and it had triggered a headache. Jean was furious at Peaches' refusal.

She started screaming at me and suddenly, for the first time in my life, I wasn't afraid of her anymore ... She kept on and on until finally I told her that this was the last match I was ever going to play for her. That's when she started to crumble before my eyes. She started pleading for me not to leave her. She offered me money. I had never seen her like this before. Then, finally, she told me that she was the one who made me great and that she had done everything for me and what had I done for her. I told her that if winning seventeen United States

*championships wasn't enough, then I didn't know what else to do.*¹⁵⁷
-- Peaches Bartkowicz, 1978

If the argument affected Peaches, it was not apparent during her match against Ann. She pinned the British player to the baseline with deep drives and had a point for a 5-3 lead in the first set. Ann then began to vary the pace and spins on her shots, enabling her to squeeze out a 10-8 6-3 victory. After the U. S. Open, Peaches remained in New York that fall, staying at the home of her good friend Marilyn Aschner and attending Queen's College on Long Island. In between classes, she rededicated herself to tennis and played "more tennis than I ever played in my life" on the various indoor and outdoor courts in the area.

In October 1968, Peaches was part of the U. S. tennis contingent that went to Mexico City for the Olympic Games. She lost in the finals of the women's singles demonstration event to Helga Niessen of West Germany, and also took silver in the women's doubles with Valerie Ziegenfuss and silver in the mixed doubles with Jim Osborne. An exhibition tournament was held in Guadalajara the following week, and Peaches won a gold medal by beating her friend Julie Heldman in the women's singles final. On her way back home to New York City, Peaches played in the Westwood Racquet Club Invitation in Richmond, Virginia, defeating Stephanie DeFina in the final, 6-1 6-2.

Encouraged by her recent successes, Peaches planned a full schedule of tournaments for 1969. She and Marilyn Aschner thought about playing tournaments in Asia, but they ultimately decided to play the National Women's Indoor Championships in February, the Caribbean circuit in March, and then a series of spring tournaments throughout Europe.

At the indoor championships, Peaches struggled past Emilie Burrer, 8-6 6-3, and then defaulted to Ceci Martinez in the quarterfinals. Although she was no longer associated with Jean Hoxie, the years of pressure applied by the overbearing coach had lasting effects on her. The migraine headaches that Peaches developed when she was sixteen still afflicted her, making it impossible to play tennis.

*My vision would get blurry and the least amount of noise or light would fracture me. I would lose my equilibrium and things would change colors. Then there was the vomiting and the constant pounding in my head.*¹⁵⁸

-- Peaches Bartkowicz, 1978

Playing the full Caribbean circuit for the first time, Peaches lost early round matches at the Curacao International in the Netherlands Antilles and the Altamiba International Invitation in Caracas, Venezuela. She then had one of the best tournaments of her career in Barranquilla, Colombia, beating three highly-ranked Australians – Karen Krantzcke, Judy Dalton, and Margaret Court – before losing a close match in the final to Julie Heldman by the scores of 5-7 6-2 6-3. Another outstanding win came the following week at the WLOD International in Fort Lauderdale, beating clay court expert Helga Niessen of West Germany in three sets. Once again, Peaches was forced to default before her quarterfinal match against Margaret Court, and she pulled out of the doubles as well.

Peaches and Marilyn then flew to Europe to play on the French Riviera. In two successive tournaments in Nice, Peaches defeated Gail Chanfreau in one final and Vlasta Vopickova in the other. At the Monte Carlo Open, Peaches survived the lobbing tactics of Italian Lea Pericoli in the third round before defaulting to Francoise Durr in the quarterfinals, due to another migraine headache. She scored her first and only singles victory over Virginia Wade in the third round of the Italian Open before losing to Francoise Durr. A trip to Stuttgart, Germany was productive, as Peaches won the singles title there with a final round win over Helga Niessen. She then returned to Italy to win the singles at Reggio Emilia, as well as the doubles with Marilyn, in their last tournament together.

Selected for the U. S. Federation Cup team, Peaches' role was to play doubles with Nancy Richey during the competition in Athens in May. The U. S. team scored 3-0 wins against Yugoslavia and the Netherlands to set up final with Australia. Nancy won her match against Kerry Melville and Julie Heldman lost hers against Margaret Court; with the team score tied at 1-1, the championship would be decided by the doubles, and

the Australian team of Margaret and Judy Dalton were heavily favored. Margaret, however, was still tired from her grueling match with Julie – she was only given a forty-five minute rest –and Nancy and Peaches focused their attack on her to win the match and clinch the title.

Two more clay court tournaments and a grass court event preceded Wimbledon, at which Peaches reached the third round against Nancy. The Federation Cup teammates had similar styles, both with powerful and accurate backcourt shots. Richey, however, was quicker around the court and willing to come forward to the net to volley. Their match was played on Court 3, and neither player seemed to enjoy the contest, which Nancy won 6-4 8-6. “It is apparent from Miss Bartkowicz’ play that she seems to have lost much of her zeal for the game,” wrote F. E. Storer of *Tennis USA*. “She is not nearly as keen as she was a year or so ago when her awesome hitting off the ground tabbed her as one of the brightest prospects for the future. She plays today with the air of one who could not care less.”¹⁵⁹

After her loss in the singles event, Peaches thoroughly enjoyed herself in the doubles. She and Julie Heldman reached the third round, and on the tournament’s first Saturday squared off against Billie Jean King and Rosie Casals. The match was played on Court 1, an intimate enclosure adjacent to Centre Court and known as the “graveyard court” since it was the site of numerous Wimbledon upsets. Billie Jean and Rosie were seeded second and had won the Wimbledon women’s doubles titles the previous two years, but Peaches and Julie were relaxed and not intimidated. They made frequent use of the lob, and after three long sets of hitting repeated overhead smashes, Billie Jean and Rosie were worn out. “We played out of our skulls,” said Julie after winning 5-7 6-3 8-6. The BBC video recorded the match, and broadcast it on television that evening and the next day, and several times during the rest of the summer and fall. It was one of the most surprising doubles upsets in Wimbledon history.¹⁶⁰

After Wimbledon that year, Peaches stayed in Europe for one more tournament, winning the Swedish International Open in Baastad. Back home in Hamtramck in mid-July, Bartkowicz took a short rest. She had played in tournaments almost non-stop since late February, and she wanted to be refreshed for the upcoming Wightman Cup matches

in Cleveland Heights, Ohio. The U. S. team, which also included Nancy Richey, Julie Heldman, Mary Ann Eisel Curtis and Valerie Ziegenfuss, hoped to reclaim the Cup after losing it the previous year. The U. S and British teams arrived in Cleveland Heights a week before the competition for team practice sessions. After a U. S. team practice session, Bartkowicz told a reporter from the *Polish Daily News* that she had an extra incentive to play well. “My mother and dad are here,” she said. “This will be the first time my parents will be able to see me in action since I was about eight years old.”¹⁶¹

Julie opened the competition on Saturday, August 9 with a three set win over Virginia Wade, and Nancy then defeated Winnie Shaw to give the U. S. team a 2-0 lead. The next day, more than 5400 spectators watched Peaches play the third singles match against Christine Truman Janes. Playing in front of her family and other relatives from Michigan and Ohio, Peaches was in top form against the British tennis star. Christine played well enough to win the first set, but every time she approached the net she was beaten by clean passing shots. Peaches hit eighteen winning shots from the baseline in the lengthy first set, and eleven more outright winners in the second set. It was a satisfying 8-6 6-0 win and put the U. S. ahead 3-0 in the team score.

Afterward, Peaches said that while it was not her best-ever tennis performance, it was one of the most pressure-filled matches she ever played. “My parents don’t know much about the game,” she told reporters after the match. “My mother left before it was over, she was just too nervous. I saw her under the stands and she said, ‘You lost?’ I said, ‘No, I won,’ and she grabbed me and hugged me. I guess there were fifty relatives in the stands. It was a great thrill, playing for my country here in the States and with my family here and all.”¹⁶² The following day, the U. S. team finished off a 5-2 victory, with Peaches and Julie winning the final doubles match against Virginia Wade and Winnie Shaw.

After the Wightman Cup, Peaches and Julie traveled to Moscow to play in the USSR International Tennis Championships. On her way back home to the United States, Peaches spent some time in Poland, her father’s homeland, defeating Danuta Wiczorkowna in the final of the Polish Tennis Championships, 6-3 6-3. She then had another successful run at the 1969 U. S. Open, defeating Francoise Durr in the third

round before losing to Rosie Casals in the quarterfinals. Before classes started at Wayne State University, Peaches played in the LaCosta Invitation in California, losing in the final to Julie. She returned to Richmond, Virginia in November to defend her title at the Westwood Racquet Club, defeating Linda Tuero 6-2 6-0 in the final to finish the most successful year of her career. The USLTA placed her at number four in the national women's singles rankings, and *World Tennis* magazine gave her a world ranking of number ten. She won seven singles titles in the two dozen tournaments she played and visited seventeen countries along the way.

After finishing the fall semester at Wayne State University, Peaches made her first trip to South Africa and played on the Sugar Circuit. She reached the singles finals of the first event, the Border Championships in East London, against reigning Wimbledon champion Ann Jones. Despite losing to Ann in all of their previous meetings, Peaches was confident going into the match and won 6-3 6-4. "All along I had the feeling I would win," she said afterward. "This is my greatest day in tennis."¹⁶³ Peaches did not win any more singles or doubles title in the remaining three South African tournaments, but she had consistently good results. She reached the finals of Bloemfontein and Capetown, losing both time to Ann, and she and Valerie Ziegenfuss were the finalists in three of the tournaments.

Electing to not take courses at Wayne State University in early 1970, Peaches planned another full schedule of tournaments for the spring. She reached the final of the WLOD International in Fort Lauderdale, losing to Nancy Richey, and then she won three successive tournaments in the Caribbean Circuit, taking the titles in Curacao, San Juan and Kingston. Named once again to the U. S. Federation Cup team, which was to be played on clay in Freiberg, Germany in May, Peaches – along with Julie Heldman and Mary Ann Curtis - traveled to Brussels to compete in the Belgian Open as a preparation.

While Peaches was in Europe, she received the news that Jean Hoxie had died. At her home in Michigan, Jean's brother had left a Lincoln Continental car in the driveway. Jean was told by her brother that she was not allowed to drive the large car until she was tutored in how to drive it, which he planned to do later in the day. Impatient for her brother to return, and wanting to go down the street to a cafeteria for

breakfast, Jean got into the car and started the ignition. She opened the car door to look behind her as she went in reverse, and somehow – either due to a dizzy spell, a stroke, or perhaps from losing her balance as she tried to close the door – she fell out of the car as it went in reverse. With Jean lying unconscious on the ground and the car's steering wheel turned, the car circled around and ran over her body several times, crushing her skull and rib cage and severing her right leg. Although she had not spoken to Jean for nearly two years, Peaches sent a wreath of flowers to the memorial service.¹⁶⁴

In Freiberg, the U. S. team advanced past Yugoslavia in the first round. Peaches and Julie did not lose a game in singles, and Julie and Mary Ann lost only three games in their doubles match. They won almost as easily against South Africa, earning a semifinal showdown with the host team, West Germany. Before her singles match against clay court specialist Helga Hoesl, Peaches was so nervous that her teammates had a difficult time getting her out of the locker room.

*Her opponent could be someone whom she played lots of times before and figured to beat love and love. It didn't matter. Peaches would worry. Everytime you looked at her, she was running in the bathroom, complaining about feeling sick to her stomach. They she'd go on the court and destroy her opponent.*¹⁶⁵

-- Marilyn Aschner, 1978

Peaches handily won, 6-2 6-2, scoring the only point for her team, as Julie lost to Helga Niessen and then lost her doubles match with Mary Ann. She stayed in Europe to play in the French Open – losing badly to Francoise Durr in the first round – and then played only doubles on the grass courts of the Rothman's Northern tournament in Manchester, England. She and Valerie Ziegenfuss lost in the semifinals of the women's doubles, and then she teamed with South African Robert Maud in what would be one of her career highlights. In one of the longest mixed doubles matches ever played, they needed sixty-six games to defeat Colin Dibley and Winnie Shaw by the score of 15-13 8-10 11-9. In the final, they beat Kerry Melville and Frew McMillan of South Africa, one of the world's best doubles players.

Next on the schedule was the Wightman Cup, played at the All England Club Lawn Tennis Club. The U. S. fielded its strongest team in three years, with Billie Jean King, Nancy Richey, Julie Heldman, Mary Ann Curtis and Peaches. Team captain Doris Hart decided that Billie Jean and Nancy would play in the first two singles positions, which required them to play two matches each. The player selected for the third singles spot only played one match in the best-of-seven match competition. Since Peaches did not play well in the pre-competition team practices, Julie was given the third singles spot. Billie Jean and Nancy were assigned the number one doubles position and Julie and Mary Ann were listed at number two doubles; Peaches was not selected to play at all.

In the opening match of the two-day event, Billie Jean beat Virginia Wade 8-6 6-6 and Ann Jones evened the team score by defeating Nancy, 6-3 6-3. Ann and Joyce Williams then put the British ahead 2-1 when they easily beat Julie and Mary Ann, 6-2 6-3. The following day, Julie leveled the team score with her win at number three singles. Virginia put the British team ahead again by beating Nancy, who took a hard fall during the first set and injured her knee and back. Although her movement was severely hampered, she continued playing and Virginia pulled away, 6-3 6-2. After the match, Nancy spoke with her father, and they agreed that she would be unable to play the doubles match with Billie Jean. According to the Wightman Cup rules, neither Julie nor Mary could be substituted for Nancy, since they already played in a doubles match. The only possible replacement was Peaches.

With the British team leading 3-2, Billie Jean evened the team score by beating Ann, 6-4 6-2. A doubles match, with Billie Jean and Peaches playing against Virginia and Winnie Shaw, would decide the Wightman Cup. The prospect of playing the deciding doubles unnerved Peaches, but she was immediately put at ease when Billie Jean asked her, "Would you like to stay back when I serve?"¹⁶⁶ As Peaches kept her service returns low and Billie Jean came forward to put away the volleys, the first set stayed even until 4-4. The British team then broke Billie Jean's serve, and Virginia served for the set at 5-4.

In this game, Peaches showed the quality of her service returns, which forced volley errors from the incoming server. Still, Virginia was able to reach set point, and

she served to Billie Jean in the ad court. She hit a forehand volley that sat up high, Billie Jean moved in and smacked a flat backhand at her, tying her up and forcing an error. Looking over at team captain Doris Hart, who was seated at courtside, Billie Jean could only shake her head and smile at the audacity of hitting such a shot on set point. At deuce, Virginia thought one of her shots on the baseline was good, but it was called out. On break point for the Americans, Peaches tossed up a lob that Virginia hit yards out.

The missed overhead by must have given the Americans the idea. As Virginia became nervous and anxious, Peaches made further use of the lob. She held serve for a 6-5 lead, putting the pressure on Winnie Shaw to hold serve and remain in the set. The British team was hopeful, since Winnie was the only player in the match whose service had not yet been broken. Two lobs from Peaches made the score 15-40, double break point. Winnie served down the middle of the deuce court, and Peaches hit an inside-out backhand return that clipped the doubles sideline. The Americans won the first set, 7-5.

Billie Jean opened the second set with a service hold, and then Virginia evened the score on her own serve. With Peaches serving in the third game, the British pair began to dominate the net with volleys hit down the middle to create the openings. They broke Peaches, and then Winnie held serve to lead 3-1. The British kept their lead for the rest of the set, and it was Billie Jean's turn to save the set when she was serving at 3-5. A series of unforced errors from both sides brought the game to deuce, and the Americans found themselves at set point down when Billie went for a high backhand volley poach and dumped it into the net. On the next point, Billie Jean tried to poach again, and when she did not put the ball away, Winnie hit a winning forehand into the open court to take the set and level the match.

Wightman Cup rules allowed for a ten-minute break between the second and third sets. As the American team came back to the locker room, Billie Jean's legs started to cramp. While Nancy Richey, who was hobbled by her own knee injury, rushed from room to room to get hot towels for Billie Jean, Julie Heldman took Peaches aside to give her some advice. "You're doing great," Julie said. "Groan. Just throw the ball higher on your serve."¹⁶⁷

At that point, Peaches burst into tears because she thought she wasn't playing well. During the match she had three times waved her hands in disgust, which meant, 'That's it! I'm giving up the game!'" ¹⁶⁸

-- Julie Heldman, 1970

When the ten-minute break was over, team captain Doris Hart gave the doubles team a series of final instructions, and the Americans walked back to the court. Virginia opened the third set by holding serve, and British hopes were high when Billie Jean's serve was broken in the next game. The Americans came back to 2-2, and they broke Virginia's serve when Billie Jean hit a knifing low backhand service return. Leading 3-2, Billie Jean held serve when Winnie missed a volley and Virginia nervously pushed a forehand long. With Winnie serving at 2-4, the nerves were apparent on both sides as nearly every point ended on an unforced error. Virginia hit a backhand into the net, Billie Jean did the same with a forehand, Winnie made a volley error and then double faulted. At 15-40, Winnie hit a second serve down the middle in the deuce court, and Peaches cranked a backhand return past Virginia. Just as the ball landed in, Billie Jean shook her fist at Peaches and yelled "Yes!"

Peaches served for the match and the Cup at 5-2 in the third set. On the first point, she hit three consecutive lobs until Virginia finally put the ball away. Virginia then slid a slice backhand return down the line past Billie Jean. At 0-30, Billie Jean crossed to poach, but the British were able to put the ball into the open court. Peaches got to the ball in time and hit two angled shots, the second one a delicate crosscourt forehand that Virginia could not reach. The British team reached double break point when Virginia crushed a forehand at Billie Jean. Peaches served at 15-40, and as she ran forward for a short wide angled shot she put up a short lob that confused her opponents, who were at the net. At first, the British thought their short angled shot missed the line, and when there was no call, they were not prepared to reply. Virginia made a last minute swing, but completely missed the ball as the crowd groaned. When Virginia dumped the following service return into the net, bringing the game to deuce, Peaches shook her fist. She served wide to Winnie's forehand and then engaged her in a crosscourt rally. Billie

Jean waited for the opening and poached a winning forehand volley directly at Virginia. On match point, Peaches served wide to Virginia's backhand. Billie Jean made a fake move, tricking Virginia into thinking she was about to poach to the middle. Virginia hit her backhand down the line, but Billie Jean stayed in position and firmly punched back a forehand volley. As Virginia hit her next forehand into the net, Billie Jean tossed her racquet over her head and jumped joyously with Peaches at mid-court. After shaking hands, Virginia and Winnie stood dejectedly with their coach Angela Barrett as Julie, Mary Ann and Nancy came onto the court to congratulate their teammates.

After the Wightman Cup, Peaches reached the third round of singles at the London Grass Court Championships at Queen's Club, as well as the semifinals of the doubles with Valerie Ziegenfuss. Back at the All England Club one week later for the Wimbledon Championships, Peaches played a first round match against Kristy Pigeon, the left-handed Californian who almost beat her in the semifinals of the U. S. National Girls' 18 Championships three years earlier. Kristy started the match strongly, coming in to the net behind spins and angles to keep Peaches from getting into a rhythm. She won the first set 6-3 as Peaches had no control on her groundstrokes. Slowly worked her way into the second set, Peaches found the timing for her shots and began to neutralize Kristy's attack. Once she won the second set, Peaches finished off a 3-6 9-7 6-1 victory.

Peaches played her next match against Evonne Goolagong, a talented young Australian who was playing on her first overseas tour. Many tennis observers were predicting that Evonne was destined to become a future champion, and she had already acquired a large following in England. As they walked onto Centre Court, both players received a tremendous ovation. Not only were they eager to watch Evonne, but Peaches was a crowd favorite with the British as well. Evonne, unfortunately, was extremely nervous playing on Centre Court for the first time, and offered little challenge. Peaches made quick work of her opponent in a brief 6-4 6-0 contest.¹⁶⁹

Two days later, Peaches was back on Centre Court to play against Virginia Wade. With their opposite personalities and style of play, the Centre Court spectators were treated to a fine match. Both players rallied from the baseline, and Peaches gave an expert demonstration of depth and angle. Virginia was unusually patient, and only when

an opening occurred did she approach the net to volley. Keeping her nerves and temperament under control, Virginia registered a 6-4 6-4 win.¹⁷⁰

Peaches returned to Basstad, Sweden the week after Wimbledon to defend her title at the Swedish Open. She had two difficult matches enroute to the final, losing the first set against Indonesian Lita Liem in the quarterfinals, and then being forced to three sets against Frenchwoman Gail Chanfreau. Once she arrived in the final, she had an easy time defeating local favorite Ingrid Bentzer, 6-1 6-1. It was only the third time in the twenty-two year history of the tournament that a player had a successful title defense. With Ana Maria Arias, Bartkowicz also won the women's doubles title over Eva Lundquist and Kathy Harter, 6-4 6-4.

Taking a month off from tennis, Peaches skipped the 1970 U. S. summer clay court tournaments and did not play again until the Pennsylvania Grass Court Open at the Merion Cricket Club. She had a fine second-round win over Sharon Walsh, who had just won the U. S. National Girls' 18 singles title for the second consecutive year. The athletic Sharon was a natural grass court player, and Peaches was satisfied to come through a 8-6 9-7 winner. In the semifinals, she pushed Kerry Melville in the first set before losing 8-6 6-1.

Peaches' final tournament before the 1970 U. S. Open was the Marlboro Open in South Orange, New Jersey. Her first match was against Chris Evert, a 15-year Floridian who – like Peaches – possessed a cool demeanor and an accurate two-handed backhand. The match, easily won by Peaches, was an intersection between two players whose careers were heading in different directions. One year later, Chris would be an emerging superstar and Peaches would be out of the game. Before that happened, however, Peaches would become part of a group of women who took a stand and demanded more prize money, paving the way for players like Chris Evert to eventually make a fortune in the game.

Judy Tegart Dalton

Having parents who both played tennis, it was only natural that Judith Anne Tegart was exposed to the game at early age. At the age of six, she occasionally tried to hit tennis balls with her father, Joseph – not an easy task for a young girl using a heavy,

adult-sized wooden racquet. Three years later, Joseph arranged for former Australian Army tennis champion Constance Hoddle-Wrigley to give Judy some lessons on a neighborhood court. Soon, the athletic Judy – who also enjoyed basketball, baseball and field hockey – was competing in the numerous Australian schoolgirls tournaments that were organized by the Victorian Tennis Association. These events were staged year-round all across the state, and in Judy's hometown of Melbourne they were held at the private tennis clubs of Glen Iris, Lauriston and Kooyong. Judy and her friends made good use of their bicycles, riding them to local tournaments as well as to school everyday.¹⁷¹

After finishing her high school education, Judy did not attend a university; instead, she decided to pursue a career as a chartered accountant – a specialized field that requires training courses and a series of examinations in order to remain licensed. From the age of eighteen, Judy was a full-time accountant for four years; although she still played an occasional tennis tournament or church team competition, her main athletic interest was playing basketball for a team that was sponsored by Channel 7, a new television station that was based in Melbourne. She was actually asked to play for the Australian national basketball team, but she declined when she realized she wanted to re-dedicate herself to tennis.¹⁷²

Judy first played in the Australian National Championships in 1957, at the age of nineteen while she worked in the accounting firm. She lost in the first round, as she did for the next two years when she was only a part-time player. After training more intensely, she made a modest breakthrough in 1961 and reached the third round. That year, the Lawn Tennis Association of Australia announced it would include five female players on its overseas team – with all expenses paid – to compete in Europe, Great Britain and the United States. After the LTAA selected national champion Margaret Smith, finalist Jan Lehane and semifinalist Robyn Ebborn for the world tour, Judy decided to arrange her own trip of several Asian countries. She requested two months off from her accounting job and began planning her trip, receiving some assistance from Nell Hopman, wife of Australian Davis Cup captain Harry Hopman.¹⁷³

*Nell Hopman had a lot of contacts because she and Harry played there, and she gave me the names of some people and I wrote to them. They told me which tournaments to play, arranged some exhibitions for me, and gave me accommodations. I played a tournament in Manila and got to final against the Philippine champion, but the final was rained out. A huge typhoon was coming, and we were told if we did not get on the plane to Hong Kong we would not get out for days. I packed my bags, people were helping me, and I got on the plane in my tennis clothes. We got out just in time ... I also played in tournaments at the Hong Kong Cricket Club and at the Tokyo Lawn Tennis Club.*¹⁷⁴

-- Judy Tegart Dalton, 2010

Judy went back to work at the accounting firm in May, since the deadline for tax returns in Australia was June 30. She continued her training at tennis, and at the end of the year she almost beat Darlene Hard – the recent winner of the U. S. National Championships – in the third round of the Victorian Championships in Melbourne. The 7-5 7-5 loss gave Judy the confidence that she could compete against the world’s best players, and her improved play continued one month later at the Australian National Championships in Sydney. She defeated Robyn Ebbern in the third round and gave eventual champion Margaret Smith her toughest match of the tournament, losing 6-2 7-5. With her win over Robyn and quarterfinal showing, Judy was sure she would get named to the Australian overseas team. When the team was announced shortly after tournament, Judy was passed over in favor of Margaret, Robyn, Leslie Turner, Jan Lehane and Madonna Schacht.

*The president of the LTAA was a Queenslander, and he said Robyn is on the team and you are not.*¹⁷⁵

-- Judy Tegart Dalton, 2010

With only a few months to prepare, Judy immediately began making arrangements to finance her own tour again for 1962. She persuaded her accounting firm

to let her work for only six months at a time, which would allow her to travel overseas from April to September each year. The previous year, Judy purchased some stock shares of a public company that her accounting firm was associated with. She eventually sold a portion of her shares, making enough of a profit to purchase an around-the-world airline ticket – at a price of \$3000 – on Pan American Airways. She then had her friend Margaret Carter, an Australian living in Italy, arrange for her to get appearance fees – usually at \$400 per tournament – and housing at tournaments in Italy, Monaco and Switzerland. A number of tournaments in France, Great Britain and the United States were also on her schedule. Judy planned to save the money she received at tournaments to pay for the following year’s airfare; it was a method she would use for the next ten years to finance her travels on the tennis circuits.¹⁷⁶

Judy did very well in the three Italian tournaments, getting to the final of each one and winning two of them. On the grass court circuit in England, she reached the final of the Northern Championships in Manchester with wins over Elizabeth Starkie, Nancy Richey and Carole Caldwell before losing to Darlene Hard, 6-3 6-2. In the first round of the London Grass Court Championships at Queen’s Club, she almost lost to Silvana Lazzarino, an Italian known primarily for her proficiency on clay courts.

It rained, and we didn’t think we’d be playing at all, so Margaret and I went into the indoor courts at Queens, which are boards – which is very unusual, it’s the only place I think that have indoor courts that are boards – and it as fast as anything. We practiced in there, and I thought, “Well, that’s it,” and then all of a sudden they said “Oh no, we think you are going to play, you’ve got to stay around,” so we hung around and then I had to play ... now, Silvana couldn’t play on grass and I’m in this blur because the courts were so slow because of the rain and it was suiting her perfectly ... she was up 6-0 5-0 40-love and I’m thinking. “What am I doing here?” I had no idea what happened and for some inexplicable reason I turned it around and won 0-6 8-6 6-1 ... the sun was coming out and the grass was getting quicker, so by the third set I was fine.¹⁷⁷

-- Judy Tegart Dalton, 2010

At Wimbledon, Judy needed three sets to defeat Virginia Wade, a seventeen-year-old qualifier who would go on to become the women's singles champion fifteen years later. In the fourth round, Judy lost to eventual champion Karen Susman.

I remember that very well. As much as I like Karen and I thought she was an unbelievable player, she could talk you out of anything. On the change of ends she'd say something ... she did it to Margaret Court, she had Margaret absolutely wrapped around her little finger. She'd say things like, "Oh, have you seen that man sitting up in the stands there, he's got a green jacket on," and you'd walk around the chair and you'd look up in the stands and you couldn't see a man in a green jacket, so you'd think about that and then the game would have gone before you even knew what happened. She did it so often, it was just unbelievable. She'd mutter it under her breath, and we didn't sit down and there was no time limit, we just walked around the net. Frank Sedgman was watching and he said to me afterwards, "You know, you got completely conned by Karen," and I had never met her before, that was her first year there, and I didn't have a clue, I didn't know ... She was just clever.¹⁷⁸

-- Judy Tegart Dalton, 2010

At her first U. S. National Championships at Forest Hills in 1962, Judy was among the large contingent of foreign players that made the tournament a rousing success. Gladys Heldman had coordinated an airlift of players from Europe, although Judy was not on that particular flight since she had own around-the-world ticket with Pan Am Airways. In a second round encounter played on the Stadium Court, Judy held four match points against sixth-seeded Renee Schuurman of South Africa before losing 4-6 6-1 7-5.

Judy concluded her world tour with two California tournaments, the Pacific Southwest Championships in Los Angeles and the Pacific Coast Championships in Berkeley. In Los Angeles, she had a close win over Cathy Lee Crosby – who would later go on to become the star of the television show *Superwoman* – by the scores of 6-3 10-8,

and then eventually lost in the semifinals to Carole Caldwell in three sets. In the women's doubles, Judy and Carole defeated Wimbledon champions Billie Jean Moffit and Karen Susman in three sets in the semifinals, followed by a 7-5 10-8 win over Darlene Hard and Maria Bueno in the final.

*We got nothing. I went into Perry Jones' and said we should get something for winning the doubles. He said, "You're getting nothing," and so I walked out the door and slammed it so hard it nearly fell off its hinges!*¹⁷⁹

-- Judy Tegart Dalton, 2010

In Berkeley, Judy played her first match against another future champion; she comfortably defeated fourteen-year-old Rosie Casals in the second round, but was impressed with the young girl's talent. After losing to Rita Bentley in the quarterfinals, Judy and Elizabeth Starkie lost to Darlene and Maria in the women's doubles final, and she and Dennis Ralston lost to Darlene and Jim McManus in the mixed doubles championship. She then returned home to Melbourne for the next six months, during which time she resumed her accounting job and played in more tournaments, finishing the Australian season with women's singles national ranking of number eight.

For the next several years, Judy had consistent results on the international circuit and was considered a threat to all the top players. She held match point against Darlene Hard in the fourth round of the 1963 U. S. National Championships before losing 10-8 in the third set, and the following year at Forest Hills she eliminated twelfth-seeded Francoise Durr in the third round, 6-1 6-1. She won the Pacific Coast Championships in Berkeley in 1964, defended her title there the following year with a 6-4 3-6 7-5 win over Rosie Casals, and several months later won 1966 Tasmanian Championships by beating Carole Graebner. Later in 1966, Judy won the Essex Championships in England over Christine Truman by the impressive score of 6-2 6-0, as well as the Belgian International with a final round win over clay court specialist Gail Sherriff.

It was in doubles, however, that Judy made her mark during the mid-1960s. A strong serve-and-volley player, she won the 1964 Australian Championships women's

doubles with Lesley Turner, the 1966 Australian mixed doubles title with Tony Roche, and the 1966 French Championships women's doubles with Margaret Smith. She also came close on several other occasions, including runner-up finishes with partner Ed Rubinoff at Forest Hills in 1964 and at Wimbledon in 1965. The mixed doubles final at Forest Hills in 1965, played on the clubhouse court during the same time as the men's singles final in the Stadium, was an especially distracting match, as sportswriter Robert Johnston reported to readers of the *Melbourne Herald-Sun*.

Miss Tegart and American Frank Froehling were down 2-5 against Margaret Smith and Fred Stolle in the final of the mixed doubles on an outside court near the clubhouse bar. Suddenly the umpire announced: "This match will now be moved to the Stadium Court." The players looked amazed and dropped their rackets in the drizzling rain. "Typical American management," said Miss Tegart, hands on hips. "They're making the presentation over there now," Stolle yelled ... Miss Smith completed her service and she and Stolle took the set 6-2. But then, with the score 4-2 in Miss Smith and Stolle's favor in the second set and Miss Tegart about to serve, along came a team of flamenco dancers from the World's Fair, rattling castanets, shouting Ole! and singing. They were chairing singles champion Manuel Santana back to the clubhouse. Miss Tegart stopped her service. "Would someone please stop the ----- circus please?" she called. Ole! Ole! yelled the Spaniards. 'Bring on McNamara's Band!' yelled Stolle. Stolle and Miss Smith won the match, 6-2 6-2.¹⁸⁰

After Forest Hills in 1965, on her way from New York to California, Judy spent ten days in Dallas, Texas to train with Maureen Connolly. Earlier in the year, Judy had met the former champion when the *Melbourne Herald-Sun* hired her to report on the Australian season.

We became really good friends, and I went to stay with her as often as I could. She was still able to play, it was amazing. She helped me with tactics, and she

*was so steady she made me steadier – you know, I was a bit erratic. I had a serve and volley, but my groundstrokes weren't the best, and she helped me with that. And I was playing matches with some of the good men players in the area.*¹⁸¹
 -- Judy Tegart Dalton, 2010

By 1966, Judy was the third-ranked women's singles player in Australia, and for the second year in a row she was named to her nation's Federation Cup team. Thrilled to win the Australian mixed title with Tony Roche and the French women's doubles with Margaret Smith, her biggest disappointment of the year was a final round loss in the Wimbledon women's doubles final. Maria Bueno and Nancy Richey won the match when Margaret got nervous and lost her serve at 4-4 in the third set. As Judy was learning, playing doubles with Margaret could sometimes be difficult.

*I was the only one who didn't have a nervous breakdown. Justina Bricka nearly had a nervous breakdown, Lesley Turner had a nervous breakdown, Robyn Ebbenn nearly did, and I was the only one who survived it all. She always used to blame you and she'd stand behind you and go "Tsk, tsk, tsk," and I turned around and said, "Smithy if you make that noise again, I'm going to put this racquet right around your throat," and then she'd be fine.*¹⁸²
 -- Judy Tegart Dalton, 2010

Judy began to realize the promise of her singles game in the spring of 1967, when she won the London Hard Court Championships in Hurlingham with a 6-1 2-6 6-3 final round win over Ann Jones, ranked number three in the world. In the quarterfinals of a grass court tournament in Beckenham, England, she defeated world number-two Maria Bueno in three sets, followed by another win over Ann to win the Welsh Championships. Quarterfinal finishes at the Australian Championships and Wimbledon, as well as fourth-round appearances at the French Championships and the U. S. National Championships, earned Judy her first world ranking at the end of the year, with *World Tennis* placing her at number ten.

During the Australian circuit in late 1967 and early 1968, Judy continued with her run of impressive singles wins. She had her first career win over Billie Jean King in the quarterfinals of the New South Wales Championships in Sydney in November, and had one of the best singles tournaments of her life when defeated Rosie Casals, Kerry Melville and Billie Jean again to win the South Australian title in Adelaide. In the Tasmanian Championships, she had her first singles win over Margaret Smith Court, who was returning to competition after retiring in 1966 to get married. Leading up to the national championships in Melbourne, the climax of the Australian circuit, Judy was certainly a contender to win the title. After narrowly getting past Karen Krantzcke in the quarterfinals, Judy lost in the semifinals to Billie Jean in three sets, giving the reigning Wimbledon champion her most difficult match of the entire tournament.

In the 1960s, the Caribbean circuit was a popular destination for the world's best men and women players, a series of tournaments with warm weather during the day and parties in the evening. The circuit was funded by the tourism industry, and most of the players received airfares, hotel accommodations and under-the-table payments. Judy made her first appearance in the Caribbean in March 1968, reaching the singles quarterfinals in Barranquilla, Colombia, the semifinals in Caracas, Venezuela and the final in Curacao, Netherlands Antilles. A trip to New York City at the end of the month to play in the Madison Square Garden Invitation – her first time playing in that venue – resulted in a semifinal win over Ann Jones before losing in the final to Nancy Richey.

At the Caribe Hilton Championships in San Juan, Puerto Rico – the centerpiece of the Caribbean circuit – Judy reached the semifinals and lost to Nancy for the fourth time of the tour, this time by the lopsided score of 6-1 6-1. She then lost in the final of the Dixie International Invitation in Tampa, Florida to Helga Niessen in three sets before winning the invitational tournaments in Charlotte, North Carolina and Lighthouse Point, Florida. Judy defeated Stephanie DeFina, an outstanding clay court player from Florida, in both finals, and she ended her spring tour of North and South America by reaching the semifinals of the Atlanta Invitation, losing to Linda Tuero of Louisiana – another tough clay court player – by the scores of 1-6 8-6 6-2.

Judy's tournaments results from 1967 and early 1968 earned her the top women's singles ranking in Australia. The LTAA named her to play on the Federation Cup team, along with Margaret Court and Kerry Melville, at the competition in Paris. While she was playing in tournaments on the British circuit, Judy discovered that the LTAA had agreed to pay Margaret for her expenses. Since she was not offered any expense money, Judy declined to play on the Federation Cup team and remained in England, preparing for Wimbledon by playing in four grass court events.¹⁸³ She won the singles titles in Surbiton and Nottingham, and reached the semifinals of the North of England Championships in Manchester. By the time Wimbledon started in late June, Judy's grass court game was fine-tuned and she was ready to make a spectacular run.

Seeded at number seven in the women's singles draw, Judy won her first three matches in straight sets to set up a quarterfinal against Margaret, seeded second and favored to reach the final. Starting the match strongly, Margaret won the first set 6-1 was two games away from victory at 4-4 in the second set. In the moment of crisis, Margaret got nervous and her game completely collapsed, riddled with numerous double faults. Judy grabbed the second set and raced to 5-0 in the third, winning the match 4-6 8-6 6-1 to reach her first Wimbledon semifinal on her seventh attempt.¹⁸⁴

Waiting for Judy in the semifinals was Nancy Richey, who was riding a wave of confidence. She had just won the French Open, with wins over Billie Jean King and Ann Jones, and she had beaten Judy on all four of their previous meetings of the year, including a 6-1 6-1 drubbing in San Juan. Their semifinal on Centre Court promised to be one of the highlights of the tournament, but Judy came perilously close to missing the 2:00 pm start time. She was practicing at Queen's Club, about five miles away from the All England Lawn Tennis Club, when her courtesy car failed to show. She telephoned tournament officials to request another car, and she was left waiting for that one as well.

So by this time, I'm getting a bit stressed. Then finally another car came, and when we got to Southfields Station it got a flat tire, and by this time it was one o'clock. They'd sent the police out to see when the car was coming ... Then a man came along in a Rover, with the roof open, and he was stopped at the light,

*and I asked him, “Are you going to watch the tennis at Wimbledon?” and he said, “Yes,” and I said, “You’ll have to take me to the front gate. If you’ve got tickets to Centre Court, you won’t see me play if you don’t get me there.” So I bundled all my stuff in and told my brother he’d have to find his own way there. When we got near, the policeman saw me and ushered all the traffic out of the way, opened up the gates and the man said, “I’m not allowed in,” and the policeman said, “You drive in,” and he drove me up to the main entrance.*¹⁸⁵

-- Judy Tegart Dalton, 2013

Wearing a Ted Tinling dress that was trimmed in Australian green, Judy played the best match of her life, thoroughly dominating Nancy by hitting outright winners on her serves, returns, volleys and groundstrokes. She took the first set 6-3 and led 5-1 in the second, as Nancy futilely tried to push her opponent away from the net with lobs. Facing match point, Nancy came forward and dumped a high backhand volley into the net, and Judy tossed up her racquet as she ran to shake hands. It was, as Judy would later recall, the best-played match of her career, all the more remarkable considering she arrived at the club by hitching a ride from someone at a stoplight.

*To this day, I have no idea what his name was, but he sent me a telegram when I got to the final, saying “All the best of luck, from the man in the Rover car.”*¹⁸⁶

-- Judy Tegart Dalton, 2013

In the championship match, Billie Jean King opened up a 4-1 first set lead before Judy evened the score at 4-4 with some strong serving and several backhand passing shots. Perhaps pressing too much in her first Wimbledon singles final, Judy committed five double faults as Billie Jean took the first set at 9-7. One of the keys of the match was Billie Jean’s slice serve in the deuce court, forcing Judy out wide and reducing the power on her forehand. Billie Jean won the second set 7-5, breaking Judy’s serve in the final game with a series of low, soft service returns to win her third straight Wimbledon singles title.¹⁸⁷

Wimbledon was an open tournament for the first time in 1968, and since Billie Jean was a contract professional she collected the first prize of \$1800. The first year of open tennis was a confusing situation to many players, with each ILTF member nation having the option of recognizing the “registered player” category – a player who was not a contract professional and still under jurisdiction of her national association, yet permitted to accept prize money. By the time Judy realized she could have played Wimbledon as a registered player, it was too late; she did not declare her playing status in time, and instead of receiving the runner-up prize of \$1080, she had to settle for less than one-fourth of that amount for playing as an amateur.

*Judy's case makes me feel mad about the craziness of the present set-up. She should have collected £450 as runner-up, apart from £75 as a doubles semi-finalist. All she got from the Australian LTA was £100 as expenses toward her airfare, which is too bad for a fine player, a darned good sport and a girl who makes no bones about making money out of playing tennis like all the rest of us.*¹⁸⁸

-- Billie Jean King, 1968

Having learned her lesson about accepting prize money, Judy began to reap some financial rewards by playing as a registered player. After Wimbledon in 1968, she reached the finals of the Eastbourne Invitation, the Dutch Open and the German Open, and she defeated Gail Sherriff in the finals of a tournament in Knokke, Belgium. A quarterfinal finish at the U. S. Open and pushing Margaret Court in a 4-6 9-7 10-8 loss in the semifinals of the Pacific Coast International in Berkeley, California concluded another successful world tour for her, and she was recognized by *World Tennis* magazine at the end of the year with a world ranking of number six.

During the Australian circuit in early 1969, Judy played doubles with Margaret and they did not lose a match, winning the Western Australian Open, the Victorian Open, the New South Wales Open and the Australian Open over the likes of Billie Jean King and Rosie Casals, Ann Jones and Francoise Durr, and Kerry Melville and Karen

Krantzcke. They continued their successful partnership on the Caribbean circuit by taking the titles in Curacao, Caracas, Barranquilla, and Fort Lauderdale. Their eight tournament winning streak came to an end in the quarterfinals of the Caribe Hilton Invitation in San Juan, surprisingly at the hands of Patti Hogan and Tory Fretz by the score of 6-1 8-6.

*The match that we lost in the quarterfinals was amazing. We lost to Tory Fretz and Patti Hogan. As you can see, we hadn't lost a doubles match in God knows how long. We'd gone weeks and weeks and weeks without losing a match. We played it at night, under lights, and I didn't know then that Tory Fretz liked to use drugs, smoke marijuana ... none of us knew this. She was as high as a kite, on whatever she was on ... I don't think she missed a shot, and it got to a point where Smithy could not believe what was happening, everybody came and watched the match, it was just unbelievable. She never played like that ever again, it was just incredible. And Margaret kept saying, "But she never missed anything!" and none of us realized what was going on ... I don't think even Patti knew what was going on, she might have but I doubt it ... she never missed a ball. It took me ages to get over it, it took Margaret about two months to get over it. It wasn't funny at the time, but it's funny now when I look back at it.*¹⁸⁹

-- Judy Tegart Dalton, 2010

They recovered to win the doubles titles at the two remaining tournaments on the Caribbean circuit, the Charlotte Invitation in North Carolina and the River Oaks Invitation in Houston. Judy won only two games against her doubles partner in the singles final of Charlotte, and then held match point against her in the singles final of Houston. The European clay court circuit and the British grass court circuit were next on the schedule, along with the Federation Cup competition in Athens, Greece.

Judy, Margaret and Kerry Melville were favored to win the Federation Cup for Australia for a fourth time in 1969. They defeated France in the quarterfinals and Great Britain in the semifinals, setting up a championship match with the United States team of

Julie Heldman, Nancy Richey and Peaches Bartkowicz. At the number two singles spot, Nancy defeated Kerry, 6-4 6-3, and at number one singles Margaret was extended by Julie before she won, 6-1 8-6. The oppressive heat and persistent play of Julie had sapped all of Margaret's energy, and she was given only a forty-five minute break before the deciding doubles match was to start. Judy urged team captain Wayne Reid to take Margaret out of the doubles and replace her with Kerry, but he elected to go with the established pairing.¹⁹⁰ Nancy and Peaches focused their attack on Margaret and avoided Judy. They continually lobbed Margaret, who had lost the effectiveness on her overhead smashes, to score a surprising 6-4 6-4 win and take the Federation Cup.

As she did the previous year, Judy decided to play the British grass court circuit leading up to Wimbledon instead of the European clay court events. She reached the finals at Surbiton, losing in three sets to Mary Ann Eisel Curtis. At the Wills Open Championships in Bristol, she had a quarterfinal win over Ann Jones – who would win the Wimbledon singles title three weeks later – before getting eliminated in the semifinals by Margaret. Seeded eighth at Wimbledon, Judy collided with Billie Jean King in the quarterfinals and nearly beat her in a much closer match than the previous year's final. This time, Judy won the first set 6-4 and led 4-3 in the second, twice having points for a 5-3 lead. In the deciding set, Judy once again led 4-3 and had a point for 5-3, and later led 6-5 and four times was within two points of victory. In each crisis, Billie Jean raised the level of her game and played to Judy's backhand, scraping out a 4-6 7-5 8-6 win.

As the top-seeded team in the women's doubles, Judy and Margaret comfortably advanced through the draw when Billie Jean and Rosie Casals were unexpectedly defeated by Julie Heldman and Peaches Bartkowicz. In the final, they played the American pair of Patti Hogan and Peggy Michel, who had their chances to win a very close first set.

In the first set, we were up 4-3 and with all due respect to Patti and Peggy, they hadn't done what we'd done all the year, and Margaret says, "I'm getting cramps and I don't think I can serve," and I said "Smithy, you can't possibly be getting cramps, we've played seven games. There's no way on God's earth. It's only

because we're playing a final and you're a bit nervous. Don't even worry about it." And somehow we struggle through and we won the first set, and as soon as we won the first set it was easy for us. ¹⁹¹

-- *Judy Tegart Dalton, 2010*

After winning the women's doubles title with Margaret by the scores of 9-7 6-2, Judy played in the mixed doubles final with Tony Roche, losing 6-2 6-3 to contract professionals Ann Jones and Fred Stolle. After Wimbledon, Judy remained in England for two more grass court events before going to Hamburg for the German Championships. In another career highlight, Judy won the singles title with victories over the two best German players – Helga Hoesl and Helga Niessen – and she teamed with the latter to take the women's doubles. Judy completed a triple crown in Hamburg when she won the mixed doubles with American Marty Riessen. The following week, she achieved another triple crown, winning all three titles at the Austrian International in Kitzbuhel.

Judy skipped the U. S. summer tournament circuit in 1969, including the U. S. Open, to return to Australia and prepare for her November wedding to David Dalton, a metallurgist from England. While taking a three month break from the game, she told sportswriter Mike Gibson that she had won \$3000 during the course of four weeks on the British grass court circuit. "I'll be 31 next year and I'll be saddling up for another tour overseas," she told Gibson. "I was going to give the game away, but the way these open tournaments are going now, I just can't afford to. A girl would be mad. Girls used to go away on the tennis circuit to see the world. Now they can go away and if they're any good they can make a darn good living. In Berkeley, they just put on a tournament worth \$25,000 and you know what the players did? They turned up their noses at it. They reckoned it wasn't enough!" ¹⁹²

Although she was pleased with the financial opportunities in England and the United States, Judy was annoyed at the treatment that women tennis players were subject to in all of the Australian tournaments. At the Victorian Championships, for instance, the men were offered five times more prize money than the women; first prize for the men's

singles winner was \$3400 and first prize for the women's winner was only \$700. Judy complained that the low women's prize money was not enough to pay for players' expenses, and she considered not playing in them in protest.¹⁹³ She eventually played, and was glad she did; she and Margaret successfully defended their Australian Open women's doubles title, increasing Judy's collection of grand slam doubles titles to seven.

Judy and Margaret continued their doubles partnership through the first half of 1970, losing to Billie Jean and Rosie in the final of the Durban Open in Natal, South Africa and beating them 6-2 6-8 7-5 to win the British Hard Court Championships at Bournemouth. After winning the doubles title at the Surrey Hard Court Championships in Guildford, England, they went their separate ways for one week; Judy traveled to Germany to play in the Berlin International while Margaret remained in England to play a tournament at Hurlingham. They then planned to reunite, along with Kerry Melville, to represent Australia at the Federation Cup in Freiburg, Germany.

Kerry, however, injured her ankle while playing at Bournemouth and immediately withdrew from the team. She was replaced by her doubles partner, Karen Krantzcke, who was having the best singles results of her career. Two days before the start of the Federation Cup, Margaret lost to Joyce Williams at Hurlingham and decided to withdraw. Although she said she was tired and wanted to rest a persistent neck injury, "there were some mutterings among other members of the team," British sportswriter David Gray reported, "that an injured neck ought not to have prevented her from traveling to Freiburg and doing a non-playing captain's job." As a result, Judy became the team captain, and she subsequently handed over the job Alf Chave, a former Australian men's captain who had come to Freiburg to report on the matches for the *Melbourne Sun* and *Brisbane Telegraph*.¹⁹⁴

The Australian team won all four rounds of the competition without the loss of a match, although Judy was pushed to three sets all four times. In the semifinals against Great Britain, Karen defeated Winnie Shaw, 6-4 7-5, which put the pressure on Virginia Wade to keep her team in contention in the best-of-three match format. She built a 4-3 third set lead against Judy but could not maintain it, too often succumbing to the pressure of the situation by attempting low-percentage shots. "I don't think I've been as nervous

as this since I was five,” Virginia said while serving to save the match at 5-6. Judy was reassured by Alf Chave’s quiet courtside presence, and she remained calm and determined to not hit the ball any harder than necessary as she closed out the match 6-4 4-6 7-5.

In the championship round, Judy and Karen played the West German team, who were surprise winners over the Americans in the semifinals. Karen defeated Helga Hoesl, 6-2 6-3, and then retreated to the clubhouse of the Freiburg Tennis Club, too nervous to watch Judy’s critical match against Helga Niessen. As messengers brought Karen updates from the court, Judy lost the first set, won the second after being down 0-2, and was twice a service break down in the third. Resisting her tendency to go for winners on every shot, Judy patiently waited for the right time to attack and closed out the match, a forehand down the line setting up a winning shot for a 4-6 6-3 6-3 victory. “At the end,” David Gray wrote, “she gave a gigantic smile of satisfaction and kissed everyone within clutching distance.”¹⁹⁵

*We beat everybody, didn't lose a rubber. We had no reserves or anything, so it was pretty special.*¹⁹⁶

-- Judy Tegart Dalton, 2013

Judy and Margaret reunited at the French Open, getting upset by Francoise Durr and Gail Sherriff Chanfreau in the semifinals. At Wimbledon, Judy was inexplicably unseeded in the women’s singles, provoking commentary on the decision from Rex Bellamy of the *Times* and Frank Rostron of the *Daily Express*. She reached the fourth round in singles, losing to Federation Cup teammate Karen Krantzcke, who was seeded seventh. Judy had more misfortune in the women’s doubles when Margaret withdrew before their quarterfinal match; Margaret was playing on an injured ankle that required cortisone shots to alleviate the pain, and she decided to focus on her singles matches.

After Wimbledon, Judy remained in England to win the Welsh Open women’s doubles title with Rosie Casals. In singles play, she lost in all three grass court tournaments to Evonne Goolagong, a talented eighteen-year-old Australian who was

making her first overseas trip. Judy hoped to defend her title at the German Open in Hamburg in August, but Helga Hoesl eliminated her in the quarterfinals. At the Marlboro Open in South Orange, New Jersey, a grass court tournament held the week before the U. S. Open, Judy had an impressive win over Rosie Casals in the quarterfinals before losing to Kerry Melville. Margaret Court, having almost recovered from her ankle injury, had not played since her Wimbledon singles victory and planned to resume her doubles partnership with Judy at Forest Hills. In the meantime, Judy played doubles with former great Althea Gibson at South Orange and lost in the second round. Judy and Althea would soon have more in common than they realized at the time; Althea left the amateur ranks ten years earlier to play professional tennis with Karol Fageros on the Harlem Globetrotters tour, and four months later Judy would embark on a women's professional circuit that would revolutionize the sport.

Nancy Richey

For George Richey, falling out of an automobile at the age of fourteen and severely injuring his right arm was ultimately a blessing. A promising baseball player in the small west Texas town of San Angelo, George wanted to keep physically active during a lengthy convalescence and delved into tennis, playing left-handed. He immediately fell in love with the sport and became proficient enough to earn a tennis scholarship to the University of Texas. George married Betty Slaton in 1941, and one year later their first child, Nancy, was born. Another child, Cliff, was born in 1946. The Richey family relocated to Houston in 1947, where George became a teaching professional at the Houston Country Club. When time permitted, George competed in national tournaments for other teaching professionals, and he was ranked as high as number eight in 1952 by the Professional Lawn Tennis Association.¹⁹⁷

With Betty helping out as George's teaching assistant, the Richey children spent much of their free time at the club. Six-year old Nancy started hitting tennis balls with her father for fun, and by age ten she developed a serious interest in the game. She wanted more coaching from her father, and George agreed on one condition.

*He said if I wanted him to help me, I had to give 150 percent of myself, or he wouldn't do the deal.*¹⁹⁸

-- Nancy Richey, 2003

Willing to work hard, Nancy was soon progressing through local, state and national tournaments. She soon became one of the best juniors in Texas, and eventually in the nation. In 1957, she won the Western Girls' 15 singles in Cincinnati and finished the year at number one in the Texas women's singles rankings. The following year she reached the final of the River Oaks Invitation in Houston and the semifinals of the U. S. National Girls' 18 Championships in Philadelphia. In 1959, Nancy went one round further in Philadelphia, advancing to the final with wins over Justina Bricka, Carole Caldwell and Billie Jean Moffitt. In the championship, the final match of her junior career, Nancy lost to her main rival, Karen Hantze, who was the nation's top-ranked junior player.

During her teenage years, Nancy's toughest competitor was her younger brother. Cliff had tried tennis at the age of eight, quit the sport for awhile to play baseball, and then took it up again when he saw all the trophies that Nancy was winning. In their practice matches, with their father watching and coaching from the sidelines, Nancy consistently beat Cliff until she was seventeen. Although Cliff eventually got too strong for his sister to beat, they continued to be each others' favorite practice partners.

*Being four years older than Cliff, I had a decided advantage over him until he was about thirteen years old. Cliff started to beat me in our practice matches on a regular basis when he turned fifteen. However, we continued to be good for one another's games throughout our careers.*¹⁹⁹

-- Nancy Richey, 2009

Nancy's results in adult tournaments in 1960 signaled that she had become one of the nation's best women players. She defeated number-two ranked Darlene Hard in the quarterfinals of the Thunderbird Championships in Phoenix, Arizona, and then pushed

third-ranked Dorothy Knode to 6-4 11-9 in the semifinals of the U. S. National Clay Court Championships in River Forest, Illinois. At the Eastern Grass Court Championships in New Jersey, Nancy saved two match points in a second round victory against Darlene, just three weeks before the Californian would win the singles title at the U. S. National Championships. By the time Nancy arrived at Forest Hills she was seeded eighth, and she reached her allotted spot in the quarterfinals before losing to Maria Bueno. At the end of the year, she placed at number three in the national women's singles rankings.²⁰⁰

After scoring another win over Darlene at the Thunderbird Championships in Phoenix in 1961, this time in the final, Nancy made her first overseas trip. At the Kent Championships in Beckenham, England, she played a first round match against Rita Bentley in a constant drizzle. As both players slipped on the wet grass court, Nancy injured her back during the 7-5 11-9 loss. The following week – with her back getting massaged and taped – Nancy worked her way to the final of London Grass Court Championships at Queen's Club with three set wins over such experienced players as Lesley Turner of Australia and Christine Truman, winner of the 1959 French Championships and Great Britain's Wightman Cup heroine.

In the championship match, Nancy faced another player who was making her first overseas tour – Margaret Smith, the highly-touted Australian who had won her national championships earlier in the year. Margaret started the match by controlling the net and not losing a game; in the second set she suddenly became tentative and stayed on the baseline. Given more time to prepare, Nancy directed her shots to the backhand corner. After losing the second set, Margaret realized she would not win the match by trading groundstrokes with Nancy, and resumed her attack to complete a 6-0 4-6 6-2 win.

At Wimbledon the following week, Nancy and Margaret were disappointed to learn that they were drawn to play their first match against each other. Interest in a rematch of the Queen's Club final resulted in a Centre Court assignment. For Nancy, it was going to be difficult Wimbledon debut; she had not practiced for three days due to her back injury, she had never set foot on Wimbledon grass before, and she was pitted against the champion of Australia and the tournament's number-two seed. Margaret –

also making her Wimbledon debut – had her own concerns about the match as she and Nancy walked onto Centre Court on Tuesday evening.

*My knees were knocking. There was an awful empty feeling ... as I walked out alongside Nancy, the tension nearly killed me.*²⁰¹

-- Margaret Smith, 1965

Nancy began the match by attacking Margaret with booming drives to the corners and down the lines. She quickly took leads of 3-0 and 5-1, and within twenty minutes she won the set 6-3. Margaret looked unsettled as she struggled to find the range on her shots. She inched ahead 3-2 in the second set and closed it out at 6-3. As they battled to 3-all in the third set, Nancy's drives began to lose some of their sting. Margaret lost only one more game, finishing with a 3-6 6-3 6-4 victory.²⁰²

Nancy's back strain forced her to withdraw from the Wimbledon doubles, as well as the U. S. National Clay Court Championships, the U. S. National Championships at Forest Hills, and the U.S. Wightman Cup team. Since she played only six tournaments in 1961, she did not receive a national ranking from the USLTA at the end of the year. Instead, she was placed in the Insufficient Data listed, which consisted of players who did not fulfill the ranking requirements for the year. In its analysis of the rankings, *World Tennis* magazine noted that she would have been ranked somewhere in the nation's top three, along with Darlene Hard and Karen Hantze, had she not gotten injured and played a full schedule of tournaments.

Nancy finally returned to action at the U.S. National Hardcourt Championships in La Jolla, California on December 10, sweeping past three-time national clay court champion Dorothy Knode in the final with the loss of only two games. The following month, she successfully defended her title at the Phoenix Thunderbird Championships with a 6-3 7-5 final round win over her former junior rival, Karen Hantze Susman. In the spring of 1962, Nancy made her first appearance at the Caribe Hilton Championships in San Juan, Puerto Rico, one of the stops on the popular Caribbean circuit. After losing a

very close quarterfinal match to Yola Ramirez, the best women's player in Mexico, Nancy returned to Texas to prepare for the upcoming grass court events in England.

A three-set third-round loss to Judy Tegart at the Northern Championships in Manchester, England was followed by a disappointing Wightman Cup debut one week later. Nancy was assigned the number three singles position, and she was expected to defeat Deidre Catt, since she had done so the previous year at Queen's Club. By the time their match was played on the second day of the competition, the United States had clinched the team victory by winning four matches in the best-of-seven match format. Nancy still wanted to win her match, but Deidre played better than she did the previous year and won 6-1 7-5. Reporting for *World Tennis*, Mary Hardwick observed that "Deidre Catt displayed the best tennis of all the British as she outplayed Nancy Richey, who so far has failed to show anything like the form she produced in England in 1961."²⁰³

More disappointments followed in the next two tournaments. At Queen's Club, Nancy lost in the quarterfinals to Rita Bentley in three sets, prompting British reporter Linda Timms to note that Nancy "does not look quite so severe or so certain this year."²⁰⁴ At Wimbledon, her 11-9 10-8 opening round win over U. S. number ten Donna Floyd did not impress *World Tennis* reporter Mary Hardwick, who felt that Nancy "seems to have lost that spark. Her game is only mechanical. It lacks variety."²⁰⁵ In the third round she met Deidre Catt for a rematch of their Wightman Cup encounter two weeks earlier. Nancy started well and led 4-1 in the first set before Deidre Catt slowed the pace by hitting drop shots and low returns. Not flexible enough to adapt to these tactics, Nancy's groundstrokes became less effective and Deidre won the match, 7-5 8-6.

Back home in the United States, Nancy reached the semifinals of the U. S. National Clay Court Championships in River Forest, Illinois and took the first set against Carole Caldwell, the ninth-ranked American woman. Carole, an equally tenacious baseline player, fought back to win the next two sets and finish the match at 2-6 7-5 6-3. Nancy's final tournament of the year was the U. S. National Championships, where she struggled in the first round against Andria Miller, comfortably defeated Tory Fretz in straight sets, and then lost to Donna Floyd – whom she had beaten at Wimbledon – by the

scores of 4-6 6-3 7-5. Her season ended with a national ranking of number six in women's singles, made even more disappointing by contracting mononucleosis in October.²⁰⁶

Nancy returned to competition at one of her favorite tournaments, the Phoenix Thunderbird Championships in January 1963. She had a semifinal win over Rosemary Casals, a 14-year old from San Francisco who had earlier scored an upset over the veteran Yola Ramirez Ochoa, 6-3, 3-6, 10-8. Nancy, aware of her opponent's ability, did not underestimate Rosie and defeated the youngster 6-2, 6-2. In the other half of the draw, second-seeded Karen Hantze Susman was beaten by Vicki Palmer, the 1961 and 1962 U.S. National Girls' 18. In their first career meeting, Nancy outlasted Vicki in grueling baseline duel, 8-6 8-6, to win her second Phoenix Thunderbird title.

Another tournament victory came three months later, at the Dallas Invitational in April 1963, with 6-3 7-5 victory over Vicki in the final. Nancy should have won the Tulsa Tennis Club Invitational in May, easily advancing to the final where she took the first set from Yola Ramirez Ochoa. She then inexplicably lost twelve of the next thirteen games, giving Yola a 4-6 6-0 6-1 win. Nancy received a small amount of consolation by winning the doubles title with Patsy Rippey, defeating Yola and Carol Johnson 6-4 6-1.

Nancy did not play overseas in the summer of 1963, opting to stay home and prepare for the American clay court and grass court tournaments. At the 1963 Western Championships in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, she had a tough match in the semifinals against Gwyn Thomas, a steady player who pushed Nancy to three sets at the U. S. National Clay Court Championships one earlier. In Milwaukee, Nancy won the first set against Gwyn, 6-2, and had to struggle to finish off the match in the second set, 13-11. Nancy's 6-2 7-5 win over Vicki Palmer in the final – their first clay court encounter – was good preparation for the following week's U. S. National Clay Court Championships in River Forest, Illinois.

Unseeded at River Forest, Nancy lost only five games in her first two matches. Her quarterfinal opponent was number-four seed and defending champion Donna Fales, who had won their previous meeting in three sets at Forest Hills one year earlier. Nancy won a close first set, 11-9, and then lost only one game after that. A semifinal win over

Judy Alvarez, the nation's tenth-ranked player, put Nancy in her first national clay court final. Her opponent once again was Vicki Palmer, who had earlier eliminated Billie Jean Moffitt and Gwyn Thomas. In a match that lasted only 36 minutes, Nancy lost only two games to Vicki, winning 6-1, 6-1.²⁰⁷

From the clay courts of the River Forest Tennis Club in Illinois, Nancy traveled to South Orange, New Jersey for the Eastern Grass Court Championships. A third-round win over Justina Bricka, a serve-and-volley player, gave her good preparation for two-time Wimbledon champion Maria Bueno in the quarterfinals. Three years earlier at Forest Hills, Maria exposed Nancy's lack of mobility; this time, Nancy won with surprising ease, 6-3 6-1. In the semifinals, she faced Margaret Smith for the first time since their three-set encounter at Wimbledon in 1961. Nancy held set point in the first set before Margaret took control and finished off the match, 9-7 6-2.

At the 1963 Wightman Cup competition, played on clay courts at the Cleveland Skating Club, Nancy was once again the number-three singles player. She was paired against Deidre Catt, who had spoiled Nancy's Wightman Cup debut in England the year before. Their match was played on the second day of the competition, after the U. S. team took a 2-1 lead over the British. Deidre took a 4-1 lead in the first set and had a point for 5-1, but Nancy ran down every shot and turned many of them into winners. Allison Danzig of the *New York Times* reported that the two players "put on a slugfest of savage, unbelievably accurate hitting from the back of the court worthy of a Helen Wills and a Maureen Connolly. Long after the winner of the cup has been forgotten, the gallery of 1,800 here will remember the thrilling exposition of classic groundstrokes put on by Miss Richey and Miss Catt. From forehand and backhand they hammered the ball with a length, velocity and control nothing short of astonishing in rally after rally and game after game."²⁰⁸ Nancy leveled the set at 4-4 and fought off three set points when serving at 4-5 love-40. The score climbed to 12-12, and Nancy finally won two consecutive games to take the first set 14-12. "The fight and stamina of the two girls under punishment was beyond belief," Danzig wrote, and the battle continued until 3-3 in the second set. Nancy then pulled away from her opponent, losing only four points in the last three games of the

set. After a rest, Nancy and Donna Floyd Fales defeated Deidre and Elizabeth Starkie by the scores of 6-4 6-8 6-2, giving the United States a 6-1 victory over the British.

Nancy's results in 1963 earned her a number five seeding at the U. S. National Championships at Forest Hills, and she easily defeated her first four opponents to set up a quarterfinal meeting with fourth-seeded Maria Bueno. It had rained on the morning of the match, and the slippery court made the footing more difficult for Nancy, who remained on the baseline, than it did for Maria, who came forward to the net at every opportunity. "The Texan is not versatile enough to play a good match on a sloppy court," Julie Heldman observed in an article for *World Tennis*. "Her great groundstrokes failed her and she was too unsure of herself to go to net. She has the best approach shots in the game, but it would be hard to picture her leaping backwards for lobs like Smith or tearing across the court for a volley like Hard. It is not her net game but rather her lack of mobility at the barrier that keeps her from being a dangerous net player."²⁰⁹

Nancy started 1964 very strongly, winning tournaments in Dallas, San Juan, Miami Beach, St. Petersburg and Dallas. Her overseas tour had respectable results, reaching the semifinals of the British Hard Court Championships at Bournemouth, in which she fought a losing battle with Norma Baylon of Argentina, 4-6 12-10 10-8. At the Italian Championships, Nancy lost to Lesley Turner of Australia in the quarterfinals, 8-6 8-6, in a match that lasted for hours. "Nancy was a curiosity to the Italians," Gloria Butler reported in *World Tennis*. "They are very woman conscious, and they could just not understand how such a pretty girl could ruin herself by wearing unbecoming clothes. The face is adorable, but she wears a floppy hat which hides it, a T-shirt, and long Bermuda shorts which emphasize the wrong part of her anatomy. She was a source of dismay to her admirers. 'Che peccato – e una bella bambina,' they exclaimed, then shrugged uncomprehendingly."²¹⁰

In her first appearance at the French Championships in Paris, Nancy reached the fourth round and easily won the opening set from Helga Schultze of West Germany. Helga then changed her strategy, drop-shotting Nancy, lobbing over her head, and then drop-shotting again to win the next two sets, 6-3 6-3. Nancy's brother, Cliff, was making his first overseas trip and the siblings reached the quarterfinals of the mixed doubles,

beating the tough Australian team of Judy Tegart and Tony Roche in the third round before losing in the quarterfinals. In the Wightman Cup competition, played on grass at the All England Club, Nancy had wins over Deidre Catt and Ann Jones, helping the U. S. team to a 5-2 win over the British. A quarterfinal finish at Wimbledon, losing to Lesley Turner by the score of 6-3 6-4, concluded her overseas tour.

Nancy successfully defended her title at the U. S. National Clay Court Championships in River Forest, Illinois, defeating Carole Caldwell Graeber 6-2 6-1 in temperatures that reached 110 degrees on the court. At the Eastern Grass Court Championships in South Orange, New Jersey, she defeated Karen Hantze Susman in the semifinals before having her first career loss to Billie Jean Moffitt, losing in the final 7-5 3-6 8-6. Nancy and Carole began a successful doubles partnership in 1964, winning the title at the national clay court tournament in River Forest and reaching the final at South Orange, losing in three sets to Billie Jean and Karen. Before they reached the final, Nancy and Carole need eighty-one games to get past Justina Bricka and Carol Hanks in the semifinals, losing the first set before winning by the score of 31-33 6-1 6-4 in the longest women's doubles match ever played.

Two weeks before the U. S. National Championships, Nancy won the singles title at the Piping Rock Invitation in Locust Valley, New York, with wins over Karen Hantze Susman and Billie Jean Moffitt. At Forest Hills, she surprised Billie Jean in the quarterfinals by unveiling an aggressive net attack, sometimes even coming forward after serving. She won the first set 6-4, and when Billie Jean double-faulted to lose her serve while leading 2-1, Nancy dominated the rest of the match with her penetrating groundstrokes and decisive volleys. In the semifinals, Nancy allowed only two games in the first set to her doubles partner Carole Caldwell Graebner, who determinedly ran down every shot. Carole took early leads the second set, which she eventually won 9-7. In the deciding set, Nancy led 4-2 before Carole evened the score at 4-4. Driving her shots deep into the court and finishing the points with winning volleys, Carole recognized that Nancy had suddenly lost her nerve and she seized the next two games to finish the match.²¹¹

The ranking season in the United States traditionally ended each year on September 30, and the USLTA rewarded Nancy for her consistent results by giving her the nation's top ranking in women's singles. Before the calendar year was finished, Nancy won the National Invitation Tournament in Midland, Texas in October with a final-round win over Karen Hantze Susman. In November, she played in the Championships of South America in Buenos Aires, Argentina and beat the two best players on the continent. In the semifinals, Nancy eliminated Norma Baylon of Argentina, 6-2 3-6 6-3, and in the final she registered one of the biggest upsets of the year by beating Maria Bueno, the reigning Wimbledon and Forest Hills champion, by the score of 4-6 6-2 6-4. Maria was hampered by legs cramps in the third set, the result of chasing Nancy's corner-to-corner shots.

A surprising loss to Justina Bricka in the semifinals of the Phoenix Thunderbird Championships in March 1965 was followed by three of the best weeks of Nancy's career. On the Caribbean circuit, she defeated Lesley Turner and Margaret Smith in the semifinals and finals of three successive tournaments. The final of the Caribe Hilton Invitation in San Juan was especially thrilling; in a two-hour baseline duel played in 100 degree weather, Margaret held match point in the third set before Nancy prevailed 6-8 6-4 9-7.

On her overseas tour in the spring and summer of 1965, Nancy reached the final of the Italian Championships in Rome, falling in three sets to Maria Bueno's low slices and drop shots. After her 6-1 1-6 6-3 victory, Maria told reporters she could "not understand why Nancy does not attack. Playing the way she does, she will never win any major tournaments."²¹² Nancy actually had a chance to win the French Championships in Paris the following week, winning her first four matches in straight sets. With her 3-0 record for the year against Margaret Smith, Nancy must have felt confident going into her semifinal match. Margaret, however, won 7-5 6-4 and then lost in the final to Lesley Turner, another player whom Nancy had easily defeated three times earlier in the year. A win at the West of England Championships in Bristol, over a weak field, was Nancy's preparation for the grass courts at Wimbledon, where she lost in the quarterfinals to British favorite Christine Truman on Centre Court by the score of 6-4 1-6 7-5.

Another win at the Western Championships in Milwaukee, a clay court title she won two years earlier, was Nancy's tune-up for the U. S. National Clay Court Championships in River Forest, Illinois. In the final, she faced a tough opponent in eighteen-year-old Julie Heldman, and the match was made even more difficult since the men's final – in which Nancy's brother Cliff played against Dennis Ralston – was played at the same time. "For the first time in history," Mary Hardwick reported in *World Tennis*, "a brother and sister were playing in the finals of a National Championship on adjacent courts at the same moment. The ladies' singles was tense and exciting, and the fact that the two matches were played side by side was most disconcerting for both players and gallery. Cliff just managed to win the set 6-4. From then on Cliff seemed to be disturbed and tense, perhaps because his mind was on the women's final in which his sister came close to losing."²¹³ In what Mary Hardwick called the best women's singles final seen at River Forest in the past twenty years, Julie won the first set and led 7-6 in the third. Nancy had to call on all her experience to prevail 5-7 6-3 9-7 and win her third straight national clay court title.

After teaming with Billie Jean Moffitt, Karen Susman and Carole Graebner to win the Wightman Cup in Cleveland in August, Nancy won her first grand slam title at the U. S. National Doubles Championships, played at the Longwood Cricket Club in Chestnut Hills, Massachusetts. In the final, Nancy and Carole posted a 6-4 6-4 win over Billie Jean and Karen, ensuring their placement at the top of the national women's doubles rankings for the year. At the U. S. National Championships one week later, Nancy reached the semifinals of a major singles tournament and was once again beaten by Margaret Smith.

Nancy's semifinal finishes at Paris and Forest Hills earned her a *World Tennis* world ranking of number three, behind Margaret Smith and Maria Bueno. The USLTA ranking committee, however, decided to place her at number two in the nation, behind recently-married Billie Jean Moffitt King, in its tentative rankings for 1965. At the organization's annual meeting in Palm Beach, Florida – where the rankings were voted on and finalized – Al Bumann, representing the USLTA Texas section, proposed that Nancy deserved the top ranking ahead of Billie Jean. After nobody in the room seconded

his motion, Bumann suggested that Nancy and Billie Jean be placed jointly at number one. The motion was put to a proxy vote (each of the sixteen USLTA sections had a representative at the annual meeting, and these representatives had voting strength based on the number of USLTA members in their respective sections), and approximately 51,000 votes favored the Bumann proposal and 49,000 votes rejected it. In a controversial and unprecedented move, the USLTA had no choice but to co-rank Nancy and Billie Jean at number one.²¹⁴

At first, the compromise seemed to be a fair one, since Nancy and Billie Jean had not played each other in singles during the year and had comparable results. Billie Jean reached the semifinals of Wimbledon and the final of Forest Hills, she won six other smaller tournaments in the United States, and she had two wins over Ann Jones, two wins over Lesley Turner, and one win over Maria Bueno. Nancy reached the final of the Italian Championships and the semifinals of the French Championships and Forest Hills, she won the U. S. National Indoor and U. S. National Clay Court titles along with seven other tournaments, and she had three wins over Margaret Smith, three wins over Lesley Turner and one over Maria Bueno.

Almost immediately, however, the USLTA decision to have Nancy and Billie Jean share the top ranking was questioned and ridiculed. Some critics felt that certain USLTA officials wanted to punish Billie Jean for not playing in their clay court events, a surface she did not care for. Those who felt that Nancy solely deserved the top national ranking argued that the USLTA placed greater weight on the results from the summer grass court tournaments leading up to Forest Hills, three of which were won by Billie Jean – and at which Nancy did not play. The decision, however, was final and the picture of both players was placed on the cover of the forthcoming USLTA Yearbook and Guide.²¹⁵

In late 1965, the Lawn Tennis Association of Australia invited Nancy, Cliff, Carole Graebner, Arthur Ashe and Dennis Ralston to play in five of its state tournaments and its national championships. Before joining the other Americans in Sydney for the New South Wales Championships, Nancy flew to Buenos Aires, where she defended her title at the South American Championships with a straight set win over Norma Baylon in

the final. The following week at Sydney, Nancy lost in the singles final to Margaret Smith, 6-2 6-2. She reached the final at the Victorian Championships two weeks later, losing again in three sets, but received some consolation when she and Carole took the doubles title over Margaret and Lesley Turner.

Disaster struck three weeks later, when Nancy played in the Western Australian Championships in Perth in early January 1966. During the course of a 6-3 5-7 8-6 semifinal win over Judy Tegart, Nancy injured her left knee.²¹⁶ She immediately withdrew from the doubles event, and was only able to win four games in the following day's singles final against Margaret. The next week, at the Tasmanian Championships in Hobart, Nancy opted to rest her knee and played only doubles, winning the women's title with Carole and the mixed doubles with Tom Okker.

Nancy hoped her knee would hold up for the duration of the Australian National Championships in Melbourne, and she advanced without much trouble to the singles semifinals. She won the women's doubles title with Carole over Margaret and Lesley by the scores of 6-4 7-5, but aggravated the injury in the second set. With her knee taped, Nancy struggled past Kerry Melville in the following day's singles semifinal. In a great deal of pain after the match, a specialist examined her knee and determined the cartilage was torn. Nancy then made her decision to default the final of the Australian National Championships to Margaret and return home to Texas for treatment.²¹⁷

Returning to action four months later, Nancy won the Masters Invitation in St. Petersburg and the Atlanta Invitation, followed by a loss to Patti Hogan in the quarterfinals of the U. S. National Hard Court Championships in LaJolla, California. She withdrew from the Italian Championships due to the persistent knee injury, preferring to rest it for the upcoming French Championships. In Paris, Nancy was extended to three sets on three occasions, and in the semifinals she beat a below-form Margaret Smith. "It was painful to watch," Gloria Butler wrote for *World Tennis*. "Margaret double faulted, hit balls wildly and came in on the wrong shots ... Nancy, on the other hand, has never played better ... She is not the exactly the kind of opponent to have across the net when you are having a bad day."²¹⁸ Nancy lost only four games to Margaret, and she won only as many in the final against Ann Jones. Despite the lopsided score, the

championship match was actually quite competitive and featured lengthy baseline rallies. Ann had an advantage thanks to her effective slices and drop shots, a strategy that prevented Nancy from establishing a rhythm on her groundstrokes.

Nancy lost to Ann twice more during the summer, both times on English grass, in the Wightman Cup and in the quarterfinals of Wimbledon. She won the third grand slam title of her career with new partner Maria Bueno, winning the women's doubles at Wimbledon with a 6-3 4-6 6-4 victory over Margaret Smith and Judy Tegart. "It was Nancy who continually held the match together, playing half-volleys and volleys she had never attempted before," Mary Hardwick reported in *World Tennis*. "She played with abandon and gusto and without the eyeshade. If only she would perform like this in singles, she would win many more matches she now loses."²¹⁹ Nancy and Maria were also given some help from Margaret's notoriously suspect nerves; at 4-4 in the third set, the Australian played tentatively and lost her serve, and Maria held serve in the following game to close out the match.

In the summer of 1966 the Richey family, who were living in Dallas, moved back to San Angelo. Nancy's father, George, resigned his position as the teaching professional at the Brook Hollow Club and signed a three-year contract with real estate developer Ted Brown, agreeing to teach tennis at the Brown's newly-built College Hills Swim and Racquet Club. Brown also donated two residential lots in the College Hills subdivision to the Richey family; a new home was built for them at cost on one of the lots, and a private tennis court was built for them on the other.²²⁰

While George was coordinating the move back to San Angelo, Nancy resumed her domination of the U. S. summer clay court tournaments. She defended her singles title at the Western Championships in Indianapolis, losing only six games during the course of four matches, and she won her fourth consecutive U. S. National Clay Court Championships title in Milwaukee with a 6-2 6-2 final round win over Stephanie DeFina. Nancy and Stephanie lost in the doubles semifinal to the South African team of Esme Emanuel and Marvina Godwin. It was just a temporary setback in doubles; one month later, Nancy and Maria Bueno partnered again for their second major doubles title of the

year, winning the U. S. National Doubles Championships over Billie Jean King and Rosie Casals in straight sets.

Going into the 1966 U. S. National Championships at Forest Hills, Nancy and Billie Jean had not played each other in singles for two years. In the wake of the controversial USLTA vote to co-rank them at number-one in the national rankings, many people were eager to see the matter settled in their next match. One interested follower was Clark Graebner, the nation's thirteenth-ranked men's singles player and husband of Carole. "Women's tennis is awful. I can't stand it," he told Boston sportswriter Bud Collins, "But if those two play each other at Forest Hills, I'd walk from my house in Cleveland to New York to watch that match. They'll be going at each other with sledgehammers."²²¹

Both players were still resentful about sharing the top USLTA ranking. "I want to play her so bad and settle this thing," Billie Jean told Collins. "And where has Nancy been this summer? The same place she was last year – avoiding me. She doesn't like grass, so she won't risk her record by playing a single tournament until Forest Hills. It's worked out fine for her. She got the number one ranking with me."²²² Nancy was indignant about Billie Jean's claim. "It's silly to say I'm avoiding her," she said. "To get ready for Forest Hills, I rest and just do some practicing. I need to rest at this time of the year. In May, I went to her home territory to play in the U. S. Hard Courts. I intended to face her there, but I was upset by Patti Hogan and Billie won the tournament. Where was she when I was winning the U. S. Clay Courts in Milwaukee? I understand she was playing an exhibition in Louisville. Is she afraid to play me on clay? ... Nobody wants to settle it more than I do. I think I'm better. I've beaten her six out of the seven times we've played."²²³

The showdown between Nancy and Billie Jean at Forest Hills in 1966 never happened. Walking onto the court for her first-round match with Kerry Melville, a nineteen-year-old Australian who was making her first overseas tour, Billie Jean noticed that the chair umpire was Al Bumann, the tennis official from Texas who proposed the USLTA co-ranking one year earlier. Billie Jean asked to have Baumann replaced, and when her request was denied, she played the match in anger and distraction.²²⁴ Kerry

won 6-4 6-4 and then advanced to the semifinals, she was taken out by Nancy in straight sets.

Playing in her second major singles final of the year, Nancy battled Maria Bueno evenly for the first six games. At 3-3, Maria raised her level of play and lost only one more game, winning her fourth singles title at Forest Hills by the score of 6-3 6-1.

At the end of the ranking year, there was no argument as to who was the nation's top-ranked women's singles player. Despite her first-round loss at Forest Hills, Billie Jean was ranked number one based on her Wimbledon triumph over Maria and her wins at the U. S. National Indoor Championships and the U. S. National Hard Court Championships. Nancy's record for the year, highlighted by runnerup finishes at Paris and Forest Hills, as well as her U. S. National Clay Court title, firmly put her in second.

Nancy was once again invited to play on the Australian circuit in late 1966 and early 1967, and before traveling to Australia, she went to Buenos Aires to defend her title at the South American Championships. The disappointment of a three-set loss in the final to Norma Baylon continued with her on the Australian tour, where she lost to Judy Tegart in the third round of the Victorian Championships in Melbourne, to Kerry Melville in the semifinals of the South Australian Championships in Adelaide, and to Francoise Durr in the semifinals of the Western Australian Championships in Perth. Nancy broke her slump when she took the title at the Tasmanian Championships in Hobart, beating three of Australia's top five players – Karen Krantzcke, Judy Tegart and Lesley Turner.

In a field that did not include any of the world's top four players – Billie Jean King, Maria Bueno, and Ann Jones did make the trip to Australia, and Margaret Smith retired a few months earlier to open a dress shop in Perth and get married to Barry Court – Nancy made the best of her opportunities at the Australian National Championships in Adelaide in late January 1967. She defeated relatively obscure players in her first three matches, losing only a total of eleven games, and then scored a 6-4 6-1 semifinal win over Kerry Melville and a 6-1 6-4 victory over Lesley Turner to win her first major singles title. “The American girl tackled this match just as an Australian woodcutter would compete for the world's championships,” former Australian champion Adrian

Quist wrote for *World Tennis*. “Slowly and deliberately she pounded her drives, first to one corner, then to the other, just as the axeman chops his way through the logs. Lesley ran from side to side. The second set was close but, slowly, the precision shot-making of Richey broke up the Australian girl’s game. The only emotion displayed by either player was the quaint skip of joy when she threw her racket in the air as the last shot flew over the baseline ... Nancy is not yet a great player. She is studied and methodical, something like a wound-up clock. Her groundstrokes are solid and she eliminates errors but she does not have fast reflexes or lightning racket work. On the credit side, Nancy never quits and it takes a mighty good shot and a lot of bustling to throw her out of gear. Margaret Smith could do it, but Margaret is not around now and so Nancy’s precision and shot-making could win a few more big titles this year.”²²⁵

After winning her first grand slam singles title, Nancy was on track to have one of the best years of her career in 1967. For the first time in six years, however, she decided to skip the European clay court season and the French Championships – where she would have been one of the favorites to win the title – and opted to play in the Thunderbird Championships in Phoenix and the Tulsa Tennis Club Invitation in Oklahoma, which she won. Playing at the London Grass Court Championships at Queen’s Club in preparation for Wimbledon, Nancy had another fine tournament. As she did in Australia five months earlier, she defeated Lesley Turner and Kerry Melville on her way to the title. Wimbledon was a disappointment for Nancy; she was upset by Mary Ann Eisel in the fourth round, and she and Maria did not successfully their doubles title, losing in the final to Billie Jean King and Rosie Casals in three sets.

On the U. S. summer clay circuit, Nancy won her fourth Western Championships title with a 6-4 6-0 win over Kerry Melville and looked forward to the following week’s U. S. National Clay Court Championships in Milwaukee. Billie Jean was also entered in the tournament, and the long-awaited encounter between the two rivals – they had not played each other in singles for three years – was a promoter’s dream. Billie Jean was the top seed in Milwaukee, based on her national ranking and recent Wimbledon victory; Nancy was seeded second. They were expected to meet in the final, perhaps the most eagerly anticipated women’s match since Helen Wills played Suzanne Lenglen in 1926.

Nancy effortlessly worked her way through the draw, losing only seven games in her first three matches and getting tested slightly in her 6-1 7-5 semifinal victory over Kerry Melville. In the other half of the draw, Billie Jean also advanced easily past her first three opponents. Against her good friend and doubles partner Rosie Casals in the semifinals, Billie Jean came up flat. She committed numerous double faults and was unable to control her groundstrokes, losing 6-4 6-4. Nancy was disappointed with the result, convinced that Billie Jean lost on purpose to avoid a confrontation with her on clay. The next day, Nancy defeated Rosie by the scores of 6-2 6-3 for her fifth consecutive national clay court title.

All of the best American women players – Nancy, Billie Jean, Rosie, Carole Graebner and Mary Ann Eisel – played on the U. S. Wightman Cup team against Great Britain in Cleveland, Ohio, the following week. During the course of a 6-1 team victory, played on the fast concrete court hard court at Harold T. Clark Stadium, Nancy won both of her singles matches. She thoroughly dominated Ann Jones, 6-3 6-2, and was extended to three sets by Virginia Wade the following day. Virginia won the first set, served for the match at 5-4 in the second set, and let 2-1 in the third set. Stretching wide for a return, Nancy strained her back and was unable to generate any power on her serve. Virginia, unsure of herself after missing so many opportunities, was not able to take advantage of her opponent's injury, and Nancy courageously held on for a 3-6 8-6 6-2 victory.

The back injury was severe, and it forced Nancy to withdraw from the U. S. National Championships at Forest Hills. She spent the next several weeks rehabilitating her back, often sitting in a home traction kit that was attached to a clothesline pole at the family home in San Angelo. The injury prevented Nancy from doing any traveling, and she was unable to attend her brother Cliff's wedding in Houston in August. She finally felt well enough to play a local tournament in late September, winning the Permian Basin Invitation with close matches against Emily Burrer and Patsy Rippy, two players she normally would have had no problems with.

Nancy's uncertain physical condition took her out of the contention for a professional contract with George MacCall. In late 1967, MacCall had taken over the

floundering men's professional tour, and he wanted to add four women to his roster when the series resumed in the spring of 1968. MacCall signed Billie Jean King and Ann Jones to professional contracts, and he also hoped to get Margaret Court, who planned to end her retirement and return to the game. Margaret, however, indicated she would play on the tour only if she received more money than Billie Jean. MacCall declined, and he began looking for other players. Not sure if Nancy's back could remain healthy throughout the course of demanding professional tour, MacCall passed on her and eventually signed Francoise Durr and Rosie Casals.

Eager to get regain her match toughness, Nancy decided to play the entire Caribbean circuit for the first time in her career. She defeated Judy Tegart, Ann Jones and Lesley Turner Bowrey to win in Barranquilla, Colombia, lost to Judy in the quarterfinals of Caracas, Venezuela, and scored another win over Judy to win the tournament in Curacao, Netherlands Antilles. She then traveled to New York City to play in the Garden Challenge at Madison Square Garden, an amateur tournament for men and women that featured Arthur Ashe, Stan Smith, and soon-to-be professionals Roy Emerson, Ann Jones and Billie Jean King. After having little trouble in their first two matches, Nancy and Billie Jean arrived in the semifinals – their first singles match against each other in almost four years.

*I was unbelievably tense. I wanted to beat her so badly I could taste it. We played so rarely that every time we did meet, the importance of the match was blown way out of proportion by both of us.*²²⁶

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

More than ten thousand fans were in the stands on the evening of Friday, March 29, eager for the conclusion of the Arthur Ashe-Clark Graebner semifinal so that the featured women's match could start. Billie Jean started tentatively, probing cautiously and losing her serve in the third game as a result. Trailing 3-4 in the first set, she hit her open palm with her racket strings, clenched her teeth, and as tennis journalist Richard Evans reported, she "swung round to face Nancy's service in the eighth game and let the

real Billie Jean off the leash.” She broke service twice to take the first set, 6-4, and continued her assault to build a seemingly insurmountable 5-1 lead in the second.²²⁷

Serving for the match, Billie Jean was broken and lost the next game to narrow her lead to 5-3. She served for the match one more time, playing aggressively and finally arriving at match point. Nancy hit a short return, from which Billie Jean hit a strong approach shot and positioned herself at the net for a final winning volley.

She sent up a weak little lob just barely to my backhand side. Indecision. First I thought I'd play it safe and let it bounce. Then I figured no, I'll take it as a high backhand volley. Finally I decided to move around it and put the damned thing away with a regular forehand overhead. But by the time I'd finished my mental gymnastics, the ball had dropped too low for me to do anything with it; I went for it awkwardly – and smashed it about a foot and a half long.²²⁸

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Billie Jean's miscalculation brought the score to deuce and lifted Nancy's confidence. Pounding the ball deeply into the corners and not letting any shots get past her, Nancy took the game plus three more, winning the set 7-5. Mentally and physically spent, Billie Jean's game totally collapsed as the spectators watched in amazement.

Nancy continued her run in the third set, quickly reaching 5-0 and serving for the match. On her first match point, Nancy served to Billie Jean's backhand, and when the return landed weakly in the net she tossed her racquet over her head in celebration. It was one of the most remarkable comebacks in tennis history; from her second set deficit of 1-5, Nancy won twelve consecutive games against the world's number-one player, the equivalent of winning 6-0 6-0.²²⁹

In the following day's final, Nancy won the Garden Challenge trophy with a 7-5 7-5 win over Judy Tegart. She then resumed her tour of the Caribbean circuit, winning the tournaments in San Juan, St. Petersburg and Houston. Nancy, Mary Ann Eisel and Kathy Harter were named to the U. S. Federation Cup team, with matches to be played in Paris one week before the French Open.

Traveling to France in the spring of 1968, however, proved to be challenging. In early May, demonstrations were held in Paris to protest the expulsion of students from two universities. The movement gained momentum and expanded, and by the end of the month nearly two-thirds of the nation's workers went on strike, demanding a new government and higher wages. As the country teetered on the brink of civil war, many services and goods were suspended, including airline travel, gasoline, laundries, telephone lines and trash collection.

*The American team gathered in Brussels for a day or two and took a bus into Paris. Cliff was playing a tournament in Sardinia the week we were playing Fed Cup. He flew from there to Luxembourg and hired a taxi with two or three other guys for one hundred dollars and got into Paris that way. I moved hotels three times trying to get closer to Roland Garros as the official cars were being given gas but needed the players as close to the courts as possible. The garbage was stacked everywhere and the city really came to a standstill. The other thing I remember was that there was no phone service out of Paris during that three week period I was there.*²³⁰

-- Nancy Richey, 2008

Although the American team was unexpectedly defeated in the Federation Cup semifinals by the Netherlands, the competition was good preparation for the upcoming French Open. Despite the lack of transportation in Paris, spectators flocked to Roland Garros in record numbers, many of them walking or riding bicycles. With so much turmoil in the city, the tournament became a refuge for Parisians – a “port in the storm,” as Rex Bellamy of the *London Times* called it.²³¹ It was the world's first major open championship, with amateurs and professionals playing each other, and the historical significance was embraced by spectators. All of the professionals from George MacCall's troupe were entered, including Rod Laver, Ken Rosewall, Pancho Gonzalez, Billie Jean King and Ann Jones, and fans were eager to see how the world's leading amateurs would do against them.

Nancy had no problems in her first two matches, but she had to fight off a match point against Karen Krantzcke in the third round and was then tested in the first two sets against Galina Baksheyeva of the Soviet Union before prevailing 10-8 4-6 6-1. In the quarterfinals, Nancy allowed Elena Subirats of Mexico only one game, setting up another semifinal encounter with top-seeded Billie Jean King. Against Maria Bueno the quarterfinals, Billie Jean patiently rallied from the baseline, and she tried the same strategy against Nancy. Her drop shots and lobs were good enough to win the first set at 6-2, but in the process she had run so much she was starting to get tired. Nancy, in contrast, was just hitting her stride, and she won the second set, 6-3. The third set went to 4-4, and at that phase of the match Nancy unveiled an unexpected tactic.

Our semifinal match went to 4-4 in the third and was a very tough fight. I came into the net at that stage, which surprised her. Cliff did some orchestrating from the sidelines. He felt I needed to be more aggressive at 4-4 and make her come up with some passing shots when she was out on her feet tired. Cliff was a good tactician. I know it wasn't supposed to be done but it happened all the time and there was no real rule against it back then. It was kind of like the wild west!²³²
 -- Nancy Richey, 2008

Nancy's win over Billie Jean put her in the final against Ann Jones, a rematch of the championship match from two years earlier. Ann took a commanding lead by hitting a variety of spins to Nancy's backhand, reaching set point at 5-1. As it would later transpire, it was the most critical point of the entire match. Nancy saved the set point with a forehand winner, and then leveled at 5-5. Ann used all her energy to win two games for the set and climb ahead 4-2 in the second, but by that time her fatigue was evident.

I sensed that Nancy needed to do something different than her usual game. I also felt like Ann was getting tired ... I told Nancy from the stands to do some things she wouldn't ordinarily have done, like coming to the net more. I had to keep

*telling her to attack. I knew I would have to stay with her so she wouldn't fall back into what was comfortable ... I was living and dying with every point. I knew what the big, important points were.*²³³

-- *Cliff Richey, 2010*

After building a 4-2 second set lead, Ann won only one point in the next four games. Nancy won four straight games to take the set, and then won six of the next seven games to win the third set and the match. Facing match point against her, Ann wearily served double-faulted and Nancy very briefly raised her racquet in celebration as she came forward to shake hands. As the runnerup, and as a professional, Ann collected \$600. Since Nancy was still an amateur, she was not allowed to receive the first prize of \$1000 and was instead given a voucher worth \$400.

Nancy's next goal was to win Wimbledon, and she played two grass court events to get prepared. She played one of her best grass court matches to beat Christine Truman Janes in the Wightman Cup, although her doubles loss with Mary Ann Eisel and singles loss to Virginia Wade helped the British team win the cup for the first time in eight years. At the London Grass Court Championships at Queen's Club, she reached the final against Ann Jones. The final was rained out; Ann was given her share of the prize money, and Nancy received a voucher worth \$250, with which she purchased a set of dishes at the Liberty department store and shipped home to Texas.²³⁴ Seeded third at Wimbledon, Nancy advanced to the semifinals against Judy Tegart. The Australian played the match of her life, hitting winners from all parts of the court, and allowed Nancy a total of only four games.

At the Woodstock Tennis Club in Indianapolis, Nancy won her fourth Western Championships singles title with the loss of only nine games in the entire tournament. The following week, at the U. S. Clay Court Championships in Milwaukee, Nancy won almost as easily, getting tested slightly by Kathy Harter in the semifinals and withstanding the lobbing tactics of Louisiana teenager Linda Tuero in the final. In Milwaukee, Nancy achieved the remarkable record of winning six successive national

clay court titles. The only other American to win six consecutive national titles was Bill Tilden, who won six of his seven national titles at Forest Hills from 1920 to 1925.

Along with Billie Jean King, Nancy was among the top two female tennis players in the United States and the world, yet she was not allowed to collect any prize money. With the advent of open tennis in early 1968, each national association was allowed to decide which of three player categories it would allow for its players. Most national associations recognized the “registered player” category, which permitted players to collect prize money while remaining under the jurisdiction of the association. The USLTA, however, did not recognize the “registered player” category; as a result, American players had only two choices. They could remain amateurs, or they could leave USLTA jurisdiction and become contract professionals – but only if a promoter such as George MacCall or Lamar Hunt wanted to sign them.

Amateurs were allowed to receive up to \$28 per day in expenses at amateur tournaments in the United States (if the tournament director agreed to provide it) and were under the same restriction at open tournaments. Registered players could ask for unlimited expenses at amateur tournaments, and at open tournaments they had the choice of asking for unlimited expenses or playing for prize money. Contract professionals, such as Billie Jean, Rosie, Rod Laver, Ken Rosewall and others, did not have to worry about this nonsense since they were receiving salaries from their promoters and could also play for prize money.

Nancy and many other Americans, including her brother Cliff, Arthur Ashe, Stan Smith, Julie Heldman, Mary Ann Eisel and Peaches Bartkowicz, had no professional contracts and were thus stuck in the amateur category. They were dependent on USLTA per diems at international team competitions, they were at the mercy of tournament directors to give them up to \$28 per day in expenses, and they often resorted to negotiating with tournament directors for additional under-the-table payments. For Nancy, the recent winner of the French Open, it was an unacceptable arrangement. Billie Jean and Rosie could play for prize money, and foreign registered players such as Margaret Court, Virginia Wade and Maria Bueno could ask for substantial expenses or play for prize money. The situation was unfair, and Nancy informed the tournament

directors of the U. S. National Championships and the U. S. Open that unless she was treated as a registered player and was given a reasonable amount of expenses, she would not play in either tournament.

Nancy's requests were declined, and after winning the national clay court title in Milwaukee she went home to Texas for the remainder of the summer. She told Neil Amdur of the *New York Times* that she "just couldn't come to a financial agreement" with tournament officials ... It's a big disappointment, but I'd rather not go into details."²³⁵ Amdur asked Nancy if she was concerned that her absence from the national championships would impact her USLTA ranking. "I don't much care about my ranking anyway," she replied, "at least not my United States ranking." Marty Riessen, another top American amateur, sympathized with Nancy in his *Tennis* magazine column. "Nancy must feel that she is quite right in demanding equal compensation for equal ability," Riessen wrote. "But it is a shame that she felt she could not participate in her own National Championships, which she might have won. As for the Open Championships, why would it be fair for Nancy to play for \$30 per day while others who are not professionals were able to compete for top prize money of \$6000? ... I respect her for her stand and I hope that her withdrawal forces some necessary rule changes."²³⁶

*One of my regrets is that I didn't play Forest Hills in 1968 ... (the American amateurs) weren't allowed to play for prize money that year, so I asked the tournament committee for \$900 ... they wouldn't give it to me so I got bullheaded and didn't play. I had one of my best years that year, and I feel I would have had a good chance to win it ...*²³⁷

-- Nancy Richey, 2010

Virginia Wade won the women's singles at 1968 U. S. Open in 1968, and since the British Lawn Tennis Association approved, she kept the first prize of \$6000. Arthur Ashe won the men's singles, and since he was an amateur and the USLTA did not recognize the registered player category, the first prize of \$14,000 was given to the runnerup, Tom Okker – a registered player from the Netherlands. This bizarre situation,

along with Nancy's protest, convinced the USLTA to recognize the registered player category at its annual meeting in Clearwater, Florida in February, 1969. As a result, American players who were under USLTA jurisdiction were finally permitted to play for prize money at open tournaments. The category eventually acquired the confusing label of "independent professional" – they were still under USLTA jurisdiction, but they were not under contract to a professional promoter.

Despite her absence from the U. S. National Championships and the U. S. Open, Nancy was awarded the top USLTA women's singles ranking for 1968. Billie Jean King and Rosie Casals were not included, since they had become contract professionals and were no longer under USLTA jurisdiction. In the world rankings, she was listed at number two, behind Billie Jean King. Nancy's first tournament as an independent professional – one at which she could play for prize money – was the South African National Championships in Johannesburg in April 1969. Before then, as an amateur negotiating with tournament directors for expenses or under-the-table payments, she had won the Thunderbird Championships in Phoenix and was a finalist in the South American Open and the Curacao International in the Netherlands Antilles.

In Johannesburg, suffering from fever and influenza, Nancy struggled past Virginia Wade in the semifinals and lost in straight sets to Billie Jean in the final – her first loss to her main American rival in nearly five years. After a win at the Atlanta Invitation in early May, defeating the persistent Linda Tuero in the final, Nancy joined Julie Heldman and Peaches Bartkowicz in Athens, Greece for the Federation Cup team competition. The U. S. team won its first three matches 3-0 and arrived in the final against the Australian team of Margaret Court, Judy Tegart and Kerry Melville. The team score was tied at 1-1 after the singles, with Nancy defeating Kerry and Julie losing to Margaret. Although she lost, Julie tired Margaret with a lengthy second set that was played in searing heat. Given only a forty-five minute rest, Margaret and Judy took the court for the deciding doubles matches against Nancy and Peaches. The Americans played from the baseline and focused their attack on Margaret, making her hit as many overheads as possible. The strategy worked, and the 6-4 6-4 win gave the United States its fourth Federation Cup victory in seven years.

Nancy hoped to defend her title at the French Open the following month. In the opening round, she was pushed to an 11-9 first set by Karen Krantzcke, and then she had a difficult match against Federation Cup teammate Julie Heldman in the quarterfinals. Her opponent in the semifinals was Margaret Court, who had made a return to tennis the previous year following a short retirement. Nancy and Margaret had not crossed paths on a singles court since the 1966 French Championships, when Nancy easily won 6-1 6-3. This time, Nancy lost the first set but rebounded to win the second and take a 5-2 lead in the third. With only one more game to win, a calf muscle injury – sustained during the Federation Cup in Athens – was aggravated, and Nancy lost five consecutive games to lose the match. She also played in the doubles with Margaret, losing to Ann Jones and Francoise Durr in the final, 6-0 4-6 7-5.

*I remember that match well, as I had pulled a calf muscle and could hardly walk. I told Margaret that she was going to have to cover most of the court, which she valiantly tried to do, and we nearly pulled it off ... my leg was the main reason why I lost to Margaret in the semis. I had just come from Fed Cup in Greece where the captain had me playing challenge matches with Julie Heldman every day to see who would play number one singles. It was hot and my leg started bothering me down there before I ever hit Roland Garros ... so basically Fed Cup cost me the French that year, in both singles and doubles ... I didn't hit a ball for two weeks after that match and wasn't sure if I could play Wimbledon.*²³⁸
 -- Nancy Richey, 2008

The calf injury healed in time for Wimbledon, where Nancy was seeded fifth. She almost did not reach her allotted spot in the quarterfinals, narrowly escaping defeat in a fourth round match against Karen Krantzcke on Court 8. Karen won the first set 6-4, and Nancy won the second 6-3 and was serving at 5-5 in the third. A linesman called one of her second serves out, and Nancy approached the umpire to dispute the double fault. After a long discussion, Karen approached the chair umpire and said, "Let's continue."

Karen walked slower than anyone I ever played against, which made the match much longer than it should have been by far. In the latter stage of the match, I got a really bad line call and spent some time talking to the umpire. Karen thought I was taking too long with the whole deal and said so to the umpire, at which point I shouted at her, "Shut up! You have no foot to stand on about telling anyone that they are taking too long with the slowness you play!" I think all of Wimbledon came to a dead stop at my outburst, as I did scream it at the top of my lungs. I can truthfully say that was my one and only outburst like that. ²³⁹
 -- Nancy Richey, 2008

Mary Hardwick, reporting for *World Tennis*, witnessed the incident and said it was "so out of character for the little Texan, who had always maintained perfect poise and equally perfect manners on the court, that one could only see it as the result of the pressures and strains imposed upon the modern player." Hardwick noted that "only a handful of the 1500 spectators applauded" when Nancy eventually won by the scores of 4-6 6-3 7-5. ²⁴⁰ "I'm sorry," Nancy told reporters after the match, "I just want to forget about it." ²⁴¹ In the quarterfinals, played tentatively against Ann Jones, who raced to a 6-2 5-0 lead. Nancy won five games to level the second set at 5-5, but Ann maintained her composure to win two games and close out the match.

At the U. S. Clay Court Championships, played in Indianapolis, Indiana for the first time, Nancy attempted to win a seventh consecutive title. She won her first two matches at the Woodstock Tennis Club with the loss of only one game, and she unexpectedly lost the first set of her quarterfinal against Australian teenager Kerry Harris before relinquishing only two games in the next two sets. In the semifinals, Nancy faced Gail Chanfreau, whom she had beaten in singles on five previous occasions without the loss of a set. Gail, born in Australia and living in Paris after marrying French player Jean Baptiste Chanfreau, had an unorthodox style; she had a severe slice backhand and excessive topspin forehand, which she liked to wallop as hard as possible. She was also a fighter who loved to play on clay. In the previous week's final of the Western

Championships in Cincinnati, she fought Lesley Turner Bowrey for more than three hours in the heat and humidity before collapsing with leg cramps at 10-10 in the third set.

By the time she got to Indianapolis, Gail was ready to give Nancy a battle. Some other players gave her advice before the match, telling her to “keep the ball deep and slow it down.” Gail could not resist playing her usual game, whacking her forehand at every opportunity, and it won the match for her, 6-3 6-4. “I went out there determined to slow things up,” Gail said after her victory, “but I started hitting the ball and decided to play my own game. I figured that when I started losing, I’d change.”²⁴² Gail won the tournament the following day, defeating Linda Tuero in the final, 6-2 6-2. Nancy’s run at the national clay court championships had come to an end after six years, and she went home to prepare for the U. S. Open.

*Before that tournament, I decided I was going to serve and volley every point at Forest Hills on the grass, and I practiced that for three months in San Angelo, Texas that whole summer. Come hell or high water, I was going to serve and volley at the U. S. Open.*²⁴³

-- Nancy Richey, 2010

Nancy did not appear at any grass court tournaments leading up to the 1969 U. S. Open, but she did play in the Wightman Cup team competition on hard courts in Cleveland. She lost to Virginia Wade in three sets and defeated Winnie Shaw, 8-6 6-2, helping the U. S. team defeat Great Britain 5-2. Switching from a metal racquet to a wooden model in time for the U. S. Open, Nancy swept past her first two opponents and needed three sets to get past Winnie in the third round. Due to persistent rain throughout the tournament and a backlog of matches, the quarterfinal match between Nancy and Billie Jean King was played on one of the grandstand courts. From the very first point, Nancy served strongly and hit deep drives to the corners; Billie Jean was forced to twist and scramble, and early in the set she gave her right knee a painful jerk. Nancy won the first set 6-4 and then fell behind 1-4 in the second as Billie Jean got her all-court attacking game under control. Nancy then changed her strategy, coming forward at every

opportunity and taking the net away from her opponent. Billie Jean had leads of 5-3 and 6-5, but several missed overheads and double faults drained her confidence, and Nancy took the set 8-6. In her semifinal match against Rosie Casals, once again played on the grandstand, Nancy continued her aggressive play, fighting off a set point in the first set before prevailing 7-5 6-3.²⁴⁴ For the second time in her career, Nancy was in the finals of Forest Hills, where she would play against Margaret Court.

*Dad wanted me to mix it up. He thought I should not serve and volley all of the time the way I had been doing up until then. But Cliff wanted me to go with what got me there.*²⁴⁵

-- Nancy Richey, 2010

In the championship match, Nancy served first and came to the net at every opportunity. Margaret hit low dipping returns and clean passing shots and easily won the first set 6-2. She constantly kept Nancy off-balance with delicate lobs and soft drop shots, and raced to 3-1 in the second. Nancy made a final effort to turn the match around, driving the ball deep into the court, but Margaret was too strong and took the second set by the same score as the first, 6-2. At the presentation ceremony after the match, U. S. Vice President Spiro Agnew gave the players their prize money checks and told the fans that Nancy “would go far in the game if she keeps improving.”

Billie Jean defeated Nancy in straight sets the next time they played, two weeks later in the semifinals of the Pacific Southwest Open at the Los Angeles Tennis Club. Nancy, however, won the match that really mattered, winning the \$3000 first prize for beating Billie Jean by the scores of 2-6 6-4 6-1 in the final of the Howard Hughes Open in Las Vegas. Once again, Nancy was listed at number one in the USLTA national rankings, and Billie Jean and Rosie were not included because they were contract professionals. In the *World Tennis* world rankings for 1969, Nancy was placed at number four, behind Margaret Court, Ann Jones and Billie Jean.²⁴⁶

In early 1970, a circuit of three women’s indoor tournaments was held in the Northeast, organized by Gladys Heldman. At the World Tennis Luv Cup, a women’s

event held in conjunction with the men's International Tennis Players Association Open in Philadelphia, Nancy defeated Virginia Wade in the quarterfinals and lost to Billie Jean in the semifinals. Billie Jean won the first set 6-4 by employing a new strategy of hitting low backhand slices and high looping forehands in order to disrupt Nancy's rhythm. She trailed 2-5 in the second and pulled up to 4-5, serving to level the score. After a point was played and won by Nancy, a service linesman informed the chair umpire that he had made an "out" call on Billie Jean's serve. An argument ensued, the point was replayed and Billie Jean won it. "Mrs. King won that game and the next two for the match," Parton Keese wrote in the *New York Times*, "and Nancy fumed in the dressing room."²⁴⁷

Skipping the following week's tournament in New York City, Nancy was the clear favorite to win the U. S. National Women's Indoor Championships in Winchester, Massachusetts over a weakened field. As professionals, Billie Jean and Rosie Casals were not eligible to participate in the non-open event and they, along with Margaret Court and Virginia Wade, played an exhibition that same week in Dallas, Texas to benefit the Maureen Connolly Brinker Foundation. In Winchester, Nancy won her first two matches easily, and in the semifinals she led Patti Hogan 6-0 4-2. Patti suddenly turned the match around, making Nancy run non-stop and winning ten of the next eleven games for a remarkable 0-6 6-4 6-1 comeback. "I'm in shock," Patti said after the match. "I don't think I'll come down for a week."²⁴⁸ Nancy earned \$250 for defeating Peaches Bartkowicz in a third place consolation match, and then they split \$400 for winning the doubles title over Mary Ann Eisel and Valerie Ziegenfuss, 8-6 6-4. "Spectators watched in some bewilderment," Barry Lorge reported in *Tennis USA* magazine, "as the winners hung out in the backcourt at all times, even on serve."²⁴⁹

Nancy quickly rebounded from her disappointing losses to Billie Jean and Patti. She won five consecutive tournaments in Florida, North Carolina and California, mostly against second-tier players. One of her toughest matches was in the semifinals of the WLOD International in Lighthouse Point, Florida, where 15-year-old Chris Evert pushed her to three sets. She also had a close match in the finals of the California State Championships in Portola Valley, defeating Denise Carter 10-8 2-6 6-3 to win the first prize of \$1000. Since women were not included in the River Oaks Invitation for the first

time in years, there was talk of having Nancy play a prize-money exhibition in Houston against Bobby Riggs, the nation's top-ranked men's senior player. The plans never materialized, and Nancy prepared for a three-week trip to England.²⁵⁰

After playing a full schedule of spring tournaments in the United States – and missing all the European clay court tournaments, including the French Open – Nancy's overseas schedule in 1970 included only the Wightman Cup and Wimbledon. Arriving in London with a sore back and ribs, Nancy aggravated both on the first day of the Wightman Cup when she slipped and fell several times against Ann Jones, losing 6-2 6-3. The next day, early in the match against Virginia Wade, she wrenched her knee and fell to the court in pain. Nancy finished the match wearing a knee brace, unable to put up much resistance during her 6-3 6-2 loss. After consulting with her father, she decided it would be best if she did not play in the deciding doubles match with Billie Jean King. “She had been having treatment for a strained side,” George Richey told reporters. “She will scratch from Wimbledon and fly home tomorrow.”²⁵¹ Peaches Bartkowicz replaced Nancy in the critical doubles match, and she blasted winners from the backcourt as Billie Jean blanketed the net. The unorthodox strategy worked, and the pair won 7-5 3-6 6-2 to retain the cup for the United States.

Nancy returned to competition at the Western Tennis Championships in Cincinnati, a clay court tournament she had previously won five times without the loss of a set. In the semifinals, Helen Gourlay of Australia ended the set streak, winning the first one at 6-4 before Nancy recovered to take the next two. It took Rosie Casals to end the match streak, playing aggressively and using her overhead effectively to win 6-3 6-3. Rosie's proficiency on the clay may have been surprising to some, but Rosie had actually played more clay court tennis that summer than Nancy. She won the Swiss Championships two weeks earlier, scoring an impressive win over Francoise Durr in the final. In Cincinnati, Rosie earned \$1000 for first place and Nancy was given \$500.

At the U. S. National Clay Court Championships in Indianapolis the following week, Nancy appeared to regain her form. She won her first three matches in straight sets, including a 6-3 6-3 win over Helen Gourlay. In the semifinals, Nancy faced nineteen-year-old Linda Tuero in a rematch of the 1968 national clay court championship

match. Despite her youth, Linda was a patient clay court player, and she liked to lob her opponents to distraction during the rallies. In a match that lasted nearly three hours, Linda prevailed by the scores of 9-7 7-5. “She would have played better if I had given her the stuff she likes to play against,” Linda said after the match. “If I had tried to slug everything with her, she would have beaten me. But I couldn’t do that, so why let her play her best game?”²⁵² Nancy received \$500 for her semifinal showing while the losing men’s semifinalists divided \$6000.

Heading into the 1970 U. S. Open, Nancy hoped to salvage what had been a relatively disappointing year for her. She had battled injuries, relinquished her longstanding domination of the U. S. summer clay court tournaments, and her only notable singles win of the year was over Virginia Wade six months earlier. If Nancy had lost some of her focus, it was understandable; she was preparing to marry San Angelo television executive Kenneth Gunter at the end of the year. The U. S. Open was her final chance to turn the season around, unaware that a brewing off-court controversy at the West Side Tennis Club at Forest Hills, New York would soon take her tennis career in an entirely new direction.

Billie Jean Moffitt King

Born on November 22, 1943, Billie Jean Moffitt grew up in the working class city of Long Beach, California. Her father was a fireman in the Long Beach Fire Department and her mother was a homemaker who sold Avon beauty products to help make ends meet. Billie Jean was a tomboy who often played touch football on the front lawns with her younger brother Randy and other neighborhood boys – until her mother told her that her days of playing football were over and she was expected to act like a lady. Soon afterward, a fifth-grade classmate name Susan Williams – whose family had recently moved from New York to California and joined a local country club – invited Billie Jean to play tennis.²⁵³

I said, “What’s tennis?” She said, “Well, you get to run, you get to hit a ball, and you get to jump.” I’ll try that! I’ll try that! So I think, with tennis being a sissy

*sport – in the 1950s particularly – my mom could handle that. To her, it was more of a feminine sport.*²⁵⁴

-- Billie Jean King, 2006

Billie Jean immediately fell in the love with the game, and her father told her that if she wanted a tennis racquet, she would have to earn it. She did odd jobs around the neighborhood – babysitting, mowing grass, and running errands – and she eventually saved eight dollars and bought her first tennis racquet at a local department store. The Moffitt family did not belong to a country club, but Billie Jean soon discovered that the Long Beach Park Department offered free tennis lessons on the public courts throughout the city. Along with another classmate, Jerry Cromwell, was on the tennis court as often as possible.²⁵⁵

*Long Beach had a tennis instructor named Clyde Walker, and he started me and Jerry Cromwell out. He'd be at a different neighborhood park every day, and you'd get instruction when he came to your park. Jerry and I followed him around so we were at a different park with Clyde every day.*²⁵⁶

-- Billie Jean King, 1973

*Clyde Walker was a great man ... He'd taught in country clubs all his life, but he got out of that because he wanted to teach in the public parks, to find kids who really wanted to play. He felt the kids at the clubs weren't hungry enough ... Clyde loved the idea that he'd finally found two youngsters who were so enthusiastic and dedicated, because, he said, he'd waited his whole lifetime for that.*²⁵⁷

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Clyde Walker organized a tournament for his novice players in December 1954, and in Billie Jean's first competition – three months after her first lesson – she was defeated 6-0 6-0 by her friend Susan Williams. Six months later, however, Billie Jean

improved enough for Walker to enter her in a USLTA sanctioned tournament, the Southern California Junior Championships at the Los Angeles Tennis Club. Billie Jean won her first match against Marilyn Hester – ranked at number 16 in the Southern California Girls’ 13 and under division – before losing to Ann Zavitkovsky at 9-7 in the third set. Billie Jean was especially disappointed, since the winner of her match with Ann would next play Karen Hantze, a sensational young prodigy from San Diego. Her disappointment turned to disbelief when Perry T. Jones, the longtime president of the Southern California Tennis Association, barred Billie Jean from the tournament players’ group picture.²⁵⁸

*Mr. Jones pointed to me, “Not you. You can’t be in a picture because you’re not dressed properly.” I was wearing my usual outfit, white shorts and a white T-shirt, but I found out that Mr. Jones expected you to wear a tennis dress. That turned me inside out. The experience didn’t make me bitter, but I found out that these people were more concerned with what you wore than how you played. And that men were making the decisions about what women should do.*²⁵⁹

-- Billie Jean King, 1973

For the next two years, Billie Jean continued to take lessons from Clyde Walker and play in tournaments throughout Southern California. By 1958, she was the number-two ranked girl in the Southern California Girls’ 15 and Under division, qualifying for the U.S. National Girls’ 15 and Under Championships in Middletown, Ohio. The Long Beach Tennis Patrons funded the trip, and Billie Jean won three matches before losing in the quarterfinals to Carol Hanks of St. Louis.

What I really remember is what happened the last day of the tournament. This car pulled up to our hotel gate and about six girls got in to head off farther east to the Junior Girls’ 18 and Under Championships in Philadelphia. After that, they would join the regular USLTA grass-court circuit for the rest of the summer. The big time. I wanted to go so badly I had tears in my eyes and my insides literally

*shaked. I remember standing there just completely frustrated and totally depressed. "I've got to go," I cried. "I'm really sorry," mom said, "but we can't. We don't have any more money." Then the car pulled away, and it just killed me. "I'm going next year," I said, "even if I have to hitchhike." I was heartbroken.*²⁶⁰

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Billie Jean's results in 1958 earned her the number-five national ranking in the Girls' 15 and Under division, and the following year Wilson Sporting Goods sales representative Joe Bixler arranged for her to receive coaching from Alice Marble, the winner of eighteen major singles and doubles titles. Billie Jean was hesitant, but Clyde Walker urged her it was time to move on; he had taught her everything he knew, and she needed to take advantage of the opportunity. For about four months, Billie Jean's parents drove her forty miles to Tarzana, California, every Saturday morning and picked her up the following night. Alice corrected some minor technical flaws in Billie Jean's shots, and instilled in her the mentality of a champion. During one weekend visit, Alice asked Billie Jean about her goals in tennis.

*"I want to be the best tennis player ever," I said, and as soon as I did I knew immediately she wasn't going to be able to handle that. Because what I really was saying was that I wanted to be a better player than Alice Marble, even. One weekend she called Long Beach and said she wasn't feeling well. I blurted out, "I guess that means I won't be coming up today," and she went into a rage about how selfish I was, how all I cared about were my lessons and nothing about her at all. She finally hung up on me. I was really shaken up, especially when my parents also said I'd been selfish. I never took a lesson from Alice after that incident.*²⁶¹

--Billie Jean King, 1974

Billie Jean made her first trip east in 1959, and since she was named to the Junior Wightman Cup team, the trip was funded by the Southern California Tennis Association. She reached the quarterfinals of three tournaments on the Eastern grass court circuit, losing in the Middle States Grass Courts Championships to Nancy Richey of Texas in the first encounter of what would become a lengthy rivalry, and getting beaten fellow Californians Karen Hantze and Kathy Chabot in two subsequent tournaments. In the third round of the Eastern Grass Court Championships in South Orange New Jersey, Billie Jean played Maria Bueno, the newly crowned Wimbledon champion, losing a close match at 6-4 6-4.

On my first trip to South Orange, New Jersey, for Eastern Grass Court Championships, a man named Frank Brennan introduced himself to me after one of my matches, took one look at the beat-up nylon in my rackets, and offered me some real gut so I could have them restrung ... It turned out that Mr. Brennan was a part-time tennis coach and was absolutely great about match strategy, about small things like when to lob down the line and when to lob cross court. Things like that, about which I didn't have a clue then ... ²⁶²
 -- Billie Jean King, 1974

While practicing for the Junior Wightman Cup team competition at a club on Long Island, the legendary American champion Maureen Connolly stopped by to offer some coaching advice and singled Billie Jean out, inviting her to dinner that evening. During the meal, Maureen offered her opinion of the young girl's chances of becoming a great player. "Look, I just want to let you know," she told Billie Jean, "you'll never make it. So don't bother."²⁶³ Unknown to Billie Jean at the time, Maureen actually believed the opposite. Billie Jean did not learn the truth until many years later, after Maureen had passed away.

A man came up to me and told me that he had been helping coach the Junior Wightman Cup team that day Maureen came by. And she watched for a while,

*and then she asked him who he thought the top prospect was. He had answered Maureen by saying Tory Fretz. Well, he told me, Maureen had only laughed at him when he said that, and then she had pointed over to where I was hitting, and she had said, "Oh no, the only one with any real chance at all is that one." So the whole business with dinner and putting me down was Maureen's idea of reverse psychology. She thought that anybody who was going to be a champion needed more spunk, of the sort Teach Tennant has instilled in her. Only all it did was scare me, because I just wasn't built that way.*²⁶⁴

-- Billie Jean King, 1982

In her grand slam tournament debut, Billie Jean lost in the first round of the U. S. National Championships at Forest Hills to Justina Bricka by the scores of 4-6 7-5 6-4, after holding match point in the second set. She then returned home to California and finished her season by pushing Ann Haydon of Great Britain to 6-4 1-6 7-5 in the Pacific Southwest Championships at the Los Angeles Tennis Club. In the finals of the girls' singles division, played on a side court, Karen Hantze defeated Billie Jean in a 2-6 9-7 9-7 net-rushing thriller. The match attracted a large crowd, even though Roy Emerson was playing on the stadium court. Billie Jean's results in 1959 earned her a USLTA national women's singles ranking of number nineteen, as well as being placed at number six in the Girls' 18 and Under division.

The following year, 1960, was notable for Billie Jean's first significant women's singles title, her first U. S. national title, and losses to four veteran players. She won the Philadelphia District Women's Grass Court Championships, defeating Karen 6-4 6-3 in the quarterfinals on her way to the title. Karen gained revenge a few weeks later, winning the National Girls' 18 Singles title with a 6-3 6-4 final round win. Earlier in the year, Billie Jean lost in the quarterfinals of the Southern California Championships to 43-year-old Dorothy Cheney. At the U. S. National Clay Court Championships in Chicago, she lost in the second round to 35-year-old Dorothy Knode, who went on to win the title for the fourth time. Billie Jean and Darlene Hard, playing doubles together for the first time, won the women's doubles without the loss of a set.

In the semifinals of the Pennsylvania Lawn Tennis Championships, 42-year-old Margaret Osborne DuPont had too much experience and variety for Billie Jean, winning 6-4 2-6 6-2. Billie Jean won two rounds at the U. S. National Championships before losing to seventh-seeded Bernice Carr Vukovich of South Africa, 7-5 6-4. In three California tournaments at the end of the year, Billie Jean pushed Maria Bueno in the quarterfinals of the Pacific Southwest Championships in Los Angeles and Ann Jones in the quarterfinals of the Pacific Coast Championships in Berkeley. At the U. S. National Hard Court Championships in November, Billie Jean was beaten for the second time of the year by Dorothy Cheney, a 6-3 4-6 6-3 quarterfinal result.

Listed at number four in the USLTA national women's singles rankings, 17-year-old Billie Jean earned her first trip overseas in 1961. She missed her high school graduation ceremony to play the English grass court tournaments at Beckenham, Queen's Club and Wimbledon. She roomed with Karen Hantze, and at the behest Perry T. Jones – the Southern California Tennis Association president who barred Billie Jean from a photograph six years earlier for not wearing a tennis dress – the two Californians played doubles together for the first time. Jones also told Billie Jean to concentrate on women's singles division at Wimbledon instead of the junior tournament.

*I think, well, you know, one thing about Mr. Jones, he had plusses and minuses ... Some of his plusses were that in 1961 when we used to go to Wimbledon, you either had to play the juniors if you were still a junior, or in the women's, and he told me to play the women's and not play the juniors that year. I always try to kind of think about that.*²⁶⁵

-- Billie Jean King, 2006

Billie Jean made her Wimbledon debut on Centre Court against fifth-seeded Yola Ramirez of Mexico. Not intimidated and inspired by the world's most famous tennis court, Billie Jean barely lost the first set 11-9 before taking the second at 6-1. Darkness halted the match, and the following day Yola came back with a new game plan, hitting

soft high shots and playing exclusively to Billie Jean's forehand to take the third set at 6-2.

Billie Jean and Karen had come into Wimbledon with the loss of only one doubles match; they reached the quarterfinals at Beckenham and won the title at Queen's Club with a 6-2 13-15 6-2 decision over the South African pair of Margaret Hunt and Lynn Hutchings. Karen was confident that she and Billie Jean could win the Wimbledon women's doubles title.

*We weren't even seeded in the doubles at Wimbledon, but I remember that Karen took one look at the draw and said, "I think we can win this thing. What about you?"*²⁶⁶

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Billie Jean and Karen eliminated the top-seeded team of Sandra Reynolds and Renee Schuurman in the quarterfinals, followed by the fourth-seeded team of Sally Reynolds and Lesley Turner in the semifinals. In the championship match, Billie Jean and Karen played completely relaxed and came away with the title, giggling their way to a 6-3 6-4 win over Margaret Smith and Jan Lehane of Australia to become the youngest-ever Wimbledon women's doubles champions.

Three days later, Billie Jean learned that Clyde Walker, her first coach, had died after a year-long battle with cancer. Before leaving for England, Billie Jean visited him in the hospital, knowing that she would never see him again.

*His wife, Louise, said the only thing that kept him going that last week was reading the newspapers and finding out we were still in the doubles. She said Clyde would talk to the doctors about Jerry Cromwell and me, about how we were the first two really good players he'd ever coached, and about how one of us was now going to win at Wimbledon. And when I did, Louise said he just about busted his buttons, he was so proud.*²⁶⁷

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Billie Jean's results at Wimbledon earned her a spot on the United States Wightman Cup team, with matches played against Great Britain on the clay courts of the Saddle and Cycle Club in Chicago in August. The British team included Angela Mortimer, Christine Truman and Ann Jones, each of whom had won the French Championships – the unofficial clay court championship of the world – at some point in their careers. The American team consisted of teenagers – Karen Hantze was 18-years-old and Billie Jean and Justina Bricka were both 17-years-old – and although they were the nation's top three players, they were not considered clay court experts.

Although the British press predicted and looked forward to watching a one-sided match, U. S. team captain Margaret Osborne duPont told her young team that she believed in them. On a cold and blustery opening day of competition, Karen defeated Christine in three sets and Billie Jean needed only two sets to get past Ann. Karen and Billie Jean then won easily against Ann and Deidre Catt to give the United States a 3-0 lead. The next day, Justina clinched the trophy in the best-of-seven-match format with a three-set win over Angela. Despite the low spectator attendance – hardly any fans were present on either day – it was one of the highlights of Billie Jean's young career.

*It was one of the greatest upsets in Wightman Cup history, and for me it was almost as much fun as winning the Wimbledon doubles. For the first time I had represented my country in international team competition, and for the first time I had actually gotten money – expense money – directly from the USLTA. We all received plane tickets to and from Chicago and \$20 per diem, and I thought that was fantastic.*²⁶⁸

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

In the fall of 1961, Billie Jean started classes at Los Angeles State College, an eighteen-mile commute from her parents' house in Long Beach. She played on the women's tennis team, and for the next eight months she played an occasional local tournament, losing to 45-year-old Dorothy Cheney at the Pacific Southwest

Championships and at the Ojai Valley Championships, and losing to Karen in the finals of the Southern California Championships.

*We had a tennis team, but we didn't have a conference, so we didn't get to play matches. Once in awhile we might play matches against University of Southern California in a match for fun, but it didn't count. We were allowed, fortunately at Los Angeles State, to play against the men's team, who were actually NCAA Division II champions. It was fun for us, to work out with them, but we didn't have any opportunities. The boys had their conference and their championships. We didn't have any of that.*²⁶⁹

-- Billie Jean King, 1998

Billie Jean and Karen successfully defended their Wimbledon women's doubles title in 1962, and both players stole the headlines in the singles tournament. Billie Jean played her opening match on Centre Court against the number-one seed, Margaret Smith, who had recently become the first Australian woman to win the French Championships. Margaret had also won her national championships for the third time, and she was expected by many to win at Wimbledon and the U. S. National Championships and achieve a calendar-year grand slam.

*It was obvious to almost everyone that unless she fell out of an airplane she was on her way to becoming the next great player in the game. She was tall, powerful, consistent, and moved beautifully for a person of her size ... Very predictable, very mechanical. No touch, no finesse, very little versatility ... She was getting all the attention then. She deserved it because of her record, but it was certainly more than was healthy for her. The pressure on her was unbelievable ... It was a lot to ask of a nineteen-year-old.*²⁷⁰

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Margaret won the first set at 6-1, and Billie Jean took the second set at 6-3 when she realized that the Australian's forehand was starting to break down in the swirling wind. Margaret led 5-2 in the third set, and reached 5-3 30-15 – only two points away from winning. Billie Jean's down-the-line backhand passing shot changed the momentum, and she reeled off three games for a 6-5 lead. Serving at 40-love, Billie Jean lost the first two match points before completing the victory with a winning backhand volley. It was the first time in Wimbledon history that the women's top-seed lost an opening match. Billie Jean went on to reach the quarterfinals, losing to Ann Haydon, and the elimination of Margaret cleared the way for Karen to win the title with a final round win over Vera Sukova.

Margaret defeated Billie Jean twice on the Eastern grass court circuit later that summer, at the Pennsylvania Lawn Tennis Championships and the Eastern Grass Court Championships. Billie Jean's season ended with a first round loss to Victoria Palmer in the first round of the U. S. National Championships in Forest Hills, New York, defaulting with an injury after winning the first set 8-6 and trailing 0-5 in the second. After Forest Hills, Billie Jean returned home to California to resume her education and college tennis career at Los Angeles State College.

At the start of my sophomore year, in the fall of 1962, I moved to an apartment off campus and took a couple of part-time jobs to help pay the bills. I made \$90 a month as a playground director in a park near the campus, and I also worked in the cage of the athletic department, handing out towels and equipment to the women's gym classes. ²⁷¹

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Marcus Carriedo, a student at Los Angeles State College who played tennis occasionally, introduced Billie Jean to 17-year-old freshman Larry King in the fall of 1962. Since Larry played on the men's tennis team, Marcus thought his two friends might be interested in each other. Six months later they were dating steadily, and Larry's progressive opinions about gender equality began to have an impact on Billie Jean.

I probably didn't become a feminist until Larry and I were walking around the campus at Los Angeles State and he said, "You're a second class citizen." I said, "What do you mean?" and he said, "Well, you're the best-known athlete in the school, the best-known person in the school. I get an athletic grant, so I have more opportunity being the seventh man on a six-man tennis team than you do, and the reason for it is because you're a girl." Just in that moment it crystallized, all the things I always felt but couldn't put into words. I became a feminist. To be a feminist, to me, just means equal opportunities for boys and girls. ²⁷²
 -- Billie Jean King, 1998

As a junior player, Billie Jean's tournament schedule was often controlled by Southern California Tennis Association president Perry T. Jones, a fussy bachelor who unabashedly favored the boy players. By 1963, when Billie Jean was the nation's third-ranked woman player, she was still being treated unfairly – this time by USLTA officials. Thanks to Larry's influence, however, she was becoming increasingly assertive about the inequities.

In those days, whatever your gender, the USLTA had to give you approval before you played abroad. Then it would dish out some expense money. And one summer, when they doled out the grand sum of \$240 to me, I knew they were giving Chuck McKinley \$1200. I knew. There aren't any secrets in tennis. They made the payoffs to us at Wimbledon in cash, in little white envelopes, right in the tea room. And I went to Bill Clothier, the big society honcho from Philadelphia, the gentleman who was in charge of that sort of thing, and I protested that it wasn't right that McKinley could get that much more – five times as much. It wouldn't have been so bad if Clothier could have at least stuck to his guns and said that he and the rest of the USLTA believed that women were second-class citizens and we were lucky to get bus fare – at least I would have admired his

*honesty – but instead, he just lied outright and told me that I was mistaken and that McKinley certainly wasn't getting so much as a nickel more than I was.*²⁷³

-- Billie Jean King, 1982

Shortly before the 1963 Wimbledon, the inaugural Federation Cup – an international team competition for women – was held in London. Billie Jean, Darlene and Carol Caldwell were named to the United States team, and they reached the final against the Australian team of Margaret Smith and Lesley Turner. In the best-of-three-match format, Margaret defeated Darlene and Billie Jean won against Lesley, setting up the doubles match to decide the championship.

*One of my greatest moments came in a doubles match during the finals of the first Federation Cup matches in 1963 ... Darlene and I quickly got ourselves into a hopeless situation – down a set and 5-4 with Margaret's service coming up. Margaret reached 40-15 (double match point) and got ready to serve to me.*²⁷⁴

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Billie Jean and Darlene fought off the two match points, broke Margaret's serve and eventually took the set 13-11. With the Australian discouraged, the Americans easily won the third set to take the title. Two weeks later, Billie Jean had the best Wimbledon singles results of her career, reaching the final with upset wins over Maria Bueno and Ann Haydon Jones. In the championship match, top-seeded Margaret was eager to avenge the previous year's surprise loss, and she won comfortably, 6-3 6-4.

I simply wasn't ready. The match was postponed from a Saturday to the following Monday because of rain, and whatever nervous tension I had built up was gone by the time we played. Margaret deserved to win, and she did. But for some reason, that particular loss to Margaret stayed with me for a long time. Literally for years afterwards, whenever I needed something to psych me up before going out to play, I tried to remember the feelings I had during that match,

*and the sense of utter desolation and failure I felt when we walked off the court. It wasn't a very good feeling and I didn't want to have to repeat it – ever. It was something to avoid, and the best way to avoid it was to win.*²⁷⁵

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Billie Jean rebounded the following week, winning her first international singles title at the Irish Championships in Dublin. Returning home for the U. S. summer tournaments, Billie Jean was defeated in the quarterfinals of the U. S. National Clay Court Championships by Vicki Palmer in three sets, in the semifinals of the Pennsylvania Grass Court Championships by Darlene Hard by the score of 11-9 6-2, and in the second round of the Eastern Grass Court Championships by Judy Alvarez by the score of 0-6 6-1 6-3. Seeded third in the U. S. National Championships, Billie Jean won the first set of her fourth round match against Deidre Catt of England and led 5-3 in the second. Unable to close out the second set, Billie Jean reached 5-3 in third before her opponent reeled off four straight games to win 2-6 8-6 7-5. At the Pacific Southwest Championships in Los Angeles, Billie Jean defeated Ann Jones and Maria Bueno before losing to Darlene in the final.

Listed at number two in the USLTA national rankings, Billie Jean had another successful run at Wimbledon in 1964, scoring a 6-3 6-3 quarterfinal win over Ann Jones. In the semifinals, Margaret Smith defeated her for the fourth straight time, this time by 6-3 6-4. Billie Jean's rivalry with Nancy Richey was established on the U. S. summer circuit, beating the Texas baseliner 7-5 3-6 8-6 in the finals of the Eastern Grass Court Championships in South Orange, New Jersey. Nancy won the following week in the finals of the Piping Rock Invitation in Locust Valley, New York in another three set match. In the quarterfinals of the U. S. National Championships, Nancy unveiled a surprise strategy as she came forward and took the net away from an indecisive Billie Jean, winning 6-4 6-4. "The strange part of this match was Billie Jean's serve," Mary Hardwick wrote in *World Tennis* magazine. "She used a shortened swing after the manner of Dick Savitt. She said later that it gave her greater control in the wind, but what an odd time to change a stroke!"²⁷⁶

The highlight of Billie Jean's year was winning her first U. S. National Doubles title, teaming with Karen Hantze Susman to defeat Margaret Smith and Lesley Turner in three sets at the Longwood Cricket Club in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts. Once again, she reached the finals of the Pacific Southwest Championships, losing to Maria Bueno in three sets. It was another respectable season for Billie Jean, ensuring her spot again at number two in the national singles rankings.

*In the fall of 1964, things really came to a head. I was trying to juggle my relationship with Larry, what I thought was my obligation to get a college education, and my goal to become the number one tennis player in the world. It was pretty obvious that something had to give. Then, to really put the pressure on, I got a chance to go to Australia for three months, all expenses paid, to take private lessons from Mervyn Rose, the former Australian Davis Cup doubles player. Rose, since his retirement, had built a great reputation as a coach of world-class players.*²⁷⁷

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

*There was a wealthy businessman in Australia named Bob Mitchell, a great tennis fan ... he brought Margaret in out of the boondocks. Mitch told me that when she first came to stay with him, she literally didn't know how to eat or speak properly. He was her social Pygmalion, and he got Frank Sedgman to polish her on the court. But Mitch soured on Margaret because he didn't think she was appreciative enough of all that he had done for her. That was the prime reason why he invited me to come down to Australia and study with Mervyn Rose. He wanted me to learn how to beat the champion he had helped make.*²⁷⁸

-- Billie Jean King, 1982

Encouraged by Larry to pursue her goals, Billie Jean did not register for college classes and departed for Australia on October 31. She played several tournaments on the Australian circuit, culminating with the Australian National Championships and the

Federation Cup in Melbourne, all the while implementing the new stroke production techniques that Mervyn Rose had taught her. In addition to rebuilding Billie Jean's serve and forehand, Rose made Billie Jean run to improve her physical conditioning, he made her think about playing "percentage tennis," which is the best shot to use in a particular situation. Rose also made Billie Jean sit and watch other players' matches, analyzing what they had done on every point and what they should have done differently.

... when I went to bed at night I was so tired and so confused by all this, my head felt like a basketball. The results were hardly apparent right away ... equipped with my brand-new forehand, a fresh new service, and a bold new strategic outlook, I was awful. The week after Merv showed me my new service, I lost to this fourteen-year-old girl. I double-faulted thirty-five times, which must be some kind of record. But I stayed with it, and it eventually paid off. The whole experience was exhausting, but it made a more mature tennis player out of me. It was also the last basic coaching I ever got. Clyde Walker had taught me the fundamentals, Alice Marble had taught me what it was like to be a champion, Frank Brennan gave – and was still giving me – insights into particular strategies, and Merv Rose taught me a new serve, a new forehand, and how to think. My tennis education, as it were, was complete, although I didn't fully realize it until the next U. S. Nationals at Forest Hills in September 1965.²⁷⁹
 -- Billie Jean King, 1974

Billie Jean did not win any tournaments on her first Australian tour, losing to Margaret Smith on three occasions – each time in straight sets. During the tour, she announced her engagement to Larry and pondered her future. "We will probably marry in about a year's time," she said, "but at the moment I am undecided whether to continue tennis after our marriage. I think Larry would like me to keep it up but he feels it is up to me."²⁸⁰

After winning three tournaments in California in the spring of 1965 – including the California State Championships with a 6-2 8-6 final round win over 17-year-old

Rosemary Casals of San Francisco – Billie Jean once again reached the semifinals of Wimbledon, losing Maria Bueno in three close sets. With Karen Hantze Susman playing a limited schedule and not making the trip to England, Billie Jean played doubles with Maria and won the title over the French team of Francoise Durr and Jeanine Lieffrig, 6-2 7-5.

Billie Jean dominated the Eastern grass court circuit, winning the Pennsylvania Grass Court Championships, the Eastern Grass Court Championships and the Essex Invitation. At the U. S. National Doubles Championships, Billie Jean and Karen were surprisingly beaten by Carole Graebner and Nancy Richey. The underdogs focused their attack on Karen, who was making a return to the game after a layoff. Billie Jean seemed ready to finally make her breakthrough at the U. S. National Championships at Forest Hills, defeating Ann Jones in the quarterfinals, 16-14 6-2, and dismissing Maria Bueno in the semifinals with the loss of only five games. In the championship match against Margaret Smith, Billie Jean led 5-3 in the first and second sets, only to see the Australian prevail 8-6 7-5.

It should have been a devastating blow. But it wasn't, because for the first time in a major championship I began to understand what it took to win one of those things. I began to sense what it meant to have that killer instinct, to be able to go for the jugular ... But I was too conservative. I wasn't free to understand what it took to win one of those things. I began to sense what it meant to have that killer instinct, to be able to go for the jugular ... But I was too conservative. I wasn't free to stand why in the hell I was in that position in the first place. I'd never had such a comfortable lead in an important match before and I didn't know what to do with it. Instead of bearing down, I was thinking, "What's going on here?" The answer was that I'd moved to within about one step from the very top, only I didn't realize it – until the match was over, and then a lot of things hit me right over the head. During the trophy presentation, in fact, I realized that I could beat

*Margaret, and anyone else in the world too. It just came to me in a rush, as clear as a bell, and suddenly the fact that I'd lost the match didn't bother me at all.*²⁸¹
 -- Billie Jean King, 1974

Five days later, Billie Jean and Larry were married in Long Beach, and they moved into a small apartment in Alhambra, California. Larry was in his final year at Los Angeles State College and would soon get accepted into the law school at the University of California-Berkeley. In addition to being a full-time student, he worked full-time in a factory and Billie Jean brought his lunch at 2:00 am. Although Billie Jean was ambivalent about pursuing her college education, she decided to register for classes. She also got a job teaching tennis to children in Pasadena, earning \$32 for four hours of work each weekend. Unlike previous years, when she played little tennis during the fall and winter months, Billie Jean played serious tennis every day in a renewed effort to reach her goal of becoming the best player in the world.²⁸²

Billie Jean's doubles player, Karen Hantze Susman, was controversially suspended by the USLTA in late 1965. Karen felt she should have been seeded at the U. S. National Championships, and when she was drawn to play top-seeded Margaret Smith in the first round, she withdrew from the tournament in protest. Karen's suspension left her future tennis plans in limbo – she actually would not play competitive tennis again until 1974 – and as a result Billie Jean asked Rosemary Casals, a talented young player from San Francisco, to be her doubles partner in 1966.

In early 1966, another USLTA controversy enveloped Billie Jean and her main American rival, Nancy Richey of Texas. The USLTA ranking committee originally decided to place Billie Jean at the top of the women's singles national rankings for 1965, but Al Baumann – the delegate from Texas – argued that Nancy deserved the honor. After none of the other delegates agreed with him, Baumann proposed that the two women share the number-one ranking. The motion was put to a proxy vote, which passed by a slim margin. When news of the unprecedented move was made public, the USLTA was criticized by those who felt Billie Jean should have been awarded the top spot as well as those who felt the top ranking belonged to Nancy.²⁸³

Billie Jean opened her 1966 campaign in February at the New England Indoor Championships, losing to her doubles partner Rosie Casals in the quarterfinals, 2-6 6-4 7-5. She rebounded the following week, winning the singles, women's doubles and mixed doubles in her first appearance at the U. S. National Indoor Championships in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts. She then won the singles and doubles titles in two tournaments in the West – the Thunderbird Invitation in Phoenix and the Ojai Valley Championships in California – with comfortable straight-set wins over all her opponents, including Rosie. In April, playing in her first international tournament of the year, Billie Jean announced she was ready to reach the top of the game by ending a fourteen-match losing streak against Margaret Smith. After easily defeating the Australian in the finals of the South African National Championships by the scores of 6-3 6-2, Billie Jean realized that the tide had finally turned.

After winning three tournaments in the spring – the Southern California Championships, the Tulsa Invitation and the U. S. National Hardcourt Championships in LaJolla, California – and leading the U. S. team to victory at the Federation Cup in Turin, Italy, Billie Jean began her preparation for Wimbledon by winning the English grass court tournaments in Manchester and Queen's Club. On the first day of the Wightman Cup competition, played on Court 1 at the All England Lawn Tennis Club, Ann Jones defeated Nancy Richey and Billie Jean eliminated Virginia Wade to tie the best-of-seven series at 1-1. In the number-one doubles match, Ann and Virginia comfortably defeated Billie Jean and a tentative Janie Albert, who was making her Wightman Cup debut.

It was generally agreed that Ann Jones fashioned the pattern of the match, not just with her tennis but in coaxing Virginia through a series of shaky passages to an eventual comfortable win. In contrast to Jones' careful nurturing there was widespread criticism of Billie Jean's constant lecturings and natterings at her nervous partner, who was at times out of her depth but who seemed to receive no encouragement from her leader. Billie Jean's clearly heard "Gee, we were forty-love in that game" after Janie had dropped her service in the second set seemed

*to break Miss Albert's spirit ... After leaving the court Janie hurried to the dressing room alone and trying to hold back the tears.*²⁸⁴

-- Chris Whiteside, 2006

The following day's matches were played in scorching heat, and Winnie Shaw gave the British team a 3-1 lead with a straight-set win over Mary Ann Eisel. Just one match away from a stunning upset, Virginia Wade won the first set against Nancy Richey, lost the second and served for the match at 5-3 in the third. With the Wightman Cup displayed at courtside, Virginia suddenly froze and began to play defensively, losing four straight games. Still leading 3-2, the British team had another chance to win the series when Ann Jones took the court against Billie Jean. Standing well inside the baseline to take the ball on the rise – and deny Billie Jean any time to get ready for her volleys – Ann won the first set 7-5.

*At 1-1 in the second set, normal service was resumed as Ann inexplicably reverted to her normal defensive game. She had retreated to the baseline to receive serve, was hitting the ball higher over the net – particularly on her backhand – and hitting the ball at such a uniform pace that it looked almost as she was a professional being paid to train Billie Jean's volleying. Mrs. King broke for 3-1 and was soon at 5-2. Agonizingly, Jones couldn't save the set in the next game, which meant that it handed an immediate advantage to Billie Jean in the final set as she would serve first and she was the sort of player who thrives on being ahead.*²⁸⁵

-- Chris Whiteside, 2006

A ten-minute intermission (permitted in Wightman Cup competition) was taken before the third set started. The heat of the day was bearing down, and after Billie Jean held serve for a 2-1 lead, and on the changeover she asked team captain Margaret Varner for some salt tablets. Ann held to level at 2-2, and in the next game, with Billie Jean serving at 30-all she began to groan loudly every time she stretched for a shot.

I looked on in amazement, as immediately a groan escaped Billie Jean, she would then race with seemingly nary a problem to bang away the ball on the next shot – then she would groan again. Billie Jean held on for 3-2 as Ann seemed uncertain. After the changeover, Ann steeled herself and played a good game to level at 3-3. However, the groaning and grimacing from Billie Jean’s side of the net was becoming more pronounced. Ann’s agitation was beginning to show as she glanced despairingly at Pip, who was in the Competitors’ Box. This was always a telling sign in Ann’s game; when things were going well, she didn’t look to her husband for encouragement ... Billie Jean’s groans became louder and seemed to be deliberately timed for just as Ann was making her shot. ²⁸⁶

-- Chris Whiteside, 2006

Billie Jean held for 4-3, and after the changeover Ann reached 40-love on her serve. Three points later, when Billie Jean leveled the game at deuce, Ann’s game collapsed. Billie Jean broke service and closed out the match, 5-7 6-2 6-3. On the final point, Billie Jean missed her first serve and nearly fell over; she got the second serve in and Ann seemingly hit the ball into the net on purpose. When they met at the net to shake hands, Billie Jean apologized. In the deciding match, Nancy Richey and Mary Ann Eisel needed only thirty minutes to defeat Rita Bentley and Elizabeth Starkie to secure the U. S. victory.

She distracted me utterly and completely, and I lost my concentration ... I was so annoyed with Billie Jean and myself for allowing this to happen that I failed to return the ball over the net in the final game. I was disgusted at her antics. Whether she did it on purpose or not is to some extent beside the point. The rules state that you must not distract your opponent but this is precisely what she did ... It took me a long time to get over this incident and Billie Jean and I, for all the time we have spent together since, have never discussed it. ²⁸⁷

-- Ann Jones, 1971

*Many disappointed Britishers felt Billie Jean was putting on the cramp and resorting to gamesmanship. I would like to go on the record as saying, in my opinion, Billie Jean did have the cramp and was not using it as a tactic to gain victory. I was confident Billie was going to win the match, although AP wire service erroneously quoted me as saying Ann was going to win. Billie vehemently denied to the press that the cramp was faked ... As the American captain, I apologized to the British captain because what could have been a wonderfully played sporting event was spoiled and it ended in distraction and annoyance to Billie Jean's opponent. The apology was not because the actuality of the cramp was doubted ... it was a sporting gesture and an attempt to assuage bitter feelings.*²⁸⁸

-- Margaret Varner, 1966

*As for the press, their animosity toward me had really begun, I think, during the 1966 Wightman Cup matches ... the press accused me of faking an injury and of being theatrical, and all but said I'd deliberately psyched Ann out of the match. Even Ann's husband, Pip, thinks to this day I cheated her out of a victory that afternoon. It was ridiculous. I know I'm dramatic sometimes, but there's no way I would have tried to pull a psyche job like that, especially not against Ann. I couldn't have lived with myself if I had.*²⁸⁹

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Seeded fourth at Wimbledon, Billie Jean struggled through her first five matches, getting tested by Winnie Shaw in the first round, Karen Krantzcke in the fourth round and Annette van Zyl in the quarterfinals. Her easiest match of the tournament was in the semifinals against Margaret Smith, beating the Australian 6-3 6-3. Billie Jean was confident about her chances against Maria Bueno in the final, despite the fact she had only won twice against the Brazilian in their previous six matches.

*Maria was real star turn... She kept herself aloof from the rest of the players, which added to her aura ... She scared all the girls ... as far as tennis was concerned, I never thought she knew what was going on out there. She was a con, really ... Maria's problem was simply that she wasn't quick enough. When she moved in to volley off her great first serve, she seldom could get much past the service line, but opponents were so taken by the whole act that they popped high returns back that Maria, as graceful as ever, gracefully put away ... So anyway, against Bueno, I chipped low volleys all afternoon, and she was worn down by the third set, which I won 6-1.*²⁹⁰

-- Billie Jean King, 1982

After winning at Wimbledon, Billie Jean's results for the remainder of the year were inconsistent. She lost to Virginia Wade in the quarterfinals of the Welsh Championships, Rosie Casals in the third round of the Eastern Grass Court Championships, and withdrew from two other grass court tournaments. She rebounded to win the Piping Rock Invitation in Locust Valley, New York, but a lingering illness and the presence of Larry were a distraction during the entire summer.

*Larry just couldn't tolerate hanging around like a puppy dog ... he was plain going crazy. He was absolutely wonderful, too. I was sick for virtually all of the summer with diarrhea, which was subsequently diagnosed as colitis ... By the time Larry and I reached the national doubles championships in Brookline, Massachusetts, I had combat fatigue; and one day, in the house where we were staying as guests, I came apart at the seams, and I started beating Larry and screaming at him, "You don't care!" ... And, of course, he had already been with me for weeks, literally caring for me the whole summer. We were smart enough never to try that again.*²⁹¹

-- Billie Jean King, 1982

At the U. S. National Doubles Championships, Billie Jean and Rosie needed three sets to win their first three matches. In the final, they were decisively beaten by the reigning Wimbledon doubles champions, Maria Bueno and Nancy Richey. The following week, at the U. S. National Championships at Forest Hills, Billie Jean was the top seed and drawn to play her opening match against Kerry Melville, an Australian teenager who was making her first trip to the United States. It should have been a routine win for Billie Jean, since she had beaten Kerry only three weeks earlier at the Piping Rock Invitation by the score of 6-2 6-1. Walking onto the court, Billie Jean saw that the chair umpire was Al Baumann, the USLTA official from Texas who was responsible for having Nancy Richey share the nation's number-one singles ranking. "I asked Kerry if it would be all right if I tried to get another umpire," Billie Jean told a reporter, "and she said 'Fine.' The official referee, Dan Johnson, was quoted as saying I never asked him to remove the umpire, but that is wrong. I asked him as a favor to me to replace Mr. Baumann, but he rejected my appeal. This hurt me deeply. It was not an unreasonable request. It seems the least they could have done." Still bothered by the intestinal virus and agitated with the umpiring situation, Billie Jean lost to Kerry, 6-4 6-4. "I think they were very unfair to me," she said about the tournament officials after the match. "If I had had enough time to cool off, I might have played okay, but as it was we started right in and I was so angry throughout the match I couldn't see straight."²⁹²

Billie Jean ended her season with a surprising loss to 17-year-old Valerie Ziegenfuss in the second round of the Pacific Southwest Championships and the women's doubles title with Rosie. She then spent most of the winter at home, recuperating from the intestinal virus. Despite her inconsistent results during the second half of the year, Billie Jean was ranked number one by the USLTA and placed atop most journalists' unofficial world rankings. She returned to action in February 1967, losing in the finals of the New England Women's Indoor Championships to Mary Ann Eisel, 6-4 5-7 11-9. Match-toughened after her first tournament of the year, Billie Jean then won her next six tournaments, including a successful defense of her title at the South African National Championships with a 7-5 6-4 win over Maria Bueno. Billie Jean also won the

women's doubles with Rosie and the mixed doubles with Owen Davidson in South Africa, giving her a rare triple crown.

Appearing at the French Championships for the first time in her career, Billie Jean worked her way through three matches on the slow red clay – her least favorite surface – until Annette van Zyl defeated her in the quarterfinals in three sets. Although she and Rosie lost in the women's doubles quarterfinals, she won the mixed doubles title with Owen, and the two weeks of clay court play prepared her for the Federation Cup matches in Berlin. Billie Jean won all four of her singles matches and all three of her doubles matches with Rosie, giving the United States its third Federation Cup championship.

Billie Jean defended her singles title at Wimbledon without the loss of a set. She also won the women's doubles trophy with Rosie Casals and the mixed doubles title with Owen Davidson, becoming one of only five women to accomplish the feat. Making a rare appearance at the U. S. National Clay Court Championships in Milwaukee, Billie Jean was expected to meet Nancy Richey in the finals. The two rivals had not played since 1964, and many observers were looking forward to seeing the number one co-ranking controversy from 1965 settled on the court. Billie Jean, however, may have had another reason for entering a tournament that was played on her least-favorite surface.

*... a promoter would occasionally offer expenses for Larry and me together, thus doubling the regular per diem. The most ridiculous example of this came in 1967 when Larry was mysteriously entered in the National Clay Court Championships at the Town Club in Milwaukee. Now, Larry's a pretty good weekend player, but even he'd admit he didn't deserve entry into a circuit tournament, let alone a national championship. When we found out what they'd done, we talked a long time about it. He didn't want to play because he'd probably be bumping some deserving junior player from the draw, but on the other hand, it was the recognition of my worth that we'd been striving for, and besides we were in a really bad box financially, so we went ahead. He lost in the first round.*²⁹³

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Four-time national clay court champion Nancy Richey easily advanced to the final round of the tournament, eager to defend her title against Billie Jean. In the semifinals, however, Billie Jean was beaten by her doubles partner Rosie Casals, 6-4 6-4. The result raised a few eyebrows, and some suggested that Billie Jean wanted to avoid playing Nancy on clay. Rosie, however, was actually playing very well and had reached the Wimbledon semifinals two weeks earlier with a win over Maria Bueno.

Immediately after the national clay court tournament, Billie Jean and Rosie – along with Clark Graebner, the third-ranked American male player – began using an innovative stainless steel racquet that was invented by former French champion Rene LaCoste and marketed in North America by the Wilson Sporting Goods Company. The Wilson T-2000 featured an open throat, a tubular metal construction and a unique string suspension system. The result was a whippy, flexible racquet that had more power but less control than a wooden racquet. Wilson hoped that the visibility of the T-2000 at the upcoming U. S. National Championships would result in massive sales among recreational players.

Using the Wilson T-2000, Billie Jean won the singles and doubles titles of the Eastern Grass Court Championships at the exclusive Orange Lawn Tennis Club in South Orange, New Jersey. At the following week's Wightman Cup competition in Cleveland, she easily defeated Virginia Wade and Ann Jones in straight sets, and she and Rosie won their doubles match against Virginia and Ann to lead the United States to a 6-1 victory over Great Britain. During the week, Billie Jean told a reporter her opinions making tennis more popular. "Get tennis off the society pages and onto sports pages, where it belongs," she said. "Get it away from those private clubs and onto public courts. Lower ticket prices. Let kids in for free. Have open tennis, with pros and amateurs playing together."²⁹⁴

While winning the following week's U. S. National Doubles Championships with Rosie at the Longwood Cricket Club, Billie Jean continued her criticisms of the sport. During the week, there were numerous complaints from spectators after the American doubles team of Charlie Pasarell and Cliff Richey played half-heartedly in losing to Roy Barthes and Steve Tidball. "The Davis Cuppers are mostly babies," Billie Jean told Bud

Collins of the *Boston Globe*. “They’re given everything wherever they go. Last year they were put on that twenty-eight dollar a day guarantee. They didn’t even have to perform well to get their money. When they don’t feel like trying, they tank ... the men do it all the time in minor tournaments when they don’t feel like hustling. You see, none of the men want to be number one badly enough.”²⁹⁵

Billie Jean expressed her frustration as a female player under the control of the USLTA. “The women get nothing but the barest expenses,” she told Collins, “and we’re watched closer on the finances than the men ... I’ve been offered twelve hundred dollars a week to play in Europe. I’d love to do it, but the USLTA insists that I return to America to play our own tournament for straight expenses and I can’t make much doing that. Why shouldn’t I make money? Or anybody else? The tournaments make money on us players. The whole amateur-pro situation is stupid. As soon as it goes open for both men and women, the game will begin moving ... If there were open tournaments and the men had to earn their money by winning, they’d be fighting more and more kids would take up the game who otherwise go into golf, baseball, football and basketball, where the bog money is to be made – and where it’s publicized.”²⁹⁶ Billie Jean was speaking from experience, as her younger brother Randy was only a few years away from starting a successful career as a pitcher for the San Francisco Giants.

At the following week’s U. S. National Championships at Forest Hills, Billie Jean continued to prod the American tennis establishment. After defeating Patti Hogan in a third round match, she told reporters that “the game is fifty years behind the times. Open tennis would be the big salvation, but if we can’t have that we should do something to make kids want to play and win. We in this country have no incentive at all. I am Wimbledon champion and rated the number one women player in the world and I get twenty-eight dollars a day in expenses. The fourth-ranked girl – whoever she is – gets the same thing. We are at a big disadvantage in America. European players in European tournaments make a killing. Maria Bueno in Brazil can demand and get anything she wants. But not us. We aren’t allowed to make a private tour and we get our meager expenses and that’s all.”²⁹⁷

... not everybody in tennis administration was a scoundrel. There were some who even liked me and a few who actually tried to understand me. None, for example, was more sympathetic than Bob Kelleher, who was president of the USLTA ... he came up to me after I had played an easy early-round match in the Stadium, and he asked if he could go back to the clubhouse with me ... “Billie Jean,” Mr. Kelleher said, “I think you can win the Sullivan Trophy this year.” That is the top American honor for an amateur athlete, although most of the time it goes to someone in an Olympic sport, usually in track and field, and probably someone peaches and cream, too ... Mr. Kelleher told me that he was sure they could mount a nice and proper little backstage PR campaign for me, and he was fairly certain I could win. He also told me that he was afraid that there was a move afoot in the USLTA to have me suspended. So, if I would just mind my manners for a few months and keep my mouth shut, I could not only save my skin but probably win the Sullivan Trophy as well ... Finally, I stopped and turned to him. “I’m sorry, Mr. Kelleher,” I said. “I’m sorry, but I can’t do it.”²⁹⁸

-- Billie Jean King, 1982

Billie Jean easily advanced to the Forest Hills finals, losing only a handful of games in each of her first five matches. On the eve of her championship match against Ann Jones, she once again spoke to Bud Collins about the tennis establishment’s refusal to embrace professionalism. “Listen, we should all be pros – the players would like it better,” she insisted. But tennis is so strange. It’s the only sport in the United States in which ‘pro’ is a dirty word ... since there is no such thing as women’s pro tennis, I have to accept this, no matter how hard I work or how good I get.” Collins informed his readers that some players were considering the formation of a union and organizing a strike against the national doubles and national singles tournaments. “Every player who qualifies for those two tournaments,” Billie Jean told Collins, “should get a minimum of \$140, just as at Wimbledon.”²⁹⁹

Billie Jean won her first singles title at Forest Hills with an 11-9 6-4 win over Ann Jones, followed by taking the singles and doubles titles at the Pacific Southwest

Championships in Los Angeles. At the Pacific Coast International in Berkeley, she was surprised in the quarterfinals by Julie Heldman, who had recently returned to the game after taking a year off. Three weeks later, she departed for her second trip to Australia, stopping in Buenos Aires, Argentina along the way to win the South American Championships with a 6-3 3-6 6-2 final round win over Rosie.

Billie Jean began her tour of Australia with a loss to Judy Tegart in the quarterfinals of the New South Wales Open in Sydney and a win at the Victorian Championships in Melbourne. During the South Australian Championships in Adelaide, news came that the British Lawn Tennis Association voted to hold an open tournament at Wimbledon in 1968. Billie Jean and Rosie, along with other top players Arthur Ashe and Frank Froehling, indicated they would play in a open Wimbledon, despite USLTA president Bob Kelleher's warning that it would be foolish for an amateur to enter a tournament with professionals and risk suspension.³⁰⁰ Billie Jean, however, was not worried about any potential disciplinary actions from the USLTA; one week earlier, she indicated that she would be happy to listen to any offers from professional promoters.

As he promised at the U. S. National Championships in September, Kelleher nominated Billie Jean as a candidate for the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) Sullivan Trophy. She was considered to have an excellent chance of winning it until, as Allison Danzig reported in the December 15, 1967 issue of the *New York Times*, she "killed her chances with her recent statements on professional and amateur tennis."³⁰¹ One of seven female athletes nominated for the award, along with seven male athletes, Billie Jean finished in second place. She received 579 points while the winner, world shot-put record holder Randy Matson, received 787 points. Billie Jean, however, received many recognitions at the end of 1967 and early 1968. She was voted Woman Athlete of the Year by the Associated Press and was awarded the Babe Didrikson Zaharias Trophy as the top woman athlete of 1967.³⁰² In the numerous unofficial world rankings, compiled by tennis journalists, she was the top player on everyone's list. For the second year in a row, the USLTA put her alone atop the national women's singles rankings, and she and Rosie were listed as the number one American women's doubles team.

After two losses to Judy Tegart in the early weeks of her Australian tour, Billie Jean hit her stride and won the Western Australian Championships in Perth and the Tasmanian Championships in Hobart. At the Australian National Championships in Melbourne, she defeated Judy in three sets to reach the finals against Margaret Smith Court, who had retired in late 1966 and married Barry Court. With open tennis on the horizon, and the opportunity to make a substantial amount of money, Margaret decided to resume her tennis career. In Melbourne, she signaled she was ready to give Billie Jean a battle when she easily defeated Rosie Casals in the quarterfinals, 6-0 6-2, and won her semifinal against Lesley Turner by the score of 6-3 6-2. The final was a disappointment; Margaret double-faulted and fumbled throughout the match, and Billie Jean won 6-1 6-2 in only thirty-nine minutes.

During the tournament in Melbourne, Billie Jean quietly agreed to become a contract professional under George MacCall, the former Davis Cup captain who had acquired the remnants of Jack Kramer's men's tour and was putting together his co-ed National Tennis League for 1968. MacCall also wanted to secure Margaret Court, but the Australian said she would sign only if she received a higher guarantee than Billie Jean. MacCall refused, and as suggested by Billie Jean, he eventually signed Rosie, Ann Jones and Françoise Durr.³⁰³

By becoming a contract professional, Billie Jean was aware that she would no longer be under the jurisdiction of the USLTA; she would no longer be eligible for a national ranking or play in the Wightman Cup or Federation Cup competitions. Besides the unsanctioned National Tennis League events organized by George MacCall, she would only be able to participate in sanctioned tournaments that were open-to-all, and not any open or amateur tournaments. The open-to-all tournaments, however, were the ones that offered the most prize money – including the U. S. Open and Wimbledon – which was Billie Jean's primary interest anyway. Any prize money she earned in open-to-all tournaments would be included in the annual guarantee that MacCall promised her.

*I signed my contract a few weeks later in Los Angeles, and ironically it was negotiated for me by the same Bob Kelleher, who had warned me just a few months earlier about speaking out against tennis hypocrisy. It was a two-year deal with \$40,000 each year, plus expenses, and I couldn't have been happier. At last I was a professional tennis player, something I wanted to be most of my adult life.*³⁰⁴

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Billie Jean played the final amateur tournaments of her career in February and March of 1968. She won the singles and doubles at the New England Indoor Championships and the U. S. National Indoor Championships for the third time. At the Madison Square Garden Challenge in New York City, Billie Jean and Nancy arrived in the semifinals to play their first match against in each other in nearly four years. In front of ten thousand spectators, Billie Jean won the first set 6-4 and led 5-1 in the second. Nancy took the next two games, and at 5-3 Billie Jean reached match point. With Billie Jean positioned at the net, Nancy put up a short lob. A moment of hesitation forced Billie Jean to smash the shot awkwardly, and she missed the line by several feet.

*I didn't win another game. Nancy finished off that set and raced through the third, 6-0. I was just emotionally kaput. I was supposed to be the best player in the world and all that, but boy, I was still pretty immature in a lot of ways. Later, I talked to Laver and Rosewall about the match and they said to just forget it, that you're always going to have a couple of those along the way. But it wasn't easy to forget, especially since I was turning pro just two days later.*³⁰⁵

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

The National Tennis League was scheduled to open in Los Angeles on April 7, 1968, but the assassination of Martin Luther King caused the event to be postponed. Instead, the four women and six men assembled in Paris one week later. The tour was to be a combination of National Tennis League events plus any other open tournaments that

offered enough prize money (open tennis was finally approved by the ILTF, and the first open tournament was British Hard Court Championships in Bournemouth, England in April 1968). Tour promoter George MacCall entered his men players in Bournemouth, but he felt the prize money offered to the women in that tournament was not warrant bringing Billie Jean, Rosie, Ann and Francoise in from Paris.

*The whole tour was nothing but one-night stands, and I was never so tired in my life ... We always seemed to finish at 2 a.m, rarely got to sleep until four, then had to get up at six in order to arrive at the airport ... When we got to the next city we'd hop a bus and travel six hours along those meandering European roads, get off the bus, check into a hotel – and within an hour we'd have to be on the court again. That's what we did for thirty straight days, and by the end of it I just wouldn't have cared if I died.*³⁰⁶

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

The players had to deal with lockers rooms filled with cobwebs and showers that did not work. The men players often had to lay the portable court, and the women had to help with the taping. At one stop, in a small town in Italy, the lighting for the outdoor court consisted of a string of light bulbs stretched across wooden poles. The playing surface was three inches of fresh asphalt laid out to the exact dimensions of the court. When the players were behind the baseline, they would have to take a small hop if they came onto the court. And with the asphalt having no coating, the tennis balls were black and impossible to see after a few minutes of play.³⁰⁷

I remember that particular night because, the fact is, I don't remember it at all. It was though I went to sleep for a set and a half, and when I woke up I didn't know where I was. That's when I knew things were getting tense. I do remember thinking, "If this is what being a pro means, who needs it?" ... In retrospect, though, the two years that the four of us spent on tour were really our intern years, because when our own tour began in 1971, a lot of the basic things we'd

*found out about promoting and handling the press and just plain day-to-day existing suddenly came in very handy. The four of us were the ones who were able to guts it out and hold our own circuit together when things got tough.*³⁰⁸
 -- Billie Jean King, 1974

Although it was not her favorite tournament, Billie Jean must have viewed the 1968 French Open as a vacation from the rigors of the National Tennis League schedule. She won her first four matches easily enough, including a 6-4 6-4 quarterfinal win over Maria Bueno, and took the first set of her semifinal with Nancy Richey with the loss of only two games.

In October 1967, I felt my left knee starting to go. The next spring the pain was much, much worse and I consulted three doctors. The last one said, "Don't worry. When you need an operation, you'll know." But starting right then, I was in almost constant pain for the next three years. Anytime I got into really long matches, or sometimes even just a long rally, my knee would either flat give out or start to burn with pain. I remember especially my semifinal match against Nancy Richey in the 1968 French Open. We got into a fantastic rally on that slow European clay at Roland Garros Stadium and I finally ended it with sharp forehand down the line that went for a winner. But that one point did me in.

*My knee just wouldn't work right anymore, and I lost the match in three sets.*³⁰⁹
 -- Billie Jean King, 1974

The following month, Billie Jean won her third straight Wimbledon singles title, despite her sub-par physical and mental condition. In the semifinals, Ann Jones led 6-4 5-3 before Billie Jean won four consecutive games to win the second set and then coast through the third set, 6-2. In the final she defeated surprise finalist Judy Tegart, 9-7 7-5, and after the match she was more relieved than elated. Billie Jean and Rosie also defended their women's doubles title, beating Ann and Françoise in a reversal of the

French Open final. Two months later, after more National Tennis League events, Billie Jean won a long, three-set match against Maria Bueno in the semifinals of the U. S. Open. She offered little resistance in the final against Virginia Wade, losing 6-4 6-2. Two weeks after the U. S. Open, Billie Jean withdrew from the Pacific Southwest Championships in Los Angeles and underwent surgery on her left knee. The problem was a mushy patella, which limited her movement and cut off blood circulation to the calf, resulting in leg cramps.

*It took six months before I really felt sure about that left knee, but by then my right one was starting to go. Same damn thing. The next year and a half, I'd just as soon forget. There weren't many triumphs and there were a whole lot of disasters. I was fast becoming a cripple again, my attitude was lousy, and my tennis was worse than that.*³¹⁰

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Billie Jean returned to action on the 1968-1969 Australian circuit, playing in four tournaments and winning none of them. Hoping to at least defend her title at the Australian National Championships, she was extended in the quarterfinals and semifinals by Karen Krantzcke and Ann Jones before being decisively beaten in the final by Margaret Court, 6-4 6-1. Billie Jean then played four National Tennis League events on the West Coast – one of which, in Oakland, California, was promoted by Larry – before flying to South Africa and win the South African National Championships and the Durban Open. She then won only three games from Kerry Melville in the quarterfinals of the Italian Open, withdrew from the British Hard Court Championships in Bournemouth – citing tennis elbow – and lost in the quarterfinals of the French Open to Lesley Turner Bowrey, 6-3 6-3. “I did just about everything wrong,” she told tennis journalist Richard Evans about her loss on the slow red clay in Paris. “I shall have to lose a hundred times on this stuff before I learn not to be so silly.”³¹¹

In addition to a sore elbow, painful knee and negative attitude, Billie Jean was dealing with additional off-court distractions, as she was beginning to experience conflicting emotions about her sexuality.

*During the late 1960s, the whole world was tumult, and so was I. I was just a lost soul. Usually the court was my sanctuary. I was just going through hell, and I told Larry that things weren't right. I didn't want to get into exactly why. By then I knew I had some interest in women, and I'm going "Oh, no, I don't understand what's going on!" I felt like I was betraying him. I was a mess. I think he was getting some inklings, but I couldn't even get the words out, I was so ashamed. I couldn't even say "gay" or "homosexual" or "lesbian" to Larry. I couldn't get it out to anybody, let alone him. I couldn't get it out for myself. To speak about being gay or lesbian was a no-no, and if it was talked about publicly, there was so much hostility ... I wanted a divorce from Larry in 1969, but he wouldn't give it to me.*³¹²

-- Billie Jean King, 2006

After several years as the world's best female tennis player, Billie Jean hoped that Wilson Sporting Goods would produce and market a tennis racquet with her name on it. In 1967, she agreed to use the new Wilson T-2000 metal racquet in competition, and when she became a professional in 1968 she was given \$1500 for playing with it.

Wilson refused to sell an autographed model with my name on it, because they were already making a Maureen Connolly "woman's racket." The Connolly model was exactly the same as the Wilson best-seller, the Jack Kramer model, but Wilson carried on as if there were all the difference in the world between a man's racket and a woman's ... finally, I went to Gene Buick, the Wilson racket manager, and I flat-out asked him why they couldn't produce a Billie Jean model. Maureen was very sick then. "If Maureen dies, sure," he said. "Only one

*woman at a time.” I couldn’t believe he had said that; I almost got sick. Not long after that, Maureen did die, and Wilson began producing a Billie Jean model.*³¹³
 -- Billie Jean King, 1982

At the 1969 Wimbledon Championships, a film crew followed Billie Jean around, gathering footage for the BBC television show “Man Alive.” All of the spectators who were interviewed indicated that they were tired of Billie Jean winning the Wimbledon singles each year, and they hoped someone else would lift the trophy in 1969. “She used to be always chattering and always making funny remarks – a very happy competitor,” *London Daily Express* tennis writer Gerald Williams observed. “I don’t think she is now, and I think that’s why the public really don’t enjoy watching her play as much as they did at the beginning when they clearly adored her. The Wimbledon crowds adored her, the first couple of years.”³¹⁴ Billie Jean acknowledged that she was no longer embraced by the spectators at Wimbledon. “I remember very much in 1966, the first year I won Wimbledon, the people were really for me,” she said. “I got to the point where they said, this is it, they wanted Billie Jean to do well because they thought I had a good chance, and I could just feel the crowd saying, ‘Come on! Come on!’ They loved it when I won it. The next year was the absolute opposite. Billie Jean’s had her turn and let someone else win it. That is just human nature.”³¹⁵

Billie Jean comfortably advanced to the quarterfinals, where she was tested by Judy Tegart, 4-6 7-5 8-6 in a repeat of the previous year’s final. She defeated her good friend and doubles partner, Rosie Casals, in a semifinal match that last only thirty minutes. “Rosie seemed mesmerized and at no time during the match did she look like she wanted to win or show any interest in match,” Mary Hardwick wrote in *World Tennis*. “Rosie’s attitude was so unfortunate that at times Billie Jean was in obvious distress because of the attitude of her opponent.”³¹⁶ The 6-1 6-0 win put Billie Jean in her fourth consecutive Wimbledon singles final, where she would play national heroine Ann Jones.

*If there were any hints of a British change of attitude toward me the year before, this time there was no question, at least not in my mind, that they were really down on me. It was Ann's thirteenth Wimbledon, and up to then she'd made it at least as far as the semifinals eight times without ever winning. The crowd was for her, as it should have been. That didn't bother me at all. I love partisan crowds, for me or against me ... But on that day against Ann, I sensed an almost total hypocrisy that almost bordered on dishonesty. It was very strange. They'd go through the motions and applaud a good shot of mine, but they did it in such a blatantly cool way that I knew that what they really wanted was for me to dump the ball into the net. It would have been obvious to anyone ... I hate to say it, but the British tennis fans were just asses that day, everything I thought the British weren't supposed to be. And to top it off, I felt I was getting screwed on the line calls themselves, that the linesmen and lineswomen were making sure Ann won, no matter what.*³¹⁷

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Some of the 15,000 fans had queued up at the gates of the All England Lawn Tennis Club twenty-six hours before the match began in order to get a seat. Billie Jean started strongly, winning the first set at 6-3. Ann won the second set by the same score, and immediately got into trouble when she fell behind 15-40 on her serve in the first game of the third set.

During this game occurred an incident which reveals the tension in which everyone, players and spectators alike, can get involved. The crowd, giving me the most wonderful support, had – quite wrongly – disputed one or two close line calls. Then Billie Jean hit a down a ball down the sideline, and before the linesman could even call there were loud shouts of “Out, out!” When the call was given in my favor, Billie Jean turned and curtsied to the spectators behind her, which was really rather silly as it put some of the crowd against her ... I

think this showed that her concentration was starting to go, otherwise I am sure she would never have made this gesture. ³¹⁸

-- Ann Jones, 1971

Billie Jean and Ann held serve for the first three games of the third set. The turning point of the match came with Billie Jean serving at 1-2; Ann hit two winning service returns to take a 3-1 lead. Four games later, Billie Jean served at 2-5 to stay in the match. At deuce, she dumped on easy volley into the net, and she double faulted on the next point to end the match. Billie Jean was gracious in defeat, urging her friend to raise the Wimbledon trophy over her head during the awards presentation. "Hold it up, Ann!" she playfully yelled. "Hold it up! You've waited long enough for this day!" ³¹⁹

You may be shocked and I won't name the match, because I don't want to deprive my opponent of anything, but I absolutely tanked the final of a grand slam tournament once. Honestly – I threw the match completely. I was in a bad humor. Larry and I had a horrible argument that morning ... I had to break off the argument because I had to get to the tournament and dress for the final. The result was that I took the court with a terrible feeling of incompleteness, which made it all the harder for me to concentrate on the match. I remember, distinctly, for example, that all of a sudden, in the middle of the match, my mind started to wander to the state of the world. Since the state of the world is rarely very good, and certainly wasn't on this occasion, I became even more depressed and lost more concentration. Then I decided that the fans didn't like me, that they weren't fair. All of a sudden, I just said to myself, "All right, people, you can have it. You don't want me to win, and I don't care all that much about tennis anyway, because I'm angry at Larry and the world stinks, so to hell with it, people, I'll just let my opponent have it." And I packed it in at that moment as sure as if I had picked up my racquets and left the court. ³²⁰

-- Billie Jean King, 1982

For the next eight months, Billie Jean combined tournament titles with surprising losses. She won the Irish Open the week after Wimbledon, as well as the Pacific Southwest Open and the Stockholm Indoor Open later in the year. She had losses to clay court experts Lea Pericoli in Gstaad, Switzerland and Helga Niessen in the South American Open in Buenos Aires. One of her biggest disappointments of the year was loss in the quarterfinals of the U. S. Open to Nancy Richey, who unveiled a surprise strategy at critical phase of the match and took charge of the net. Nancy also defeated Billie Jean in three sets in the finals of the Howard Hughes Open in Las Vegas in October, taking home the first prize of \$3000. In the Las Vegas semifinals, Billie Jean won a long, 8-6 6-8 6-4 battle against Margaret Court, who had lost only a handful of singles and doubles matches all year. Margaret won their next match in the finals of the World Tennis Luv Cup in Philadelphia in February 1970, splitting sets with Billie Jean and taking the match-deciding tiebreak at 14-12. Two weeks later, Margaret prevailed again. In the finals of the Maureen Connolly Brinker Memorial, the Australian won by the score of 1-6 6-3 11-9.

In early 1970, George MacCall told Billie Jean, Rosie and Françoise Durr that he decided not to renew their contracts with the National Tennis League. Ann Jones asked for, and was given, an early termination of her contract in the fall of 1969. MacCall did not want to find a replacement for Ann, and he did not want to continue carrying three women on his roster. Billie Jean and Rosie wanted to keep playing as touring professionals, and Larry composed a proposal for a circuit that would feature eight of the world's best female players. While Larry was stationed at Fort Harrison in Indianapolis, Indiana – he had been drafted into the U. S. Army in November 1969 and took a leave of absence from his job at a law firm in Honolulu, Hawaii – the plans for a women's-only contract professional tour was conceived. He envisioned a series of ten \$8000 events in which a bracket of four “challengers” would play off to decide who would play the “champion” in a match that was worth \$5000 to the winner. Larry argued that playing for such high stakes would attract the interest of the general public and legitimize women's professional tennis. He also suggested the formation of a corporation, in which the players held ownership and would profit from the tour. The proposal, embraced by

Billie Jean and Rosie, was sent to Margaret Court, Virginia Wade, Nancy Richey, Judy Dalton, Julie Heldman, Ann Jones and Francoise Durr – as well as Gladys Heldman, who had also talked about putting together an indoor circuit for women in early 1971.³²¹

Except for Billie Jean and Rosie, Larry's proposal did not capture the imagination of any of the other women players. As a result, Billie Jean and Rosie reluctantly applied for reinstatement with the USLTA; if approved, their status would be changed contract professional to independent professional, which would allow them to play in open tournaments as well as open-to-all events, receive national rankings and be eligible for the Wightman Cup and Federation Cup. The USLTA did recognize the independent player category in 1968 but approved it the following year, allowing all players under its jurisdiction to accept prize money. Ann Jones and Francoise Durr also asked their respective national associations to rescind their contract professional status, making them eligible once again for international team competitions.

No longer guaranteed an income, Billie Jean and Rosie played a full schedule of tournaments in the spring of 1970 in order to earn as much prize money as possible. Billie Jean lost to Margaret in the final of the South African Open, but beat her the following week in the finals of the Durban Open, where she also took the women's doubles and mixed doubles. Playing at the famed tournament in Monte Carlo for the first time in her career, Billie Jean won the mixed doubles with Marty Riessen but was beaten in the singles semifinals by Kerry Melville by the scores of 6-2 7-5. Billie Jean, using the steel Wilson T-2000 racquet in the previous tournaments, felt she played so poorly against Kerry that she went switched back a wooden model. Instead of using her Wilson Billie Jean King Autograph model, however, she elected to use the newly-produced Wilson Jack Kramer Pro-Staff.³²²

At the Italian Open in Rome, Billie Jean finally proved her proficiency on red European clay. In the quarterfinals, she won only one game in the first set against Helga Niessen. Tennis writer David Gray, covering the tournament for *World Tennis* magazine, noted that Billie Jean "gave Niessen scarcely any pace in the second and third sets, and Helga suddenly found it impossible to lure the American into her trap. She began to hunt for points and made mistakes. A German television crew had turned up to make a film

about her. The cameras whirred furiously in the first set. Later, when Billie Jean took the second set by 6-2 and the third by 6-4, they seemed less interested.”³²³

For her semifinal, Billie Jean convinced the tournament directors to put her match against Virginia Wade on the Foro Italico stadium court. As was the tradition in Rome, women’s matches – including the finals – were rarely put on the huge stadium court. The Italian fans were enthralled by a fascinating match in which Virginia won the first set at 6-3 and held two match points at 5-4 in the second. Billie Jean survived that crisis and led 6-5, followed by a game that went to deuce twenty-one times and lasted twenty-two minutes. Virginia has points to win the game on sixteen occasions and fended off six set points. Billie Jean, hitting wide to Virginia’s forehand and hitting some spectacular backhand volleys, finally won the set and then completed a 3-6 7-5 6-3 victory.³²⁴

The final against defending champion Julie Heldman, played on the tournament’s windiest day, was anticlimactic. Billie Jean was determined to spoil Julie’s day, and she did it with the loss of only four games. She earned only \$600 for winning one of the world’s most renowned clay court tournaments, compared to the \$3500 that was awarded to men’s champion Ilie Nastase. To make matters even worse, the amount that Billie Jean earned for the week was a reduction from the previous year, when Julie was given \$800 for winning the title.³²⁵

Seeded second at the French Open behind Margaret Court, Billie Jean had no problems until she faced Helga Niessen in the quarterfinals. Billie Jean easily won the first set at 6-1 and held break points on sixteen occasions in the set for a comfortable lead. She was unable to capitalize on those opportunities, and early in the third set her right leg was seized with cramps. Unable to move forward for the West German’s drop shots, Billie Jean was defeated 1-6 8-6 6-1. With Rosie, she lost in the finals of the women’s doubles to Francoise Durr and Gail Chanfreau, but won the mixed doubles title with Bob Hewitt over Francoise and Jean Claude Barclay.

Billie Jean and Rosie got reinstated by the USLTA in time to be eligible for the Wightman Cup in June. Billie Jean was named to the team, but strangely enough Rosie was not. Billie Jean won her singles match against Virginia Wade on the first day of the competition, but by the next day the U. S. team trailed 2-3 in the best-of-seven match

format. Just as it happened in 1966, Billie Jean needed to defeat Ann Jones to keep her team's chances alive. She won 6-4 6-2 to level the series at 3-3 and put the outcome of the subsequent doubles match to determine the winning team. Nancy Richey had injured her knee and back in losing singles match with Virginia and was unable to play doubles. Julie Heldman and Mary Ann Curtis had already played in the previous day's doubles match, and under Wightman Cup rules neither of them could play doubles again. The only remaining player was Peaches Bartkowicz, who had played so poorly in practice that team captain Doris Hart decided not to use her in any of the singles matches. While Rosie watched from the stands, Billie Jean and Peaches took the court for one of the most dramatic Wightman Cup doubles matches ever played.

For me, possibly my supreme doubles accomplishment was in the Wightman Cup of 1970, which was played at Wimbledon, when Peaches Bartkowicz and I had to play Virginia Wade and Winnie Shaw in the final match. The Cup was tied at three matches apiece, and not only were the British a good team, but they were playing before the home crowd – and Peaches was not exactly a classic doubles type. She was like Chris Evert, only worse, because she just couldn't stand ever to go to the net. But she had a great return of serve and outstanding groundies, so I sorted this situation out, and I told her, "Look, don't even worry about coming to the net. We'll play it this way: you take it back, and I'll take it up." And we did. We played the absolute worst way you can set up for doubles, one up and one back, but it was a surprise team improvisation, and it snuck us through in three sets, and we won the Cup.³²⁶

-- Billie Jean King, 1982

Billie Jean's right leg bothered her during the third set of her Wightman Cup doubles match, and as a result she played only doubles with Rosie at the London Grass Court Championships at Queen's Club. At Wimbledon, she was tested in singles by Karen Krantzcke and Francoise Durr in the quarterfinals and semifinals, but she survived those encounters to reach the final against Margaret Court.

*... everybody still makes a big fuss over the “great” Wimbledon final I played with Margaret in 1970, when I led in both sets, but lost 14-12 11-9. What a classic! Oh yeah; if either one of us had played up to our average form, the other would have been lucky to take a couple of games. But as it was, we were both lucky to be on our feet. Margaret had her injured ankle shot full of novocaine just before we came out, and my knee was so bad I had to have it operated on the very next week. I don’t think I could manage to get to the net more than a couple times in the whole dreary forty-six games. But in the press, it was, and will forever remain, a great all-time match.*³²⁷

-- Billie Jean King, 1982

Billie Jean received some consolation when she won the women’s doubles title with Rosie, defeating Francoise Durr and Virginia Wade 6-2 6-3. The following week she was back home in California, knowing that she would miss the upcoming U. S. Open since she would soon have surgery on her right knee. “The pain is so bad,” she told Jeff Prugh of the *Los Angeles Times*, “that you wonder whether you can walk again. But then, if there’s one thing I really can’t stand, it’s losing. That kills me, too.” She disagreed with those who believed that another knee surgery would be the end of her career. “That’s what the reporters want me to say, that this will mean the end. It makes a better story. But the more I think about it, the more I know I wouldn’t like going out a loser. That’s a terrible feeling, knowing you *have* to quit. Of course, I may feel a lot different about it six weeks from now, but right now I want to be back playing in tournaments again in January.”³²⁸ Billie Jean’s interview with Prugh was interrupted by a telephone call from Larry, who had finished his basic training with the U. S. Army and was back at his job at a law firm in Honolulu. Larry told Billie Jean that he was able to secure a television commentary job for her at the U. S. Open, which made her smile. Billie Jean’s partners in the broadcast booth would be *Boston Globe* sportswriter Bud Collins and Jack Kramer, the man who would inadvertently create a new era for women’s professional tennis.

Rosie Casals

In the mid-1920s, Manuel Casals and his sister Maria emigrated to the United States from El Salvador, seeking better opportunities from what was offered in their home country. They settled in the Western Addition section of San Francisco, a poor district of the city that was eventually demolished for an urban renewal project. Neither of them spoke English very well, and with the economic depression of the 1930s, it was difficult to find work. Manuel worked a variety of odd jobs to make ends meet, and he eventually saved enough money to invest in a stamp machine business. The machines were usually located in grocery stores, and Manuel kept the machines filled and repaired them when they broke down.³²⁹

Lillian Matamoros, Manuel and Maria's cousin, came to the United States with her brother, Renee, in the early 1940s when she was sixteen. Within a few years she was the single mother of two children, Victoria and Rosemary. Feeling that she was unable to care for the girls, Lillian decided that they should live with and be raised by Manuel and Maria. Victoria and Rosemary – nicknamed Vicky and Rosie – grew up in the modest house on Grove and Buchanan Streets, and they came to call their adoptive parents “Father” and “Tia.”³³⁰

*We were about the only white family on the block. All my friends were black when I was young.*³³¹

-- Rosie Casals, 1974

Manuel Casals loved to play the rough-and-tumble version of European soccer, and continued to do so until the day he suffered a broken leg while playing in a game. After being told by a doctor that he had to quit playing soccer or risk losing his leg, Manuel – at the age of forty – decided to start playing tennis. Self-taught and unorthodox in his tennis stroke production, Manuel developed a variety of chops, spins and slices. On occasion, Manuel brought eight-year-old Rosie and Victoria to the tennis courts in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, where he played doubles matches with his friends.

The girls were expected to sit and watch, but Rosie insisted that she wanted to play tennis as well – and at times she was especially vocal about it.³³²

*Sometimes my father and his friends would all chip in, a nickel each, and send me over to the merry-go-round. Then they'd be able to finish playing their games in peace.*³³³

-- *Rosie Casals, 1976*

The Golden Gate Park carousel was only a temporary diversion, and Rosie continued to insist on learning to play tennis. Manuel soon gave in, and he began to teach the two girls. Victoria was better than Rosie at first, but she eventually lost interest. Rosie, on the other hand, improved at a quick rate since she loved to spend up to five hours a day on the courts. Manuel often paired her against older male opponents who usually beat her, and the only time Rosie pouted was when she thought the men were taking it easy on her. The tennis courts at Golden Gate Park quickly became the center of her life, and she played there as often as she could, even when Manuel was not there to coach her.³³⁴

*I played with anybody I could, anybody who was willing to play. Lots of times, I wound up hitting the ball against a backboard, practicing my shots that way.*³³⁵

-- *Rosie Casals, 1976*

Manuel was able to budget a small amount of money to buy racquets and shoes for Rosie. More funds were eventually needed for tournament entry fees and travel expenses, and the Northern California Tennis Association and the Golden Gate Park Tennis Club helped to send Rosie to several competitions in some of the area's nicest clubs.

*It was difficult. I was aware that other people lived differently, that other kids had money, that they could afford to go to tournaments in style, have nice homes, have enough money to go out to restaurants.*³³⁶

-- Rosie Casals, 1976

By the time she was thirteen, Rosie's dedication and sacrifices were starting to pay off. In 1961, she played seven 13-and-under tournaments and won all of them without the loss of a set, she played twelve 15-and-under tournaments and won all but three of them, including the USLTA National Girls 15 Hardcourt Championships in Burlingame, California. Perhaps most remarkably, Rosie reached the second round of the Pacific Coast Championships in Berkeley and pushed Carol Caldwell – twelfth in the U. S. national women's singles rankings – during a 8-6 6-1 loss. Jim Moffett, former president of the Northern California Tennis Association, told *World Tennis* magazine that Rosie was “the best thirteen-year-old he had ever seen.”³³⁷

Throughout 1962, Rosie continued to dominate the 14-and-under tournaments in Northern California, and in the older divisions she was usually stopped by Jane Albert, listed at number one in the national 15-and-under rankings or Jean Danilovich, who was ranked at number three. Rosie played the Pacific Northwest circuit that summer, winning the Girls 18-and-under title at the Washington State Championships before returning home to win the San Francisco City Championships in August.

Rosie's first win over an established international player occurred at the Thunderbird Invitation in Phoenix, Arizona in January 1963. In the quarterfinals, she upset Yola Ramirez Ochoa, the top-ranked woman from Mexico who had defeated Billie Jean Moffitt at Wimbledon in 1961. Although she was convincingly beaten in the semifinals by Nancy Richey, the USLTA's sixth-ranked player, fourteen-year-old Rosie was beginning to make a name for herself among the nation's women players.

No longer finding the 14-and-under and 16-and-under divisions challenging to her, Rosie competed in 18-and-under and women's divisions at tournaments throughout Northern California. She usually reached the final of every event she entered, still unable to break through against her older rivals Jane Albert and Jean Danilovich. Rosie

preserved, determined to improve her tennis, which had become the top priority in her life.

I wanted to be someone. I knew I was good, and winning tournaments – it's a kind of way of being accepted. ³³⁸

-- Rosie Casals, 1976

In the summer of 1963, Rosie made her first trip east to play in the U. S National Girls 16 Championships in Lake Bluff, Illinois. Although she was seeded third, Rosie had never played on clay before and she was upset by Becky Vest in the quarterfinals, 4-6 6-1 6-1. She teamed with Pixie Lamm to win the doubles title and also won the feed-in consolation event. After the tournament in Lake Bluff, Rosie played on grass for the first time, reaching the quarterfinals of the Delaware Girl's Grass Court Championships in Wilmington and helping the Northern California team reach the finals of the National Girl's Grass Court Team Championships, played at the Germantown Cricket Club in Philadelphia.

I had to learn, at this very early age, to cope with new scenes, courts, balls, players. There was clay in Illinois, and grass where you had to worry about whether the ball would even hit the strings. ³³⁹

-- Rosie Casals, 1974

Despite her youth, Rosie was not impressed with the exclusive eastern grass court clubs. Her upbringing on the public courts at Golden Gate Park had made her resilient, and she was not intimidated by anyone.

Those clubs, they were something else. All those rich kids. They got to play tennis all the time, and yet you'd never see a top player coming out of there, from New York or Boston. The top ones, they came from Florida and California, off the public courts. ³⁴⁰

-- Rosie Casals, 1976

In early 1964, the USLTA listed Rosie at number eight in the Girls 16 Singles national rankings and at number one in the Girls 16 Doubles rankings for her results from the previous year. In the next few months, Rosie raised her game to another level. She won the California State Junior Championships in June with a final round win over Jean Danilovich, won the U. S. National Girls 18 Hardcourt Championships in July over Kathy Harter and Valerie Ziegenfuss, and reached the semifinals of the U. S. National Girls 16 Championships. In August, Rosie won the singles and doubles titles at the Delaware Girls Grass Court Championships and led the Northern California team to victory at the National Girls Team Championships. She made her debut at the U. S. National Doubles Championships in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, partnering with Patricia Reyes and reaching the fourth round.

Rosie also played at the U. S. National Singles Championships in Forest Hills, New York for the first time in 1964, where she won two rounds and took the first set from eighth-seeded Norma Baylon of Argentina before losing 4-6 6-2 6-2. "Norma Baylon said afterwards," Mary Hardwick reported in *World Tennis* magazine, "that she found Casals quicker than any other opponent she has ever played. When this young San Franciscan learns the importance of certain points and her generalship on court matures, she could develop into one of the country's top players." ³⁴¹

After Forest Hills, in the nation's two most important fall tournaments, Rosie reached the semifinals of the Pacific Coast Championships in Berkeley, California and pushed eventual champion Judy Tegart of Australia in a 6-1 8-6 loss. The following week, at the Pacific Southwest Championships in Los Angeles, she had a 7-5 3-6 6-4 second round win over British Wightman Cup player Rita Bentley and won the doubles title with Margaret Fredericks. Rosie's results for 1964 earned a USLTA national

women's singles ranking of number thirteen, as well as number four in the Girls 18 and under division and number three in the Girls 16 and under list.

By 1965, sixteen-year-old Rosie was the second best female player in Northern California – only Jane Albert of Pebble Beach, ranked sixth in the nation, was ahead of her. She won the women's singles title at the Northern California Championships in May, and the following month she won her first national adult title, the women's singles at the U. S. National Hard Court Championships in Sacramento in June. Two weeks earlier, in the finals of the California State Championships in Portola Valley, Rosie had her first encounter with Billie Jean Moffitt, the second-ranked woman in the United States and 1963 Wimbledon finalist. Although Billie Jean won the match, 6-2 8-6, she was impressed with the raw talent of her young opponent.

Two tournaments on the Midwest summer clay court circuit further established Rosie as one of the nation's best women players. She reached the semifinals of the Western Championships in Milwaukee and the same round of the U. S. National Clay Court Championships in River Forest, Illinois the following week. In River Forest, she upset second-seeded Carole Caldwell Graebner in the quarterfinals, 6-4 6-4, before losing to Julie Heldman in the semifinals in the best match of the tournament. After watching Julie prevail by the score of 11-9 7-5, Mary Hardwick reported in *World Tennis* that the match was “a great fight between two of the most potentially brilliant players in the game today. One wins with her brain and the other with her natural ball sense and feel. We have not seen anything like Rosemary since Maria Bueno was seventeen.”³⁴²

In the Eastern grass court tournaments, Rosie defended her singles and doubles titles at the Delaware Girl's Grass Court Championships, and she won all her matches to help Northern California retain its title at the National Girl's Team Championships. Seeded number one at the U. S. National Girls 18 Championships in Philadelphia, Rosie smashed the little finger of her playing hand in a door before the tournament began. A doctor told her that stitches were required, but Rosie refused because it would prevent her from playing. She won her first four matches with her finger continually bleeding, and in the semifinals she lost 7-5 4-6 6-3 to unseeded Julie Anthony of Malibu, California.

Rosie's finger healed in time for the 1965 U. S. National Championships in Forest Hills, where she had the misfortune to draw eighth-seeded Norma Baylon of Argentina – a rematch of their third-round meeting from the previous year. Since their last match, the Argentine clay-court expert had become much more proficient on grass, and she dismissed Rosie in straight sets, 6-3 6-4. Rosie also lost her opening mixed doubles match, partnering with Jim McManus in a straight set loss to Francoise Durr and Donald Dell. Forest Hills was not a total disaster for Rosie, however; Billie Jean Moffitt, who had not forgotten about their close match in the finals of the California State Championships, asked her to play doubles in England the following summer.³⁴³

During her senior year at George Washington High School in San Francisco, Rosie played a full schedule of tournaments across the United States. Although everyone always considered her very bright, she spent little time on her studies – and her teachers seemed to sympathize.

*I made them understand that school was secondary and tennis was my life ... I was never there, always off playing tennis.*³⁴⁴
 -- Rosie Casals, 1976

Rosie made her debut in the nation's two most important women's indoor tournaments in early 1966. At the New England Women's Indoor Championships in Salem, Massachusetts in February, Rosie surprised her doubles partner, Billie Jean Moffitt King, in the quarterfinals by the score of 2-6 6-4 7-5. She lost in the quarterfinals of the following week's U. S. National Women's Indoor Championships to Carol Aucamp, but won the doubles title with Billie Jean over Carol and Justina Bricka, 3-6 6-4 6-2.

Receiving permission from her high school principal to miss the final weeks of her classes and graduation ceremony, Rosie teamed with Billie Jean to win the women's doubles titles at the U. S. National Hard Court Championships in La Jolla, California and the Tulsa Invitation in May. With Billie Jean as her chaperone, Rosie made her first trip abroad to play four grass tournaments in England. At the London Grass Court

Championships, played at Queen's Club, Rosie won her first encounter with British number-two Virginia Wade, 6-3 2-6 8-6. The following week, Rosie reached the fourth round of Wimbledon, along the way defeating Kerry Melville of Australia, another young player making her first overseas trip. She made a respectable first appearance on Centre Court, showing no nerves and playing aggressively in a 6-2 6-3 loss to third-seeded Ann Jones. Days later, she watched her friend and doubles partner Billie Jean take her first Wimbledon singles title with a three-set win over Maria Bueno.

Rosie and Billie Jean had moderate doubles success on their overseas trip, reaching the Wimbledon quarterfinals and winning the Welsh Championships. When they returned home to the United States, they won two tournaments on the summer grass court circuit. At the Eastern Grass Court Championships in South Orange, New Jersey, they lost the first set of their quarterfinal match against the Australian team of Kerry Melville and Karen Krantzcke by the score of 25-23. They recovered to win the next two sets for the match, and then won the title the following day with a 15-13 7-9 7-5 final over Virginia Wade and Winnie Shaw. Rosie's results in the singles draw were also memorable. She scored her second career victory over Billie Jean, a 6-3 6-8 6-3 win in the third round. Rosie then reached the final, where she won the first set from Donna Fales at 7-5 before losing the next two sets.

Two weeks before the adult national doubles and singles tournaments, Rosie was required to participate in the U. S. Girl's Team Championships in Philadelphia. Since the Northern California Tennis Association was helping to fund her trip in the East, Rosie had no choice but to play.³⁴⁵ She had become an established player on the international circuit, and playing in junior tournaments was no longer challenging. Knowing that the end of her junior career was at hand, Rosie kept her interest long enough to comfortably win all her matches and lead Northern California to its third successive title. One week later, she was upset in the semifinals of the U. S. National Girl's 18 Championships by Patsy Rippey of Oklahoma, 5-7 6-4 6-3. In the doubles final, the last junior match that Rosie played, she and Lynn Abbes held match point against Peaches Bartkowicz and Valerie Ziegenfuss before losing 5-7 8-6 6-2.

Happy to be back on the adult circuit, Rosie partnered with Billie Jean to reach finals of the U. S. National Doubles Championships at the Longwood Cricket Club in Brookline, Massachusetts. They needed three sets to win each of their first three matches, and in the final against recent Wimbledon champions Maria Bueno and Nancy Richey they lost 6-3 6-4. At Forest Hills, Rosie had an outstanding run with wins over Winnie Shaw, Patti Hogan, Peaches Bartkowicz and Francoise Durr. In the semifinals against Maria Bueno, Rosie entertained the packed stadium with her attacking game and scrambling ability. Maria escaped with a 6-2 10-12 6-3 victory, and since the Brazilian crushed Nancy Richey in final two days later with the loss of only four games, it is conceivable to think that Rosie could have won that national title if she had won her semifinal match.

After winning the doubles titles with Billie Jean at the Pacific Southwest Championships and the Pacific Coast International in the fall, Rosie was part of an American squad that was invited to play in Australia in late 1966 and early 1967. She defeated Lesley Turner and Kerry Melville to win prestigious Victorian Championships, lost to Lesley in the semifinals of the Australian National Championships, and won the singles, women's doubles and mixed doubles titles at the Will International Championships in Wellington, New Zealand. On her way back to the United States, Rosie rejoined Billie Jean in Johannesburg, South Africa to play in the South African National Championships, where they won the women's doubles title over Maria Bueno and Judy Tegart.

Six weeks at home included the California State Championships, with Billie Jean beating Rosie in the singles final and teaming up to win the doubles. Selected to represent the United States in the Federation Cup on red clay at the Blau Weiss Club in Berlin, Germany, Billie Jean and Rosie planned to play several European tournaments in order to get accustomed to the slow surface. Rosie traveled to Rome to play the Italian Championships, where she was seeded fourth. She arrived at the courts fifty minutes late for her 9:00 am match against Alessandro Gobbo, and the referee defaulted her. "I honestly didn't think I was on at that time," she said. "I asked them at night and they couldn't tell me." Alessandro refused to reverse the decision, and Rosie had to settle for

playing only in the women's doubles, which she won with Lesley Turner. "How do you like that? I only play one event and I get a title," Rosie said later.³⁴⁶

Rosie got revenge against Alessandro Gobbo the following week, beating her in the quarterfinals of the Reggio Emilia clay court tournament. She went on to beat Lea Pericoli, Italy's best woman player, in the final. She then joined Billie Jean in Paris for the French Championships, where they lost in the quarterfinals of the women's doubles. Rosie also reached the fourth round of the singles draw, losing to clay court specialist Helga Schultze of Germany. With several weeks of European clay court play behind them, Rosie and Billie Jean traveled to Berlin for the Federation Cup competition.

In Berlin, Rosie and Billie Jean did not lose a singles or doubles match all week, beating the teams from Rhodesia, South Africa, West Germany and Great Britain. Rosie learned enough from her loss to Helga Schultze in the French Championships to turn the tables on her in Berlin, and she had her second career win over Virginia Wade in the championship team match by the score of 9-7 8-6. After Billie Jean clinched the title with a 6-3 6-4 win over Ann Jones, the meaningless doubles match was abandoned after Rosie and Billie Jean split the first two sets against Ann and Virginia due to the unseasonably cold weather.³⁴⁷

Barely missed getting seeded in the Wimbledon women's singles draw, Rosie came up against second-seeded Maria Bueno in the fourth round. "For ten years, Maria has been the Queen of Wimbledon, whether or not she won," Mary Hardwick reported in *World Tennis*, "and the anguish of maintaining her position has taken its toll."³⁴⁸ After winning the first set with loss of only two games, Maria suddenly became error-prone and tentative. Rosie sensed her chance and continued to play aggressively, taking the next two sets, 6-2 6-3. At the end of the tournament, Maria played the women's doubles final and mixed doubles final on the same day and injured her elbow in the process. The combination of mental and physical frailties triggered a swift decline in the Brazilian's great career.

In the quarterfinals, Rosie defeated Judy Tegart of Australia, 7-5 6-4, to set up a semifinal encounter with Ann Jones – a repeat of their fourth round match from one year earlier, when the British number-one comfortably won in straight sets. This time, Rosie

won the first set 6-2 and reached 5-5 in the third before Ann called upon her greater experience to escape with a narrow victory. Rosie and Billie Jean had an easy win over Ann and Virginia Wade in the women's doubles semifinals and needed three sets to defeat Maria Bueno and Nancy Richey, the defending champions, to win their first major title as a team.

At the 1967 U. S. National Clay Court Championships in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, there was heightened excitement over the anticipated final-round showdown between Billie Jean and Nancy Richey, since the Californian and the Texan had not played each other in nearly three years. In the semifinals, Rosie played the spoiler, beating her doubles partner 6-4 6-4. Some observers were skeptical about the result, suggesting that Billie Jean did not want to face Nancy on a clay court, her least favorite surface. In truth, Rosie was becoming a proficient clay court player in her own right, thanks to the five weeks she had recently spent in Europe. In the final, however, she did not threaten Nancy, winning only five games during the course of two sets. Rosie and Billie Jean struggled in their first tournament as reigning Wimbledon champions, saving match points against Peaches Bartkowicz and Peachy Kellmeyer in the semifinals and losing quickly to Kerry Melville and Karen Krantzcke in the final, 6-4 6-1.

Before their next competition, Rosie and Billie Jean switched from using wood racquets to the new Wilson T-2000 steel frame. In early August they won the Eastern Grass Court Championships, one of the most important tournaments on the U. S. summer circuit. The following week, at the Harold T. Clark Stadium in Cleveland, Ohio, Rosie made her Wightman Cup debut. She had her chances against Christine Truman in the number three singles match, losing 3-6 7-5 6-1. In the number one doubles match, Rosie and Billie Jean defeated Ann Jones and Virginia Wade, 10-8 6-4, to finish 6-1 U. S. victory over the British team. A surprising quarterfinal loss to Virginia and Winnie Shaw at the Essex Invitation in Manchester, Massachusetts concluded Rosie and Billie Jean's preparation for the following week's U. S. National Doubles Championship.

At the national doubles tournament, played at the Longwood Cricket Club in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, Rosie and Billie Jean comfortably won their first four matches to reach the final. In the championship, they lost the first set to Mary Ann Eisel

and Donna Fales before rebounding for a 4-6 6-3 6-3 win. Rosie had disappointing results at the national singles tournament at Forest Hills the following week. Seeded seventh, she struggled against Linda Tuero – not considered a strong grass court player – in the third round and was then the victim of Peaches Bartkowicz' accurate passing shots in her next match, losing 4-6 6-3 7-5.

In the fall of 1967, Rosie had better singles results in two California hard court tournaments. In the Pacific Southwest Championships in Los Angeles, she lost in the final to Billie Jean, 6-0 6-4, and in the Pacific Coast International in Berkeley, she lost to Francoise Durr in the semifinals, 7-5 6-3. Rosie and Billie Jean won the women's doubles titles at both tournaments, and Rosie also added the mixed doubles title in Berkeley with Marty Riessen. On their way to Australia for two months of grass court tournaments, Rosie and Billie Jean played in the Championships of South America in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Rosie reached the final of three events and lost all of them in three sets; Billie Jean beat her in the singles final, 6-3 3-6 6-2, and they had a surprising loss to Norma Baylon Puiggros and Francoise Durr in the women's doubles. In the mixed doubles final, Francoise and Roger Taylor defeated Rosie and Marty, 6-4 4-6 6-4.

During the 1967-1968 Australian circuit, Margaret Smith Court returned to the game after retiring in 1966. In her first career meeting against Margaret, Rosie was defeated in the quarterfinals of the New South Wales Championships, 6-3 6-1. She returned the favor the following week, beating the Australian in the quarterfinals of the Victorian Championships in three sets, 6-3 3-6 9-7. After a 6-3 9-11 6-2 loss to Judy Tegart in the quarterfinals of the South Australian Championships, Rosie was beaten by Margaret in three successive tournaments, including a 6-0 6-2 result in the quarterfinals of the 1968 Australian National Championships in Melbourne. In doubles, Rosie and Billie Jean won the titles in the Victorian Championships and the Western Australian Championships, and lost in the semifinals of the nationals to Judy and Lesley Turner, 6-2 6-2.

Billie Jean won the singles title in Melbourne for her third straight major championship, following her 1967 victories at Wimbledon and Forest Hills. During her tour of Australia, George MacCall finalized the contract that would have Billie Jean leave

the amateur ranks and play on his upcoming tour. As professionals, the men and women on MacCall's tour – called the National Tennis League – would no longer be allowed to play Davis Cup, Wightman Cup or Federation Cup, and would no longer be eligible for national rankings in their respective countries. They would play in a series of National Tennis League exhibitions around the world, and with the approval of open tennis on the horizon, they would be allowed to play in open tournaments, which included all the major championships. MacCall negotiated a salary guarantee with each of the players on his tour, which included any prize money that was won in open tournaments. Along with Billie Jean, the women on MacCall's upcoming tour would include Ann Jones, Francoise Durr and Rosie.

*MacCall talked to me seriously for the first time in Melbourne, during the nationals, and it took us about two seconds to come to terms. He wanted three other women for his tour, and his first choices were at the time were Margaret, Nancy Richey and Maria Bueno. Maria and Nancy declined for various reasons, and Margaret said no way unless she got more than I did, which George, from a promoter's point of view, couldn't see giving. I recommended the three women who eventually did sign, and they jumped aboard almost had.*³⁴⁹

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Billie Jean and Ann were guaranteed \$40,000 per year, and Rosie and Francoise were guaranteed \$25,000. Rosie's final tournaments as an amateur were played in the United States in February and March of 1968. She and Billie Jean won the doubles titles at the New England Women's Indoor Championships and the U. S. National Women's Indoor Championships. In singles, Rosie lost a close match to Billie Jean in the final of the national indoors, 6-3 9-7, and she was surprised by Patti Hogan in the quarterfinals of the Thunderbird Invitation in Phoenix, 0-6 6-2 6-4. In her last match as an amateur, at the Madison Square Garden Invitation in New York in March, Rosie lost a first round match to Julie Heldman, 3-6 7-5 6-1. After the tournament in New York, the MacCall professionals assembled in Paris to begin the National Tennis League tour.

The tour included four-woman and six-man events throughout Europe, England and the United States, with time off to play in open tournaments that offered sufficient enough prize money to offset MacCall's salary guarantees. As a result, at the first open tournament – in Bournemouth, England, where the women's total prize money was only a fraction of the men's – MacCall entered his male players but decided not to incur the travel and lodging expenses of his women.

MacCall's women professionals played in the French Open in Paris, where Rosie was upset in the fourth round by Elena Subirats of Mexico. Rosie and Billie Jean lost in the women's doubles final to fellow professionals Ann Jones and Francoise Durr, 7-5 4-6 6-4. At Wimbledon, Rosie struggled through her first three singles matches, getting tested by Valerie Ziegenfuss, Karen Krantzcke and Yelena Baksheyeva. In the fourth round, she won the first set from Maria Bueno before losing 5-7 6-4 6-3. Rosie and Billie Jean were also pushed in all of their doubles matches. They defeated Margaret Court and Virginia Wade in the quarterfinals, 6-4 3-6 6-3, and Lesley Bowrey and Judy Tegart in the semifinals, 1-6 6-1 10-8. In the championship match, against Ann and Francoise, the spectators on Centre Court made it clear who they wanted to win. Since Billie Jean had just won her third straight Wimbledon singles trophy, and since Ann had never won a title there before, the crowd wanted to see the American lose just as much as they wanted to see the British player victorious. For Rosie, it was one of the bitterest moments of her tennis career.

*It was in 1968 when we were playing in the doubles at Wimbledon, and that was the first time I really felt the crowd against me. I hated them. We were out there breaking our asses, playing our game, and all they could do was feel like that. It really hurt. I've never forgotten.*³⁵⁰

-- Rosie Casals, 1974

Rosie's best chance at a major singles title may have been at the 1968 U. S. Open at Forest Hills. She easily won her first two matches, and in the third round she led Virginia Wade 3-0 in the first set before fading away. "Rosie Casals was never in the

match,” Mary Hardwick wrote for *World Tennis*, “and the English girl romped home 6-4 7-5. In all fairness to the young Californian, she did not seem to be in her usual excellent physical condition.”³⁵¹

*Poor Rosie probably had her best shot at the U. S. title in 1968, when she came down with horrible menstrual cramps right before she played Virginia Wade ... In the other half of the draw, I got to the finals, but my knee was absolutely killing me. The night I beat Bueno in three sets, I had to rest it up over a guitar case I put on the bed, but I still was in such pain I could hardly sleep. I was up almost all night crying, and the next day I couldn't move. Virginia jumped all over my serve, and she beat me in straight sets. I'm fairly certain that Rosie would have beaten Virginia if she hadn't had such a bad period, and then I'm sure she would have beaten me for the championship.*³⁵²
 -- Billie Jean King, 1982

Twenty-year-old Rosie showed her potential as one of the world's best singles player two weeks later at the Pacific Southwest Open in Los Angeles. A three-set win over Margaret Court in the quarterfinals was followed by her first career victory over Ann Jones. The British player led 5-3 in the third set before Rosie stormed back to wrap up the match, 3-6 6-3 7-5. In the final, Rosie had little trouble with Maria Bueno, beating the Brazilian 6-4 6-1 for one of her greatest moments in singles. “It’s about time I beat her,” Rosie told Jeff Prugh of the *Los Angeles Times* after the match. “Usually, I’ve had her beaten – and then I go and lose it. But frankly, I don’t think she moves very well, and this time I tried to make her run.”³⁵³

Rosie had solid, if unspectacular, results throughout 1969. Although she did not win any singles tournaments, she defeated Billie Jean at the New South Wales Open in Sydney, Australia and Virginia Wade in the second round of the French Open. She had a series of surprising singles losses during the year, including a defeat by Monique Salfati at the Italian Open and a loss to Glenda Swan Schaerer at the South African Open when she was suffering from the flu.³⁵⁴ Rosie and Billie Jean won four doubles titles

throughout the year, although none of those were major championships. In between the open tournaments, Rosie and Billie Jean and the other National Tennis League professionals made appearances in the U. S. cities of Portland, Oakland, Los Angeles, St. Louis and Reno, Nevada.

By early 1970, Rosie and Billie Jean were ready to leave the National Tennis League, and tour promoter George MacCall was not planning to renew their contracts. Several months earlier, Ann Jones requested and was granted a release from her contract, and MacCall neither wanted to find a replacement for her nor run a tour with three women. Rosie and Billie Jean, however, were not looking forward to playing in open tournaments that offered paltry amounts of prize money for women. They liked the idea of playing on a women's professional tour, and they asked Billie Jean's husband, Larry, to explore the possibilities. Larry had promoted several National Tennis League events in California and had his own ideas for a tour format. He composed a proposal and sent it to the top women players in the world, as well as potential tournament organizers. When Larry's idea for a women's tour did not materialize, Rosie and Billie Jean decided to request reinstatement with the USLTA. If granted, they would once again be eligible for national rankings and participation in the Wightman Cup and Federation Cup competitions – which offered stipends and travel expenses for those who were named to the teams.

While waiting to get reinstated by the USLTA, Rosie and Billie Jean played the open tournaments on the South African circuit and in Europe. Rosie lost to Billie Jean in the semifinals of the South African Open, and reached the quarterfinals of the French Open before bowing to Margaret Court. In doubles, Rosie and Billie Jean won the titles at the South African Open and the Italian Open, and lost in the finals of the British Hard Court Championships and the French Open.

The 1970 Wightman Cup competition was scheduled to be played at the All England Lawn Tennis Club in mid-June, two weeks before the Wimbledon Championships. Rosie and Billie Jean were reinstated by the USLTA as eligible players in time for the Wightman Cup team selection, and when the team was announced, most observers were perplexed. Billie Jean was named to the five-woman team, along with

Nancy Richey, Julie Heldman, Mary Ann Eisel Curtis and Peaches Bartkowicz. Rosie, one-half of America's best doubles team, was snubbed. "They said I had no United States ranking," she told Fred Tupper of the *New York Times*, referring to her two-year stint as a contract professional when she was ineligible for a USLTA ranking.³⁵⁵ Billie Jean, of course, was also a contract professional during the same time and had not held a USLTA ranking since 1968.

On the second day of competition, the United States and Great Britain were tied at 3-3 in the best-of-seven-match format. Nancy Richey was supposed to play the deciding doubles match with Billie Jean but withdrew due to an injury. Julie Heldman and Mary Ann Eisel Curtis could not be used as substitutes since they played a doubles match on the first day and, according to Wightman Cup rules, each player was restricted to one doubles match. The only replacement was Peaches Bartkowicz, a baseline player who was very limited with her volleys and overheads, and who had never played doubles with Billie Jean before. With Rosie watching from the stands, Peaches remained on the baseline while Billie Jean ran forward to hit volleys and overheads against Virginia Wade and Winnie Shaw. The Americans won the match in three sets to win the Wightman Cup, but it surely would have been an easier match if Rosie had been chosen for the team.

Rosie made a point to the Wightman Cup team selectors the following week when she and Billie Jean won the London Grass Court Championships at Queen's Club. They then won the Wimbledon women's doubles, defeating Virginia Wade and Francoise Durr in straight sets in the final. Rosie also teamed with Ilie Nastase of Rumania to win her first major mixed doubles title, winning against the Soviet team of Alex Metreveli and Olga Morozova, 6-3 4-6 9-7. In addition to winning two doubles titles, Rosie reached the semifinals of the women's singles, making this the most successful Wimbledon of Rosie's career.

Billie Jean, whose left knee was in severe pain during the Wightman Cup, managed to reach the Wimbledon singles final and nearly defeated Margaret Court. After losing 14-12 11-9, Billie Jean returned home to California for surgery. Rosie stayed in Great Britain to play in the Welsh Open, where she won the women's doubles with Judy

Dalton and the mixed doubles with Cliff Drysdale. She then won the clay court Swiss Open in Gstaad, defeating Francoise Durr in three sets for her first singles title since the 1968 Pacific Southwest Championships. Rosie also won the women's doubles with Francoise, and lost in the mixed doubles final with Cliff Drysdale against Francoise and Marty Riessen.

Upon her return to the United States, Rosie played two more clay court tournaments in the Midwest. She won the Western Championships in Cincinnati over clay court expert Gail Chanfreau in the semifinals and Nancy Richey in the final, who was returning to action after her Wightman Cup injury. Rosie and Gail won the women's doubles in Cincinnati, as they did the following week at the U. S. National Clay Court Championships in Indianapolis. In the national clay court singles tournament, Rosie reached the semifinals, where Gail defeated her in straight sets. Still, it was three of the best weeks of Rosie's career, ironically on clay courts and without the presence of her good friend and mentor Billie Jean.

During the summer of 1970, when there were rumors that several women's grass court tournaments might be canceled in order to provide more prize money for the men, Rosie wrote an article for *World Tennis* that criticized the USLTA for its treatment of women. While the men competed in the Washington Star International immediately after Wimbledon in mid-July, Rosie protested, the women had no place to play. A similar situation occurred during the first week in August, when the U. S. Pro Championships in Boston featured only men players. "The nationally ranked women ... now have a far more restricted summer tournament circuit than ever before," complained Rosie. "There are dead weeks in the middle of the circuit, which means the girls must either go home for the week or find a friend who will take them in."³⁵⁶

Rosie argued that the development of talented young American players would be hindered unless more tournaments were made available to them. "Give them a primary and secondary circuit, set up a schedule that allows for the tennis development of those with potentiality, talent, color and dedication," Rosie urged. "Don't turn them off or ignore and humiliate them. If the lesser men are too proud to play in a synchronized schedule, the women are not. Give us the tournaments ... and we'll play and we'll play

and we'll play." While Rosie suggested that "perhaps the girls should form their own organization and make their own rules," she admitted that such an idea might not be realistic. She did, however, urge the installment of a female USLTA president and a female chairperson for the USLTA Scheduling Committee. Concluding her argument, Rosie asked, "How about including everyone in the Grand Prix instead of only one segment of the tournament game? How about a circuit for all?"³⁵⁷ In a few weeks' time, while playing at the 1970 U. S. Open at Forest Hills, Rosie and several other players would realize that "a circuit for all" was not going to materialize and they would have to take matters into their own hands.

Kerry Melville

Kerry Melville, born on August 4, 1947 in the Sydney, Australia suburb of Mosman, had parents who were outstanding tennis players. Her father, Jim, played for a New South Wales inter-varsity team and he later competed at the University of Sydney while studying to become an architect. Kerry's mother, Dorothy, was also an accomplished player. She was a member of the New South Wales inter-state team and competed against the likes of Thelma Coyne, who later went on to win eighteen major singles and doubles titles. Dorothy also excelled as a sprinter in school track events, and she later became a physical education teacher.³⁵⁸

The Melville family relocated to the North Balwyn section of Melbourne in 1952, moving into a house that was adjacent to a church. The church had four tennis courts on its property, and when ten-year-old Kerry expressed an interest in learning to play, Jim took her onto the courts to toss a few balls to her. The church courts were not open to the public, but Jim and Kerry were able to use them unnoticed by going through a gate in their backyard and playing on a court that was out of view.³⁵⁹

*I remember the first time I hit a tennis ball. Pop took me out on the court, and tossed some balls to me, and we just tapped them back and forth.*³⁶⁰

-- Kerry Melville Reid, 2015

None of Kerry's older siblings – brothers Gary and Bob, and sister Gay – were particularly interested in tennis. No longer practical for Jim and his young daughter to sneak onto the church courts, they joined a tennis club on Yarrbart Avenue. Jim worked during the week, and the only time he had to work with Kerry was on the weekends. Each week Kerry counted the hours until the time when Saturday morning would arrive, and another weekend of tennis would begin.³⁶¹

*I was becoming almost fanatical about tennis. Every Friday night, or on Saturday morning, I would get all of Pop's tennis clothes ready and clean his tennis shoes for him.*³⁶²

-- Kerry Melville Reid, 2015

Kerry soon became totally immersed in the sport. When she was not on the courts, she frequently hit tennis balls against a wall – in the morning before school started, during lunchtime, and when school was done for the day. At age eleven, Kerry played and lost in a tournament in the town Eisternwick, after which Jim realized the need for additional coaching. Aware that the Grace Park Lawn Tennis Club was the premiere club in the Melbourne area, he arranged for Kerry to receive coaching from Keith Rogers, one of the club's tennis professionals.³⁶³

Keith Rogers had come to the Grace Park one year earlier, in 1958, at the suggestion of Frank Sedgman, one of Australia's best amateur players in the early 1950s. After playing on Jack Kramer's professional tour, Sedgman opened a gymnasium and squash club near Grace Park. Sedgman had known Rogers for many years, from the days when they had played basketball together as youngsters, and he urged his friend to join the staff at the club.³⁶⁴

Kerry began playing at the Grace Park Lawn Tennis Club at the same time another future champion arrived there. Rogers brought seventeen-year-old Margaret Smith to Melbourne from her rural hometown of Albury, nearly two hundred miles away. After watching Margaret play in junior tournaments, Sedgman offered her a secretarial job at a factory that he owned, which would enable her to be coached by Rogers.

Margaret accepted the offer, and she moved to Melbourne to live with her older sister June and start her new life. Since Sedgman's gymnasium was initially strictly for men, Margaret joined the Camberwell Women's Athletic Club for her physical training. Within a year, Margaret was permitted to train at Sedgman's facility, where her regime was designed and supervised by Stan Nichols. Margaret and Keith Rogers also spent a great deal of time running long distances and sprints in the park adjacent to the tennis club.³⁶⁵

In early 1960, Margaret became the youngest winner of the women's singles title at the Australian National Championships, and she soon became Kerry's role model. Following Margaret's approach to physical training, Kerry began to work with Stan Nichols as well. She also played for her school, Strathcona, and was chosen to be on squads that trained at the Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club in Melbourne. In 1963, at the age of fifteen, Kerry made her first appearance in the Australian National Championships, losing in the first round of the women's singles to Lesley Turner, 6-3 6-0.

Shortly after starting her lessons with Rogers, Kerry played in a junior tournament in Burnie, Tasmania – her first time on an airplane trip. Entered in three age divisions, Kerry kept winning her matches and was on court almost continuously for three days. After winning the titles in the girls' 13-and-under singles and the girls' 15-and-under singles divisions, the local newspaper hailed her at the "Twelve year-old surprise package."³⁶⁶

During the 1963-1964 Australian tournament season, Kerry's results in junior tournaments put her near the top of the national junior rankings. She scored a major upset in the quarterfinals of the Queensland Championships junior girls' singles, defeating top-seeded Kay Dening by the score of 6-3 8-10 6-3 before losing a close match to Gail Sherriff in the final. One month later, Kerry won the junior girls' title at the Victorian Championships, defeating Gail Sherriff, Helen Gourlay and Joan Gibson in succession.

At the Australian National Championships in Brisbane in January 1964, Kerry reached the final of the junior event – again with wins over Helen Gourlay and Joan Gibson – and had another memorable match with Kay Dening, this time losing 2-6 6-3

9-7. Former Australian champion Adrian Quist was so impressed with Kerry's performance that he commented he had never seen a woman hit the ball so well. "Her forehand drive is a perfect copybook shot," Quist said, "and I feel certain that she will develop into one of the greatest players Australia has produced."³⁶⁷ Kerry's forehand was a unique weapon; she hit it with sidespin, coming across the ball from outside to inside with a firm, laid-back wrist. The result was a low-spinning ball that hit the opponent's backhand corner and veered away.

The following season, Kerry began a friendly rivalry with Karen Krantzcke, a tall and powerful player from Brisbane. At the New South Wales Championships in Sydney in November 1964, Kerry defeated Karen in the first round of the women's singles, 9-7 11-9, and Karen won their meeting in the semifinals of the junior girls' division, 6-4 3-6 6-3. Kerry's victory at the Queensland Championships junior singles, which included another win over Karen, was good preparation for the 1965 Australian National Championships, played at the Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club in Melbourne. Kerry won the junior girls' singles title over Helen Gourlay, 6-1 6-1, and she reached the third round of the women's singles. In her opening match she defeated Heidi Orth of Germany, 6-4 12-10, and then she upset junior rival Gail Sherriff, the tenth seed, in the next round, 10-8 6-4. Fourth-seeded Billie Jean Moffitt ended her run in the third round, losing the first set before prevailing 5-7 6-4 6-1. Kerry's successful tournament campaign resulted in the number-one national ranking in girls' singles and number nine on the women's singles list.

Leading up to the 1965-1966 Australian tournament season, eighteen-year-old Kerry began receiving additional instruction from Neil Guiney, a well-known coach who had a lighted tennis court on his property. Kerry fit in with the Guiney family, which included seven children. On the court, Neil revamped her game by adding a topspin forehand and improving her serve and volley.³⁶⁸ The hours of hard work paid off, as Kerry won two important state titles in November 1965 – the New South Wales Championships in Sydney and the New Zealand Championships in Auckland – and she reached the semifinals of the 1966 Australian National Championships in Sydney in January, narrowly losing to number-one foreign seed Nancy Richey, 6-2 8-6. Kerry was

not successful in defending her junior girls' title, losing the final to Karen Krantzcke, 6-3 6-3. She also reached the quarterfinals of the mixed doubles, playing with her boyfriend Allan Stone, whose father gave her the nickname "Tup."³⁶⁹

In the final tournament of the Australian season, Kerry had a convincing win over Lesley Turner in the semifinals of the Auckland Championships in New Zealand. Although she was easily beaten by Margaret Smith in the final, the Lawn Tennis Association of Australia selected Kerry – and Karen as well – for a six-month tour of tournaments in Europe, Great Britain and the United States. Joining the women on their first overseas trip would be chaperone Nell Hopman, wife of Australian Davis Cup captain Harry Hopman, as well as the top male Australian amateurs John Newcombe, Tony Roche, Bill Bowrey and Ray Ruffels. "I was so thrilled and surprised to be included in the team. It is a great honor," Kerry told a reporter from *The Age* newspaper.³⁷⁰ She and Karen hoped to do well enough in their first tournament, at Reggio Calabria, Italy, to earn a spot on the Australian Federation Cup team and play in the competition in Turin, Italy three weeks later.

Kerry struggled in the Reggio Calabria tournament, getting pushed to three sets by Madeleine Pegel of Sweden in the first round. She then retired in her second round match against Helga Niessen of Germany after winning the first set 6-4 and losing the second, 12-14. Kerry did not get named to the Federation Cup team – the LTAA chose Margaret Smith, Judy Tegart and Lesley Turner – but she did have her first career win over her friend Judy at the Italian Championships in Rome, one week before the Federation Cup competition.

On the English grass court circuit, Kerry defeated Olga Morozova of the Soviet Union at the London Grass Court Championships at Queen's Club. The following week, spectators were treated to the Wimbledon debut of Kerry and Rosie Casals, and their third round match – won by Rosie, 1-6 7-5 6-4 – was one of the best matches of the tournament. Kerry and Karen had an outstanding run in the women's doubles, winning four matches to reach the semifinals before losing 6-2 6-3 to eventual champions Maria Bueno and Nancy Richey.

Kerry and Karen won the doubles titles at their next two tournaments, the Western Championships in Indianapolis, Indiana and the U. S. National Clay Court Championships in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Kerry reached the singles semifinals of both events, with impressive wins over Patti Hogan and Peaches Bartkowicz, but not manage more than five games in either of her matches against clay court expert Nancy Richey.

Leading up to the 1966 U. S. National Championships at Forest Hills, Kerry and Karen reached the semifinals of the Eastern Grass Court Championships in New Jersey, losing to Billie Jean King and Rosie Casals 23-25 6-2 6-3 in the second-longest women's doubles match in tennis history. Kerry had her first singles encounter with Billie Jean at the Piping Rock Invitational one week later, losing 6-2 6-1. At the U. S. National Doubles Championships in Massachusetts, Karen injured her arm during a fall during a workout and had to return home to Australia, withdrawing from the following week's national championships at Forest Hills and leaving Kerry without a doubles partner.

Kerry survived her opening match at the West Side Tennis Club, defeating Kathy Harter 6-2 3-6 6-4. She played Billie Jean in the next round, and as the two walked onto the Stadium Court, Billie Jean noticed that Al Baumann was sitting in the umpire's chair. Baumann was the USLTA official from Texas who insisted that Billie Jean and Nancy Richey share the nation's number-one women's singles ranking. Billie Jean asked to have Baumann replaced, and when her request was denied she proceeded to play an error-filled match. Most spectators, and probably Kerry as well, were unaware of the circumstances, and Billie Jean's performance was not helped by the fact that she had been suffering from an intestinal virus all summer. After her unexpected 6-4 6-4 win, Kerry told reporters, "Oh, I never thought I had a chance to win. I didn't have anything to lose. I just went after my shots." Bud Collins of the *Boston Globe*, making a reference to Herman Melville's epic novel *Moby Dick*, wrote that Kerry "hooked a big fish."³⁷¹

In the third round Kerry registered another upset, a three-set win over Judy Tegart. An easy 6-1 6-2 score against Madonna Schacht put Kerry in the semifinals, where Nancy Richey's consistent groundstrokes and greater experience prevailed, 6-3 6-2. Kerry finished her world tour with two tournaments in California, the Pacific Southwest Championships in Los Angeles and the Pacific Coast Championships in

Berkeley. Singles losses to young American players Kristy Pigeon and Kathy Harter, who won 6-2 6-0, indicated that the tour was starting to get tiring and Kerry was ready to return home. Despite the losses in California, it was a successful campaign for Kerry, and Bruce Walkley of the *Melbourne Herald* placed her at number nine in his women's world rankings.³⁷²

After suffering injuries and unexpected losses throughout 1966, Margaret Smith retired from tennis, married Barry Court and opened a dress shop in the Western Australia city of Perth. Margaret's exit gave Kerry a chance to become the top-ranked woman in Australia. On the 1966-1967 Australian circuit, she reached the singles finals of four consecutive state tournaments, highlighted by a 4-6 6-3 7-5 first-time win over Nancy Richey in the semifinals of the South Australian Championships in Adelaide. She was unable, however, to clear the final hurdle in each of the tournaments, falling to Lesley Turner in three of them and Rosie Casals in the other. She came close on two occasions, losing to Lesley 6-8 9-7 6-3 in the New South Wales Championships in Sydney, and losing to Rosie in the final of the Victorian Championships, 1-6 6-1 7-5.

After her four consecutive finals losses, Kerry decided to skip the upcoming Tasmanian Championships to work on her game with coach Keith Rogers in his town of Swan Hill, and she was surprised to suddenly find herself the subject of a controversy. Davis Cup captain Harry Hopman, suspecting that Kerry planned to make money by assisting Rogers with his coaching of other students in addition to giving tennis demonstrations, publicly announced that she should be careful "not to do anything to impair her amateur status." Hopman's accusations were published in *The Age* newspaper, as was Kerry's response that she "was in Swan Hill only to be coached by Mr. Rogers. I don't assist him with the coaching of people in any way. I want to get as much coaching as possible before the nationals next month. That is why I won't be playing in Tasmania in early January."³⁷³ Rogers also clarified the situation, telling sportswriter Greg Hobbs that he has "been coaching Kerry for seven years. She and a couple other Melbourne girls are her to be coached, not to assist me in my duties."³⁷⁴

Kerry's work with Rogers almost paid off at the 1967 Australian National Championships in Adelaide, as she reached the semifinals with an easy win over talented

teenager Evonne Goolagong and a 6-1 4-6 10-8 struggle over Judy Tegart in the quarterfinals. In the semifinals, as was the case at Forest Hills four months earlier, Kerry could not get past Nancy Richey, and the Texan won comfortably, 6-4 6-1. Kerry finished her Australian season with a semifinal loss to Francoise Durr at the Wills International Championships in Wellington, New Zealand and national women's singles ranking of number two behind Lesley Turner.

On her second overseas tour, in 1967, Kerry had a memorable tournament at the French Championships in Paris. She survived two match points during a 3-6 8-6 7-5 defeat of Monique Salfati in the third round, and she then ousted defending champion Ann Jones by the curious score of 0-6 6-4 8-6. "The situation cried out for more lobs and more high bounces to Melville's backhand," David Gray wrote in *World Tennis*, "but Jones could not do anything to save herself. She worked all the time but she was always frustrated. She tired quickly under pressure." Against Francoise Durr in the semifinals, Gray reported that Kerry "served furiously but often inaccurately. She hit great walloping forehand drives, breathtaking backhand volleys and attempted quite astonishing drop shots without referenced to the situation in any particular rally or game ... Sometimes the results were spectacular. Sometimes they made Durr hang her head, clutch her bosom and mutter in both English and French. But as often as not, Kerry's risks turned into wasted failures."³⁷⁵ Francoise won the match 8-6 6-3, ending Kerry's third consecutive semifinal appearance in a major championship.

With Margaret Smith Court no longer playing, the LTAA named Kerry, Lesley Turner and Judy Tegart to the 1967 Australian Federation Cup team. The competition was held at the scenic Blau Weiss Tennis Club in West Berlin, Germany, and the Australians won their first round match by forfeit when the team from Czechoslovakia withdrew. Against France in the quarterfinals, Kerry had another close match with Monique Salfati, who reached 7-6 30-all in the third set – just two points away from victory. Monique netted easy shots on the next two points, and Kerry escaped by the score of 4-6 6-4 9-7. Lesley then lost to Francoise Durr, 9-7 6-1, forcing the tie to be decided by the doubles, which Lesley and Judy won over Francoise and Jeanine Lieffrig, 6-3 6-3. In the semifinals against Great Britain, Kerry lost to Virginia Wade, 9-7 4-6 6-2,

in a match that was interrupted several times for rain. Ann Jones ended Australia's hopes when she comfortably won against Lesley, 6-2 6-2.

The following week, Kerry and Karen Krantzcke – who was not named to the Federation Cup team – scored their first win against Billie Jean King and Rosie Casals, winning 6-3 6-4 in the semifinals on grass in Beckenham, England. Kerry reached the singles final of the London Grass Court Championships by allowing Francoise Durr only two games in the quarterfinals and outlasting Judy Tegart in the semifinals, 6-3 10-8. She took the first set from Nancy Richey in the final but was unable to maintain her momentum, losing 2-6 6-2 6-4. At Wimbledon, Kerry had yet another close match with Monique Salfati, winning 7-5 7-5 in the second round. Virginia Wade scored her third straight win over Kerry in the next round, 7-5 6-2, and a 6-1 6-3 loss to Billie Jean King and Rosie Casals in the women's doubles quarterfinals ended Kerry and Karen's campaign in England.

Once again making appearances in Indianapolis and Milwaukee, Kerry lost to Nancy in the final of the Western Championships and semifinals of the U. S. National Clay Court Championships - both times in straight sets. Kerry and Karen won their biggest title in the United States when defeated Billie Jean and Rosie in the national clay court finals, 6-4 6-1, and continued their run by winning the doubles at the Pennsylvania Grass Court Championships in Haverford, Pennsylvania the following week. Kerry won the singles at the Piping Rock Invitation, a small grass court tournament in Locust Valley, New York, and then reached the final of Essex Invitation in Manchester, Massachusetts with her first career win over Rosie Casals and an easy semifinal against Winnie Shaw. In the final, Kerry pushed Billie Jean in the first set before surrendering, 8-6 6-1. Seeded fourth at the 1967 U. S. National Doubles Championships, Kerry and Karen were upset in the third round by Kathy Harter and Wendy Overton, 1-6 6-3 6-2.

As the number ten seed in singles at Forest Hills, Kerry reached her allotted position in the draw, losing to second-seeded Ann Jones in the fourth round 7-5 6-3. In the final tournament of her overseas tour, Kerry once again had disappointing results at the Pacific Southwest Championships in Los Angeles – losing to Kathy in the singles

quarterfinals and, with Karen, losing to Julie Heldman and Patricia Cody in the doubles quarterfinals – before flying home to Australia.

Kerry returned to action one month later at the Australian Hard Court Championships in Melbourne, where she reached the singles final and had her chances during a 1-6 7-5 6-2 loss to Lesley Turner. During the tournament, Kerry announced her engagement to David Allen, a lawyer in Melbourne.³⁷⁶ She then had a very successful week at the Queensland Hard Court Championships in Brisbane, easily defeating Kathy Harter and Lesley in straight sets to win the singles, and teaming with Karen to win the doubles over Lesley and Judy Tegart. Leading up to the Australian National Championships, she had two semifinal losses to Judy and one to Billie Jean King, and she and Karen won the New South Wales Championships in Sydney. At the national championships in Melbourne, Kerry was surprised by Astrid Suurbeek of the Netherlands in the third round, 8-6 6-3. Her disappointment at losing in the singles was lessened when she and Karen won the doubles title, in the semifinals defeating Gail Sherriff and Margaret Smith Court – who had recently come out of retirement – and in the finals winning over Lesley and Judy, 6-4 3-6 6-2.

For the 1968 Federation Cup competition in Paris, the LTAA named Kerry, Margaret and Judy to its team. When Judy learned that the association agreed to pay for Margaret's expenses, and not hers, she declined the invitation and decided to play the English grass court circuit.³⁷⁷ The LTAA did not add anyone else to the team, so it was left to Kerry and Margaret to defeat the teams from Brazil, South Africa, England and the Netherlands, who had surprised the United States team in the semifinals. Kerry and Margaret easily won their singles matches against the Dutch team to clinch the title, and surprisingly were pushed to three sets in the meaningless doubles match. In her other European clay court events, Kerry lost in the quarterfinals of the Italian Championships and the fourth round of the French Open, both times to Annette duPlooy of South Africa.

On the English grass court circuit, Kerry won the singles title at the West of England in Bristol, barely getting past Astrid Suurbeek – the Dutch player who upset her at the Australian National Championships – in the semifinals and losing only one game to Karen in the final. Not seeded at Wimbledon, she was unlucky to come up against

professional Francoise Durr in the third round and lost 6-3 8-6. The highlight of Kerry's trip to Great Britain was winning the doubles title with Karen at the Scottish Championships the week after Wimbledon, defeating Wightman Cup players Winnie Shaw and Joyce Williams, 6-3 9-7. Afterwards, Kerry returned home to Australia – skipping the remaining tournaments in Europe and the United States – in order to prepare for her upcoming wedding.³⁷⁸

Kerry did not get married to David Allen; she ended the engagement and returned to tennis in time for the 1968-1969 Australian season. She earned \$425 for winning the Tasmanian Open, which included wins over Billie Jean King, Lesley Turner Bowrey and Rosie Casals.³⁷⁹ At the New South Wales Open in Sydney, Kerry had a tough battle with Ann Jones in the quarterfinals, winning 5-7 6-4 8-6. She gave eventual champion Margaret Court her toughest test at the 1969 Australian National Championships, pushing her to 3-6 6-2 7-5 in their semifinal. Kerry and Karen were not able to repeat as national doubles champions, losing to Billie Jean and Rosie in the semifinals, 6-3 6-4.

For the first time in her career, Kerry played on the Caribbean Circuit in early 1969. She won the singles title at the Masters Invitational in St. Petersburg, Florida with a final round win over Lesley Turner Bowrey, with whom she won the doubles, and she and Karen won the doubles titles at the Caribe Hilton Invitation in San Juan, Puerto Rico and the Kingston International Invitation in Jamaica. In a series of clay court tournaments leading up to the 1969 Federation Cup competition in Athens, Greece, Kerry reached the final of the Italian Open in Rome with wins over Billie Jean King and Francoise Durr. In the Rome final, delayed by one day due to rain and played on a side court in front of a handful of spectators, Julie Heldman continually hit high lobs from the baseline to win the match, 7-5 6-3. Two weeks later, Kerry won the Surrey Hard Courts Championships in Guildford, England with straight-set wins over her Federation Cup teammates Judy Tegart and Margaret Court.

In Athens, the Australian team defeated France in the quarterfinals and Great Britain in the semifinals without the loss of a match. Favored to win the final against the United States, the Australian team was not overly concerned when Nancy Richey continued her clay court mastery over Kerry, winning 6-4 6-3. In the next singles match,

Margaret was expected to even the team score by beating Julie Heldman, which she did by a score of 6-1 8-6. Julie, however, made it a grueling affair with her lobbing tactics, and an exhausted Margaret was given only twenty minutes' rest before playing the deciding doubles match. Judy urged team captain Wayne Reid to replace Margaret with Kerry, but her suggestion was not followed.³⁸⁰ Subsequently, Nancy Richey and Peaches Bartkowicz focused their attack on Margaret, making her hit as many overheads as possible. They scored an unlikely upset, beating the world's best doubles team 6-4 6-4 and winning the Federation Cup for the United States.

In the remaining European clay court events, Kerry won the Spanish International in Barcelona, defeating Karen in the semifinals and Helen Gourlay in the final, 5-7 6-4 7-5. At the French Open, she reached the quarterfinals of three divisions and was beaten by Margaret Court in all of them. In the singles, Margaret won 9-7 6-1, and in the doubles Margaret and Nancy defeated Kerry and Karen, 14-12 6-3. In the mixed doubles, Kerry and Ilie Nastase of Rumania had a good win over Tony Roche and Rosie Casals in the third round before losing to Margaret and Marty Riessen in three sets.

Kerry's campaign on the English grass court circuit began at the Kent Championships in Beckenham, where she beat Winnie Shaw and Patti Hogan before losing to Denise Carter in the final. Kerry had to play Denise again in the following week's London Grass Court Championships, and after she won the first game the match was moved indoors because of rain. Kerry was very unhappy about playing on the slick wood surface and quickly lost, 6-2 6-0.³⁸¹ She had better results in doubles, where she and Karen reached the semifinals and challenged Billie Jean and Rosie before bowing 10-8 17-15. At Wimbledon, where she was seeded sixth, Kerry had the misfortune to draw Rosie Casals – curiously unseeded herself – in the second round and lost 6-2 7-5 on Centre Court. Kerry and Karen made another run to the women's doubles semifinals, as they did three years earlier, and came within two games of reaching the final before Patti Hogan and Peggy Michel prevailed, 4-6 6-2 7-5. The following week, Kerry had another loss to Rosie in the quarterfinals of the Irish Open, but had one of her best results with Karen when they beat Virginia Wade and Judy Tegart, 13-11 10-8, and Billie Jean King and Rosie Casals, 5-7 6-2 6-4 to win the title.

Instead of playing the summer clay court tournaments in the United States, Kerry stayed in Europe after the grass court circuit to play tournaments in Germany and the Netherlands. At Hilversum, she defeated Karen in the final of the Netherlands International Open and teamed with her to win the doubles title over Helen Gourlay and Pat Walkden, 1-6 6-4 6-3. Kerry's grass court preparation for the U. S. Open included the Pennsylvania Grass Court Championships at the Merion Cricket Club in Haverford, Pennsylvania, where she and Karen reached the semifinals and pushed Margaret Court and Virginia Wade in a 6-4 6-4 loss. Seeded sixth at the U. S. National Championships, played at the Longwood Cricket Club and preceding the U. S. Open at Forest Hills, Kerry had wins over Sharon Walsh, Patti Hogan and Christine Janes before falling to Margaret Court in the semifinals, 6-4 6-4.

The 1969 U. S. Open was not a successful tournament for Kerry; for the first time in her career, she lost in the first round of a grand slam singles event. Christine Janes, whom Kerry had beaten at Longwood one week earlier, fell behind 0-3 in the first set. When Christine leveled the first set at 4-4, the momentum had shifted and the British player forged ahead to win, 8-6 7-5.³⁸² In the second round of the women's doubles, Kerry and Karen split sets with Gail Sherriff Chanfreau and Lesley Hunt and then retired from the match. Away from home for seven months, Kerry decided to skip the California tournaments after the U. S. Open and return to Australia.

After Kerry won both titles at the Australian Hard Court Championships in Sydney in December – beating Karen in the singles final and teaming with her to defeat Winnie Shaw and Jan Lehane O'Neill in the doubles championship – Margaret Court dominated most of the remaining 1969-1970 Australian season. Kerry lost to Margaret in straight sets in three consecutive finals – the Western Australian Championships in Perth, the Victorian Championships in Melbourne, and the Australian National Championships in Sydney. Kerry and Karen reached the finals of all three of those tournaments, beating Margaret and Winnie in Perth and lost to Margaret and Judy Dalton in Melbourne and the national championships.

At the Benson & Hedges Open in Auckland, New Zealand in late January, Kerry registered her second career singles win over Margaret. In their semifinal match, Kerry

won the first set 7-5, had a letdown and won only two games in the second, and then amazingly raced through the third set, 6-0. Kerry continued her inspired play in the final, taking a 6-0 2-0 lead against Ann Jones before the British star won a game. Ann then began to work her way into the match, winning the second set 6-4 and running away with the third, 6-1. Ann continued her determined play in the women's doubles final, teaming with Margaret to defeat Kerry and Karen, 6-0 6-4.³⁸³

Kerry made her first trip to South Africa in February 1970, appearing in the South African Open in Johannesburg. On the cement courts at Ellis Park, Kerry beat Winnie Shaw in the third round and lost to Virginia Wade in the quarterfinals. She and Karen reached the doubles final, where they met Billie Jean King and Rosie Casals. "We were smashed off the court," Kerry said after the 6-2 6-2 loss.³⁸⁴ After playing in the Dunlop Open in Natal, where Winnie scored a 6-4 6-8 7-5 upset in the second round, Kerry went to Europe and England for a full schedule of clay court and grass court tournaments.

Seeded fourth at the \$20,000 Monte Carlo Open in Monaco, Kerry was challenged in her first two matches by Italian clay court specialists – in the first round against Monica Giorgi, and then against Lea Pericoli – before squaring off against Julie Heldman in a rematch of the 1969 Italian Open final. This time, they split the first two sets before Kerry pulled away to win the third, 6-1. In the semifinals, Kerry defeated top-seeded Billie King, who was so disappointed by her performance she stopped using her steel Wilson T-2000 racquet and went back to a wood frame.³⁸⁵ The final between Kerry and Helga Niessen lasted only forty-five minutes; the West German clay court expert won 6-4 6-1. The amount of prize money offered to the women in Monte Carlo was in stark contrast to what was offered to the men; Helga earned \$500 for her victory, compared to the \$3000 given to the men's champion Zeljko Franulovic, and Kerry earned only \$200 for her runner-up finish.³⁸⁶

Kerry was upset by unseeded Pat Walkden of Rhodesia in the second round of the Italian Open in Rome, 4-6 6-3 10-8. At the following week's British Hard Court Championships in Bournemouth, Kerry injured her ankle during a second round win over Janice Townsend and withdrew from the tournament before her next match against Joyce Williams.³⁸⁷ She pulled out of the following week's Berlin Open in Germany, and one

week later she tested her ankle in a small grass court tournament in Wolverhampton, England. Although Kerry easily won the singles, doubles, and mixed doubles titles against second-tier players, she decided her ankle was not completely healed and she withdrew from the upcoming Federation Cup matches in Berlin. The LTAA put Kerry's doubles partner in her spot, and with the experienced Judy Dalton leading the way, the Australian team surprised everyone and won the competition.³⁸⁸

Kerry also withdrew from the 1970 French Open, and she did not return to action until the Surrey Grass Court Championships in Surbiton, England. Although she was beaten in the second round by Valerie Ziegenfuss, she regained her form at the following week's Rothman's Northern Championships in Manchester, winning the women's singles over Winnie Shaw and Carole Graebner, winning the women's doubles with Kristy Pigeon, and reaching the mixed doubles final with Frew McMillan. In the two tournaments preceding Wimbledon, Kerry and Karen reunited and reached the finals of the Wills Open in Bristol, losing to Margaret Court and Judy Dalton, and the finals of the London Grass Court Championships, losing to Billie Jean King and Rosie Casals. In her singles matches, Kerry lost to young Australian Lesley Hunt in the quarterfinals of Bristol, and at Queen's Club she was beaten by Winnie Shaw in the semifinals.

Kerry and Winnie were on another collision course at Wimbledon. Their fourth round match was played on Court 2, the notorious "graveyard court" where seeded players were known to fall in the past. Winnie won the first five games against the fourth-seeded Kerry and then finished off the match 6-2 6-4 to reach the quarterfinals.³⁸⁹ Kerry and Karen once again reached the women's doubles semifinals, as they had done in 1966 and 1969, where they were eliminated by Billie Jean and Rosie, 6-3 8-6.

After Wimbledon, Kerry stayed in Great Britain for three more weeks, teaming with Karen to defend their doubles title at the Irish Open and adding the Hoylake Open trophies to their collection. She reached the final at Hoylake and lost to Evonne Goolagong in three sets, and at the Midland Open in Leicester she won the mixed doubles with Owen Davidson over Judy Dalton and Cliff Drysdale. Before traveling to the United States, Kerry hoped to defend her singles title at the Dutch Open; she got to the final and was only able to win only two games from Margaret Court. Kerry and Karen were able to

defend their doubles title at Hilversum, defeating the odd pairing of Margaret and Helga Niessen, 3-6 9-7 7-5. One week later, they won the German Open over Virginia Wade and Winnie Shaw, and their \$800 first prize was their largest paycheck as a team.

Top-seeded at the Bavarian Open in Munich, Kerry was upset in the quarterfinals by Evonne Goolagong, the talented young Australian. The following week, in the semifinals of the German Open, she was outlasted by Helga Schultze Hoesl, the 30-year-old mother of a 15-month-old daughter. Kerry led 3-2 40-15 in the third set against Helga, but the German persisted despite having leg cramps and won 6-3 3-6 6-4.³⁹⁰ During the Pennsylvania Grass Court Open at the Merion Cricket Club in Haverford, Pennsylvania, Kerry had wins against young Americans with two-handed backhands. She beat 15-year-old Chris Evert in the first round, 6-4 6-4, and Peaches Bartkowicz in the quarterfinals, 8-6 6-1. In losing to Margaret Court in the semifinals by the score of 6-4 6-4, Kerry gave the eventual champion her toughest test of the week.

In her final preparation for the 1970 U. S. Open, the \$25,000 Marlboro Open at the Orange Lawn Tennis Club in New Jersey (formerly the Eastern Grass Court Championships), Kerry was seeded sixth and hoped to at least make the quarterfinals in a very strong field. Her path was cleared when fourth-seeded Virginia Wade was defeated in the first round, second-seeded Rosie Casals lost in the semifinals, and – in the most surprising upset of the year – top-seeded Margaret Court was beaten by Patti Hogan in the semifinals after leading 6-1 3-1. Patti changed the course of the match when she began to lob, but Margaret was still able to reach match point at 5-3 in the second set. Patti won the second set in a tiebreak, battled to 4-4 in the third set, broke Margaret's serve in the ninth game and held serve for the match.³⁹¹

The Marlboro Open was one of the first tournaments to use the sudden-death nine-point tiebreak, and in the final Kerry and Patti played evenly until 6-6 in the first set. Kerry won the tiebreak 5-2, and then took the second set to clinch the match. She was thrilled to collect the first prize of \$2000, the biggest payday of her career. The fact that men's singles champion Rod Laver earned \$4000 did not seem to matter. The prize money ratio at the Marlboro Open – where the men earned twice as much – was the same that was offered at only a handful of tournaments, and it was the best deal the women

were given. Kerry did not know that something would happen at the upcoming U. S. Open that would motivate her – and many other women players – to never again be satisfied with unfair prize money distributions.

Valerie Ziegenfuss

George Ziegenfuss, who was a point guard on the University of Washington men's basketball team – earning All-Pacific Coast Conference honors and selected as team captain for the 1938-1939 season – began his coaching career at Renton High School in Renton, Washington. He moved on to assistant coaching positions at two Seattle area colleges, Whitman College and Columbia College, and then became the head coach at San Diego State College in 1947. During his twenty-two year tenure at San Diego, he compiled a 329-244 win-loss record, with his best season coming in 1966-1967 when the Aztecs won twenty-four games and lost only five. Among the many young men who played for George were his son, Fritz, and Bernie Finlay, who was later inducted into the college's Hall of Fame.³⁹²

*It was old-school basketball. A lot of pressure on the ball. He was well-organized. He knew the game. He was a really good strategist. And he was really good at being able to talk to his players.*³⁹³

-- Fritz Ziegenfuss, 2007

*He was a taskmaster. Everything he did was very precise and well-organized. In practice, he used to have us play one-on-one for several minutes and then we would practice full court for seven minutes and then we would practice full-court passes for three minutes. No one else practiced that. He had his stopwatch out, moving from drill to drill. He was very stern.*³⁹⁴

-- Bernie Finlay, 2007

George Ziegenfuss had many other interests besides basketball. He earned a doctorate from Columbia College, and he enjoyed writing and classical music. George

also played tennis as a youngster, and he coached the tennis team at San Diego State College. He became a good club-level player, and – when he was not coaching the basketball and tennis teams – he taught a racquet sports class at the college. George taught the game to each of his four children – Ken, Fritz, Valerie and Lynn.³⁹⁵

My dad took me out when I was eight and my wrist wasn't strong enough. He carved down the handle of a Bancroft racquet, and it was heavy! He said my wrist wasn't strong enough, so we waited until I was ten ... Dad took me down to Morley Field, which is our public parks site, and wanted me to see Karen Hantze play Kathy Chabot in a tournament, and said "This is tennis. Do you like it? Do you want to learn it?" And then I said, "Yes."³⁹⁶

-- Valerie Ziegenfuss, 2015

Valerie played her first tennis tournament on the public courts of Morley Field in November 1959. She defeated the number one seed, Mari Ana Poiset, in the semifinals and then lost to her sister, Dophie, in the final. Dophie won the match by getting every ball back and outlasting the more aggressive, but still more erratic, Valerie. After the match, George told Valerie not to worry and that in a year's time she would be beating players who pushed every ball back.³⁹⁷

So we worked on strategy and shot production ... I loved to come forward. I was aggressive, I was a shot maker and I loved to volley. I was not very patient, so I had to learn to be consistent and work my way up to finish the point.³⁹⁸

-- Valerie Ziegenfuss, 2015

Competing in the Girls' 11-and-under division, Valerie played in tournaments throughout Southern California, where her other rivals included such future nationally-ranked players as Patti Hogan, Kristien Kemmer and Pam Teegarden. Within two years, she was ranked at number twelve in the Southern California Girls' 13-and-under division,

and her results in 1962 earned her a number five ranking in the Girls' 14-and-under division.

The following year, Valerie was accepted to play in the USLTA National Girls' 14 Championships. With limited funds, she and her mother took a bus from San Diego to Chattanooga, Tennessee.³⁹⁹ The long trip was worth it, as Valerie reached the semifinals in singles, losing to eventual champion Peaches Bartkowicz, and she reached the semifinals of the doubles with Mari Ana Poiset. On the way back home to California, Valerie played in the St. Louis Invitation – a prestigious junior tournament – and won the Girls' 14 singles title and the Girls' 16 doubles title with Lynn Abbes.

Throughout 1964, Valerie remained in California for all of her tournaments. She won the Girls' 16 singles title at the Long Beach Junior Championships in April and the Girls' 16 doubles title with Julie Anthony at the Southern California Junior Championships in June. During a family trip to Tijuana, Mexico, George let Valerie choose which dog to bet on at a greyhound race. Valerie's choice won, and the \$35 prize was used to help finance a trip to Burlingame, California for the U. S. National Junior Hard Court Championships.⁴⁰⁰ Valerie reached the final of the Girl's 18 singles division and pushed Rosie Casals, one of the top players in the state, 5-7 6-3 6-3. Unable to attend the U. S. National Girls' 16 Championships in Lake Bluff, Illinois, due to financial restraints, Valerie ended her year by winning several local tournaments in the San Diego area and reaching the final of the Girl's 18 singles division at the Pacific Southwest Championships in Los Angeles, losing to local rival Patti Hogan, 4-6 6-4 6-0.

Valerie defended her Girls' 16 singles title at the Long Beach Junior Championships in April 1965, adding the Girls' 18 singles as well. Valerie, along with the winners from other divisions, was presented with her trophies by two-time Wimbledon doubles champion and Long Beach native Billie Jean Moffitt. Two months later, Valerie registered her first win over Patti Hogan, winning 6-3 1-6 7-5 in the finals of the Southern California Junior Championships. For her victory, the Southern California Tennis Association gave her \$250 to use for a trip to the U. S. National Girls' 16 Championships in late July.⁴⁰¹ Before traveling to Illinois, Valerie reached the Girls'

16 singles final of the U. S. National Hard Court Championships in Burlingame and won the Girls' 18 doubles division with Lynn Abbes for her first national junior title.

In addition to playing in the U. S. National Girls' 16 Championships in Lake Bluff, Illinois, Valerie was entered in several grass court events further east. Traveling in a Volkswagen car and camping out at night, the Ziegenfuss family was able to make ends meet on the month-long road trip.⁴⁰² At Lake Bluff, Valerie had another three-set match with Patti Hogan, losing to her rival 4-6 6-1 6-4. Valerie's first-time doubles partnership with Peaches Bartkowicz, the nation's top-ranked player in her age division, proved successful; they won the title with three set win over Patti and Peggy Michel, 3-6 6-1 6-1. In her first grass court tournaments, Valerie lost in the second round of the Delaware Girls' Grass Court Invitation and then helped her Southern California team reach the finals of the National Girls' Team Championships in Philadelphia, falling to a very strong squad from Northern California.

The highlight of Valerie's year was the U. S. National Girls' 18 Championships, played on grass at the Germantown Cricket Club in Philadelphia. She lost in the third round to Peaches, and then joined forces with her for the doubles tournament. As they did during their doubles matches in Lake Bluff, Peaches stayed in the backcourt while Valerie moved forward for volleys and overheads. "Playing doubles with Peaches, who constantly remains on the baseline, is not easy and must be quite and unusual experience for the Californian," Mary Hardwick reported in *World Tennis*. "Valerie has taken full advantage of her opportunities and plays the one-up-one-back game like a veteran of the past."⁴⁰³

*I was up at net all the time, I had quick reactions. Peaches would hit the groundstrokes, and they would volley it up or at me, and I just reflexed it. So we were a really good combination. Her groundstrokes cleared the net by an inch, so it was harder to volley. So we had the one up and one back, which was sort of unheard of back then. But it worked for us.*⁴⁰⁴

-- Valerie Ziegenfuss, 2015

Valerie and Peaches defeated Patti Hogan and Louise Gonnerman in the quarterfinals, 6-3 6-2 and Rosie Casals and Paulette Verzin in the semifinals, 6-2 6-4, to meet Wendy Overton and Emilie Burrer in the final. "It was surely many a year," Mary Hardwick noted in *World Tennis*, "since the final was played with the server's partner on the baseline, as was the case when Valerie served. There was Peaches on the baseline every time, and Wendy and Emilie were not quite accurate or severe enough to dominate continually. Valerie took the net and used this antique gambit most effectively and intelligently."⁴⁰⁵ Once again, the unorthodox doubles combination paid off, and Valerie and Peaches won a very close match, 6-8 8-6 6-3. They also created a record; it was the first time any doubles team won the national girls' 16 title and national girls' 18 title during the same year.

At the Ojai Valley tournament in Ojai, California in April, 1966, Valerie had her first match against a world-ranked player. She won four games from Billie Jean Moffitt King during the course of a quarterfinal loss, and then pushed the top-ranked American woman in the quarterfinals of the Southern California Championships in Los Angeles, losing 6-2 10-8. In July, Valerie and Lynn Abbes defended their title at the U. S. National Girls' 18 Hard Court Championships in Burlingame without the loss of a set. After a close three-set loss to Patti Hogan in the Girls' 18 singles final of the La Jolla Championships in early July, Valerie once again traveled east for the summer grass court tournaments. This time, in addition to the U. S. National Girls' 18 Championships in Philadelphia, she was entered in the adult national doubles tournament in Brookline, Massachusetts and the adult national singles tournament in Forest Hills, New York.

Valerie and Lynn had respectable doubles results in the summer tournaments, reaching the finals of the Middle States Grass Court Championships and the Delaware Girls' Grass Court Invitation. The pair temporarily split up for the U. S. National Girl's 18 Championships, as Valerie teamed with Peaches Bartkowicz and Lynn played with Rosie Casals. Valerie and Peaches lost only seven games on their way to the final, where they fought off four match points before defeating Lynn and Rosie, 5-7 8-6 6-2.⁴⁰⁶ Reunited for the U. S. National Doubles Championships in Brookline, Massachusetts, the

ninth-seeded team of Valerie and Lynn had their chances against Rosie and Billie Jean King, narrowly losing at 7-9 6-2 8-6.

In her next two singles tournaments, Valerie showed that she was ready to compete with the world's best players. In the first round of the 1966 U. S. National Singles Championships at Forest Hills, she played third-seeded Nancy Richey on the Stadium Court and led 4-1 and 5-3 in the first set. "Valerie, with her complete all-around game, is one of the most gifted young players of today," Mary Hardwick of *World Tennis* observed. "Nancy was forced to call on her reserves, particularly her matchless powers of concentration, and she sailed on to victory, 8-6 6-2."⁴⁰⁷ Two weeks later, Valerie caused one of the most surprising upsets of the year when she defeated newly-crowned Wimbledon champion Billie Jean King in the second round of the Pacific Southwest Championships in Los Angeles. "I'm shaking all over right now! I don't know how I feel!" an excited Valerie told Jeff Prugh of the *Los Angeles Times* after her 3-6 7-5 6-3 win.⁴⁰⁸ Billie Jean had been suffering from an intestinal virus all summer, but she made no excuses after her loss.⁴⁰⁹

*We played the match on the court near the pool at the Los Angeles Tennis Club. I remember playing well, but she didn't play that great. I think she was more or less exhausted. It was hot, it was always full of smog, so I think she was just tired and really couldn't come up with it. I realized, "Wow, this is really an opportunity."*⁴¹⁰

-- Valerie Ziegenfuss, 2015

Valerie's joy at defeating the reigning Wimbledon champion may have been short-lived, since she lost to hometown rival Patti Hogan in the next round by the score of 6-4 6-4. Still, it was a satisfying year for her, and she earned USLTA national rankings of number one in Girls' 18 doubles with Peaches Bartkowicz and number fourteen in women's singles.

During her senior year in high school, Valerie played the New England Women's Indoor Championships in Salem, Massachusetts – where she pushed Billie Jean to 7-5 6-2

in their quarterfinal match – and the U. S. National Women’s Indoor Championships in Winchester, reaching the doubles semifinals with Emilie Burrer. After her high school graduation, she won the doubles title at the U. S. National Hard Court Championships in Sacramento, California with Stephanie Grant, and in singles she beat eighth-ranked Carol Aucamp in the semifinals before falling in the final to Peaches Bartkowicz, 6-4 6-4.

Valerie played a full schedule of junior and adult tournaments during the summer of 1967, with first-time appearances at the Western Championships in Indianapolis, Indiana and the U. S. National Clay Court Championships in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Happy to be back on grass in early August, Valerie came very close to upsetting Rosie Casals in the quarterfinals of the Eastern Grass Court Championships, losing 4-6 11-9 6-1, and she and Lynn Abbes had similar chances in the first set of their doubles semifinal against Rosie and Billie Jean King in a 10-8 6-1 loss. At the U. S. National Girls’ 18 Championships in Philadelphia, Valerie and Peaches comfortably won the doubles title and established a new record. It was the first time the same doubles team won the national girls’ 18 doubles title for three consecutive years.

At the 1967 U. S. National Championships at Forest Hills, Valerie had what would turn out to be her best run in singles at a grand slam tournament. She defeated Jacques Green and Wendy Overton to face Judy Tegart of Australia, who had earlier eliminated eighth-seeded Mary Ann Eisel. In their third-round match, Mary Hardwick of *World Tennis* reported that Valerie “served deeply and consistently, volleyed beautifully and returned so well that she forced Judy into error. Frequently the young Californian played with the composure and authority of an established world class player ... It was a polished performance from one of the finest and most dedicated of the world stars of the future.”⁴¹¹ Valerie’s 7-5 6-1 victory earned her a spot in the quarterfinals against third-seeded Francoise Durr, recent winner of the French Championships. Unable to anticipate the Frenchwoman’s unorthodox strokes, especially the backhand down-the-line, Valerie lost 6-0 6-3 as Francoise, according to Mary Hardwick, “paid the compliment of refusing to concede even one point.”⁴¹²

In the fall of 1967, Valerie started classes at San Diego State College, planning to follow in her father’s footsteps with a major in physical education.⁴¹³ She did not enroll

for the classes in early 1968, deciding instead to play spring and summer tournaments before returning to college each fall. After reaching the doubles semifinals of the U. S. National Women's Indoor Championships with Patti Hogan, Valerie toured on the Caribbean Circuit – a favorite destination for the world's best players because of the sun-soaked beaches, gambling casinos, steak dinners and nightly parties. Despite the social distractions, Valerie had good results on the hard court circuit. She had two wins over Helga Niessen, the top-ranked German player and one of the world's most proficient clay court experts, and Lesley Turner Bowrey, the two-time winner of the French Championships. In doubles, she and Nancy Richey won the titles in Curacao, Netherlands Antilles and San Juan, Puerto Rico. After playing on the Caribbean Circuit, Valerie then made her debut on the English clay court and grass court circuit.

I financed the trip on my own. I wrote those tournaments and asked for money. Mary Hardwick Hare helped me to organize it, and I traveled with Vicki Rogers. Mary recommended to get over and play on grass as soon as possible, to get used to the grass in England. So we went over there for two and half months. Mary was kind of like our chaperone – she told us where, how and when. She helped us organize that tour. ⁴¹⁴

-- Valerie Ziegenfuss, 2015

Valerie was one of only three Americans who played in the world's first open tournament, the 1968 British Hard Court Championships in Bournemouth, England (Pancho Gonzalez and Vicky Rogers were the other two). For the first time, professionals were allowed to compete against amateurs, and to accommodate this new arrangement, most of the world's national tennis associations recognized the "registered player" category. Registered players were under the jurisdiction of their national associations and had the choice of accepting prize money or expenses in each tournament they played. The USLTA, however, did not recognize the registered player category in 1968; as a result, most American players were strictly amateurs who could only play for allowable expenses (a handful of Americans, including Dennis Ralston, Pancho

Gonzalez, Billie Jean King and Rosie Casals, were contract professionals and could accept prize money).

Seeded seventh in singles, Valerie reached the third round of the clay court tournament at Bournemouth and lost to eventual champion Virginia Wade, 7-5 6-3. In women's doubles, Valerie and Vicki Rogers advanced to the quarterfinals, and in mixed doubles Valerie partnered with former Chilean Davis Cup player Luis Ayala to reach the semifinals. As a registered player, Ayala opted to play for prize money and earned \$100 for reaching the second round of the men's singles. As an amateur, Valerie was given allowable expenses for the week, which amounted to \$125.⁴¹⁵

On the English grass court circuit, Valerie won the singles title at a small tournament at the Wolverhampton Lawn Tennis and Squash Club in West Midlands. She had her first career encounter with Australian champion Margaret Court at the North of England Championships in Manchester, losing 6-1 6-2 in the quarterfinals. Valerie lost to Margaret again the following week at the Kent Open in Beckenham and then reached the quarterfinals of the London Grass Court Championships at Queen's Club. She had wins over two excellent Australian players – Kerry Harris and Karen Krantzcke – before bowing to Nancy Richey, 6-4 6-1. For the second year in a row, she lost to Rosie Casals in the first round of Wimbledon, but reached the third round of the women's doubles with Patti Hogan and the third round of the mixed doubles with Terry Addison. In the Wimbledon Plate, a consolation tournament for those who lost in the first round of the women's singles, Valerie won three matches before losing in the semifinals to Virginia Wade, 4-6 6-4 6-4. It was a successful first trip overseas, and Valerie returned to the United States to play in the Western Championships in Indianapolis and the U. S. National Clay Court Championships in Milwaukee.

*I gained fifteen pounds on that first trip to England, which I quickly lost in the heat of Indianapolis and Milwaukee.*⁴¹⁶

-- Valerie Ziegenfuss, 2015

Back on clay for two weeks, Valerie and Nancy Richey lost in the doubles semifinals of the Western Championships to the South African team of Maryna Godwin and Laura Roussow, 6-2 12-14 6-3. They gained revenge the following week, beating the South Africans in the semifinals of Milwaukee, 2-6 6-4 7-5 and then took the title with a final round win over Peaches Bartkowicz and Stephanie DeFina, 6-0 6-2. In singles Valerie had a three-set win over Faye Urban, the top-ranked Canadian woman, before falling to Kathy Harter in the quarterfinals, 6-3 7-5.

Valerie won her next two doubles tournaments, teaming with Mary Ann Eisel for the Pennsylvania Grass Court Championships and the Eastern Grass Court Championships. Their winning streak came to an end in the finals of the Baltimore Grass Court Invitation, when a sore elbow forced Valerie to retire after she and Mary Ann split sets with the Australian team of Karen Krantzcke and Helen Gourlay. Valerie and Mary Ann struggled through their first three matches at the U. S. National Amateur Championships at the Longwood Cricket Club in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, eventually losing in the semifinals to Virginia Wade and Joyce Williams, 11-9 7-5. At the U. S. Open in Forest Hills, Valerie's elbow was in severe pain, and she went out quietly in the first round to Francoise Durr, 6-0 6-1.

Tennis was a demonstration sport at the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico, and the U. S. team included Valerie, Peaches Bartkowicz, Julie Heldman, Jim McManus, Jim Osborne and Herb Fitzgibbon. In late October, the tennis competition was held in Guadalajara, an hour away from the main venues in Mexico City. In the first round of singles, Valerie lost to Lulu Gongora, Mexico's fourth-ranked player, 6-1 6-2. Valerie and Jim McManus lost in the mixed doubles quarterfinals to the West German team of Helga Niessen and Jurgen Fassbender, 3-6 6-1 7-5. She teamed with Peaches to win a bronze medal by defeating the Mexican team of Lulu Gongora and Patricia Montano, 6-0 6-2 in a third-place playoff.

My arm got bad, and I ended up serving underhand. We got third place, even though I could hardly serve. They talked to me at the U. S. Open and asked if I was going to be okay, and at that time it wasn't as bad. I said, "Yes, I will be

fine,” and then I attempted to serve hard. By the end of the week, I was serving underhand. ⁴¹⁷

-- Valerie Ziegenfuss, 2015

Another semester at San Diego State College in the fall of 1968, and a limited tournament schedule, gave Valerie's arm time to heal. She returned to action at the New England Indoor Championships in Massachusetts in February 1969, winning the women's doubles with Mary Ann Eisel without the loss of a set. Valerie and Mary Ann repeated their success at the following week's U. S. Women's National Indoor Championships, defeating the excellent team of Patti Hogan and Peggy Michel, 6-1 6-3. In early 1969, the USLTA finally acquiesced and allowed players under its jurisdiction to receive prize money while remaining eligible for national rankings and international team competitions. Unfortunately, prize money was not offered at the 1969 U. S. Women's National Indoor Championships, and the top players only received expense money.

Valerie then played on the Caribbean Circuit again, reaching the doubles finals of St. Petersburg and San Juan with Mary Ann. On her way back home to San Diego, she played the Mexican International Championships, a clay court event in Mexico City. She defeated Elena Subirats, Mexico's second ranked player, in the semifinals to earn a rematch against Lulu Gongora. Six months earlier, Lulu easily dismissed an injured Valerie in the first round of the Olympic demonstration tournament in Guadalajara. This time, Lulu won the first set and reached 5-5 in the second before Valerie took charge and won the eight of the next ten games for the title, 1-6 7-6 6-2. For a serve-and-volley player raised on California hard courts, it was one of Valerie's most satisfying wins.

Brief debuts at the German Open and French Open – winning only one singles match at each tournament – allowed Valerie and her parents some time for sightseeing in Europe. ⁴¹⁸ Back on the faster grass surfaces in England, she had three good singles wins at the Northern Championships in Manchester, defeating Linda Tuero, Judy Tegart and Tory Fretz in succession. Doubles partner Mary Ann Eisel prevailed in their semifinal singles match, 6-0 7-5, and after the tournaments at Bristol and Queen's Club, Valerie was ready for Wimbledon.

For the third straight year, Valerie drew Rosie Casals as a first-round opponent at Wimbledon. Rosie dominated the first set before Valerie could get into the match, and she came away a 6-1 7-5 winner. The highlight of the tournament for Valerie was reaching the doubles semifinals with Mary Ann, losing a close match to eventual champions Margaret Court and Judy Tegart, 6-4 6-4. The match was also very special for Valerie since her parents were attending Wimbledon for the first time.⁴¹⁹

A doubles win at the clay court Western Championships in Cincinnati with Kerry Harris and a run to the finals of the Eastern Grass Court Championships with Mary Ann (the match was rained out and not played) prepared Valerie for her debut in the Wightman Cup in Cleveland, Ohio. To play on clay, grass and hard courts in three successive weeks is not easy, but Valerie and Mary Ann performed admirably in a three-set loss to the British sister combination of Christine Truman Janes and Nell Truman, losing 6-1 3-6 6-4. The United States team won 5-2, with Virginia Wade's singles win over Nancy Richey the only other British point.

As the number six domestic seed in singles at the U. S. National Championships in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, Valerie was stopped in the third round by eventual champion Margaret Court, 6-2 6-2. The number one domestic seeds in doubles, Valerie and Mary Ann had a close win over the British team of Winnie Shaw in the quarterfinals, 5-7 9-7 8-6 and then easily defeated Gail Chanfreau and Lesley Hunt, 6-1 6-3. In the championship match, Margaret and Virginia Wade were dominant, winning 6-1 6-3.

At the 1969 U. S. Open at Forest Hills – which included contract professionals along with amateurs and registered players – Valerie and Mary Ann got revenge on Christine Truman Janes and Nell Truman, the sister team who beat them at the Wightman Cup three weeks earlier. After an easy 6-0 6-3 first round win, Valerie and Mary Ann scored another straight-set win over Wimbledon finalists Patti Hogan and Peggy Michel, 6-4 7-5. A quarterfinal victory against Emilie Burrer and Linda Tuero put them the semifinals against the professional team of Francoise Durr and Darlene Hard. After splitting the first two sets, the professionals pulled away and won 6-3 3-6 6-1.

In her remaining tournaments for 1969, Valerie teamed with two of her doubles opponents and made the finals of two tournaments. She and Winnie Shaw were defeated

by Peaches Bartkowicz at the LaCosta Invitation in California, and she partnered with Darlene Hard in reaching final of the Westwood Invitation in Richmond, Virginia. In that tournament, Peaches teamed with Stephanie Johnson and they won against the two Californians, 6-3 2-6 6-3. After completing her third semester at San Diego State College, Valerie traveled to South Africa with several other American for the four hard court tournaments known as the “Sugar Circuit.”

In South Africa, Valerie reached the singles quarterfinals of three tournaments and the third round of another. She was beaten twice by Pat Walkden, once by Ann Jones and once by Brenda Kirk – all very good hard court players. Valerie had her best success in doubles, teaming with Peaches Bartkowicz to reach three finals and losing each time to Pat and Ann. It was a successful tour, but one the Valerie did not forward to repeating the following year.

*It was my first time away for the holidays, and I just thought I'll never do that again, it was just hard to be away from my family. Good experience, bad conditions. East London was so windy, and Bluefountain was so hot. Four of us traveled together, Peaches, Kristy Pigeon, Denise Carter and myself. I always had Christmas at home after that.*⁴²⁰

-- Valerie Ziegenfuss, 2015

Valerie and Mary Ann were not successful in defending their U. S. Women's National Indoor title in February 1970, losing the final to Peaches and Nancy Richey. It was the first time that prize money was offered at the tournament, and Valerie and Mary Ann split \$200 for being doubles finalists. Mary Ann fared much better financially in singles, earning \$1500 for winning the title over Patti Hogan.⁴²¹

On the Caribbean Circuit in early 1970, Valerie had clay court wins over Patti Hogan in Fort Lauderdale, as well as Kathy Harter and Judy Alvarez in Jacksonville. She reached the singles final on the hard courts of the Caribe Hilton Invitational in San Juan, Puerto Rico with first-time wins over Stephanie Johnson and Mary Ann, recently married to British player Peter Curtis. Valerie also took the doubles title with Mary Ann at the

Masters Invitational in St. Petersburg, Florida, and in May she won the doubles at the California State Championships with Nancy Richey.

Skipping the European clay court circuit, Valerie played the English grass court tournaments leading up to Wimbledon in the spring of 1970. At the Surrey Grass Court Championships in Surbiton, she had one of the finest singles wins of her career, a 9-7 1-6 6-2 third round win over Kerry Melville of Australia. The following week, at the Northern Championships in Manchester, Valerie had a good result over fellow Californian Peggy Michel, winning 9-7 3-6 6-1 in the third round. Reunited with Peaches Bartkowicz in doubles, the pair reached the semifinals of the London Grass Court Championships at Queen's Club, beating Patti Hogan and Peggy Michel along the way, 6-4 6-3.

Relieved not to have drawn Rosie Casals in the first round of Wimbledon, as was the case the previous three years, Valerie won two singles matches before bowing to Julie Heldman, 6-3 6-2. She won one doubles match with Peaches and reached the fourth round of the mixed doubles, partnering with Roy Barth of Australia. The week after Wimbledon, Valerie had an outstanding singles run at the Irish Open in Dublin, taking Julie out in the quarterfinals, 6-3 3-6 6-3. She had another good win over Karen Krantzcke of Australia in the semifinals, 6-3 6-4, and then gave a respectable showing against Virginia Wade in the championship match, earning \$600 for her 6-3 6-3 runner-up finish.⁴²²

Valerie stayed in Europe for two more weeks to play the clay court events in Montano, Switzerland and Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, where she defeated American clay court specialist Stephanie DeFina Johnson in the semifinals. In a grass-court lead-up tournament to the 1970 U. S. Open, Valerie and Mary Ann reached the doubles final of the Pennsylvania Grass Court Open, losing to Francoise Durr and Gail Chanfreau 6-3 6-2 and receiving \$75 each. In the first round of the \$25,000 Marlboro Open – formerly known as the Eastern Grass Court Championships, with most of the prize money allotted for the men players – Valerie and Virginia Wade had a rematch of their recent Irish Open final. After winning only two games in the first set, Valerie turned the match around and completed a 2-6 6-2 6-3 upset. Although she lost to Helen Gourlay of Australia in

straight sets in the next round, Valerie's win over Virginia bode well for her chances at the upcoming U. S. Open.

At Forest Hills, Valerie had a good draw in the singles tournament. Her first round opponent was 34-year-old Darlene Hard, the champion in 1960 and 1961 who had only played an occasional tournament in recent years. If she won, Valerie would then probably meet 18-year-old Sharon Walsh in the second round and a projected third round encounter with fifth-seeded Virginia Wade. Valerie knew, however, not to be overconfident; Darlene had won the U. S. Open women's doubles title the previous year, and the two Californians played doubles together in Richmond, Virginia in 1969 and reached the final. "Opening day at Forest Hills was a smash," Mary Hardwick wrote in *World Tennis*. "A star from the past, Darlene Hard, drew the greatest number of spectators as she outthought and outplayed Valerie Ziegenfuss 3-6 6-4 6-4."⁴²³ Although the players were similar in their serve-and-volley approach to the game, they were on different career paths. After narrowly losing to Sharon Walsh in her next match, Darlene would never again play in a major championship and she would go back to teaching tennis. For Valerie, one of her greatest accomplishments would come in a week's time, when she would become part of a group who bravely steered women's tennis into a new direction.

Kristy Pigeon

Kristy Pigeon began her athletic career at the age of six, competing for an AAU swim team in her hometown of Danville, California. In the summer of 1962, when Kristy was twelve years old, her swim team was practicing three hours a day at San Ramon High School while a free tennis lesson program was being offered on the high school's courts. Kristy, who loved all sports – including snow skiing, water skiing, scuba diving and surfing – soon found a new favorite activity.

After swim practice I would don my tennis shoes and walk to the courts, still dressed in my black Speedo swimsuit. There were over one hundred and fifty kids in the tennis program, where each participant stood in line for up to a half an

hour to hit a few balls before returning to the end of the line. Dick Overstreet, the teaching professional at the Diablo Country Club, spearheaded the lesson program. The ten-week program culminated with a tournament in August. I won the event and was given the opportunity to work at the country club, cleaning the tennis shop and later stringing racquets, in exchange for lessons. ⁴²⁴

-- Kristy Pigeon, 2010

Nine months after her first tennis lesson, Kristy entered her first Northern California sectional tournament in Palo Alto and reached the quarterfinals of the girls' 14 and under singles division. She lost to Denise Carter, and two became good friends and rivals in local junior tournaments. Kristy's game developed rapidly in 1963 and 1964; she spent nearly all of her free time at the Diablo Country Club and steadily worked her way up the Northern California rankings.

As my game progressed, I was sent out to play with club members who needed a partner or someone to hit with. Eventually my parents, Frank and Darleene, who had previously only dabbled in tennis, joined the club and started to play on a regular basis. There was never any doubt about which of the two sports I would pursue. I loved tennis and quickly dedicated every minute, other than school, to practicing and playing. ⁴²⁵

-- Kristy Pigeon, 2010

Accompanied by her mother, Kristy played her first tournament outside of Northern California in St. Louis, Missouri in July 1964. She won the girls' 14 singles division of the prestigious St. Louis Junior Invitational with a 6-2 6-1 final round win over Stephanie Grant, and then traveled to Chattanooga, Tennessee for the U. S. National Girls' 14 Championships.

I lost to Marjorie Gengler in singles and won the doubles event with Patricia Montano from Mexico. I had not known Patricia before the tournament and we quickly became good friends. ⁴²⁶

-- Kristy Pigeon, 2010

Returning home to California with her first national title, Kristy then reached the girls' 14 and under singles semifinals of the 1964 U. S. National Hard Court Championships in Burlingame. In September, she had an amazing result in the women's singles division of the Pacific Coast Championships in Berkeley, a major event on the international calendar. Only two years after her first tennis lesson, Kristy won the first set from Helga Schultze of Germany before losing the match 2-6 6-3 6-4. Helga was one of the top women players in her country, and two years later she would reach the quarterfinals of the French Championships.

The following summer, Kristy pushed Rosie Casals – who, at age seventeen, was already an established star on the national level – in the quarterfinals of the Pacific Coast Junior Championships in Berkeley, losing 8-6 6-4. Two weeks later, Rosie again prevailed in the quarterfinals of the U. S. National Junior Hard Court Championships, this time by the score of 6-3 6-2. At the 1965 U. S. National Girls' 16 Championships in Lake Bluff, Illinois, Kristy upset eighth-seeded Martha Downing in the third round, 6-3 6-1, before losing to Patti Hogan's all-court game, 6-3 6-1. Kristy then played her first series of grass court tournaments in the East, winning the consolation event at the Delaware Girls's Grass Court Invitation, representing Northern California in the National Girls' Team Championships, and reaching the third round of the U. S. National Girls's 18 Championships in Philadelphia. At the end of the year, she was ranked at number one in the Northern California girls' 16 singles rankings and was placed at number eight on the national girls' 16 singles list.

In early 1966, Kristy played an international junior tournament in Mexico City, winning the doubles title with Patricia Montano, her partner at the 1964 U. S. National Girls' 14 Championships. She won the Northern California Junior Championships in April, the girls' 16 singles title at the U. S. National Hard Court Championships in

Burlingame in July, and three weeks later she played in the U. S. National Girls' 16 Championships in Lake Bluff. In the quarterfinals, she played the longest match of the tournament, defeating Stephanie Grant 5-7 7-5 10-8. A 7-5 6-4 semifinal win over fellow Californian Pam Teeguarden put Kristy in the final, where she could manage only three games against the clay court proficiency of Linda Tuero of New Orleans, Louisiana.

After the girls' 16 nationals, Kristy repeated her tour of junior grass court tournaments in the East, adding an appearance at the U. S. National Doubles Championships at the Longwood Cricket Club in Brookline, Massachusetts. In the first round of Longwood, she and Pixie Lamm played recent Wimbledon doubles champions Maria Bueno and Nancy Richey and lost, 6-0 6-2.

Two tournaments in California in the fall of 1966 made Kristy realize that she could compete with the world's best players. At the Pacific Southwest Championships in Los Angeles, she defeated British Wightman Cup star Virginia Wade in the first round, 7-5 0-6 6-3. The following week, at the Pacific Coast International in Berkeley, Kristy eliminated Kerry Melville of Australia – a semifinalist at Forest Hills one month earlier – in the second round, 6-2 3-6 6-2. Virginia was ready to play Kristy a second time, and lost only one game in their quarterfinal match. Despite the loss, Kristy was encouraged by her results and eager to prove herself the following year.

Taking a two-week break from her junior year in high school in February 1967, Kristy made her debut in the nation's two most important women's indoor events. At the New England Women's Indoor Championships in Salem, Massachusetts, Kristy lost in the second round to Ceci Martinez, her new doubles partner and fellow Californian. Kristy and Ceci then reached the doubles final, losing to Carol Aucamp and Mary Ann Eisel 6-4 6-1. In the following week's U. S. National Women's Indoor Championships in Winchester, Kristy slipped on the carpet surface and twisted her ankle during her second round match against Donna Fales. She could not continue to play, and she was also forced to pull out of the doubles.⁴²⁷

Kristy and Ceci paired again for the California State Championships in May in Portola Valley, losing in the semifinals to Billie Jean King and Rosie Casals, 6-4 2-6 6-2. Kristy then won her first adult national championship when she and Bill Demus

combined to win the mixed doubles at the U. S. National Hardcourt Championships in Sacramento. She competed in California tournaments until mid-summer, winning the girls' 18 singles titles at the Northern California Championships and the Pacific Coast Junior Championships, and finishing second at the California State Junior Championships, the U. S. National Junior Hardcourt Championships and the Far West Junior Championships.

Five grass court tournaments in the east preceded Kristy's debut at the 1967 U. S. National Championships in Forest Hills. In her first three events, she won several matches against lesser-ranked players and to such highly-ranked Americans as Patti Hogan, Stephanie DeFina and Billie Jean King. In the quarterfinals of the U. S. National Girls' 18 Championships in Philadelphia, Patti was on the verge of defeating Kristy again when she led 5-4 in the third set and was two points away from victory. After unleashing two consecutive aces, Kristy reversed the momentum and clinched the match 7-5 3-6 7-5. She nearly upset Peaches Bartkowicz in the semifinals, leading 5-3 in the first set and 4-1 in the second. "Kristy used every shot in the game," Mary Hardwick wrote in *World Tennis*, "from service aces to drop shots. She changed her pace and length, and occasionally threw in an underhand serve."⁴²⁸ Kristy briefly lost her concentration and lost her serve, which was enough of an opening for Peaches to prevail 9-7 7-5.

In her first appearance at Forest Hills, 16-year-old Kristy received a walkover when sixth-seeded Maria Bueno withdrew due to an injury. She then played Carole Caldwell Graebner, a women's singles finalist at Forest Hills three years earlier. Kristy's powerful serve and all-court game presented a challenge, and Carole had to rely on her superior groundstrokes to escape with a 6-3 7-5 victory. Two weeks later, in the third round of the Pacific Southwest Championships in Los Angeles, they played again and split the first two sets. Kristy cruised through the third set for a satisfying 6-3 3-6 6-0 victory, and her semifinal encounter against Billie Jean King made for a memorable tournament, despite winning only four games from the two-time Wimbledon champion. At the end of the year, Kristy was rewarded with a national ranking of number sixteen in women's singles and number two in the girls' 18 singles division.

During her senior year of high school, Kristy played the two women's indoor tournaments in Massachusetts and several events in California with moderate success. After graduating in the spring of 1968, she prepared to travel overseas for the English grass court circuit. The Diablo Country Club staged a golf event to raise funds to help cover the costs of Kristy's trip, which included five tournaments leading up to Wimbledon.⁴²⁹

Kristy's best singles result heading into Wimbledon was a 6-0 6-4 win over Christine Truman Janes in the third round of the North of England Championships in Manchester. She had respectable scores against Judy Tegart in the quarterfinals of Manchester, losing 8-6 6-3, and against Ann Jones in the second round of the London Grass Court Championships, winning the first set before bowing 3-6 6-3 6-2. For her debut at Wimbledon, Kristy was assigned to play her first round match against Monique Salfati of France on Centre Court. Showing no nerves from playing on tennis' most famous court for the first time, Kristy comfortably won the first set before missing some easy volleys and losing the second. When the third set reached 5-5 at 9:20 pm, Wimbledon referee Mike Gibson came onto the court and suspended the match due to darkness. The following day, on a field court, Kristy held her serve and broke Monique's serve to conclude a 6-4 3-6 7-5 victory.⁴³⁰

Having survived the first round, Kristy lost only six games in her next two matches – including a 6-2 6-0 demolition of Heidi Orth-Schildknecht that lasted a mere twenty minutes. In the fourth round, she had her first career singles meeting with Nancy Richey, the fourth seed and recent winner of the French Open. Kristy, constantly keeping the Texan under pressure with her kicking serve and sharp volleys, had leads in the first and second sets before bowing 7-5 7-5. In the women's doubles, Kristy paired with Ceci Martinez and reached the third round, and she created an amusing buzz when she served an ace past Australian professional Fred Stolle in a mixed doubles match.⁴³¹

Kristy's impressive Wimbledon debut included a title; she won the junior singles tournament with a 6-1 6-1 semifinal win over Kazuko Sawamatsu of Japan and a 6-4 6-3 final round win over Lesley Hunt of Australia. The next week, she played the Welsh Championships in Newport, Wales and upset Lesley Turner Bowrey in the semifinals,

6-3 6-3. In the championship match, Kristy had no problems with Faye Moore, losing only two games.

Back in the United States, Kristy continued her winning streak on the Eastern grass court circuit. She defeated doubles partner Ceci Martinez in the final of the Middle States Grass Court Championships in Philadelphia, and then she won the Pennsylvania Grass Court Championships at the Merion Cricket Club in Haverford, Pennsylvania. At Merion, Kristy did not lose a set in six matches, culminating with a 9-7 6-0 final over Vicky Rogers. The string of victories continued into the following week, at the Eastern Grass Court Championships in South Orange, New Jersey. Kristy defeated Betty Ann Grubb, her good friend Denise Carter, highly-ranked American Tory Fretz and Helen Gourlay of Australia to reach the final. Against Mary Ann Eisel in the championship match, Kristy won the first set before the third-ranked American prevailed 3-6 6-1 6-2.

Top-seeded at the U. S. National Girls' 18 Championships in Philadelphia, Kristy faced a challenge from Janet Newberry, the national girls' 16 champion, in the round of sixteen. Leading 5-3 in the second set, Kristy played several loose shots and lost her momentum. She regained her focus in time to win 6-1 6-8 6-4. An easy semifinal against Betty Ann Grubb, winning 6-2 6-2, put Kristy in the final against Linda Tuero – a rematch of the national girls' 16 final from two years earlier. That match, however, was on Linda's favorite surface of slow clay. On the grass in Philadelphia, Kristy used her superior serve and decisive volleys to come from 1-4 down in the first set. When she caught up to Linda at 4-4, she was in control the rest of the way, finishing the match 6-4 6-4. Krist also added the doubles title to her trophy collection, partnering with Denise Carter to beat the unseeded team of Tammy O'Shaugnessy and Ann Lebedeff, 6-3 7-5.

After I won the U. S. National Girls' Championships in 1968, Gladys Heldman took me to an exclusive restaurant in New York City for lunch. She taught me that if you were going to have a nip at the noon hour it was best to drink vodka martinis, as vodka could not be detected later on one's breath. Gladys and I frequently had private talks where I learned a handful about life! ⁴³²

-- Kristy Pigeon, 2010

Kristy's meteoric rise came to an abrupt end during her next two tournaments. Seeded seventh at the U. S. National Amateur Championships in Brookline, Massachusetts, she was upset in the third round by her doubles partner, Ceci Martinez, by the score of 10-8 6-4. "Ceci played extremely well, displaying not only great consistency but a knowledge of how to keep Kristy from getting grooved," Mary Hardwick of *World Tennis* observed. "She threw up high lobs, changed her length and returned serve beautifully. Kristy was never able to exploit Ceci's forehand weakness. It was a heartbreaker for the U. S. junior champion, especially since Kristy led 5-4 on her own serve and at 8-7 had set points again on service. But is with defeats such as these that champions are made."⁴³³

At the U. S. Open in Forest Hills two weeks later, Kristy was surprisingly given the number eight seeded position. "Kristy's seeding was a matter of debate," Mary Hardwick wrote. "In one year she rose from an obscure junior to prominence in the international ranks. Her talent is as dominating as her personality, but it is still a little raw and in embryo. It would have been better for Kristy if the number eight spot had been awarded to someone who had served her apprenticeship in the international game a little longer."⁴³⁴ Oddly, the seasoned professionals Rosie Casals and Francoise Durr were not seeded, and neither was Peaches Bartkowicz, a quarterfinalist at Forest Hills the previous year. The expectations may have been too much for Kristy, and she was defeated in the second round by Maryna Godwin of South Africa, 7-5 6-4.

*I was starting college the next week and anxious to go home ... Even though I was the number one junior player in the world, there were few tennis scholarships available to women. I accepted a good citizenship scholarship from the Danville Chamber of Commerce. It became increasingly difficult to compete on the circuit while attending college, and my tennis definitely suffered from this time on.*⁴³⁵
-- Kristy Pigeon, 2010

In the fall of 1968, after earning the top national ranking in girls' 18 singles and the sixth spot on the women's singles list, Kristy temporarily put tennis on hold. She

attended Mills College in Oakland, California, to study biology and art in the hopes of becoming a medical illustrator.⁴³⁶ She did not take classes in the spring semester of 1969 in order to play the two women's indoor tournaments in Massachusetts and travel on the Caribbean Circuit for the first time.

*In 1969, I played on the Caribbean Circuit. I was sent a book of airline tickets for the eight week circuit and all of my expenses were paid. In addition, win or lose, I was guaranteed \$250 cash per week. This was quite a bit of money for an 18-year-old! Men and women played at the same tournaments and the weekly stipend was based on current rankings. There were parties every night and life was good!*⁴³⁷

-- Kristy Pigeon, 2010

Kristy's results in 1969 did not match what she had accomplished the previous year. She played the clay court tournaments in Europe for the first time, visiting Spain, Germany and France. The highlight of her overseas trip was winning the Women's 21 and Under title at the Kent Championships in Beckenham, England, defeating Olga Morozova of the Soviet Union in the final, 6-3 8-6 6-4. She also had her first win over Julie Heldman, who was having the best year of her career, in the third round of the London Grass Court Championships, 6-2 2-6 6-3. At Wimbledon, Kristy reached the fourth round again and lost to Billie Jean King, 6-3 6-2, and at the U. S. National Amateur Championships she partnered with Terry Addison in mixed doubles and reached the final, losing to Patti Hogan and Paul Sullivan, 6-4 2-6 12-10. After a first round loss to Gail Chanfreau at the U. S. Open, Kristy went back to California for another semester at Mills College.

In December 1969, after the semester finished, Kristy traveled to South Africa to play on the hard-court "Sugar Circuit" along with good friend Denise Carter. She performed consistently on the tour, reaching the quarterfinals of all four tournaments yet unable to get past Helen Gourlay of Australia in three of them. When the tournaments had ended, Kristy and Denise stayed in South Africa for several more weeks.

After the circuit was over, through an arrangement with the National Parks Board of South Africa, I went to Kruger National Park to study lion-zebra relationships. I received course credit equaling one semester towards my college degree in biology. This was truly one of the highlights of my life! ⁴³⁸

-- Kristy Pigeon, 2010

In the spring of 1970, before going to Europe and England for the summer tournaments, Kristy and Denise played in the Kansas City Invitation, a tournament for men and women that offered total prize money of \$10,000. Most of the prize money, however, was allocated for the men. First prize in the men's singles was \$2500, compared to \$1000 for the women's winner; the men's singles finalist received \$1000, while the women's runner-up earned \$500 – a typical prize money ratio for tournaments in the United States at the time. Kristy and Denise reached the final, guaranteeing that they would each receive \$500. ⁴³⁹ Whoever won the match would get an additional \$500, and the prospect of earning that amount distracted both of them. Kristy won the match, and the score of 6-1 1-6 6-1 reflects the players' mindsets.

I was nervous playing Denise because we were rivals, and later friends, growing up in Northern California. On a side note, we had both partied hard the night before the finals with players from the Kansas City Chiefs, who were staying at our same hotel! ⁴⁴⁰

-- Kristy Pigeon, 2015

Kristy had another memorable tournament at the Rothman's Northern Championships in Manchester, England in early June. In the third round of singles she played Evonne Goolagong, an 18-year-old Australian who was making her first overseas trip amid much media attention as a likely future world champion. Kristy won 6-2 1-6 6-2 and was impressed by her opponent's talent and pleasant disposition.

Billie Jean had seen Evonne play in Australia and had told me that she was sure to be a rising star. I was pumped for the match and played well. She was amazing in the second set, but seemed to go “walkabout” in the third. I particularly remember how nice she was after the match. After shaking hands, she suggested we go get a drink together! ⁴⁴¹

-- Kristy Pigeon, 2015

Kristy lost to Kerry Melville in the quarterfinals of Manchester, 7-5 6-2, and then teamed with her to win the doubles title over Evonne and her coach's daughter, Patricia Edwards. At Wimbledon two weeks later, Kristy was on the verge of defeating Peaches Bartkowicz in the first round, having won the first set and taking a lead in the second.

The Wimbledon match against Peaches was heartbreaking for me. There was one point in the second set that most likely caused me to lose this match. On an advantage for me to break her serve, I hit a drop shot I believed she returned after the ball bounced twice. The umpire didn't call it and she won that point and the set. ⁴⁴²

-- Kristy Pigeon, 2015

Peaches won the match, 3-6 9-7 6-1. Kristy stayed in Europe for several weeks after Wimbledon, playing in the Golden Racket tournament in Aix-en-Provence in France. She reached the semifinals and battled Isabella Bonicelli of Peru to 4-4 in the third set before retiring from the match with an injury. She skipped several tournaments on the American grass court circuit and returned to action at the Marlboro Open in South Orange, New Jersey. Kristy won her first round match against Ingrid Bentzer of Sweden, 6-3 6-4, and then lost her next match to Judy Dalton, 6-0 7-6. Going into the 1970 U. S. Open, Kristy hoped to turn around what had been a relatively disappointing year.

Eighteen months earlier, at the 1969 U. S. National Women's Indoor Championships in Winchester, Massachusetts, Kristy sent a letter to Joe Cullman, CEO of the Philip Morris company and chairman of the U. S. Open. ⁴⁴³ Gladys Heldman, who

had taken Kristy to lunch after she won the U. S. National Girls' Championships in 1968, made the introduction at Forest Hills that summer. Kristy knew that Cullman was devoted to tennis, and her letter inquired if his company would be interested in sponsoring women's tennis tournaments. Although she did not receive a response from Cullman at the time, her wish to have more financial opportunities for women tennis players would soon be realized.

Notes

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- ² “Judge G. Z. Medalie Dies in Albany at 62,” *New York Times* (New York, New York), March 6, 1946.
- ³ “Judge G. Z. Medalie Dies in Albany at 62,” *New York Times* (New York, New York), March 6, 1946.
- ⁴ “Mrs. Carrie Medalie, 86, Dies; On Board of Higher Education,” *New York Times* (New York, New York), February 13, 1971.
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- ⁶ Gladys Heldman, quoted in Barbara La Fontaine, “Busiest Voice in a Busy, Busy Clan,” *Sports Illustrated*, June 22, 1964, 38.
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- ⁹ Gladys Heldman, quoted in Barbara La Fontaine, “Busiest Voice in a Busy, Busy Clan,” *Sports Illustrated*, June 22, 1964, 38.
- ¹⁰ Julius Heldman, interview by Trixie Merkin (nee Carrie Heldman), 2002.
- ¹¹ “Tennisdom’s Woman of the Year,” *The Racquet*, November 1951, 9.
- ¹² Gladys Heldman, quoted in Charley McKenna, “She’s Come A Long Way,” *Milwaukee Sentinel* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin), June 6, 1977.
- ¹³ Gladys Heldman, quoted in Barbara La Fontaine, “Busiest Voice in a Busy, Busy Clan,” *Sports Illustrated*, June 22, 1964, 38.
- ¹⁴ Julie Heldman, email correspondence to the author, February 12, 2011.
- ¹⁵ Trixie Merkin (nee Carrie Heldman), email correspondence to the author, February 12, 2011.
- ¹⁶ Charles Hare, quoted in Zarko Franks, “Tennis Grips The Lone Star State,” *The Racquet*, November 1951, 22.
- ¹⁷ Zarko Franks, “Tennis Grips The Lone Star State,” *The Racquet*, November 1951, 22.
- ¹⁸ “Tennisdom’s Woman of the Year,” *The Racquet*, November 1951, 9.
- ¹⁹ Barbara La Fontaine, “Busiest Voice in a Busy, Busy Clan,” *Sports Illustrated*, June 22, 1964, 38.
- ²⁰ “Tennisdom’s Woman of the Year,” *The Racquet*, November 1951, 9.
- ²¹ “Tennisdom’s Woman of the Year,” *The Racquet*, November 1951, 9.
- ²² Match results listed in *American Lawn Tennis* magazine.
- ²³ *USLTA Yearbook and Guide 1951* (New York: H. O. Zimman, 1951).
- ²⁴ Jack Gallagher, “Glenn McCarthy Give Net Game a Big Boost,” *Houston Post* (Houston, Texas), March 18, 1951.
- ²⁵ Jack Gallagher, “Penick To Cut Class,” *Houston Post* (Houston, Texas), March 11, 1951.
- ²⁶ Jack Gallagher, “Penick To Cut Class,” *Houston Post* (Houston, Texas), March 11, 1951.

- ²⁷ Harv Broughton, "Net Show Gets New Cast," *Houston Post* (Houston, Texas), March 14, 1951.
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- ²⁹ Jack Gallagher, "Kelley Defeats Wood," *Houston Post* (Houston, Texas), March 17, 1951.
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- ³¹ Jack Gallagher, "Glenn McCarthy Give Net Game a Big Boost," *Houston Post* (Houston, Texas), March 18, 1951.
- ³² Gladys Heldman, quoted in Barbara La Fontaine, "Busiest Voice in a Busy, Busy Clan," *Sports Illustrated*, June 22, 1964, 38.
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CHAPTER 3: A PROBLEM IN HOUSTON

The establishment of “open” tennis in 1968 – which permitted professionals to compete against the world’s best amateurs in major tournaments, popularizing the game and triggering an influx of corporate sponsorship – significantly changed the dynamics of world-class tennis. The sport became more visible to the general public, thanks to increased television exposure. For the world’s best male players, open tennis was an opportunity; for the women players, it was a disillusion. Tennis was managed, promoted and journalistically reported by men, many of whom felt that women’s tennis was insignificant. While there were plenty of open tournaments held only for men, there were no open tournaments held exclusively for women. Whenever the women played, they shared facilities and court time with their male counterparts. Tournament directors relegated the women to second-class status, often scheduling their early-round matches to be played in the mornings on remote courts, which usually had limited or no spectator seating. During the first few years of open tennis, some tournaments eliminated the women’s divisions altogether.

Prize money disparity was the biggest concern for the women players. At tournaments that included men’s and women’s divisions, the women players competed for one-half to as little as one-tenth of what the men received. The historic first open tennis tournament, the British Hard Court Championships held in Bournemouth, England, provided the women with less than one-third of the prize money that was reserved for the men. While the women’s singles draw had the same number of players as the men’s singles draw, \$2,400 was allocated for the men’s singles winner and only \$720 was reserved for the women’s champion.¹ When the prize money distribution was announced three months prior to the event, British champion Ann Jones requested

permission from her national association to skip Bournemouth and play a tournament in the United States.²

In the pre-open era, Ann Jones won the British Hard Court Championships four times, but she had no intention of playing in an event that had become discriminatory towards women.

*The inaugural Open Bournemouth produced an argument over the prize money. It had been announced months before that the prize money for the men's event was to be about four times that of the women's and I had immediately instigated a protest that the girls were being unfairly treated. As the first Open it set a precedent, which other tournaments followed.*³

--Ann Jones, 1971

The prize money situation at Bournemouth also angered British Wightman Cup captain Angela Mortimer, the former singles champion of Wimbledon, the French Championships and the Australian Championships.. "If I were competing nowadays," she said, "I wouldn't play for this money. We've got the number two player in the world. Now they are kicking her in the teeth and saying, 'You're cheap, you're worthless, and we don't care a damn about you'".⁴

At Bournemouth, the die was cast, and a pattern began to develop at major and minor prize money tournaments. In subsequent years, the women rarely received even half of what the men were awarded; in most cases, the amount was one-third or less. At the first French Open, in 1968, the men's singles winner earned \$3,000 while only \$1,000 was allocated for the women's champion; the losing men's and women's finalists were given \$2,000 and \$600, respectively.⁵

In 1968, the first year of open tennis, Billie Jean and I were sitting together in the stands at Roland Garros during the French Open. We were discussing the sad state of women's tennis, and I suggested to her that the first thing she and the

*other girls should do was form their own association and work up their own circuit. She agreed completely ...*⁶

--Jack Kramer, 1979

The prize money ratios were only slightly better at the next two major tournaments. At Wimbledon in 1968, Rod Laver received \$4,800 for winning the men's singles title, while Billie Jean King earned \$1800 for winning the women's. ⁷ Later that year, at the first U. S. Open, Virginia Wade won \$6000 for winning her first major title, less than half of the \$14,000 that was allocated for the men's champion. ⁸ The prize money at the first Australian Open, held in January 1969, was the most disparate of the first four major opens. The first prize in the men's singles tournament was \$5000, while only \$1000 was reserved for the winning woman. ⁹

The negligible treatment continued – and in some cases worsened – throughout 1969. Julie Heldman earned \$800 for winning the women's singles title at the first Italian Open, while men's singles champion John Newcombe earned \$3,000. ¹⁰ At the French Open, the \$2,000 women's first-place payment was double the amount offered in 1968, making it the third largest women's prize of the year. However, the men's first place award was increased by \$4,000, resulting in a \$7,000 payday. ¹¹

In the early days of open tennis, the marketplace splits of the purses still went on the order of the amateur breakdown: 75 to 90 percent for the men. And from all I've seen, that is fair enough. It is fair in terms of fan interest and also in simple division of labor ... I don't think equal rights should jeopardize a fair marketplace. ¹²

-- Jack Kramer, 1979

At Wimbledon that summer – where the men were earning twice as much – Billie Jean King organized an informal gathering of women players in an effort to lobby for better prize money distribution. The meeting was not productive, according to one of the

attendees. Some of the players were apprehensive about creating controversy, fearing the men would “do away with the girl’s events if they possibly could.”¹³

*At first, my argument wasn’t for equal prize money. We couldn’t argue that we were as good as the men, or as strong, because we weren’t, and in the major tournaments the men did play the best-of-five sets while we played the best-of-three. All that the other women and I agitated for initially was for a better ratio, maybe 5 to 3 or even just 2 to 1.*¹⁴

--Billie Jean King, 1974

In 1969, Billie Jean was one of a handful of women making a respectable amount of money playing tennis – compared, at least, to what most of the other female tennis players were earning. As contract professionals in George MacCall’s National Tennis League, Billie Jean had an annual contract worth \$40,000, Ann Jones’ was worth \$25,000 per year and Rosie Casals and Francoise Durr had annual contracts for \$20,000.¹⁵ Margaret Court, an independent professional, earned \$45,000 in 1969 by playing an extensive schedule of 25 tournaments. “Part of the problem for the younger girls,” Margaret allowed, “is the lack of money. To win any big money on tour, you’ve got to either win or be runner-up.”¹⁶ That year, Margaret won 39 singles, doubles and mixed doubles tournaments, including singles titles at three of the four Grand Slam events.

The four women’s contract professionals, along with Margaret Court, were the exceptions. Most of the women players were fortunate if they earned enough money to break even on their travel expenses. Julie Heldman was the world’s fifth-ranked women’s player in 1969 – winning eight tournaments, including the Italian Open – and finished the year with \$7000 in earnings.¹⁷ For lesser-ranked players, it was much worse. Faye Urban, the number-one ranked player in Canada, quit playing competitive tennis in 1969 after receiving only \$200 for winning the Canadian Open. “This life of not knowing where your next dollar is coming from is not for me,” Faye observed.¹⁸ Compared to the money offered in men’s tournaments, competing in women’s prize-money tournaments was a risky gamble at best.

One of the most extreme cases of prize money imbalance occurred at the 1969 Western Tennis Championships, played in Cincinnati, Ohio. In the men's singles final, Cliff Richey raced through Allan Stone, 6-1 6-2 and won \$5,000 while Stone received \$2,500. Earlier that day Leslie Bowrey, a two-time winner of the French Championships, battled Gail Chanfreau in the women's singles final for three hours and twenty minutes. With the score tied at 1-6 7-5 10-10, Gail collapsed with leg cramps and had to be carried off the court. For their efforts, Lesley collected \$500 and Gail took home \$250.¹⁹

The prize money ratio at the 1969 Eastern Grass Court Championships, an historic tournament played at the Orange Lawn Tennis Club in South Orange, New Jersey since the 1920s, was only slightly more favorable to the women. That year, women's singles players received no prize money for the first two rounds, while men who lost in the first or second round won \$100 and \$300, respectively. Women who lost in the quarterfinals or semifinals received \$75 and \$200, compared to men's singles quarterfinal or semifinal losers, who took home \$500 and \$1,000. Getting to the women's singles final was worth \$500, while the men's singles finalist earned \$2,000. Patti Hogan's joy at collecting \$1,000 for winning the title in 1969 was undoubtedly dampened when she realized that the men's singles winner, Stan Smith, received \$4,000 in addition to a new \$3,000 automobile.²⁰

One week later, at the 1969 U.S. Open, a men's singles entrant won significantly more money than a women's singles player in each respective round. For instance, a man who lost in the first round was eligible for \$100, while a woman player could receive only half that amount. If a man lost in the third round, he would be eligible for \$750, while a woman who lost in the third round could only be awarded \$250. Men who lost in the quarterfinals and semifinals could collect \$2,000 and \$4,000, respectively, while women who lost at those rounds could receive \$1,000 and \$1,500. The men's singles winner and finalist won \$16,000 and \$8,000, respectively, while the women's singles winner and finalist earned \$6,000 and \$3,000.²¹ Although the prize money at the U.S. Open was far from equal, it was the best deal the women received all year.

Even the casual observer of international tennis was aware of the prize money inequities. *Tennis* magazine featured monthly columns by highly-ranked American

players Marty Riessen and Patti Hogan. In late 1969, Riessen argued that the women players did not deserve more money because they did not draw as many spectators as the men did. Riessen also stated this was due to the fact that the public recognized thirty or forty men players, but only a handful of women players.²² Patti subsequently countered that the public would recognize more women players if they were not relegated to the last paragraph of tennis articles in newspapers.²³ In nearly every issue of *World Tennis* magazine, the “Around the World” section listed prize money breakdowns for men and women at various tournaments, and always commented on the unfair differences. In contrast, *Tennis USA*, the official magazine of the USLTA, never invited debate about the prize money imbalance and usually only mentioned players’ winnings in passing.

Throughout 1970, the women players continued to endure secondary treatment at prize-money tournaments. In the Victorian Open in January – an important Australian tournament – the men’s singles champion earned \$3,400 while the women’s singles winner collected only \$700.²⁴ The following week’s Australian Open offered a total of \$2,240 for the women’s singles and women’s doubles – less than what was allocated for the men’s doubles competition. Judy Dalton, one of Australia’s best female players, observed that the money available for the women at the Australian Open and Victorian Open barely covered expenses, and she considered bypassing both tournaments.²⁵ Four months later, Billie Jean King collected \$600 for winning the Italian Open – \$200 less than what Julie Heldman collected for winning the title the previous year, and almost one-sixth of the \$3500 that men’s champion Ilie Nastase was awarded.²⁶

In February 1970, Patti Hogan attended the USLTA annual meeting in Tucson, Arizona to observe the inner-workings of the national association’s decision-making. She was especially interested in hearing about the USLTA’s plans for women’s professional tennis, and why there were increasingly fewer tournaments for women on the Eastern grass court circuit. “The problem is that some of the major grass court tournaments are to be open this year, while others have not yet decided on their status,” Patti reported. “The tournaments need all the money they can find to attract the top men, and since the women were only playing for token amounts anyway, this money might as well be thrown into the men’s pot also. After all, women do not draw crowds – so the

promoters say.” Patti learned that there were plans for a few women’s tournaments on the grass court circuit with limited draws; one tournament expected to have a draw of sixteen women, and another tournament hoped to invite four or eight women if enough money could be found. “Events of that size will provide a place for only the very top players, and especially when one considers that some of the players will be foreigners, one wonders what will happen to the second-tenners and promising younger players. They will have no opportunity to compete against the top players and gain the experience they need in order to become top players themselves.” With this scenario, Patti was concerned that eventually the United States would not be able to field teams strong enough to win the Wightman Cup or Federation Cup.²⁷

Motivated by her visit to the USLTA annual meeting, Patti composed and presented a brief questionnaire in her *Tennis* column in March, 1970. “If promoters could be convinced that women’s tennis is marketable if given as much attention as men’s,” she wrote, “then women might have a chance of earning a proportionate share of the prize money. But who is going to let them in on the secret? Certainly not the women tennis players; they have tried, without notable success. It is up to you to tell them, and you can do that by filling out the questionnaire below.” Patti encouraged readers to complete a short survey and mail their responses to the magazine.²⁸

The women players received more bad news in April 1970 when the International Lawn Tennis Federation (ILTF) announced it was adopting a prize-money bonus pool that would benefit only the men players. The previous year, former professional tour promoter Jack Kramer returned to the tennis scene when he was asked by Perry T. Jones, the director of the Pacific Southwest Open, to assist in the tournament’s management duties. The challenges in staging a successful international tennis event – including the payment of exorbitant sanction fees, negotiating with professional promoters for the appearance of their contracted players, and the news media’s confusion and lack of knowledge about open tennis – prompted Kramer to devise a plan that would restore the authority of tournament directors and stimulate the sport’s growth. Shortly after the conclusion of the 1969 Pacific Southwest Open, Kramer unveiled his proposal at a news conference at the USLTA office in New York.²⁹

Kramer's plan called for the coordination of twenty-five international tournaments, which totaled \$1.5 million in prize money. Similar to the grand prix system established in auto racing, each tournament was asked to contribute ten percent of its prize money to a bonus pool. Players would be awarded points for their results in the tournaments; at the conclusion of the season, the top twenty players would share a pool of \$229,000, with the first-place finisher receiving \$50,000. "The purpose is to put overall tournament administration on an international level," Kramer explained, acknowledging that promoters George MacCall and Lamar Hunt controlled most professional players and threatened to boycott open tournaments unless they received special fees. The 1970 French Open was a casualty of the promoters; unable to come to a financial agreement with the tournament, MacCall and Hunt did not allow their contracted players – including Rod Laver, Ken Rosewall, John Newcombe and many others – to participate. As a result, some of the national associations began considering barring contract professionals from their tournaments. "Tournament sponsors cannot afford to get involved in this kind of merry-go-round. If money is paid to MacCall, smaller promoters or player agents may make similar demands," he warned. In the grand prix system, the increased prize money and bonus pool earnings would eliminate appearance fee negotiations with professional promoters. According to Kramer, the national associations of the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, Sweden and Belgium supported the concept.³⁰

Kramer continued to work on his concept through early 1970, and in April the ILTF decided to try the Grand Prix on an experimental basis. The ILTF selected eighteen events to be part of inaugural series, including Wimbledon and the U. S. Open. By June, Pepsi-Cola agreed to become a sponsor, contributing \$75,000 to the bonus pool and \$50,000 in prize money for season-ending Pepsi-Cola Masters tournament.³¹ For the women, however, it was just another slight. The ILTF suggested that the women players may be considered for inclusion in future Grand Prix bonus pools if the 1970 experiment with the men was a success. In the meantime, the women found themselves participating in tournaments that contributed ten percent of the total prize money to the men's-only Pepsi-Cola Grand Prix.

Diminishing playing opportunities was another concern for the women. In the summer of 1970, Rosie Casals wrote an article for *World Tennis* in which she criticized the USLTA for not developing a more complete women's tennis schedule. From early October through March, there were only a handful of prize money events available for the women, while the men played on a USLTA indoor circuit organized by Maryland promoter Bill Riordan. "While the men play Omaha, Richmond, Pittsburgh, Buffalo and other points East," Rosie wrote, "the gals stay home and contemplate their forehands." Her article was written at a time when there were rumors that the Pennsylvania Grass Court Championships and the Eastern Grass Court Championships – two important lead-up tournaments to the U. S. Open – were considering not including any women players in order to give more money to the men. Ultimately, the women were not excluded from these two tournaments; however, there were other gaps in the 1970 U.S. summer tournament schedule. While the men competed in the Washington Star International immediately after Wimbledon in mid-July, the women had no place to play. A similar situation occurred during the first week in August, when the U. S. Pro Championships in Boston featured only men players. "The nationally ranked women ... now have a far more restricted summer tournament circuit than ever before," complained Rosie. "There are dead weeks in the middle of the circuit, which means the girls must either go home for the week or find a friend who will take them in."³²

Rosie argued that the development of talented young American players would be hindered unless more tournaments were made available to them. "Give them a primary and secondary circuit, set up a schedule that allows for the tennis development of those with potentiality, talent, color and dedication," Rosie urged. "Don't turn them off or ignore and humiliate them. If the lesser men are too proud to play in a synchronized schedule, the women are not. Give us the tournaments ... and we'll play and we'll play and we'll play." While Rosie suggested that "perhaps the girls should form their own organization and make their own rules," she admitted that such an idea might not be realistic. She did, however, urge the installment of a female USLTA president and a female chairperson for the USLTA Scheduling Committee. Concluding her argument,

Rosie asked, “How about including everyone in the Grand Prix instead of only one segment of the tournament game? How about a circuit for all?”³³

From the disparity in prize money, the exclusion from the Pepsi-Cola Grand Prix, and the shrinking tournament schedule, the women players felt they were gradually being squeezed out of the game. The final insult came on the eve of the 1970 U. S. Open, when the men’s prize money at the upcoming Pacific Southwest Open in Los Angeles was substantially increased, while the women’s prize money was increased only slightly. An historic tournament dating back to 1926, the Pacific Southwest was Southern California’s premiere event and one of the most important stops on the international tennis tournament schedule. Perry T. Jones was the tournament’s chief organizer since 1929, and he later made a bigger name for himself when he became the president of the Southern California Tennis Association. Due to Jones’ influence, the Pacific Southwest was given “open status” by the ILTF in 1968, and prize money totaling \$30,000 was offered for the first time.³⁴

As his health began to fail in 1969, Jones asked Jack Kramer to assist with the tournament’s management duties. After the 1969 tournament, Kramer conceived his idea for the grand prix system which was eventually adopted by the ILTF and sponsored by Pepsi-Cola. When Jones became incapacitated in early 1970, the Southern California Tennis Association appointed Kramer as the official tournament director. One month before the tournament began in September, Kramer announced that the tournament’s total prize money would be increased from \$30,000 to \$65,000, thanks to a sponsorship from Pepsi-Cola. The tournament, renamed the Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open, became one of the most lucrative stops on the Pepsi-Cola Grand Prix.³⁵

For the 1970 tournament, the additional \$35,000 from Pepsi-Cola primarily benefited the men players. The previous year, the men’s singles champion earned \$4,000 and the winning men’s doubles team collected \$1,600; in contrast, only \$1,500 was awarded to the women’s singles champion and \$600 was presented to the first place women’s doubles team. With the Pepsi-Cola sponsorship in 1970, the first prize for the men’s singles became \$12,000 – an increase of \$8,000 – while women’s singles first-place award remained at the previous year’s level of only \$1,500. Less than \$2,000 of

the Pepsi-Cola money was added to the women's doubles and the earlier rounds of the women's singles. For the men's singles and men's doubles events, the total prize money was increased to \$51,500; for the women's singles and women's doubles, total prize money was merely \$7,500. As required, the remaining \$6,000 was contributed to the Pepsi-Cola Grand Prix bonus money pool.³⁶

*Actually this was a decision of the full tournament committee. I personally argued that we ought to cut the women in for \$10,000, but I was voted down. The majority wanted to attract more male stars, draw more fans, and make more profits that we could turn over to junior development.*³⁷

-- Jack Kramer, 1979

Subject to prize money inequality for years, the women players expected a difference in the purses at the Pacific Southwest Open. This time, however, the widening gap of prize money struck a nerve. For Billie Jean King and Rosie Casals, increasing the men's singles first prize by \$8,000 while leaving the women's singles first prize unchanged from 1969 was unacceptable. At the Marlboro Open in South Orange, New Jersey, a grass court tournament held one week before the U. S. Open, Billie Jean and Rosie spoke with Gladys Heldman about the prize money disparity in Los Angeles and expressed their displeasure.³⁸

At Forest Hills the following week, Billie Jean and Rosie decided to start collecting signatures of women players who were in favor of boycotting the Pacific Southwest Open. The players who decided to sign the petition agreed that Kramer needed to be confronted; although Billie Jean was their choice as a spokesperson, she was reluctant about initiating a discussion about prize money with Kramer.

*Kramer had never been a friend of women's tennis. I knew a meeting between us would be a disaster because he'd think I was agitating for myself again.*³⁹

--Billie Jean King, 1974

Nancy Richey originally intended to play in the Pacific Southwest Open, but the first-place prize money of \$1,500 “hardly made it worthwhile” for the two-time Grand Slam champion.⁴⁰ Nancy telephoned her father in San Angelo, Texas, to discuss the unfair prize money situation, and he told her to speak with Gladys.⁴¹ One day before the U. S. Open started, the three players – Billie Jean, Rosie and Nancy – met with Gladys on the clubhouse veranda of the West Side Tennis Club to discuss the situation.⁴²

Billie Jean and Rosie explained their intentions to mobilize the women for a boycott, but Gladys was not convinced by that plan. She realized that a boycott would be effective only if every woman player signed on, which realistically would not happen. Gladys promised to speak with Kramer about the prize money situation when he arrived in New York at the end of the week.⁴³

On the morning of Thursday, September 3 – the second day of the U. S. Open – Texas millionaire Lamar Hunt, owner of the Kansas City Chiefs professional football team, announced plans for the 1971 World Championship Tennis (WCT) tour.⁴⁴ The circuit would be comprised of twenty \$50,000 tournaments, staged primarily in U. S. cities, and offer total prize money of more than one million dollars. “We want to invite the top thirty-two players in the world to compete,” said Hunt. “We’re trying to build something good for tennis.” The tour would feature not only Hunt’s contract professionals, including Rod Laver, Ken Rosewall, Roy Emerson, Tony Roche, John Newcombe, and Tom Okker, but would also extend invitations to registered players Arthur Ashe, Cliff Richey, Stan Smith and Clark Graebner. Hunt said the circuit was “not an act of hostility” against any international or national association, although, “in a sense, it could conflict with the Pepsi Grand Prix. USLTA president Alastair Martin thought the concept was “terrific,” and Ashe said the circuit was “great for tennis,” but was not sure if he would participate in any of the tournaments, since he would “have to play it with no guarantee when the contract pros are playing it with a guarantee.” For the women players, who were simply trying to get a few more thousand dollars at the Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open, Hunt’s plans for a million-dollar men’s tour must have added insult to injury.

The next day, Gladys saw Jack Kramer on the grounds of the West Side Tennis Club, and they had a brief conversation.

*The girls are talking about boycotting your tournament, I said. "That's fine with me," said Kramer. "I'll take the \$7,500 and throw it in the men's singles." But Jack was speaking in heat and had no intention of carrying out his threat.*⁴⁵
-- Gladys Heldman, 1970

*When I arrived at the West Side Tennis Club . . . I was en route to my television commentary position and made a stop to say hello to Gladys Heldman. Gladys asked me the question: Jack, have you heard that the girls are boycotting your tournament? This was the first time I had heard, officially or unofficially, that the girls were that unhappy about the \$7,500 which the Los Angeles event was putting up for the ladies' singles and doubles competition. I didn't have the opportunity to discuss the matter further at the time, and no one officially approached me further on the matter during the remaining two days that I was in New York.*⁴⁶
-- Jack Kramer, 1970

*I told him if he would make it \$10,000 or \$12,000 he would get all the top women in the world.*⁴⁷
-- Gladys Heldman, 1979

Gladys gave Billie Jean and Rosie the bad news: the prize money situation at the Pacific Southwest Open was not going to be changed. "Kramer's an ass," Gladys told them.⁴⁸ Dismayed by the lack of a resolution, Billie Jean and Rosie renewed their conviction to organize a boycott. Gladys began formulating her own solution; she conceived a plan to organize a women's prize money tournament that would be held at the same time as the Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open. Such an event would send a clear message that the women players were no longer willing to settle for second-class status.

Seven months earlier, Gladys sponsored the eight-woman World Tennis Luv Cup in Philadelphia, in conjunction with the International Tennis Players Association (ITPA) Open that featured a field of 32 male professionals. Total prize money for the women in Philadelphia was \$7,500; first round losers earned \$500 and the winner received \$3,000.

Marilyn Fernberger ran the National Pro Indoor, with men only; I asked her to do a women's tournament. She said "we have no sponsor." I said I'll be the sponsor. ⁴⁹

-- Gladys Heldman, 1987

The following week, Gladys helped to arrange the Vanderbilt Ladies World Invitational, a four-day tournament played on the indoor court of the Vanderbilt Athletic Club in Grand Central Station. The eight-woman field, which included most of the players from the previous week's event in Philadelphia, competed for \$5,000 in prize money. Capacity crowds of 1200 spectators were present on the last two days of the tournament, prompting tournament winner Margaret Court to observe that "people are finding out that when you get the top eight girls in the world, there is very interesting tennis among us." ⁵⁰

Gladys' proposed tournament in Houston would follow the same format at the Philadelphia and New York events; ; it would be contested over the course of four days, feature eight of the world's best women players, and offer \$5,000 in prize money. However, instead of awarding \$1,500 to the winner – as was the case at the Pacific Southwest Open – Gladys wanted to make her event seem more lucrative by offering \$2000 to the winner.

Houston was the choice for Gladys' tournament since the Heldman family was relocating there immediately after the U. S. Open. Earlier that summer she had met Paul Pearce, the Executive Director of the Houston Tennis Association. When the Heldmans lived in Houston in the early 1950s, Julius helped to found the Houston Tennis Association for the purpose of promoting tennis at public facilities. It eventually became, according to *World Tennis*, the "largest city tennis association in the world," with 1500

members and a budget of \$26,000.⁵¹ As Gladys began to plan the tournament in Houston, one of the first phone calls she made was to Pearce. She explained her plans for the tournament, not mentioning that it would be in direct conflict with Jack Kramer's Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open in Los Angeles.

*The reason that Gladys made her first call to me is that I had been in New York in August 1970 and went by her Manhattan office to introduce myself. World Tennis magazine was a Bible among tennis players, professional or amateur. Knowing that she had lived in Houston previously when Julius was a chemist with Shell Oil, I was eager to make national connections to do whatever I could to expose tennis efforts in Houston, particularly Youth Tennis Leagues. That was when I was first struck with her iconic image in sunglasses and cigarette smoke. We had a rich, warm conversation, and I left feeling that that we had a mutual affinity for tennis. It was not surprising then that a month later, she was calling me.*⁵²

-- Paul Pearce, 2013

When Gladys called, I was excited about the possibility of a big women's tournament in Houston. Even though I was busy with the Fall High School Tennis Conference, the upcoming exhibition at Rice University and a number of other projects, I was excited to do this tournament. We were kind of rebellious in those days in Houston, and anything that would put us on the "tennis map" was an opportunity. Besides, I was used to doing a lot of things at one time. Gladys suggested \$5000, and so the first person I called was George Mitchell, and he immediately pledged \$2000. But I hit a brick wall with other folks, some who were committed to the River Oaks Tennis Tournament and others who simply didn't get excited about women's tennis. I remember calling Gladys back, feeling very disappointed and downcast that I had only been able to raise \$2000. She didn't seem too surprised – she knew the situation in Houston. But she told me

*over the phone that she was having dinner with Joe Cullman of Philip Morris the coming Saturday evening, and she was going to talk to him.*⁵³

-- Paul Pearce, 2015

Pearce also discussed Gladys' proposal with Jim Hight, the president-elect of the Texas Tennis Association, as well as Delores Hornberger, the president of the Women's Association of the Houston Racquet Club. Delores liked the idea and was intrigued with bringing the world's best women players to her club. Situated on twenty-three wooded acres on the city's exclusive west side, the Houston Racquet Club boasted twenty-six tennis courts, a spectacular clubhouse and a swimming pool worthy of any five-star resort. It was a dynamic club that could easily raise money; each year its members contributed \$25,000 to the Houston Tennis Association's junior development program. As president of the 500-member club's Women's Association, Delores Hornberger was in a powerful position. If the women's group wanted to host the tournament, the club management would have to oblige.

*I looped Jim Hight into the project, based on our friendship through the Houston Tennis Association and also the Texas Tennis Association. Jim was a very experienced tournament director ... Jim, as I recall, took off like a rocket getting everyone involved. I "handed it off" actually to Jim, and he "moved heaven and earth," so to speak, to get everyone organized. The Houston Racquet Club and the Houston Tennis Association were tied together financially, so it was natural that its membership got involved in the project.*⁵⁴

-- Paul Pearce, 2015

During the course of several telephone calls with Delores, Gladys explained the details of the proposed tournament; it would be a four-day event, starting on Wednesday, September 23, and it would feature eight of the world's best players. The Houston Racquet Club Women's Association would need to provide \$5,000 in prize money, which could be raised through ticket sales, a pro-am tournament in which male club members

played mixed doubles with the women professionals, and a series of instructional clinics. Having a “Calcutta Pool” was also discussed; in this event, club members placed bets on their favorite pro-am mixed doubles team.⁵⁵ Gladys promised that she would personally underwrite up to \$1,000 if the women’s association could not raise all of the money. In the early stages of the discussions, none of the Houstonians – Delores, Paul Pearce, or Jim Hight – were aware of any potential controversy with the proposed tournament.

Never in any of our telephone conversations did Mrs. Heldman mention that the girls were planning to boycott the Pacific Southwest tournament in Los Angeles. It was my understanding that the girls were free for that particular week.⁵⁶
 -- Paul Pearce, 1970

I recognize now that I must have not known about the Pacific Southwest Tournament and Gladys’ plans to boycott it ... she never said anything other than the women have an open date, and we’d like to do a tournament in Houston. As a young, wet-behind-the-ears 27-year-old, I was eager to get world-class players to Houston. Promoting the game of tennis in Houston was my job, and this absolutely fit the bill. So I really never questioned her motives; too naïve and trusting!⁵⁷
 -- Paul Pearce, 2013

Although Delores was interested in having such players as Nancy Richey and Rosie Casals appear at her club, she was especially keen to have Margaret Court appear in the tournament. Knowing that Margaret never had any intention of entering the Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open in Los Angeles, Gladys told Delores that she was confident that the world’s best female tennis player could be persuaded to appear in Houston. Gladys suggested that Billie Jean King would likely be making an appearance, although only in the pro-am mixed doubles event, since she was still recuperating from knee surgery. Delores was sold on the idea, and while her husband Edwin negatively shook his head, she told Gladys over the telephone that the Houston Racquet Club Women’s Association

would tackle the project. Even though Edwin told Delores, ‘You’ll either come out smelling like a rose or looking like a goat,’ Delores was not discouraged; she was determined to bring the world’s best women’s tennis players to her club.

This was completely new to the Racquet Club, no one would touch it, and I was dumb enough to think “Yes we can!” ... I was anxious to see these girls in person

...I just had the guts, that’s all. ⁵⁸

-- Delores Hornberger, 2011

Delores began to assemble her tournament committee, all of whom were active members of the Houston Racquet Club Women’s Association. Delores appointed her vice-president, Leslie Creekmore, as the tennis chairman. Sybil Stephens was named the social chairman, and Nelle Patton was put in charge of ticket sales. Although Charlotte Lorenz was out of town at the time, Delores knew she could be counted on and would be an invaluable worker. Although none of the women had ever promoted or administered a tennis tournament before, Jim Hight’s assurances alleviated their apprehension.

I was scared to death. Jim Hight gave me confidence. ⁵⁹

-- Leslie Creekmore, 1986.

Just in case the Houston Racquet Club Women’s Association could not raise all the prize money for the tournament, Delores saw the need for a back-up plan. She turned to George Mitchell, one of the founders of the Houston Racquet Club and a wealthy oil and real estate businessman. Walking down a sidewalk together, Delores asked him, “Will you be my angel?” Mitchell promised that if the association fell short of raising the funds, he would make up the difference. ⁶⁰

Delores was advised to make sure all agreements with Gladys were established in writing. She was somewhat skeptical that Gladys could make good on her promise to get Margaret Court to come to Houston.

*I think it was Jim Hight ... I was told that there were very many times she would elaborate and she couldn't follow through. If I was going to represent the Racquet Club and get involved, I'd better have everything in writing.*⁶¹

--Delores Hornberger, 2011

After conferring with Hight and her husband, Delores told Gladys that she required a list of confirmed players, sent to her via telegram. The tournament committee reserved the right to approve which players would play in the tournament. In addition, if any substitutions were to be made to the final list of participants, Delores requested to be notified via telegram.⁶²

At the U. S. Open on Sunday, September 6, two Davis Cup rivals opened the day's schedule of matches on the Stadium Court. After Dennis Ralston of Bakersfield, California beat Australian Fred Stolle in four sets, the spectators were treated to an entertaining contest between Great Britain's Virginia Wade and the recently crowned U. S. national junior girls champion, Sharon Walsh. *World Tennis* contributor Mary Hardwick reported that Virginia and Sharon "made a contribution to the cause of women's tennis when they graced the Stadium. Virginia, the most theatrical of the current players, was in her element as 14,000 fans on Sunday watched her every move." Virginia won the first set 6-3, but then the young American relaxed and started to play freely with a series of superb backhands. Sharon forged ahead in the second set, and Virginia was continually forced to catch up to her opponent. At 5-6, Virginia held serve to enter a nine-point sudden-death tiebreak; the first player to win five points earned the set. Virginia led 3-1 in the tiebreak, Sharon went ahead 4-3, and Virginia leveled at 4-4 – simultaneous set point for Sharon and match point for Virginia.⁶³

An expectant stadium crowd watched the most exciting point of the match. After a long baseline rally, Virginia hit to her opponent's backhand and advanced to the net. Sharon took aim and hit a clean passing shot down the line. Virginia, thinking that the ball was heading out, did not attempt a volley. As the ball landed at the back of the court, no "out" call was made by the lineswoman. The stadium erupted and Virginia was furious; she thought the ball was clearly out. She threw her racket across the court in the

direction of the lineswoman, and then walked towards her. Virginia retrieved her racket and sat down on the court, staring into the eyes of the lineswoman who was only two feet away. A section of the crowd began to jeer the British players; when other spectators began to hand-clap, she ended her protest and composed herself for the third set. The crowd's displeasure was only temporary; Virginia won back their approval as she dominated the third set and won it 6-1. "The girls had both done well," wrote Hardwick, "the public loved it and the women were back where they have always belonged – on the Stadium in the second match."⁶⁴

While Virginia and Sharon were battling in the stadium, a short distance away two lesser-known players were making their own contribution. Ceci Martinez, a Californian ranked fourteenth in the 1969 U. S. national singles rankings, and her South African doubles partner, Esme Emanuel, polled spectators to determine public sentiment about women's professional tennis. Ceci had some experience in psychology and survey writing, and with Esme, she composed a list of nine questions.

*I had taken a class in psychology on how to write surveys. I had this feeling that people were interested in watching women play, but it was just a feeling. I had observed it, but I wanted to know scientifically.*⁶⁵

--Ceci Martinez, 1989

Earlier in the summer, Ceci played in an exhibition match at a public park in Schenectady, New York, with Carole Graebner, one of the top American players of the 1960s. Sponsored by the Schenectady Women's Tennis Association, the event offered free admission to spectators. More than 600 fans were on hand to watch what the local newspaper called "a great day for women's tennis in Schenectady."⁶⁶ Three weeks later, Ceci attended a series of women's liberation rallies and demonstrations in Washington, D. C. At one of the rallies, in Lafayette Park across from the White House, the results of a survey about the proposed Equal Rights Amendment were posted. Conducted by an organization called Federally Employed Women and mailed to all 100 U. S. senators, the survey reflected that only one respondent was opposed to the proposed legislation.⁶⁷ For

Ceci, it was an eventful summer that would become even more memorable; she would soon make a significant contribution to a pivotal chapter in the history of women's tennis.

By the time Ceci arrived at the U. S. Open, she was ready to take action. Although the successful exhibition in Schenectady encouraged her and the energizing rallies in Washington inspired her, the news about the Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open prize money frustrated her. Along with Esme Emanuel, she composed a survey that she hoped would convince tournament promoters that women's tennis was a viable and valuable product. Standing near the U. S. Open scoreboard outside of the Stadium, Ceci and Esme randomly distributed their questions to passing spectators. From his press box position in the marquee tent, Neil Amdur, a sportswriter and the president of the Lawn Tennis Writers Association, noticed the two players and inquired about their project. After inviting them to present their findings at the association's annual meeting on the following day, Amdur filed his story for the *New York Times*.

About the only startling events in an otherwise formful fifth day were a straight-set doubles loss by Bob Lutz and Stan Smith, who seem to regard the Davis Cup challenge round as the only doubles match that counts, to Bill Bowrey and Owen Davidson of Australia, a determined performance in defeat by a promising 18-year-old Californian, Sharon Walsh, unfounded rumors that second seeded John Newcombe had sprained his wrist, and a mini-revolution by pretty, well-meaning Ceci Martinez of San Francisco.⁶⁸

In addition to detailing the day's highlight of Manuel Santana's defeat of eighth-seeded Roger Taylor of Great Britain, Amdur explained the purpose of the survey conducted by Ceci and Esme.

Miss Martinez, in an effort to determine the extent of interest in women's tennis, was conducting a survey among the crowd of 13,116 with a mimeographed questionnaire that asked among other things: "Do you think women players should (1) play their own tournaments separate from the men, (2) play along with

the men on the same tournaments, (3) not play professional tennis.” She hopes to publish the results, but they will not change the rigid views of most men players, who tend to regard the women as touring intruders, slicing away a percentage of their pot, a small percentage at that.⁶⁹

While Ceci and Esme were conducting their survey, Billie Jean and Rosie held a meeting in the women’s locker room of the West Side Tennis Club, urging fellow players to boycott the Pacific Southwest Open. Some of the women saw no benefit in joining their protest. Margaret Court, Virginia Wade and Francoise Durr never intended to play in Los Angeles in the first place, planning to return home before the event. Other foreign players, including Judy Dalton of Australia and Pat Walkden of South Africa, were scheduled to play in the Pacific Coast International Open in Berkeley, and if they bypassed the Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open, they would have an idle week. There were a number of players from Southern California who wanted to play in the Los Angeles tournament even if no prize money was offered. Mary Ann Eisel Curtis, a top American player, agreed to boycott but changed her mind when she learned that her husband Peter planned to play in Los Angeles.⁷⁰

As the argument between those who wanted to stage a boycott and those who did not want to boycott became increasingly heated, Gladys entered the locker room and announced that she had made contact the Delores Hornberger and that plans were already underway for a tournament at the Houston Racquet Club with \$5,000 in prize money. As a result, there was no longer a need for a boycott; eight women would be selected to participate in Houston, and any other players were free to enter the Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open if they so desired. Gladys suggested to the players that the announcement of the Houston tournament should be made at the following day’s Lawn Tennis Writers Association meeting, the same meeting to which Neil Amdur invited Ceci Martinez and Esme Emanuel to present their survey results.⁷¹

On Monday, September 7, ten women players arrived at the U. S. Open Club, a restaurant under the West Side Tennis Club stadium where the Lawn Tennis Writers Association meeting was being held. Present at the luncheon were some of the best-

known tennis and sports writers, including Neil Amdur, Lance Tingay, Ron Bookman, Frank Rostron, John Barrett, Bud Collins and Will Grimsley. When it was the players' turn to speak, Rosie announced that "we are considering a boycott of the Pacific Southwest Open in Los Angeles because ... look at the figures. First prize for the men is \$12,500 and for us, \$1,500. That's ridiculous ... We would like a 1-to-3 ratio." Rosie argued that the prize money situation was actually discrimination, since "we expend the same amount of energy, we practice as much, we play just as hard. We contribute our share to the success of any tournament."⁷²

The other players were asked how they felt about the prize money situation in Los Angeles. "I didn't intend to play there, anyhow," said Margaret Court, but she suggested that the "women's prize money should be at least half, and possibly three-fourths that of the men's purse."⁷³ Gail Chanfreau agreed, arguing "if you lose in the early rounds you lose money. They increased the men's purse by \$35,000 and the women's purse by nothing. It is unfair."⁷⁴ Mary Ann Eisel Curtis tried to strike a conciliatory tone. "We don't like to use the word boycott," she said. "Some of the tournament sponsors may throw out the girls altogether. We don't want that. Some of the girls want to play regardless of the prize money."⁷⁵

Rosie announced that an alternate tournament with \$5,000 in prize money was in the process of being planned for the same week as the Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open. "The top players probably will play at Houston, and the lesser players will likely play at Los Angeles," she said, adding that a player meeting was scheduled for Tuesday night, at which the participants for the Houston tournament would be determined.⁷⁶ As established in the locker room meeting held earlier in the day, Rosie proposed recommendations for future co-ed tournaments, including fairer prize money distribution, equal exposure on show courts, and better treatment by the news media.⁷⁷

Ceci and Esme then presented the findings of their survey, which indicated a significant amount of interest in women's professional tennis, from both male and female spectators. "Eighty-two percent of the men polled said they believed men and women should be together in the same tournaments and not on separate circuits," Esme reported. "Fifty-four percent of the men said they thought women were as interesting to watch – to

watch playing tennis, that is – as the men. I think people like us even if the male tennis players don't.” Of the 94 women and 184 men who responded, one-half of the women and one-third of the men enjoyed watching both men's and women's tennis, one-third of the men and one-half of the women were in favor of equal prize money for men and women, and more than one-half of the men and two thirds of the women indicated they would pay to watch a women's tournament. In addition, more than half of the men and three-quarters of the women felt that the stadium and grandstand courts should feature an equal number of men's and women's matches.⁷⁸

*If you had those results today it would be awful. But in 1970 it was promising, considering that we weren't getting the publicity the men were; we weren't put on the grandstand or center court, we just weren't given the respect.*⁷⁹
 -- Ceci Martinez, 1989

*Esme Emanuel and Ceci Martinez were never top-ranking women tennis stars ... But when the final history of women's tennis history is written, Emanuel and Martinez will be remembered as the pair who fired the first shots for liberty and equality ... For this, all women owe Emanuel and Martinez a debt of gratitude. They took the first steps.*⁸⁰
 -- Neil Amdur, 1978

An outspoken proponent of women's tennis, Rosie agreed with the survey results but felt that separate circuits may be the only solution, telling the reporters “people like to watch us – but the men want all the money, and the promoters want no part of us. That's all right with me. I think we can go it alone on our own circuit like the women in golf. People will pay to watch us.”⁸¹ Francoise Durr, who played with Rosie in the co-ed National Tennis League for two years, was not in favor of having a strictly women's tour. “If we have separate circuits,” she asked, “how will we play mixed doubles? How will we live? Is it natural for men and women to be apart?”⁸²

*As president of the Tennis Writers at the time, and a supporter of women in sports, I felt a duty to bring the issue to the association, even though it had a political overtone. I know other writers got plenty of news out of the players' presence, and I am not so sure you would get that kind of reaction from today's female pros who are only at the whim of their managers and entourages. Back then, the women spoke for themselves.*⁸³

--Neil Amdur, 2011

Noticeably absent from the Lawn Tennis Writer's meeting was Billie Jean King. Although she was not playing in the 1970 U. S. Open due to a recent knee operation, she had numerous business commitments to fulfill in New York, including the promotion of her new tennis instruction book *Tennis to Win*, appearances for her clothing sponsor Head apparel, clinics for Pepsi-Cola, and commentary for CBS Television. Whatever were Billie Jean's reasons for not attending the meeting, Rosie was selected as the designated spokesperson.

*Billie Jean had plenty to say, and I would say Billie held her own, with a lot at stake. If she wasn't at that meeting ... it may have been because of conflicting circumstances or that there were enough other women to carry a load that she often carried alone.*⁸⁴

-- Neil Amdur, 2011

*She was number one ... and being number one, sometimes you're not liked as much as being number two, three or four ... and she was tough, she was tough on the court ... she wasn't any easy person to like or to get to know, so a lot of it fell on me ... it's not like I'm tooting my own horn, but a lot of it happened because of me. But that's not the story and that's not the glory, because people look at a leader and they look at someone who is number one, and that's who they listen to and that's who they put as the face of women's tennis, and it will always be.*⁸⁵

--Rosie Casals, 2011

Reactions to the women players' demands were divided along gender lines. George McGann, the U. S. editor of the Australian Consolidated Press, called the players "a pampered lot" and wrote they "picked the wrong place, the wrong time and the wrong group." Australian champion John Newcombe of Australia and French Davis Cup player Jean Baptiste Chanfreau – the husband of Gail Chanfreau – felt the women had no logical argument in their demands for more prize money.⁸⁶ Perhaps the most critical public comments came from Arthur Ashe. "Without a doubt," Ashe told reporters, "women's play will disappear soon from men's tournaments ... because they don't draw flies. Men are doing this for a living now. They have families, and they don't want to give up money just for girls to play... We should get all the money in most tournaments."⁸⁷

Patti Hogan, who did not attend the Lawn Writer's meeting, admitted to Bud Collins of the *Boston Globe* that "the men's attitude hurts. They're so greedy. They want all the money. We've got to get our own sponsors and make a compromise, I guess. We'll have a separate circuit for some events, and joint tournaments in bigger cities where they want us. We have to revive women's tournaments like Essex in Manchester, Massachusetts, that have dropped out in the last two years of money tennis. We need those tournaments."⁸⁸ Billie Jean King told Associated Press reporter Will Grimsley that the prize money ratio in Los Angeles was "ridiculous. Granted, there are some cities where women's tennis is not as popular as men's but the ratio of twelve to one doesn't make sense. In England, for instance, where they love women's tennis, the prize money should be equal."⁸⁹ Billie Jean was more outspoken in a conversation with Collins, proclaiming "I sell more tickets than Stan Smith. I think I'm a more exciting player and more people want to see me play."⁹⁰ Grimsley also reported that Gladys Heldman was considering setting up a tour of seven women's prize-money tournaments, to be played in the Caribbean during the winter.⁹¹

Reached for a comment before he flew back to Los Angeles to prepare for his tournament, Jack Kramer indicated that it was too late to increase the amount of women's prize money. "We will have a women's tournament regardless," he said. "We have fifty-seven entries from our area alone. We can't change the prize money now. It is already

fixed.”⁹² Kramer planned to return to New York on Friday, September 11 in order to do television commentary for the final weekend of the U. S. Open.

The players’ appearance at the Lawn Tennis Writers meeting was front-page news in the *New York Times* on Tuesday, September 8 with the headline “Women Tennis Stars Threaten Boycott Over Unequal Purses;” similar articles appeared in newspapers across the world. For the first time, the general public was made aware of how unfairly the women players were being treated.

*What happened after their appearance was truly historic. Writers picked up the plight of the women and wrote articles from their appearance. The most telling of the stories was done by Will Grimsley, an Associated Press sports writer. Will’s story was picked up all over the country, including the New York Times. I couldn’t write it at the time because I was presiding at the meeting, so Will’s story wound up in the Times.*⁹³

-- Neil Amdur, 2010

The news came as a surprise to the tournament organizers in Houston. During their telephone conversations with Gladys, it was never disclosed that the event was actually going to be a protest against prize money breakdown of the Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open.

*It was not until Jack Gallagher of the Houston Post called me and told me about a wire story from Forest Hills which he had received on September 9. The story included the details of the press conference given by Miss Casals, saying that the top girls planned to boycott the L.A. tournament in favor of the one in Houston. By this time, the Women’s Association at the Club had already raised part of the purse, sent out publicity, and begun selling tickets. From there the situation escalated ...*⁹⁴

-- Paul Pearce, 1970

By the time Delores Hornberger had learned about Gladys' true motive for having a women's prize money tournament in Houston, it was too late to change course – publicity had already started, bleachers had already been rented, and tickets had already been sold.

In England, tennis officials read news reports about the women's protest. John Dewar, chairman of the Dewar Cup – a men's and women's indoor circuit played in six cities throughout the United Kingdom in October and November – was not concerned. “We have no trouble negotiating with women players because we pay appearance money as well as prize money,” Dewar said. “This means that if we consider players to be a special attraction to the public we can offer them a deal that they consider commercially satisfactory. It may be a laudable principle to say that players should be paid prize money only, but with tennis in its present state of evolution, it is far more workable to give oneself two options. This is what we do in the Dewar Cup.” Wimbledon secretary Major David Mills told the Associated Press that “we have never had any grouses from players over prize money. The women's awards are just half of the men.” Mills disagreed with Rosie's argument that the women expend the same amount of energy. “A mathematician has worked out that the men competing at Wimbledon play twice as much tennis as the women,” he said, “and in some years three times as much.” Nevertheless, Mills indicated that Wimbledon planned to review its prize money policies at the end of the year.⁹⁵

Back at the U. S Open, four crowd-pleasing women players started Tuesday's schedule with quarterfinal singles matches. At noon, Virginia Wade and Francoise Durr opened play on the Grandstand Court, while Rosie Casals and Kerry Melville were featured on the Stadium. Virginia started well, keeping her game and emotions in check as she jumped to a 4-1 lead. Slowly and steadily, Francoise worked her way into the match, holding serve for 2-4 and then breaking Virginia to get back on serve at 3-4. Francoise was doing most of the damage with her accurate backhand, consistently hitting the lines with crosscourt and down-the-line placements. Virginia had a break point on Francoise's serve to take a 5-3 lead, and when she failed to win the game she suddenly lost control of her shots. Francoise took the first set 7-5 and raced to a 3-1 lead, with two

points to go ahead 4-1. Still playing inconsistently, Virginia willed herself – through the sheer weight of her serves and overheads – to pull ahead 4-3. Françoise held serve to level at 4-4, and Virginia held serve to take a 5-4 lead. The tenth game was a turning point in the match. Twice, Françoise had game point to even the set at 5-5, but Wade denied her with lunging backhand volleys. Virginia finally took the set on her seventh set point, and in doing so broke her opponent's spirit. Virginia romped the third set 6-0 as Françoise put up no resistance.⁹⁶

The match between Rosie Casals and Kerry Melville, played on the Stadium Court, displayed the contrasts in their personalities and styles. The outgoing and energetic Rosie bounced all around the court, hitting acrobatic volleys and forcing her quiet Australian opponent into errors as she took the first set 6-4. Kerry's fine groundstrokes – especially her sidespin forehand – kept her in the match and she took the second set, 6-4. Rosie and Kerry showed their abilities to use the entire court with a variety of shots; aggressive groundstrokes and putaway volleys were complemented with lobs, passing shots and drop shots from both players. Rosie's flexibility at the net was the difference in the third set, breaking her opponent at 4-4 and serving out the match in one of the most attractive women's matches of the tournament.⁹⁷

While the Tuesday matches were being contested, the USLTA Sanction and Scheduling Committee met to discuss the men's and women's tournament schedules for 1971. Committee chairman Stanley Malless informed the committee that more women's prize money tournaments were planned for the U. S. summer circuit the following year:

Special efforts are being made to provide a continuous, and attractive, 1971 prize-money circuit for women, as well as men. 1970 was a bad year, with last minute gaps appearing in the schedule. When any major tournament does not take women as well as men, an alternate will be selected to hold a women's tournament only. Several cities have indicated their intention in holding such world-class women's championships, so we anticipate a full schedule. The women have performed admirably for the U. S. in foreign competition, and we

intend to keep their level of performance high with first-class tournaments in this country.⁹⁸

Later that evening, Gladys hosted a party for 150 guests on the rooftop of her Manhattan apartment. An annual tradition that started when the Heldmans moved into the building at 180 East End Avenue in 1961, the gathering of players, spouses, officials and promoters was a social highlight of the U. S. Open. It was also an occasion for the discussion of tennis politics and the development of business deals. While Dennis van der Meer – a well-known Northern California teaching professional – was engaged with Billie Jean King and Francoise Durr in a serious discussion, Gladys led Lamar Hunt around the party. She was amused when Virginia Wade, Gail Chanfreau and Peaches Bartkowicz did not recognize her unassuming guest – considering that he was the oil tycoon who just invested \$1 million into his World Championship Tennis (WCT) circuit, a series of 21 tournaments for 32 of the best men’s players in the world. Never one to miss a good story, Gladys invited Hunt to her apartment for breakfast the following morning in order to interview the most powerful man in tennis for a feature story in *World Tennis*.⁹⁹

Dress designer Ted Tinling attended the party, and recalled that there were nearly one hundred tennis players of both sexes crowding the rooftop party room and pool area.

*... Gladys suddenly stood, framed in a doorway, beckoning certain figures to her side. The Pied Piper effect was dramatic, and we saw the elite of women’s tennis disappear with her through the door ... In less than fifteen minutes they emerged smiling. Gladys had revealed to them her plan ...*¹⁰⁰

-- Ted Tinling, 1979

At 9:45 pm, Gladys sent a telegram to Delores Hornberger confirming the players who agreed to participate in the Houston tournament:

DEFINITE PLAYERS ARE RICHEY, CASALS, BARTKOWICZ, MELVILLE, DALTON, HOGAN, ZIEGENFUSS. WILL CONFIRM ON MARGARET COURT TOMORROW. GLADYS HELDMAN ¹⁰¹

In Houston, Delores continued drafting a promotional letter to be distributed to tennis enthusiasts throughout the area. Ticket prices were set at \$3.00 per person for the first two days of the tournament, \$4.00 for the Friday semi-finals, and \$5.00 for the Saturday finals. A pass for the entire four-day tournament was priced at \$12.00 per person. For children eighteen years of age and younger, daily ticket prices were \$1.75 and a tournament pass was set at \$6.00. Delores hoped to have tickets available for purchase at the other clubs in the area, including the Houston Country Club, the Memorial Drive Country Club, the Forest Club, the Lakeside Country Club and the River Oaks Country Club. The promotional letter also indicated that Billie Jean King and other players would conduct a three-day clinic, starting on Wednesday, September 23. For only \$25.00, clinic participants would receive two hours of instruction and drills each day, in addition to a pass for all four days of the tournament. ¹⁰²

Lamar Hunt, along with his WCT employees Mike Davies and Al Hill, Jr., arrived at the Heldman apartment early on Wednesday morning. While workers from a moving company carried furniture out of the residence in preparation for the Heldman family relocation to Houston, and as breakfast was made, Gladys conducted the interview. She was particularly interested in how Hunt administered the men's tour; for instance, she learned that men players who signed contracts with WCT agreed to have their entire tournament schedules controlled. "When we schedule for the players," Hunt explained, "they will be there. It would reflect badly on them and on us if they didn't." Gladys inquired about the rationale for offering contract guarantees to the established WCT stars, while newcomers to the tour only earned prize money. "It's a fact of economic life that these contracts exist and the timing is such that these players have guarantees while new players coming into our tournaments won't. Very seldom do players in any sport get equal treatment." ¹⁰³

Hunt told Gladys he was not concerned if his contract players were barred from playing in ILTF tournaments, such as Wimbledon, the French Open and the U.S. Open. “It would not hurt WCT directly ... I don’t feel it’s practical for us to be under control or influence of their organization. We are not against the ILTF or USLTA but merely for WCT. We need to set our own course independent of the ILTF.” Hill added that “it’s a part-time hobby for most of their people,” and Davies complained that “tennis officials who do everything for the love of the sport cannot be criticized, but they can make so many mistakes! They don’t get hurt because they are not financially involved, but others do.”¹⁰⁴

Gladys also asked Hunt if he had any plans to develop a women’s tour. “We must walk before we can run. First we hope that the men’s tournaments will be successful. If they are and if they grow in numbers, there will be ample room for a girl’s tour. They could be played in the same cities or in different ones. It’s a question of what comes first, and we feel at this point that the men are the most important. It’s not wise for us now to attempt to promote the girls also.” Whether or not Gladys was thinking about developing a women’s tour at this time, she definitely seemed to be analyzing and studying Hunt’s business model.¹⁰⁵

At the West Side Tennis Club a few hours later, Margaret Court started the day’s schedule of remaining U. S. Open quarterfinal matches. With Margaret leading fellow Australian Helen Gourlay 5-2 in the first set, a steady drizzle forced the players off the Stadium. On the Grandstand Court, a women’s doubles quarterfinal match between Rosie Casals-Virginia Wade and the Russian pairing of Marina Kroshina-Olga Morozova was also interrupted by the rain. By 2:00 pm the entire day’s schedule of matches was postponed until Thursday.

With all matches temporarily shelved, Rosie Casals took the opportunity to visit the press marquee tent. Rosie told reporters that she, along with Nancy Richey, Patti Hogan, Valerie Ziegenfuss, Judy Dalton and Kerry Melville agreed to play in the Houston tournament, but she neglected to mention Peaches Bartkowicz. Two other women – Helen Gourlay of Australia and Pat Walkden, an accomplished South African – were mentioned as participants, even though they were not listed in the telegram that

Gladys sent to Delores Hornberger. According to Rosie, if Margaret Court decided to appear in Houston, either Valerie Ziegenfuss or Pat Walkden would be dropped from the entry list. “The top girls will play at Houston where there is \$5000 total money and \$2000 first prize ... It’s not a boycott, some of the other girls will play at Los Angeles,” she said, toning down her rhetoric from Monday’s appearance at the Lawn Tennis Writers meeting.¹⁰⁶

Rosie also incorrectly added that “we will play on various park courts where admission will be free.” Holding the tournament on public courts, without charging admission fees, was Gladys’ original idea when she contacted Paul Pearce of the Houston Tennis Association. It was also a way to bypass the USLTA, since the national association did not require a sanction for prize-money tournaments that were held at non-member clubs and were free to the public.¹⁰⁷ After Pearce indicated that he was unable to find financial support for the tournament, Gladys contacted Delores Hornberger at the Houston Racquet Club. Rosie, however, was still under the impression that the tournament would be held on public courts in Houston.

Rosie also told reporters that Larry King and Dennis van der Meer, who formed the tennis promotion company TennisAmerica, planned to establish a series of five women’s tournaments – in Honolulu (where Billie Jean and Larry were residing), Long Beach (Billie Jean’s hometown), San Francisco (close to Dennis’ teaching base in Berkeley), Lodi, California and one other undetermined city – each with prize money of \$10,000. She disclosed that several women – whose names she did not list – agreed to give Larry and Dennis 10% of their winnings and the power to act as their agents. A statement was then distributed to the reporters, explaining the rationale for forming a women’s tour.

The reason for Dennis and Larry having these tournaments is to accommodate the women during the free weeks they are not involved. The men have a circuit ran by Riordan excluding the women. It is adamant that it be understood that the women do not want to break away from the men. That is not our objective.

Tennis is far more attractive having both men and women together. It is a family sport so why not keep it that way.¹⁰⁸

For Larry King and Dennis van der Meer, the lack of women's summer prize money tournaments and the Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open controversy presented an opportunity. Ever since his marriage to Billie Jean in 1965, Larry was closely involved in the business and legal aspects of his wife's career. When Billie Jean was contracted to George MacCall's National Tennis League from 1968 to 1970, Larry promoted several professional tennis tournaments in California. Larry and Dennis originally formed Tennis America to promote instructional tennis camps throughout the country; in the summer of 1970 – with Billie Jean and Rosie no longer under contract to MacCall – they realized the company might also find a profitable niche in the development of a women's professional circuit.

On Wednesday evening, Gladys sent a telegram to Delores Hornberger, confirming that Margaret Court agreed to participate in the Houston tournament. In addition, Billie Jean King decided that, since she was still recovering from knee surgery, she would limit her participation to the Pro-Am mixed doubles tournament. Pat Walkden was notified that she was bumped off the Houston entry list; she was free to enter the Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open if she wished, as was Helen Gourlay.¹⁰⁹

After receiving the telegram, Delores finalized the promotional letter, adding Margaret Court's name to the list of contestants. It was also decided that tickets would only be available for purchase at the Houston Racquet Club, not at any of the other area clubs. Information about the pre-tournament cocktail party was also mailed to male members of the club:

Dear Gentlemen Racquet Club Members:

You and your wife are invited to attend a cocktail party and Pro-Am Auction and Calcutta on Tuesday, September 22 at 8:30 pm in the club lounge. Eight of the top women players in the world will be auctioned to any member as doubles partners to play in the first International Tournament held at the club. There is no

charge for the party. Your drinks will be charged to your account. Prize money will be awarded to the winners. Please confirm reservations early at the Racquet Club for you and your guests. Any inquiries can be made by calling Jim Hight or Dick Rogers.¹¹⁰

In the next day's newspapers, Delores Hornberger was surprised and angered to read Rosie's comments to reporters that the tournament in Houston was not going to charge admission and that Helen Gourlay and Pat Walkden planned to participate. Not realizing that Rosie was disseminating outdated information, Delores composed a letter to collect her thoughts for the next time she spoke with Gladys:

Players your wire accepted. We must be advised any changes in player list. News releases from New York say tournament and clinics free to public. This is incorrect. Prize money being raised partly through ticket sales. Appears we can raise \$5000 prize money, however unforeseen circumstances may require acceptance your generous \$1000 underwriting. Please no more news releases until details mutually understood and confirmed.¹¹¹

Delores' husband Edwin wrote his own version of the response, which was considerably more blunt:

We are not holding a public tournament and there is no guarantee as to the prize money the tournament might have other than the \$1000 which you have underwritten will come from the sale of tickets to the tournament and to the Racquet Club members and their guests. We are also counting on the girls to hold clinics with our members and these fees will go into the prize money pool. Expenses incurred, such as bleacher seats, printing of tickets, letters and special mailings will be deducted from ticket sales and clinic fees. **THESE TERMS MUST BE ACCEPTED BY RETURN WIRE BY NOON SEPTEMBER 11, 1970.**¹¹²

It was a very stressful time in our house. Mom would say, "I can't believe what Gladys has done now!" ¹¹³

-- Kathy Hornberger Leslie, 2011

U. S. Open matches resumed on Thursday, September 10 with the completion of the men's and women's singles quarterfinal matches. Margaret Court completed her suspended match with Helen Gourlay, resuming at 5-2 in the first set and only losing two more games for a 6-2 6-2 win. Nancy Richey might have been troubled by Lesley Hunt had the young Australian not attempted too many risky shots. Lesley rallied patiently from the baseline with her more experienced opponent, but too often tried to end the point with sudden volleying attacks or drop shots. She had two points to take a 5-3 lead in the first set, but she was outplayed by Nancy on the important points. A similar pattern emerged in the second set, with Lesley forging ahead to 4-1. Three double faults took the momentum out of her game, and Nancy coasted to a 6-4 6-4 victory to gain a place in the semifinals against Margaret Court. On the men's side, Nancy's brother Cliff became the only American to reach the semifinals when he beat fellow American Dennis Ralston in straight sets; in the final four, Richey was joined by three Australians: Ken Rosewall, John Newcombe and Tony Roche. ¹¹⁴

The following day was a showcase for women's tennis, with both singles semifinals played on the Stadium Court. At noon, Rosie Casals and Virginia Wade opened the program in front of 7404 spectators. Rosie easily won the first set 6-2 and led 5-3 in the second before Wade produced her best tennis with several perfectly executed topspin lobs. The set reached 6-6, and the crowd anticipated another sudden-death tiebreak. On each point of the tiebreak, Virginia gambled and went for every point, resulting in wild errors or bold winners. Finally, the score stood at 4-4 in the tiebreak – simultaneous match point for Rosie and set point for Wade. Rosie missed her first serve; her second serve landed short, and Virginia cracked a forehand crosscourt winner to earn the set. The momentum appeared to have shifted in Virginia's favor in the third set. Although she lost the first game of the final set, Virginia seemed ready to hold serve when she led 30-15 in the second game. Rosie's service return landed close to Virginia's

baseline; no “out” call came from the linesman. As she did in her match with Sharon Walsh, Virginia became infuriated; she was certain the ball was out, which would have given her a 40-15 lead. She raised her arms, tossed a ball towards the linesman, and said “Oh, you make me sick!” Her concentration shattered, she won only two games in the third set. “I think she was a little silly to let it bother her. I thought the ball was good,” Rosie later said about the controversial point. A breakthrough match for Rosie, it was the first time in her career she reached the final of a major singles championship.¹¹⁵

Margaret Court and Nancy Richey then appeared on the Stadium Court in a rematch of the 1969 U. S. Open championship match. Unlike the previous year’s final, when Nancy attempted to serve and volley on nearly every point, this match featured more baseline rallies. Margaret played faultless tennis until she served for the match at 6-1 5-2. The Australian then lost her serve for the first time in the tournament, as Nancy chased her from one corner to the other with deep, accurate drives. Suddenly, Margaret appeared to become short of breath and Nancy sensed her chance. Serving at 3-5, Nancy continued to test her opponent. When Margaret finally reached match point and saw Nancy’s attempted backhand passing shot miss its mark, she draped herself on the net with relief. Only one more match stood between her and an historic Grand Slam. Despite the one-sided score, it was a well-played match, with Nancy winning 22 points in each set.¹¹⁶

During Friday’s action, Gladys was sitting in the press tent with Will Grimsley, a sportswriter for the Associated Press. Once again, she spoke with Jack Kramer, who had returned from Los Angeles to do television commentary for CBS. Gladys explained that while several top players were planning to participate in Houston, many other women were still planning to play in Los Angeles. She informed Kramer that a request for a USLTA tournament sanction was in the process of being submitted to the Texas Tennis Association, and would then be sent to the USLTA for final approval.

Jack said, “Well, I could protest your having a sanction, but I won’t.” I’d never heard of such a thing, protesting a sanction. It had never been done before.¹¹⁷
 -- Gladys Heldman, 1987

Without mentioning the USLTA sanction request, Kramer later recalled expressing his displeasure to Gladys about the women's actions.

*I came back to the West Side Tennis Club for the weekend telecast. On Friday, I once again approached Gladys Heldman who I had heard was the official spokesperson for the ladies' organization. At this time I explained to Gladys that my tournament committee was most unhappy over the manner in which the ladies decided to handle their grievance, in view of the fact that several of the players had already handed in their entries and should not have withdrawn on any account, that our Los Angeles event received lots of poor and very ill-timed publicity, and that I frankly felt they did not have a grievance, and had they put it on the table in the proper manner and early enough it would have been possible to save all of us this embarrassing situation.*¹¹⁸

-- Jack Kramer, 1970

The women's doubles final between Margaret Court-Judy Dalton and Rosie Casals-Virginia Wade started the schedule of matches on Saturday. The Australians won the title in straight sets, earning \$1,000 apiece. Following the women's doubles awards ceremony, Ken Rosewall defeated John Newcombe and Tony Roche beat Cliff Richey to set up an all-Australian men's singles final for Sunday. Before that match, Court was scheduled to meet Rosie Casals in her attempt to complete a rare calendar-year grand slam.¹¹⁹

Rosie was eager to challenge Court for the U. S. Open title. "You sort of feel tired of seeing someone win all the time," she said before the match. "I'd like to feel it's my turn." Even though she had not lost to Rosie in two years and had five wins over her in 1970, Margaret did not underestimate her opponent. "Rosie's a real little tiger," she told reporters.¹²⁰ Before a maximum capacity of 14,502 spectators, Margaret started the match tensely, understandable in light of the historic importance of the situation. Leading 3-2 in the first set, Margaret took charge, breaking Rosie's serve and then winning two more games to clinch the first set. At 1-1 in the second set, Margaret once

again became tentative and Rosie evened the score with a 6-2 decision. In the final set, the Australian regained her confidence and forged ahead 3-0. After Rosie held serve for the only time in the final set, Margaret won the remaining three games with overpowering serves and accurate lobs to complete her grand slam - only the second time that a woman had earned such an achievement. It was not a great match, and neither player was at her best, but the historical importance of the match was not lost on the spectators. For their efforts, Margaret earned \$7,500 and Rosie collected \$3,750.¹²¹

The men's singles final between Rosewall and Roche, while not as historically important as the women's championship, was a high quality match that kept the crowd entertained. Rosewall, at age 35, was the sentimental favorite who won his first U. S title fourteen years earlier in 1956. After the Australians split the first two sets, the third set culminated in a sudden-death tiebreak. Roche served the first two points of the tiebreak and lost both of them. Leading 3-1, Rosewall executed a perfectly-placed forehand crosscourt passing shot that brought the crowd to its feet. Two points later, the tiebreak and third set belonged to Rosewall. The tiebreak was a crucial turning point; Rosewall closed out the fourth set to claim a major singles title, something he had not done since the 1968 French Open. "It's my biggest win. I'm very touched," said Rosewall. "It's been such a long time between wins." His prize money winnings of \$20,000 was the largest payday since the open era began in 1968, and he was given a new Ford Pinto automobile as well; Roche took home \$10,000.¹²²

CBS videotaped both finals and televised them later that evening. At 5:30 pm Eastern time, viewers tuned in to see Bud Collins sitting between Billie Jean King and Jack Kramer in the television broadcast booth. Collins spoke with Billie Jean about the first two sets of the women's singles final, after which the tape was broadcast with Margaret leading 3-0 in the third set. Only the final four games of the women's championship was televised; CBS devoted less than ten minutes of airtime to one of the most historically significant matches in tennis history. As soon as the women's match was finished, CBS did not televise the women's award ceremony but instead cut directly to the men's championship match. The men's final was shown in its entirety – a full two

hours in length – and television viewers were treated to the subsequent men’s award ceremony.¹²³

When the U. S. Open concluded, several key figures temporarily went their separate ways. Jack Kramer flew back to Los Angeles for a final week of preparation before the Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open. Gladys Heldman spent five days in New York completing the relocation of her household and magazine headquarters to Houston. Nancy Richey and Margaret Court flew to Chicago for an exhibition match at Northwestern University on Thursday, September 17. Billie Jean King stayed in New York for various sponsor and business commitments. In Houston, Delores Hornberger continued to work on the upcoming First Houston Women’s International Tennis Tournament; she made arrangements for bleacher rental, found club members who wanted to house players during the week, and coordinated club members and their children to volunteer as linespersons and ballpersons.

On Wednesday, September 16, Gladys attended a news conference at the Club 21 on West 52nd Street in New York. Lamar Hunt announced that three highly-ranked American men – Arthur Ashe, Bob Lutz and Charles Pasarell – signed five-year contracts with his World Championship Tennis tour. With the contract renewal of Marty Riessen and Dennis Ralston, Hunt said that WCT had twenty-seven male players under contract. Although Hunt told the gathering that the terms of the contracts would not be disclosed, Neil Amdur of the *New York Times* reported that the contract for Ashe was worth more than \$750,000 for a five-year period.¹²⁴

By signing WCT contracts, the players at the news conference were no longer under USLTA jurisdiction. In 1970, the USLTA classified American tennis players according to three categories:¹²⁵

Amateurs could not accept prize money but could receive reasonable amounts of money to pay for expenses such as transportation and lodging. Amateurs were under USLTA jurisdiction and were eligible for USLTA rankings and selection for international team competitions, such as the Davis Cup, Wightman Cup and Federation Cup.

Players (originally referred to as “Registered Players” or “Authorized Players,” and more commonly called “Professionals” or “Independent Professionals”) were age 19 or older and were allowed to accept prize money. Like amateurs, they were under USLTA jurisdiction and were eligible for USLTA rankings and selection for international team competitions, such as the Davis Cup, Wightman Cup and Federation Cup.

Contract Professionals were under contract to receive a specified amount of money from a promoter and were not under USLTA jurisdiction. As a result, they were not eligible for USLTA rankings and could not be selected for international team competitions, such as the Davis Cup, Wightman Cup and Federation Cup. Professionals were allowed to compete in all open tournaments, including Wimbledon, the French Open, and the U. S. Open.

At the news conference, Ashe thanked the USLTA for helping his career but felt the organization was limited in its abilities. “I appreciate everything the USLTA has done for me,” Ashe said. “But they just move too slowly for me. They make bad appointments, their hands are tied by antiquated rules and they don’t want to assume a role of leadership.” Nevertheless, Ashe indicated he would consider playing on the U. S. Davis Cup team in 1971, if the USLTA and ILTF changed the eligibility rules and permitted contract professionals to participate. A veteran of eight Davis Cup campaigns, Ashe told reporters that “WCT will be cooperative and I hope the other organizations will be as well.”¹²⁶

Reached for a comment, USLTA president Alastair Martin wished Ashe, Lutz and Pasarell “best of luck and success in their new venture.”¹²⁷ However, USLTA Executive Director Bob Malaga took exception with Ashe’s criticism of his organization and issued the following statement:

Under Alastair Martin, the USLTA has provided definite leadership in the growth of tennis. Martin was and is a firm advocate of open tournaments and has always

felt that the public should see the best players performing and the opens should get more prize money. As for “antiquated” rules, the association has a constitution and must abide by it. Any changes must be made in a legal way, at authorized meetings. We do not have dictatorial rule. We wish Ashe, Lutz and Pasarell the best of luck, but remember that Ashe progressed very nicely and became a big winner under the administration of three USLTA presidents – Martin Tressel, Bob Kelleher, and Martin. He has done all right under us.¹²⁸

The following day, Thursday, September 17, Gladys put a \$500 check in the mail to Delores Hornberger. It was a donation from Billie Jean King, to be used as prize money for the pro-am mixed doubles tournament in Houston. The plans included having eight mixed doubles teams compete; male club members were going to bid for the opportunity to play with the women professionals. The woman player on the first-place team would be awarded \$300, and the woman on the second-place team would be given \$200. “The money, of course, would only go to the women since the men are amateurs and are not eligible! Hurray for Women’s Lib,” Gladys wrote in the enclosed letter.¹²⁹

Gladys also revised the prize money breakdown for the Houston tournament. Originally, the first prize was \$2,000, since Gladys wanted to offer more than the \$1,500 winner’s take at the Pacific Southwest. However, the prize money originally offered to the Houston quarterfinalists and semifinalists was the same amount given at the Pacific Southwest (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 – Prize Money Breakdown at Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open and 1970 Houston Women’s Invitational (original prize money distribution)

	1970 Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open	1970 Houston Women’s Invitational (original prize money distribution)
Winner	\$1500	\$2000
Finalist	\$800	\$1000
Semifinalists	\$500	\$500
Quarterfinalists	\$250	\$250
Round of 16	\$150	-
Round of 32	0	-

For publicity reasons, Gladys felt it was important to make the prize money offered in each round of the Houston Women’s Invitational greater than what was offered in the corresponding rounds of the Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open. In the revised Houston prize money breakdown (Table 3.1), four hundred dollars was subtracted from the \$2,000 first place prize and added to the semifinal and quarterfinal payoffs.

Table 3.2 – Prize Money Breakdown at Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open and 1970 Houston Women’s Invitational (revised prize money distribution)

	1970 Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open	1970 Houston Women’s Invitational (original prize money distribution)
Winner	\$1500	\$1600
Finalist	\$800	\$1000
Semifinalists	\$500	\$600
Quarterfinalists	\$250	\$300
Round of 16	\$150	-
Round of 32	0	-

Even though the total prize money offered for the Pacific Southwest women’s singles tournament was \$5,500 (plus an additional \$2,000 offered in the women’s doubles), the restructured prize money breakdown for singles in Houston was comparatively – although slightly – more lucrative.

When USLTA Sanction and Schedule Chairman Stan Malless returned home to Indianapolis from the U. S. Open, the sanction application for the Houston tournament – approved by the Texas Tennis Association – was waiting at his office. Texas Tennis

Association president-elect Jim Hight enclosed a letter with the application, asking Malless to “please accept our apology for whatever we may have done to create a difficult situation for you and others. We hope that you understand that we may have made some poor choices in planning; that is not at all our intention to create a conflict with the tournament on the West Coast.”¹³⁰ Malless called Hight to explain that a USLTA sanction for a prize-money event could not be granted if there was another sanctioned prize-money event already scheduled for the same week. Hight then telephoned Gladys with the news that the tournament in Houston could not be sanctioned. Since Kramer had previously assured her that he would not object to a sanction, Gladys was not overly concerned. She explained Kramer’s verbal agreement to allow another sanctioned event during the same week at the Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open, and she suggested that Kramer be contacted to verify her story.¹³¹

Malless telephoned Jack Kramer’s office at the Los Angeles Tennis Club to inquire if there were any objections to the Houston tournament. Former USLTA president Bob Kelleher, an attorney who lived in Beverly Hills, was in Kramer’s office when Malless called. Kramer admitted to Malless that he had a congenial conversation with Gladys in New York, and at the time had no objections to a sanction for the Houston tournament. Kramer, however, did not believe his discussions in New York with Gladys were official or binding. Suddenly, Kramer changed his mind; he told Malless that as an official response, he definitely objected to a sanction for the Houston tournament.¹³²

Kramer and Kelleher wanted to confirm their objection after they discussed the matter with the Southern California Tennis Association’s board of directors and officers. Kramer claimed that Kelleher contacted all of them – although the association’s president, Perry T. Jones, was actually incapacitated at a Los Angeles hospital. According to Kramer, the board of directors and officers unanimously agreed that a USLTA sanction must not be granted to the Houston event. On Thursday, September 17, a telegram expressing their objections was sent to Malless.

In reply to your inquiry, we advise as follows: We are unalterably opposed to the grant by the USLTA of any sanction to any tournament in conflict with an

established, long-standing and major event such as the Pacific Southwest Open. Particularly do we object to approval in any form of the proposed conflicting Houston woman's event which is irresponsibly organized and was initiated for the principal purpose of defying USLTA regulations and of aiding a boycott. It is our view that any player may refrain from entering any tournament as he may wish and we have not made and will not make any complaint on that score. But we condemn an illegal tournament and all participants.¹³³

Perry T. Jones, President, Southern California Tennis Association

A telegram came from Perry Jones, who was in a coma in the hospital, and he died twenty-four hours after the telegram came. Of course, he didn't send it. But Jack was saying, "Oh, I don't protest, it's Perry Jones who's protesting." ¹³⁴
 -- Gladys Heldman, 1987

Kramer and Kelleher also contacted Hight to explain their objections; afterward, Hight spoke with Malless to get a clarification of USLTA rules regarding the scheduling of sanctioned tournaments. When Malless maintained that a major USLTA tournament could not be played the same week as another major event, Hight refuted the claim.¹³⁵ For years, the River Oaks Tennis Club in Houston hosted an international tournament each April. In 1968, the USLTA granted a sanction to the organizers of the Charlotte Invitation, even though it was held during the same week as River Oaks. While Cliff Richey, Nancy Richey, Peaches Bartkowicz and Clark Graebner played in the River Oaks event that year, other top-ranked players, including Arthur Ashe and Judy Tegart, played in Charlotte.

Malless argued that River Oaks and Charlotte were not prize money events, and clarified that prize money events could not be played simultaneously. Hight countered that earlier in the summer, the First National Tennis Classic in Louisville – a men's contract professional event – was scheduled for the same week as Malless' own USLTA National Clay Court Open in nearby Indianapolis. Thanks to the efforts of Jack Kramer, the Louisville event was granted "open" status by the International Lawn Tennis

Federation and became part of the Pepsi-Cola Grand Prix. The double-standard was apparent: no one complained when an event involving Kramer conflicted with a USLTA national championship, yet no one else could compete with Kramer's tournament. Malless reiterated that two USLTA-sanctioned prize money tournaments could not conflict because it was against USLTA rules. When asked by Hight to cite the rule, Malless admitted that there was no specific rule, but it was a courtesy understood by everyone. The final decision, according to Malless, was that a USLTA sanction would not be granted to the organizers in Houston and the tournament could not be held.¹³⁶

Hight discussed the matter with Delores Hornberger. It was agreed that the tournament was not going to be canceled under any circumstances, despite the objections of Kramer and the decision of Malless. Hight believed it was perfectly legal for the Houston Racquet Club to hold the tournament, since there were no rules in the USLTA bylaws that supported Malless' claims. The tournament may not have received a sanction from the USLTA, but it was approved by the Texas Tennis Association.¹³⁷

*The problems the women were having and Mr. Kramer's feelings with regard to the girls should in no way have involved the people in Houston nor their right to receive a sanction for their tournament. The decision to grant Houston a sanction ... should have first been decided by the Texas Tennis Association, with final approval from Mr. Stanley Malless. His decision should have been governed by rules alone and nothing more. To solicit and abide by the feelings and opinions of the Southern California Tennis Association or Mr. Kramer on the granting of a sanction for a tournament in Houston is essentially saying that approval of sanctions in Texas rests with this group. It is improper to make a sanction subject to the approval of any individual or section other than the section requesting the sanction and the USLTA Sanctioning Committee ... We did not cancel the Houston tournament because we could find no rule that would support a refusal of a sanction.*¹³⁸

-- Jim Hight, 1970

Hight insisted that the tournament was not going to be canceled. Malless then contacted each of the women, reminding them that USLTA regulations prohibited amateurs and registered players/independent professionals from playing in non-sanctioned prize money tournaments. Those who participated in Houston would be subjected to the USLTA Rules and Discipline Committee and would most likely be suspended from future tournaments for a specified length of time.¹³⁹ For the Australian players – Margaret Court, Judy Dalton and Kerry Melville – their national association would be notified that they had played in an event that was not approved by the USLTA. Since the various national associations worked closely with each other and honored each others' disciplinary actions, it was as serious threat for the Australians as it was for the Americans.

It was improper to threaten the women with suspension if they played in the Houston tournament; this appeared as intimidation to play in the Pacific Southwest ... At one time or another every top player in this country has played in non-sanctioned events; no action was taken to suspend them. To threaten these eight women only was discriminatory.¹⁴⁰
 -- Jim Hight, 1970

Concerned and confused about the likelihood of a suspension, several players contacted the Heldman home in Houston on Friday, September 18 to get more information. Gladys and Julius were flying in from New York later that day, and their daughter Julie was already at the residence on Timberwilde Drive.

I was helping my parents move to Houston, and was at their house the night Malless started contacting all the women, telling them they would be suspended. Many of them phoned, and I had to tell them hold on, that Mom was flying in from New York.¹⁴¹
 -- Julie Heldman, 2011

As soon as Gladys arrived at the house and heard the news about the likely suspensions, she sent a telegram to USLTA president Alastair Martin to get some clarification. Several players called the Heldman home again and were able to speak with Gladys about the situation.

The players had already been notified by the USLTA Sanctions Committee that if they played at Houston they'd be suspended. Naturally, they called me. I told them tickets had all been sold, bleachers had been installed, and we had the prize money, so come down anyway. I said, "If you can't play, or if you decide you don't want to be suspended, I'll pay for your travel, but let's at least be here." ¹⁴²

--Gladys Heldman, 1979

While Gladys maneuvered to avert a disaster in Houston, the Carolinas International Tennis Classic got underway in Charlotte, with Virginia Wade playing a teenager from Florida, Laurie Fleming, on Friday night. The top two women's seeds, Margaret Court and Nancy Richey, were en route from the Northwestern University exhibition and were scheduled to play their first matches on Saturday. On the Olde Providence Racquet Club's stadium clay court, Laurie gave Virginia a good battle before losing 7-5 6-3. In the next match, 15-year-old Chris Evert humiliated the veteran French professional Francoise Durr, 6-1 6-1. Tennis insiders were aware of the youngster's proficiency on clay. Seven months earlier, at the WLOD International in Fort Lauderdale, Chris pushed Nancy Richey to three sets. Still, the one-sided score against the experienced Francoise was remarkable. Nearly hysterical after her loss, Francoise gave no post-match interviews. Saturday's semifinals were set; clay court expert Nancy was expected to beat Virginia, and newly crowned Grand Slam champion Margaret was even more favored to defeat Chris. ¹⁴³

On Saturday, the Heldman family – Gladys, Julius and Julie – attended an exhibition tennis match at Rice University, organized by the Houston Tennis Association to benefit its junior programs. In addition to Australian stars John Newcombe and Tony Roche, celebrity participants included U. S. Congressman George H. Bush and Dan

Sandifer, a former player on the Green Bay Packers and Washington Redskins football teams.¹⁴⁴ Before the weekend was over, Gladys sent a second telegram to USLTA president Alistair Martin, inquiring about the threatened player suspensions.¹⁴⁵ She also invited Delores Hornberger to her house to discuss the tournament and release the draw to the newspapers.¹⁴⁶ Margaret Court was the obvious number one seed, followed by Rosie Casals at number two, Nancy Richey at number three, and Kerry Melville in the fourth seeded position.

In Charlotte, more than 3500 spectators arrived at the Olde Providence Racquet Club on Saturday to watch the men's and women's semifinals. As expected, Nancy dispatched Virginia, 6-4 6-4. No one, however, could have anticipated the drama in the other semifinal between Margaret and Chris. After losing the first two games of the match, Margaret settled down and won three games in a row. The first set remained close, and the crowd roared for Chris as she won the first set in a tiebreak. Margaret responded by taking a 3-0 lead in the second set, but she suddenly became unnerved. She made the tactical mistake of constantly coming forward to volley, giving Chris the openings for a series of accurate passing shots. Chris fought back to level the set, and eventually served at 5-6 to stay in the match. Here, Margaret's nerves collapsed, and she committed four unforced errors to set up another tiebreak. The two played evenly in the best-of-nine-point tiebreak until the score reached 4-4 – simultaneous set point for Margaret and match point for Chris. After a short rally, Margaret made a final unforced forehand error to end the match. "It was the most thrilling match I've ever been in," Chris remembered years later. For the crowd, it was apparent that a new tennis star had arrived.¹⁴⁷

On Sunday, the day Nancy defeated Chris, 6-4 6-1 in the Charlotte final and earned \$2500, Margaret called Gladys to tell her she was not coming to Houston and planned to return home to Australia. Whether it was from the disappointment of losing to a 15-year old girl, a nagging ankle injury, exhaustion from a demanding Grand Slam campaign, or concern about the threatened USLTA suspension, Margaret had no interest in playing. Her withdrawal put Gladys and the tournament in an awkward position, considering that an action photograph and article about the Australian's participation had

just appeared in the Sunday, September 22 edition of the *Houston Chronicle*.¹⁴⁸ For Delores Hornberger, Margaret's change of heart was a huge disappointment.

She was the big star... she and Billie Jean were the big stars ... and I was thinking if Margaret Court comes we'll just sell out ... I was very upset because I was telling all the women on the tennis courts that Margaret was coming.
-- Delores Hornberger, 2011¹⁴⁹

*Margaret was a bit discouraged and she told me "I really don't want to play." She had been given a warning not to play, but that didn't bother her. If Margaret had known there was going to be this kind of confrontation, she might have stayed in the U. S.*¹⁵⁰
--Gladys Heldman, 1989

*If Margaret knew there was going to be trouble and a risk of suspension, she never would have played. She only looked out for herself.*¹⁵¹
-- Former player (name withheld)

Margaret did not return to Australia after her withdrawal from Houston. News stories reported that she went to Florida on a fishing vacation with her husband, Barry.¹⁵² Her legal representative in the United States, New York attorney Larry Krieger, told reporters that she was instructed by her doctor to take six to eight weeks of rest to heal her injured left ankle.¹⁵³

For Gladys, it was a frustrating weekend. A USLTA sanction was denied, the players were threatened with suspension if they played, Alastair Martin did not respond to her two urgent telegrams, and the tournament's top seed and drawing card was a last-minute withdrawal. She needed to find a replacement for Margaret as quickly as possible. Helen Gourlay and Pat Walkden, mentioned as possible Houston participants when the tournament was in the planning stages during the U. S. Open, were already committed to playing in the Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open. Gladys learned that Kristy Pigeon, a young Californian ranked sixth in the USLTA national rankings, had not

entered the Los Angeles tournament and was available; Kristy made plans to arrive in Houston on Tuesday, along with most of the other players. After Court's withdrawal, Rosie Casals became the number-one seed, followed by Nancy Richey and Kerry Melville; Judy Dalton was put into the fourth seed position.

On Monday morning, Gladys placed a telephone call to the Philip Morris headquarters in New York. Although her good friend Joe Cullman, the company's CEO, was out of the country at the time, Gladys knew other upper-level Philip Morris executives, including George Weissman, the president of the company's international division. Certainly, Cullman knew about Gladys' plans to stage a tournament in Houston from the very beginning, and he likely promised to assist her if there were any problems with the USLTA. Cullman was not only the chairman of the U. S. Open, but his company was the primary advertiser on the tournament's television broadcasts.¹⁵⁴

*Joe was the sponsor of the U. S. Open and he was very friendly with USLTA people. I thought this would help us out.*¹⁵⁵

-- Gladys Heldman, 1989

The tournament was scheduled to begin in forty-eight hours, and Gladys still had not received any responses from the two telegrams she sent to Alastair Martin. Most of the players were scheduled to arrive in Houston the following day, and none of them knew the status of the tournament. Nancy Richey was finally able to reach Martin on the telephone, and he confirmed the decision made by Malless; any player who competed in the Houston tournament would immediately be suspended by the USLTA.¹⁵⁶

It was in the period from September 9 until September 23 that action should have been taken by the USLTA to prevent what in fact happened. Instead, a sort of limbo ensued in which the Houston sponsors felt the USLTA would take no action; during this time the women of the Club put out more publicity and sold more tickets ... At no time before the tournament did the USLTA contact the Club to forewarn it of any grave consequences if it staged the tournament on its court

*... All directives received from the USLTA were directed toward the girls ... This lack of action coupled with the fact that many of us here were naïve originally about the reason for the girls coming to Houston led to the unfortunate circumstances.*¹⁵⁷

-- Paul Pearce, 1970

On the morning of Tuesday, September 22, Malless called Jim Hight with a potential solution. He was willing to approve a USLTA sanction if the tournament organizers agreed to make no mention of prize money. Instead, the players could receive their money as expenses – effective the previous year, there was no longer a daily limit on the expense money that a tournament could give to players. If this was done, none of the women would be face possible disciplinary action from the USLTA. Hight thought it was a fair compromise, and he relayed the information to Delores Hornberger. Eager to resolve the problem, the Houston Racquet Club Women’s Association agreed to run the tournament without publicizing any prize money – in effect, an amateur event that was allowed to pay the players in expense money.¹⁵⁸

On arrival in Houston, I learned that a sanction had been granted for an “amateur” tournament. It seemed incredible that the USLTA was actually encouraging a return to the very evil (that) open tennis was to have eliminated.

¹⁵⁹

-- Patti Hogan, 1970

On the same day the USLTA compromise was accepted, Steve Korsen, the Virginia Slims brand manager at Philip Morris, telephoned Gladys. Perhaps instructed by Joe Cullman, either before he left the country or while he was on a safari in Africa, Korsen offered a sponsorship of \$2,500 in return for calling the tournament the “Virginia Slims Invitational.” Korsen and his team saw an obvious marketing fit. Introduced in 1968, Virginia Slims was the latest Philip Morris cigarette brand; its advertising campaign, featuring the tag line “You’ve Come a Long Way, Baby,” was geared towards the modern, independent woman who was no longer subject to male suppression. Gladys

relayed Korsen's proposal to Delores Hornberger, who was happy to rename the tournament in return for the sponsorship money.¹⁶⁰

After receiving confirmation from Gladys that the proposal was accepted, Virginia Slims assistant brand manager Bill Cutler and Philip Morris publicist Dallas Kersey booked an airline flight to Houston, and they planned to arrive in time for the cocktail party at the Houston Racquet Club that evening. The additional \$2,500 from Philip Morris, however, did not increase the tournament's prize money of \$5,000; instead, it was used to offset the tournament's expenses.

*We spent the money. It was controversial, it was going to get publicity. We wanted the brand represented. I think most brand people would do that.*¹⁶¹
-- Bill Cutler, 2012

Most of the players arrived in Houston on Tuesday, September 22, since the cocktail party and Pro-Am mixed doubles auction were held that night in the club lounge. Nancy Richey was the only player not present at the party. She was scheduled to play her first match on Thursday, and she planned to arrive in Houston on Wednesday. Before the cocktail party, Judy Dalton, Kristy Pigeon, Kerry Melville, Valerie Ziegenfuss and Patti Hogan posed for photographs in the club's locker room for a story in the *Houston Chronicle's* society page. Billie Jean King and Peaches Bartkowicz were the last players to arrive on Tuesday evening, coming to the cocktail party directly from Houston Intercontinental Airport.

*When Gladys told us she'd got a cigarette company for that tournament in Houston, I thought, 'Oh no ... that's a terrible message!' I don't smoke, I don't believe in it.*¹⁶²
-- Billie Jean King, 2011

Delores Hornberger welcomed the guests at the cocktail party on Tuesday evening. "About ten days ago," she said, "Gladys Heldman called and asked if we were

interested in having eight of the world's top women tennis players. We said yes. Ten days was short time, but the Houston Racquet Club Women's Association was not to be denied. We have had great problems in getting all the necessary approvals and sanctions, and the prize money is presenting a problem for the USLTA. It was necessary to make some changes in the tourney and pay expenses only – no prize money – to get the sanction. A sanction by the USLTA is the only way a number of the girls can play. Nevertheless, we have the girls.” Delores then thanked Virginia Slims for contributing \$2,500 to the tournament and recognized the presence of Bill Cutler and Dallas Kersey. She also introduced the Heldman family – Gladys, Julius and Julie – and acknowledged that Gladys was “instrumental in getting all this done.”¹⁶³

During the evening, teams were determined for Pro-Am mixed doubles tournament. Rennie Baker, a former president of the Houston Tennis Association and one of the founders of the Houston Racquet Club, was paired with Billie Jean King. After all the other teams were chosen, the draw was made. Baker and King were the top-seeded pair, with Larry Briggs and Nancy Richey placed in the number two seed position. The two other seeded teams were Bill Banta and Kerry Melville, and Bud Rae and Rosie Casals. For the men players, it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to play doubles with and against professional tennis players. For the women, it was an opportunity to make more money. The woman on the winning team earned \$300, and the woman on the second-place team made \$200. The club members placed bets on their favorite teams, which helped to raise more money for the tournament budget.

While the cocktail party was a festive occasion, Billie Jean was unhappy with news that Jim Hight and Delores Hornberger accepted Stanley Malless' solution and agreed to pay expenses, and not provide prize money, for the players. To her, this was no different from the old under-the-table shamateurism days. She wanted to discuss the USLTA compromise with the other women and tournament personnel, and a meeting was scheduled for the following day, after the instructional clinic and before the first match of the tournament.

On Wednesday, September 23 – the opening day of the Virginia Slims Invitational – Billie Jean led an instructional clinic in the morning while Nancy Richey

flew into Houston. The players had earlier agreed to meet in the club lobby after lunch to discuss the USLTA compromise. While some of the players waited for the others to arrive in the lobby, it was an opportunity for some casual conversation.

*During one of the lulls ... I heard Billie Jean remark about all the waiters at the Houston Racquet Club being black. She said something like, "Every time I come to the South, it seems like every club has black waiters." Nancy Richey replied, "What would you have them do? It's a good job!" I think now it was symbolic of the class consciousness emerging in America in the wake of the civil rights movement of the 1960's and then the women's movement of the 1970's. Both women were empathetic, but viewed the situation differently because of the local demographics in the part of the country where they grew up ... Nancy was defending her state and her region and basically saying that it was exemplary that these guys had really responsible jobs in a nice club ... they were employed and providing for their families.*¹⁶⁴

-- Paul Pearce, 2013

Once all of the players had assembled, along with Gladys, Delores Hornberger, Jim Hight and Bill Cutler, they went into a room in the lower level of the club to discuss the situation. Hight and Cutler favored the USLTA compromise, since it would spare the players from becoming suspended. Billie Jean and Rosie wanted to defy the USLTA and play for publicized prize money, and most of the other players agreed with them. They were willing to be suspended by the USLTA – and be barred from major international tournaments – if it meant they were in charge of their own tennis careers.

*At that point I didn't care if I never played Wimbledon again. The USLTA had treated us so badly for so long that it didn't bother me if I never saw another major tournament. We were getting such raw deals that we decided to throw caution to the wind.*¹⁶⁵

-- Nancy Richey, 1988

Only one player was not willing to risk being suspended by the USLTA. Patti Hogan had signed an agreement to play in several tournaments on the Dewar Cup circuit, played throughout Great Britain in November and December. More important to her, she was having a discrete relationship with a high-profile tennis official in London. If she were suspended by the USLTA and barred from playing tournaments, she would have no excuse to visit Great Britain for several weeks. ¹⁶⁶

Patti Hogan wanted nothing to do with it. ¹⁶⁷

-- Delores Hornberger, 2011

Jim Hight informed the players that the USLTA had specific rules prohibiting member clubs from staging non-sanctioned, prize money tournaments that charged admission fees. ¹⁶⁸ Violations of these rules could result in the denial of future sanction applications, and the Houston Racquet Club was planning to host the USLTA men's senior national clay court championships the following spring, in addition to other USLTA sanctioned tournaments.

I was concerned about the Houston Racquet Club. They ran a lot of tournaments, and I didn't want to see them get suspended by the USLTA for something that we were doing. ¹⁶⁹

-- Valerie Ziegenfuss, 2010

Gladys then offered a solution. The players could avoid USLTA suspension, and the club could be protected as well, if they temporarily became contract professionals. The USLTA maintained jurisdiction over amateurs and registered players, but had no authority over contract professionals and could not penalize member clubs for staging contract professional events. The plan was to have each player sign personal service contracts – for one dollar each – with Gladys and *World Tennis* for the duration of the four-day tournament, after which they could apply to have their “registered player” status reinstated with the USLTA.

*I got the idea to sign each of the women for one dollar.*¹⁷⁰
 -- Gladys Heldman, 1989

*We were walking side by side and she said, "I have got to make sure they can't suspend you ... I have to make you contract pros, but I can't afford to pay you," so I responded with the symbolic one dollar idea.*¹⁷¹
 -- Billie Jean King, 2012

The players wanted to discuss the contract professional option and vote on it. Jim Hight, Delores Hornberger, Dallas Kersey and Bill Cutler left the conference room, and the players asked Gladys to remain. Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals, Nancy Richey, Judy Dalton, Kerry Melville, Peaches Bartkowicz, Valerie Ziegenfuss and Kristy Pigeon were in favor of becoming contract professionals to Gladys and *World Tennis* for four days. Patti Hogan was still hesitant about endangering her trip to Great Britain, and declined the offer. Before making the agreement official, Billie Jean wanted to notify the USLTA of the players' intentions, and perhaps settle the disagreement peacefully; she left the conference room to place a telephone call to USLTA president Alastair Martin.

From a public pay telephone in the club's lobby, Billie Jean told Martin "we do not want to do this, but you have given us no choice." Martin could not understand the position of the women players, and asked them to play for the love of the game. When Billie Jean asked about future prize money events, Martin said he could not guarantee fairer distributions between men and women. Billie Jean also wanted to know if the USLTA had any plans to develop a circuit for the women during the winter months, as it had done for the men.¹⁷²

Martin said he could only guarantee one tournament during the winter, the USLTA National Women's Indoor Championships in Boston in early March.¹⁷³ It was apparent to Billie Jean that Martin and the USLTA did not understand the concerns of the women players. There were no indications that the lack of playing opportunities, or the prize money situation, was going to change anytime soon.

We had to take things into our own hands, but I wanted to do it in the most diplomatic and proper way possible. So I made a call to the president of the USLTA, Alastair Martin, and told him what we were about to do. I had been trying for two years to get them to do a tour for us. I said, 'You don't want to provide it, I hear you, but I didn't want you to read about this in the paper tomorrow without me calling you.' ... Finally I went back to the group and said, "Let's go, let's get this over with. Please!" It was excruciating. We were all scared... we had no idea what was going to happen. We just knew we had the dream, the vision. ¹⁷⁴

-- Billie Jean King, 2011

In the conference room, Patti Hogan drafted a one-sentence contract in a stenographer's notebook and printed each player's name – except her own – down the left side of the page. ¹⁷⁵ The contract, which read “We, the undersigned, declare ourselves under contract to World Tennis Magazine, at a guarantee of \$1 per player,” was passed around the table, and after each woman signed her name to the right side of the page, Gladys gave each signee a one dollar bill. Patti then handed Gladys a letter which stated, “I, Patti Hogan, promise that if the players under contract to *World Tennis* magazine are suspended by the USLTA, I will join them in not playing in any sanctioned tournaments until such time as they are reinstated.” ¹⁷⁶ With Patti's withdrawal, Billie Jean – who originally only intended to play in the Pro-Am mixed doubles – agreed to play in the singles tournament. It was a brave decision, since Billie Jean had undergone knee surgery only two months earlier. Patti took Billie Jean's place in the Pro-Am draw, which meant she was playing twice, with two different partners.

At 3:00 pm, thirty minutes before the tournament's first match, Gladys and the players emerged from the conference room. A news conference had been scheduled for 2:30 pm, and sportswriters Charles Carder of the *Houston Chronicle* and Jack Gallagher of the *Houston Post* were waiting for them, along with reporters from a local television station. Billie Jean, as the players' spokesperson, announced the players had signed short-term contracts with *World Tennis* and would be competing for publicized prize

money instead of expenses. “We thought we’d like to play above board rather than get expenses under the table,” Billie Jean said. “We’re trying to make this game honest. I’ve received as much as \$5,000 under the table even if I lost in the first round... In substance the USLTA was asking us to take money under the table again ... Well, we’ve all had enough of that... This is not a women’s liberation movement. It’s professional tennis, even though it smacks of women’s liberation.” Repeating an argument that she had been making for several years, despite the displeasure of the USLTA, Billie Jean told reporters “If you get money from a sport you should be labeled a pro. All we’re doing now with our various titles is confusing the public, and the quicker we can clear up the confusion, the faster tennis is going to grow... Why can’t we just get paid like the other pros?”¹⁷⁷

Gladys told the reporters she “asked Jack Kramer if he objected to the Houston tournament getting a sanction and he said no. Since then he says the Southern California Tennis Association has objected. Kramer is the Southern California Tennis Association. Refusing to grant the sanction was Kramer’s way of getting even with the girls.”¹⁷⁸ Billie Jean agreed, saying “when we came here, we thought the USLTA was going to sanction the tournament, but yesterday they decided not to. They were coercing us to play in the Pacific Southwest or not play at all.” When questioned about the opinions of the world’s number-one ranked player, Billie Jean said, “I don’t know how Margaret Court feels about it.”¹⁷⁹

Billie Jean admitted she did not know how the USLTA would respond to the actions of the group, and whether or not the women would be permitted to play in future USLTA tournaments. “We’ll probably be having our own circuit,” she explained, referring to the plans that her husband Larry and Dennis van der Meer announced during the U. S. Open three weeks earlier. “Except for the big tournaments,” Billie Jean hoped, “we’d like to play in those.”¹⁸⁰

As tennis fans began arriving outside for the opening match between Rosie Casals and Valerie Ziegenfuss, Gladys and the players remained in the clubhouse for a quick photo session. With Gladys seated and holding the handwritten contract, and with the players gathered around her and displaying their one dollar bills, photographers documented a seminal moment in the history of sport. Gladys and the women players

were not defiantly brandishing their independence; instead, they seemed happy to finally be in charge of their own tennis careers. Eventually, the photographs became iconic symbols of the women's sports movement.

*The nine of us who signed with Gladys didn't know it would end up being what it was. We were just trying to survive and have a place to play, and if it hadn't worked we didn't have anything anyway. So it wasn't that we were such big heroes. We just wanted to have some tournaments to play. I look at it that we were a part of making things change.*¹⁸¹

--Nancy Richey, 2010

Reached for a comment in California, Jack Kramer addressed the prize money situation but not the USLTA sanction controversy. "They said they were treated shabbily in regard to prize money and, of course, they are," he told Jim Murray of the *Los Angeles Times*. "The committee wanted to give them only \$5,000. I wanted \$10,000. We settled for \$7,500. But you have to analyze who is coming. First of all, Margaret Court, who won Forest Hills, is fishing in Florida with her husband. Billie Jean King is out with a knee operation. Virginia Wade is home in England. Ann Haydon Jones only plays sporadically. What's left is hardly center-court stuff."¹⁸²

Bob Martin, a sports reporter for the Long Beach *Independent Press-Telegram*, attended the Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open and spoke with several men players about the women's situation. "Like I told Billie Jean one time," said Pancho Gonzalez, "you take your girls across the street to another arena and you keep all the money you take in and we'll keep all we take in. Sure, we'd lose atmosphere if the girls weren't around, but the fan doesn't pay to see the girls." Marty Riessen complained that "women's events just clutter up tournaments," and Clark Graebner said "if the girls can make it on their own, more power to them. But if they want to play in the same tournaments as the men, they should be happy with whatever they get. Personally, I think men's tennis would be better off without them."¹⁸³

Rod Laver told Martin the “women shouldn’t get more than one fourth of a tournament’s prize money. One third of the purse for women is ridiculous. They’re important for gate appeal at some tournaments like Wimbledon or Forest Hills, but not at a lot of others. I think they should get their own sponsors and try their own tournaments.” Cliff Richey agreed, arguing “I don’t think the women have that big a gripe. Margaret won \$9,000 in two weeks last summer. It used to take a year to earn that much. Women ride on the coattails of the men and then complain.”¹⁸⁴

Beneath overcast skies, Rosie Casals and Valerie Ziegenfuss started their first round match at 3:30 pm. Bleacher seating for 300 spectators was set up on Court One, and all the tournament’s matches were scheduled to be played on the adjoining Court Two. Rosie won the first eight points of the match, breaking her Valerie’s serve at love in the opening game and then holding her own serve without the loss of a point. She raced through the first set 6-1, showing off her scrambling ability and great touch on drop shots. In the second set, they each held serve for the first four games. With Rosie serving at 2-2, the game went to deuce nine times; on eight occasions, Valerie had an advantage point. She finally broke Rosie’s serve for the first time in the match, and then held serve to take a 4-2 lead. Rosie won the next three games to pull ahead 5-4; each player then held serve, and Valerie found herself serving to stay in the match at 5-6. In a game that went to deuce four times, Valerie double-faulted on match point to give Rosie a 6-1 7-5 victory – and the historic first win in a Virginia Slims tournament.¹⁸⁵

I do recall that ticket sales weren’t all that great – low prices, and not enough time to rouse the tennis public in Houston. School had started, and some people turned away from tennis. But the women at the Houston Racquet Club sold most of the tickets to club members at HRC, River Oaks Country Club, Houston Country Club, Lakeside Country Club, and the smaller, Memorial-area tennis clubs. I recall some Houston Racquet Club members being irritated at having to buy a ticket to enter their own club. The tournaments area was not defined and secured very well from the rest of the club, unlike West Side Tennis Club¹⁸⁶

-- Paul Pearce, 2013

While Rosie and Valerie were playing, Julie Heldman arrived at the club to watch the matches. Number two in the U.S. national rankings and number five in the unofficial world rankings, Julie had not played a tournament in two months. After losing to Patti Hogan in a tournament in England in July, she decided to take an indefinite break.

*I wasn't playing tennis at the time of the Houston tournament because I tore a muscle plus the sheath of the bone away from my right elbow ... I was receiving treatment (for it) and waiting for it to heal ... I was playing with the Wilson T-2000, which had a very small sweet spot. I guess I kept hitting the ball off center, and the vibrations went up my arm.*¹⁸⁷

-- Julie Heldman, 2010

Hearing the news about the players becoming *World Tennis* contract professionals, Julie signed her name to the contract as a gesture of solidarity with her fellow players.

Rain showers fell intermittently during Wednesday's second match, when Australian Kerry Melville played Kristy Pigeon, a left-hander with an effective, twisting spin serve. Kerry held serve in the opening game and then broke serve in the second game to take a 2-0 lead. Kristy broke Kerry's serve in third game and then held to level at 2-2. Each player continued to hold until Kristy stood at the service line at 3-4. Kerry reached advantage point and broke by fending off Kristy's overheads with several defensive lobs. Serving for the first set, Kerry jumped to a 40-0 lead, lost the next three points, and then won the set with a forehand winner and a service return error by Kristy. The second set saw Kristy take an early 2-1 lead, but Kerry took five straight games and clinched the match with a forehand winner.¹⁸⁸

After the following morning's instructional clinic, Billie Jean was practicing her serve on a side court when Julie Heldman approached and suggested they play a one-point match. Such a gesture would make Julie's participation in the tournament official, making her subject to any penalties the USLTA imposed on the players.

*It was my decision to play the one-point symbolic match. I wanted to be clear that I was playing the point out of solidarity with my fellow players, and that I would be suspended with them, if that were to happen. I felt it was important, even though I loved to travel, and I realized that I would be giving up the ability to go to many different places if I were suspended by the USLTA ... We pitty-patted the ball back and forth, high over the net, until I decided to hit it into the net. I don't know why Billie Jean was chosen ... My recollection is that we played the match on a side court late morning, and basically no one was there.*¹⁸⁹
 -- Julie Heldman, 2010

Later in the day, Billie Jean and Rosie talked with the other players about remaining contract professionals once their contracts with Gladys expired at the end of the week. The original plan was to ask the USLTA to reinstate them as registered players when the tournament was concluded. However, even if the USLTA reinstated them – which was doubtful – the problem of not having enough tournaments with sufficient prize money would remain. Realizing the women players' only option was to break away from the USLTA and forge their own future, Billie Jean and Rosie began talking about developing plans for a women's tour.

Before the afternoon matches, Billie Jean spoke with Charles Carder of the *Houston Chronicle* about the events of the previous day, when the women became contract professionals, and what the future might hold for them. Asked what she thought the USLTA reaction might be, Billie Jean said, "I don't think they expected anything like this." She also indicated that the women were no longer interested in asking the USLTA to reinstate them as registered players when their *World Tennis* contracts expired at the end of the week, as originally planned. "We have discussed the matter and I think we are going to stay away from the USLTA," she revealed.¹⁹⁰

... by the next day, the situation had changed again. The players had decided they would not apply for reinstatement, that they would play open tournaments and hold their own tournaments during the free weeks. This was a good deal

*more serious than it had been, and when they asked me to join them after the Dewar Circuit, I declined, making it clear I considered my commitment to them at an end. A governing body is essential to any pursuit, and what the game needs now is not more anarchy, but more cooperation. The USLTA must learn that it cannot expect women either to compete where the prize money is unsatisfactory or not play at all. The game is big enough now that it can stand some competition between tournaments, and this ought not to be stifled entirely. The players must see, however, that picking up one's marbles and going home improves nothing.*¹⁹¹

-- Patti Hogan, 1970

Thursday afternoon's program opened with a battle between two baseline sluggers. Peaches Bartkowicz won the first three games against the number-two seed, Nancy Richey. After a slow start, Nancy reeled off eight straight games to lead 2-0 in the second set before Peaches evened the score at 2-2. Nancy lost only one more game in the 6-3 6-3 win, closing it out with an ace on match point.¹⁹²

Billie Jean then took the court with Judy Dalton to play her first match since her epic loss to Margaret Court at Wimbledon, and her first match since having knee surgery in late July. After losing serve in the opening game, Judy won four consecutive games enroute to winning the first set. The second set followed a similar pattern, with Judy breaking Billie Jean twice to take a 4-1 lead and clinch the match 6-3 6-3 and her first win over Billie Jean since 1967. "I don't have my strength back," Billie Jean said afterward about her knee, "but there was no pain in it. It's the first time in three years my legs haven't hurt me. It was fun playing again. I can really enjoy it again. It was really great."¹⁹³

While Thursday's matches were in progress, USLTA president Alastair Martin sent a telegram to Billie Jean, informing her that she and the other women competing in the tournament were no longer under USLTA jurisdiction. As a result, they could no longer enter USLTA sanctioned non-open tournaments, represent the United States in the Wightman Cup or Federation Cup, or be listed in the USLTA national rankings.¹⁹⁴

*... the girls received a telegram from Alastair Martin, President of the USLTA, informing them that they were suspended, that they were no longer eligible for a national ranking and the could not play Federation Cup or Wightman Cup ...*¹⁹⁵
 -- Gladys Heldman, 1970

*We did not suspend the girls when they signed contracts. All I did was ask them if they had signed, and if they had, then they were no longer under our jurisdiction. They were neither kicked out nor disciplined. If they left, they left, and I'm sorry about it.*¹⁹⁶
 --Alastair Martin, 1971

Billie Jean was nonplussed by the decision. “We really don’t care. We knew this would happen. This is no surprise and it is fine with us,” she told reporters. “Remember, the men aren’t associated with the USLTA any longer, either. Cliff Richey is the only one of the registered players who hasn’t turned pro aside from Stan Smith, who’s in the service. What the USLTA needs to do is concentrate on junior development.”¹⁹⁷

*Rosie and Billie Jean called me. I was working on our camp systems in Berkeley and they called me after they got the telegrams suspending them from the USLTA ... and Billie Jean asked if Dennis and I would be willing to make a proposal to the women ...and we said, “Sure, we’ll try” ... Dennis and I went through our contacts and thought we could get three or four tournaments together and we made up a proposal to set up a separate circuit for those who had been thrown out by the USLTA ... we would work for just ten percent of the prize money.*¹⁹⁸
 -- Larry King, 2012

Larry had some previous experience in promoting professional tennis events. His first venture as a promoter came in July of 1968, when he staged a financially successful event in Oakland, California as a stop on George MacCall’s National Tennis League tour. In February of 1969, the tournament was a disaster; poor weather resulted in police

advisories to refrain from driving across the Bay Area bridges, and the low attendance cost the tournament nearly \$10,000. Undeterred, Larry continued to pitch his ideas for promoting women's professional tennis throughout 1969 and 1970.

*I sent a proposal to Gladys and all the top women players in the summer of 1969, saying that basically the women were not going to get equal treatment unless they could draw equal crowds, and I suggested an eight-woman tour where two players always went ahead to promote the tournaments in advance ... and I sent this out to Gladys and a bunch of people during the summer of 1969 ... all the women understood that they were sinking, there were fewer opportunities and my thought was that they had to promote themselves separately to demand equal prize money and better scheduling and better treatment at combined events. It was merely a suggestion of a format of three-day tournaments with two players always going ahead promoting the next tournament.*¹⁹⁹

-- Larry King, 2012

Billie Jean felt that the actions of the USLTA presented the perfect opportunity for Larry to convince the players to support his concept. "My husband is coming to Houston and he has some ideas," she told Charles Carder of the *Houston Chronicle*. "This is the first time we have ever been united. We've talked about a break in the past but there were always some who didn't want to act." Billie Jean hoped that grand slam champion Margaret Court, U. S. number eight Denise Carter, and U. S. national junior champion Sharon Walsh would be interested in joining the group. Looking ahead to possible repercussions, Billie Jean was confident that "we could take the USLTA to court" if the players on a future proposed tour – or the clubs they played at – were barred or suspended. Perhaps alluding to Larry's aspirations to develop a women's tour, Billie Jean emphasized that "tennis is a business that requires eight hours a day, twelve months a year. Let us be the major league of tennis and let the USLTA concentrate on young players and be the minors."²⁰⁰

That evening, Barry MacKay, the tournament director of the following week's Pacific Coast International Open in Berkeley, telephoned Gladys with the news that he was able to raise the women's purse from \$3,400 to \$4,400 (while the men would be competing for \$26,000); he hoped the increased prize money would attract all of the players who signed contracts in Houston. Since MacKay planned to award prize money to only the winner, finalist and semifinalists in a 32-player field, Gladys told him that the prize money amount and distribution was still insufficient.²⁰¹

On Friday, Nancy Richey and Rosie Casals indicated they had no plans to enter the Pacific Coast International Open in Berkeley, which started two days after the conclusion of the Houston tournament. Even though Barry Mackay was able to increase the total women's prize money to \$4,400, it was still not enough to attract the two players who would be the tournament's top seeds. A few hours later, a San Francisco clothing manufacturer made a contribution of \$7,600, which boosted the total prize money to \$11,000. The contributor, Alvin Duskin, explained "the loss of the world's outstanding women players to the Pacific Coast Open would have been a tragedy." Billie Jean observed that the increase in prize money was the result of the women becoming contract professionals and presenting a united front. "As individuals, we could never have gotten it," she said. The Berkeley tournament suddenly became one of the richest women's singles events of the year, and all the *World Tennis* contract professionals (except the injured Julie Heldman) agreed to participate, even though no money was offered for women's doubles.²⁰²

In the Houston semifinals on Friday, Judy Dalton scored an upset win over clay-court expert Nancy Richey. Even though Nancy was a former Houstonian, the 200 spectators cheered equally for both players. Nancy earned a service break early in the first set and maintained the lead, winning the set by holding serve at 5-4 in a game that went to deuce four times. Judy endeared herself to the crowd by berating herself, saying "you're moving like a bloody elephant." After Nancy won the first two games of the second set, Judy won five consecutive games and led 5-2. Nancy took the next three games to level at 5-5; Judy then held and broke Nancy's serve to win the second set 7-5. Judy kept the momentum in the third set, taking a 4-0 lead and closing out the match 4-6

7-5 6-2. Afterward, she told Hal Lundgren of the *Houston Chronicle* that her husband promised any money she won in the tournament was hers to keep. By getting to the final, she earned at least \$1,000, and she planned to purchase a washer-dryer and a waste disposal with her winnings.²⁰³

The length of the match between Judy and Nancy delayed the start of the semifinal between Rosie Casals and Kerry Melville, originally scheduled for 5:00 pm. Kerry started well, winning the first two games. Rosie won four games in a row, and then it was Kerry's turn to win four consecutive games for the set, 6-4. Kerry raced to 4-1 in the second set, but Rosie won six of the next seven games – saving a match point along the way – to take the second set 7-5 and tie the match at a set apiece. None of the courts at the Houston Racquet Club were lighted, and with darkness approaching, Kerry and Rosie agreed to suspend the match and continue the following morning.²⁰⁴ When the match resumed on Saturday at 11:00 am, Rosie play flawlessly to win the deciding set 6-3.

Three hundred spectators were on hand at the Houston Racquet Club to watch the championship match of the Virginia Slims Invitational on Saturday afternoon. Before the final, a third place playoff match of losing semifinalists was played, with Kerry Melville defeating a visibly tired Nancy Richey 6-2 6-1. In the final, Judy's strong serving helped her to stay in front the entire first set. With Rosie serving at 5-6 and hoping to force a tiebreak, Judy broke serve and clinched the first set 7-5. Serving in the first game of the second set and leading 40-30 in the game, Judy's game suddenly fell apart when she committed three consecutive double faults. Rosie sensed her chance and won five of the next six games to win the set and even the match. Trailing 1-4 in the deciding set, Judy took the next two games as she held serve and then broke Rosie in the next game. At 3-4, Judy was forced to deuce five times before finally holding serve. A service break against Rosie at 4-4 gave Judy a chance to serve for the match and the title at 5-4. Rosie broke back without losing a point, then won another four consecutive points to lead 6-5. This time Judy was serving to stay in the match. She reached 30-15 before Rosie forced the game to deuce three times. On her third match point, Rosie finished the match with a backhand winner.²⁰⁵

After the match, Delores Hornberger presided at the awards ceremony and introduced the key figures to the spectators. Gladys thanked the Houston Racquet Club Women's Association and Philip Morris, and she congratulated Rosie and Judy for providing an entertaining final. Jim Hight of the Texas Tennis Association announced that more women's prize money events were planned for next year, and all of the profits from the Houston tournament would be donated to the fledgling group. When Bill Cutler of Philip Morris presented the prize money checks to Rosie and Judy, he used the Virginia Slims tag line to put the week's historic events into perspective. "You've come a long way, babies," Cutler told them.²⁰⁶ "Thank you," Rosie told the crowd, "for giving us the chance to do something we'd wanted to do for ages – go against the USLTA."²⁰⁷ For Rosie, winning in Houston was one of the highlights of her career.

*I like knowing that I was the first winner of a Virginia Slims tournament.
It wasn't much money, but I value that title a lot.*²⁰⁸
-- Rosie Casals, 1999

Following the singles final, the semi-finals of the Pro-Am tournament were played. Kerry Melville and Bill Banta defeated Nancy Richey and Larry Briggs 6-3 6-0, and Kristy Pigeon and Ed Ruffin defeated Rosie Casals and Bud Ruffin 6-3 4-6 6-3 (putting Rosie's total number of sets for the day at seven). There was no time to play the Pro-Am finals on Saturday night, so the match was rescheduled for Sunday at 1:30 pm. Any spectator who had a ticket to Saturday's matches was allowed to watch the Pro-Am final on Sunday at no charge.²⁰⁹

On Saturday night, after the tournament, the players and tournament volunteers gathered at the Heldman house on Timberwilde Drive for a spaghetti dinner. During the course of the evening, Billie Jean and Rosie gathered the other women into a bedroom for a meeting – without Gladys. Continuing with their idea to form a women's tour independent of the USLTA, they first needed to determine how much money would be required to make such a venture possible.

*I told everyone that if we were going to make a tour work, we had to figure out how much money we needed to survive. That meant we all had to admit how much money we made under the table, because if we had our own tour, we would be playing for prize money supplied by sponsors and gate receipts, not secret guarantees ... Everyone was honest about what she made ... we figured that a total purse of \$10,000 would be enough to support a tournament of sixteen women ... For tournaments with a thirty-two draw, \$18,000 would be the minimum. In every case we wanted to make sure that first-round losers earned enough to cover their expenses.*²¹⁰

-- Billie Jean King, 1988

*What happened at Gladys' house that night was the most interesting thing ... After the final, on Saturday night, we all met at Gladys' house, and Billie Jean and Rosie invited me in (to the meeting) to make the pitch to the women that they had asked us to make up. So I came in and presented ... We had tentative ideas for tournaments in Hawaii, San Francisco, Long Beach – all where we had people who had been to our camps, people that we knew in tennis. All the girls were there in Gladys' bedroom, and I made the proposal. I went out of the room. Billie Jean came back out to me and said, "We voted unanimously to hire you and Dennis." I said "Okay," and went back in and said what we would start doing, and then Julie went out to the kitchen, where her mother was.*²¹¹

--Larry King, 2012

Gladys became upset when Julie told her what had happened in the meeting. Julie then suggested that her mother go into the bedroom to make her own presentation to the women; unable or unwilling to make a pitch for herself, Gladys frantically urged Julie to go back into the meeting and persuade the players to change their minds.

*... she refused to go into the bedroom to lobby for herself. She said to me, "You go in there! I can't do it! I can't do it!"*²¹²

-- Julie Heldman, 2010

*When I heard that Gladys was unhappy, I said, "Gladys, you're running World Tennis. If you were willing to run the tour, we would run events for you." She said, "Well, you can't hire me, and I won't charge ten percent." And I said, "Gladys, are you willing to do it?" and she said, "Yes, and I don't think you should come in here and take over my project, Larry." I told Gladys if she was willing to do it, we would much rather help her than undertake the project.*²¹³

-- Larry King, 2012

While Larry was talking to Gladys, Julie made an impassioned speech to the other players about her mother's accomplishments throughout the years, hoping to convince them that Gladys was the only person who should run a women's circuit.

I described my mother's successes as a tournament promoter, including the exhibition to raise money for Art "Tappy" Larsen ... My mother put on an exhibition at the Seventh Regiment Armory on Park Avenue in New York, and it was a sellout. My mother also revived the men's National Indoors in the late 1950's after it had run on hard times. She invited top players, got them places to stay, arranged publicity with the press, and the event made money ... Perhaps her greatest success was at the U. S. Championships in 1962. Over the years, the tournament began to lose money. Fewer and fewer players were playing Forest Hills, because there was better money available at tournaments in Europe ... my mother devised a plan to revitalize the event ... she put together a group of friends to charter an airplane to bring players in from Europe ... and then she paid them all expense money. Again, she had the best players, and got great publicity ... My mother's deal with the USLTA was that if the event made money, she and her friends would be paid back, and that happened. The event was a roaring success,

*and it made money ... I told the other players in that side bedroom that my mother never had a failure, and that she was a fabulous promoter. And, fatefully, I said that Larry had failures ... Billie Jean and I never got along after that.*²¹⁴

-- Julie Heldman, 2010

*I went back in and I told the girls that Gladys was willing to do it, that we would very happily resign if they want to take another vote, because we could help Gladys ... she was in a much better position with sponsors than Dennis and I, and it had a lot better prospects for the women if Gladys was willing to run it.*²¹⁵

-- Larry King, 2012

The players decided that a vote was in order, and they took a short break to discuss their options. From a powder room connected to the side bedroom, Nancy Richey called her father in San Angelo and told him the players were about to make a decision between Gladys and Larry. The decision to vote had come up very suddenly, and Nancy wanted to make sure her preference for Gladys was the correct choice. George Richey told his daughter that she should unquestionably support Gladys, since everything she had ever done was first-rate. Nancy finished the telephone conversation and told Peaches Bartkowicz what her father said; Peaches agreed that she would choose Gladys as well.²¹⁶

*We got hired, unanimously, with Julie voting for us, and fired unanimously with us agreeing to work with Gladys. The whole point of the meeting was for me to present the plan for what was going to happen after this event because the girls were totally in turmoil and Gladys hadn't said that she was going to continue to do it. Once the girls hired Dennis and me to run it, then all of a sudden Gladys decided that she would be better situated to do it, and we totally agreed.*²¹⁷

-- Larry King, 2012

*The nine of us decided to renew our contracts with World Tennis through December, 1971, and we all thereby became another \$1 richer.*²¹⁸

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

*Houston felt like the start of something, and I remember being excited. I was just a little ol' Aussie... I wanted a better deal, of course, but I wouldn't put myself in the feminist category. I went a lot by what Judy did; it was good having her around. I think my parents were a little concerned, but I felt that with Billie Jean we had a strong leader. I think that's why a lot of us felt we had pretty good legs to stand on - she was a top player and she was powerful. And I remember how determined Gladys was to get the tour started. She was such a great believer, and she had the connections to make it happen.*²¹⁹

-- Kerry Melville Reid, 2010

While the Virginia Slims Invitational was winding down, the Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open was concluding a very successful week at the Los Angeles Tennis Club. Sharon Walsh defeated Lesley Hunt in the women's singles final on Saturday evening; since Sharon was an amateur, she could not accept the first prize of \$1,500 (but she did win an expense-paid trip to Wimbledon the following year). On a hot Sunday afternoon, Rod Laver beat John Newcombe to win the men's singles first prize of \$12,000 before a capacity crowd of 3,284 spectators. Only fifty of those spectators remained in the stands to watch the last match of the tournament, a women's doubles final in which Sharon and fellow amateur Janet Newberry defeated Ceci Martinez and Esme Emanuel. A month earlier at the U. S. Open, Ceci and Esme were the players who conducted the fan survey about the popularity of women's tennis and presented their findings at a meeting of the Lawn Tennis Writer's Association. During the women's doubles awards presentation, Ceci took the microphone and thanked the few remaining fans for staying to watch. In the fading twilight, she also pleaded with them to support women's tennis.²²⁰

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- ²⁰⁹ Hal Lundgren, “Casals Grabs Net Crown,” *Houston Chronicle* (Houston, Texas), September 27, 1970.
- ²¹⁰ Billie Jean King and Cynthia Starr, *We Have Come A Long Way: The History of Women’s Tennis* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1988), 127.
- ²¹¹ Larry King, interview with the author, May 3, 2012.
- ²¹² Julie Heldman, email correspondence to the author, January 3, 2010.
- ²¹³ Larry King, interview with the author, May 3, 2012.
- ²¹⁴ Julie Heldman, email correspondence to the author, January 3, 2010.
- ²¹⁵ Larry King, interview with the author, May 3, 2012.
- ²¹⁶ Nancy Richey, email correspondence to the author, November 25, 2009.
- ²¹⁷ Larry King, interview with the author, May 3, 2012.
- ²¹⁸ Billie Jean King and Kim Chapin, *Billie Jean* (New York: Pocket Books, 1975), 134.
- ²¹⁹ Kerry Melville Reid, quoted in Adam Lincoln, “Interview with Kerry Melville Reid,” *Women’s Tennis Association*, September 2010.
- ²²⁰ Vic Braden, “Pepsi Pacific Southwest Goes Bananas!” *Tennis*, November 1970, 18.

CHAPTER 4: THANK YOU, BILLIE JEAN; THANK YOU, ROSIE

Two days after wrapping up the Virginia Slims Invitational in Houston and getting elected to organize a women's professional tour, Gladys was back in New York City with plans to meet with potential tour sponsors. On Monday, September 28, she sent a letter to Judy Dalton and Kerry Melville – who were competing in the Pacific Coast International tournament in Berkeley, California – and asked them to encourage fellow Australian players Margaret Court and Karen Krantzcke to join the proposed circuit. She also wanted to know which Australian tournaments Judy and Kerry intended to play in their homeland in January, in order to avoid the scheduling of any conflicting events on the upcoming tour in the United States. In addition, Gladys relayed the news that Dorothy Chewing agreed to host the women professionals at her Westwood Racquet Club Invitational in Richmond, Virginia in early November. “Seeing Virginia Slims in ten minutes,” she indicated in a handwritten postscript. “Very hopeful also with two others,” she added, most likely a reference to giving sponsorship pitches to longstanding *World Tennis* advertisers. ¹

At the Philip Morris offices, located in a high-rise building at 100 Park Avenue, Gladys met with Virginia Slims brand manager Steve Korsen and assistant brand manager Bill Cutler, as well as Cliff Wilmont, Philip Morris' Director of Brand Management. Joe Cullman, the company CEO and Gladys' longtime friend and tennis partner, was still out of the country, on a safari in Africa. After Cutler summarized the events of the tournament in Houston, Gladys presented her ideas for the future.

I told everybody about the success of the event ... and I said the idea to go forward is to have a series of tournaments and we would provide the money for

that ... and we said, "Okay, can we step up and help them?" ... We did not talk to Joe about it; Cliff certainly would have been able to make that decision within Philip Morris USA without Joe ... but it was the brand that said, "Yes, we will do it." ²

-- Bill Cutler, 2012

On the following day, Korsen made an offer: Virginia Slims was willing to allocate \$40,000 of its marketing budget to sponsor a series of women's tennis tournaments in 1971, each with a prize money total of \$12,500. ³ It was a logical marketing strategy for Virginia Slims and Philip Morris; cigarette advertisements on television were to be banned effective January 2, 1971, and the company intended to maintain its presence through on-site advertising and title sponsorships at numerous sporting events.

For four of the proposed \$12,500 tournaments, Virginia Slims agreed to provide \$5,000 each; local sponsors or patrons would be responsible for the raising the remaining \$7,500. At two of the events – in Winchester, Massachusetts and Richmond, Virginia – Virginia Slims contributed the entire prize money amount, at \$12,500 and \$8,200, respectively. Virginia Slims maintained control over the disbursement of the funds; the money was not managed by Gladys Heldman or *World Tennis* magazine.

I thought it was very courageous of Philip Morris and Virginia Slims to commit that amount on the basis of one little tournament ... ⁴

-- Gladys Heldman, 1979

In addition to the cash sponsorship, Virginia Slims planned to invest a considerable amount of money for the development of event signage, program books, media guides, and other publicity tools, in addition to providing personnel who would travel on the tour.

*For every dollar Philip Morris gave us in prize money, they were matching it with two or three dollars to promote the fact that we were getting this money.*⁵

-- Billie Jean King, 1993

Since the tour would not start for another three months, the Virginia Slims management team wanted to stage one of the tournaments in the fall as a trial event, in order to fine-tune the tour's publicity and presentation strategies. Gladys suggested Dorothy Chewning's upcoming Westwood Racquet Club Invitational in Richmond, Virginia as a trial event. The Virginia Slims management liked the idea, since one of Philip Morris' cigarette factories was located in Richmond. Gladys immediately called Chewning, and the name of the tournament was changed to "Virginia Slims Invitational" and would feature ten of the women professionals and offer \$8,200 in prize money.⁶

The Virginia Slims management team wanted to hold a news conference at the Philip Morris headquarters as soon as possible, announcing the sponsorship agreement. The date of Wednesday, October 7 was chosen, a few days after the finals of the Pacific Coast Championships in Berkeley, where eight of the nine women professionals were competing. Billie Jean and Nancy were invited to travel to New York after the Berkeley tournament; along with Julie and Gladys, the players would announce that Virginia Slims was the main sponsor of the tour.

*I'll admit that I didn't like the idea of having Virginia Slims, a cigarette, as our first sponsor for women's pro tennis. I don't like the idea of smoking – smoking physically bothers me – and so it was very hard to accept the deal. But Larry, who is even more adamantly opposed to smoking than I, was the person who convinced me to go along. "Do you believe in the right of a legal product to advertise in free-enterprise society?" he asked me ... And Larry was correct.*⁷

-- Billie Jean King, 1982

The upcoming news conference gave Gladys only one week to start assembling the women's tour. She hoped to set up two dozen tournaments in 1971, each with a draw

of sixteen or more players. In order to attract sponsors, Gladys felt it was important to guarantee the appearance of players in the tournaments; as a result, she asked the nine women who signed the one-dollar contract in Houston to verbally extend their commitments for a full year. Gladys told the women they were not required to play every tournament on the proposed tour; however, they were restricted from playing in a different tournament or exhibition, or giving a clinic, during a week in which a tour event was scheduled.

*I thought instead of just eight players we could have sixteen. If more wanted to play, we would develop a format for qualifying. But mostly I wanted a commitment for the players so I could go to sponsors and guarantee that certain players would be available for their tournaments.*⁸

-- Gladys Heldman, 1979

An all-women's tennis tour had never been attempted before, and no one knew how the public would receive it. Six months earlier, *World Tennis* reported that the National Tennis League did not renew the contracts of Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals, and Françoise Durr because, according to tour owner Frank Podesta, the women could not draw sufficient crowds to make the venture profitable (Ann Jones, who was also on the co-ed tour, requested and was given an early termination to her National Tennis League contract in the fall of 1969).⁹ In his monthly column in *Tennis* magazine, Marty Riessen disparaged the women on the National Tennis League tour, reporting that "often, times were so bad that while (the) men played their own NTL tournaments, the women ended up vacationing because no one wanted them. When the women did play, they were usually first on the night's card and opened to a small gathering which only enlarged as the first men's match approached."¹⁰ For Gladys and the nine women who signed contracts with her, an all-women's tour was going to be a very brave experiment.

We knew we were gambling. Several of the men players said we were fools and would never succeed. We had no proof that we would be able to establish a series

of tournaments beyond the initial tournament in Houston. We faced humiliation if we failed. ¹¹

-- Billie Jean King, 1989

Gladys' first step was to contact the directors of women's tournaments that were already established. In the United States, there were only a handful of such events; in addition to Dorothy Chewning's tournament in Richmond, the USLTA National Women's Indoor Championships in Winchester, Massachusetts and the WLOD Invitational in Pompano Beach, Florida had an established presence. Gladys contacted tournament directors Tom Raleigh in Winchester and George Liddy in Florida, and convinced them to make their events part of the women's professional tour.

In addition to the tournaments in Winchester and Pompano Beach, Gladys scheduled a Virginia Slims Invitational at the Manker-Patten Tennis Center in Chattanooga, Tennessee. In 1967, the facility purchased a full-page advertisement in *World Tennis*, billing itself as the "world's most complete tennis center" due to its grass, clay, hard and indoor courts. ¹² Gladys contacted Alexander Guerry, Jr., who was the president of the Chattem Drug and Chemical Company and one of the most influential tennis figures in the South. The dates of February 4-7, 1971, were reserved for a Virginia Slims Invitational in Chattanooga, and the tournament would be played in the tennis center's two-court indoor facility.

I remember Alex telling me that he got the call from Gladys Heldman and that we had an opportunity to get a tournament giving us sixteen of the top players in the world ... Philip Morris would put up half of the money and we agreed immediately to sponsor it ... Alex said, "You're going to be the chairman of the tournament," and I told Alex that I don't know anything about it, I've never run a tournament. Alex said, "I'll tell you what to do." You don't say "No" to Alex, so that's how I became chairman of the tournament. ¹³

-- Steve Chazen, 2011

Next, Gladys contacted the organizers of the upcoming Embassy Indoor Championships, played at London's Wembley Arena in mid-November, and convinced them to increase the amount of money that was given to first-round losers in the women's singles draw. By raising the first-round loser's money from \$240 to \$300, Gladys promised the appearances of the women professionals. She also wanted to make sure that everyone cleared at least fifty dollars each week; any woman who failed to earn that amount would be reimbursed the difference from a tour slush fund that Gladys planned to establish.¹⁴

On October 7, 1970 – three days after the Pacific Coast International in Berkeley, California, in which Nancy Richey defeated Billie Jean King in the semifinals and Rosie Casals in the final – Gladys, Billie Jean, Nancy and Julie Heldman appeared at a news conference at the Philip Morris offices. There they made the announcement that Virginia Slims would be the primary tour sponsor and that the women would compete at five tournaments – in Richmond, Wembley, Chattanooga, Pompano Beach and Winchester – with additional cities and dates to be announced in the future.¹⁵

Billie Jean tried to find a conciliatory tone when asked about the USLTA. “We’re not telling the USLTA to get lost,” she said, “but they didn’t have a schedule for us from October through March.” Julie added that “the woman’s pro group wants every woman player who works hard ... to make some money. If you can’t even make enough money to cover expenses unless you make the quarterfinals, then it isn’t fair.” Like Billie Jean, Gladys downplayed the idea that the women were at odds with the USLTA. “I hope you will agree,” she offered, “that the women are not fighting the USLTA. They are just protecting themselves. You’ve heard of women’s lib. This is women’s lob.” Gladys also announced that Mary Ann Curtis, number three in the 1969 USLTA national rankings, and Denise Carter, the U.S. number eight, had made verbal commitments and were the latest additions to the women’s tour. Billie Jean indicated that the group also hoped to recruit the world’s top-ranked woman, Margaret Court of Australia.¹⁶

In his monthly column for *Tennis USA*, the official magazine of the USLTA, Alastair Martin took aim at the critics of the national association. Although he did not

mention names, Martin was obviously referring to Lamar Hunt, Gladys Heldman, Billie Jean King and Arthur Ashe in his article:

Many of the actions that have hurt USLTA in recent months have involved people other than USLTA personnel. There is a group of unrelated individuals – they might be called self-proclaimed independent tennis experts, or “Spites” for short – who have been the trouble-makers. These people are successful, either as tennis stars or in other fields of endeavor. They are sincerely interested in promoting and helping the game of tennis, especially in the areas of Junior activities and tournaments. But these Spites feel USLTA is unwilling or unable to help them with their personal tennis ideas, and they therefore work in competition with the organization. This, of course, upsets the existing committees that should be consulted and confuses the issues, adding to the problems involved. Almost every knowledgeable person connected with tennis affairs could list the names of these people.

Once in a while, these well-wishing but misguided people do try and work with USLTA. But, in doing so, they expect to be given full authority and when their absolute freedom is denied them they attack USLTA with renewed enthusiasm. These Spites profess to despise tennis political activity and yet they themselves often enter the political waters, most of the time sinking before they know it. Their actions are directly responsible for the death on the vine of some very good tennis ideas and plans.

Let us hope the future will see all those interested in helping this great game of tennis working with the organization, an organization by the way that has perhaps made greater strides progressively in recent years than any other sports group in the U.S.A. ¹⁷

Martin became disillusioned with Lamar Hunt's plans for a 20-city, \$1 million World Championship Tennis (WCT) men's tour. When Hunt announced the concept at the U. S. Open a few weeks earlier, Martin thought the idea was "terrific." Since that time, Hunt enticed three of the best American players – Arthur Ashe, Bob Lutz and Charles Pasarell – to become contract professionals and leave the jurisdiction of the USLTA (thus making them ineligible for Davis Cup). Hunt also decided that, shortly after his initial announcement, only those players who were contracted to WCT could compete in WCT tournaments – and many of these tournaments were scheduled during the same weeks as USLTA sanctioned events.

As Gladys continued to develop the women's tour, she hoped that 1969 Wimbledon champion Ann Jones and 1967 French champion Francoise Durr would join the troupe. A minimum of sixteen players were needed to commit to the tour, and by the middle of October only eleven women had signed up: the original nine players who were present in Houston, plus the latest additions of Mary Ann Curtis and Denise Carter. In London, *The Times* reported that "invitations to join the new group were sent to the world's top 20 players, but there has been no reply from the other nine."¹⁸ The "other nine" most likely included, in addition to Margaret Court, Ann Jones and Francoise Durr, the Australians Karen Krantzcke and Helen Gourlay, Great Britain's Virginia Wade, and Gail Chanfreau of France. The best remaining Americans who did not join the tour – Patti Hogan and Sharon Walsh – did not want to jeopardize their standing with the USLTA.

*Not everyone would join us in the beginning. As a matter of fact, at first it was a struggle to find sixteen women who would brave suspension to earn big bucks.*¹⁹
-- Julie Heldman, 1978

Although Ann Jones was an outspoken critic of the limited prize money available for women tennis players during the first few years of open tennis, she was initially ambivalent about a tournament circuit held exclusively for women. While not present for the women's protest meeting at the 1970 U. S. Open or the tournament in Houston, Ann

followed the developments in America closely from her home in Birmingham, England. During the first stop on the Dewar Cup circuit in Edinburgh, Scotland, in the middle of October, she told Rex Bellamy of *The Times* that “men’s and women’s tennis should never be split.”²⁰ Francoise Durr, also competing in Edinburgh, concurred, predicting that “women by themselves would die. On their own they would not draw as many spectators as men.”²¹ One month earlier, at the Lawn Tennis Writers meeting during the U. S. Open in New York, Francoise expressed her concerns that separate tours for men and women would result in the demise of mixed doubles competition, an event in which she was especially successful.²²

While Ann and Francoise preferred to have men and women competing in the same tournaments, they believed the women deserved a larger share of prize money. Ann did not argue that the women should receive prize money equivalent to what the men were receiving, but at least one-half to two-thirds. “The men’s field stretches further down and they have to work hard for much longer,” she said. “In small tournaments it’s a different kettle of fish; it all depends on the entry.”²³

Although he was not in charge of organizing the entire women’s circuit, Larry King continued with his plans to develop a number of women’s events on the West coast, which would be the opening tournaments on the 1971 tour. With his TennisAmerica business partner Dennis van der Meer, Larry worked on finding venues and sponsors for proposed tournaments in Honolulu, San Francisco, Long Beach, and Lodi, California.

Rosie Casals had a friend in tennis named Jack Dalton who was one of the dealers for British Motor Cars ... he had a British Motor Cars dealership in the East Bay ... and so when Rosie was explaining to him that we needed a sponsor for the San Francisco tournament, he suggested that we meet with Kjell Qvale ... so Jack told Kjell Qvale, and Kjell Qvale agreed to meet with Billie Jean and me, and we met in Kjell’s office ... and Billie Jean told him what she was trying to accomplish, we told him we were trying to get this tournament off the ground with sponsors set up for the women tennis players to have the opportunity to prove that they could draw crowds ... Kjell said that he would be willing to sponsor on one

condition, and that condition was that Jerry Diamond run the promotion, be in charge of the event, and be in charge of the publicity and advertising. I didn't know Jerry Diamond from a hole in the wall at this point. ²⁴

-- Larry King, 2012

Jerry Diamond worked for the Hearst Corporation, selling classified advertising for the *San Francisco Chronicle* newspaper. He also followed auto racing, wrote a column about it in the *Chronicle*, and came to the company's attention as a public relations person. The Hearst Corporation sponsored a USA vs. USSR track meet in 1962, and several international boxing events, for which Diamond was the public relations representative. Qvale hired Diamond to run the Import Auto Show in the 1960s, and since then had much faith in his ability to promote and publicize events. ²⁵

So, of course we said yes, and we went merrily on, thinking that we had a sponsor for the \$15,000 event, until the first time we met Jerry Diamond ... Jerry Diamond hated the idea, he hated the concept, all his friends told him it couldn't work ... Jerry talked to his buddies in Los Angeles and they told him men's tennis was bad and women's tennis was worse, and to stay as far away from that as possible ... so he tried to talk Kjell out of it, but Kjell had made a commitment to Billie Jean and me at the same time ... Kjell was committed to doing it, so against all of Jerry's best instincts, he ended up doing this for Kjell ... Jerry hated being associated with a loser, and he definitely thought women's tennis was a loser from his understanding of sports. ²⁶

-- Larry King, 2012

There was no way you could convince me that watching women's tennis would be a business success. Who the hell would come? ²⁷

-- Jerry Diamond, 1982

Larry and Billie Jean lined up another tournament – a Virginia Slims Invitational – when they telephoned Joyce Turley in Oklahoma City. Joyce met the Kings when she attended a tennis clinic given by Billie Jean in Hawaii in December 1969, and they quickly became friends. In the summer of 1970, Joyce invited Larry and Dennis van der Meer to Oklahoma City to give a series of tennis clinics. Larry and Dennis stayed in the Turley's guest house, and they conceived the TennisAmerica corporation name one evening while sitting in Joyce's dining room. ²⁸

I was standing in my kitchen in Oklahoma City and Larry, Billie Jean and Dennis called me and they said, "Joyce, we're putting together a tour of twelve cities ... how about you doing Oklahoma City?" I said "Billie Jean, come on! I was in your clinic last year. I don't know a bat from a racquet!" Billie Jean said, "That's not the point. We need someone who is very visible," and they knew that I knew all the oil people and so on ... so I said "Yes." ²⁹

-- Joyce Turley, 2012

In mid-October, Gladys sent a telegram to the British Lawn Tennis Association, officially entering Billie Jean King, Nancy Richey, Rosie Casals, Peaches Bartkowicz, Mary Ann Curtis, Denise Carter, Valerie Ziegenfuss and Kristy Pigeon into the Embassy Open in London, to be played at Wembley Arena in mid-November. Since the Wembley event was an "open-to-all" tournament, any category of player was eligible to participate – amateurs, registered players/independent professionals, and contract professionals. However, the British association was unclear about the official categorization of the women players. If they were contract professionals, there would be no problem. If they were considered amateurs or registered players/independent professionals, the British association needed to verify with the USLTA that the women were in good standing with their national association and were not under suspension. ³⁰

Not wanting to deal with USLTA President Alastair Martin or USLTA Schedule and Sanction Chairman Stan Malless, Gladys reached out to Bob Colwell, a Seattle insurance executive who was the USLTA Vice President and in line to become president

of the association at the beginning of 1971. Hoping to find a sympathetic ally in Colwell, Gladys telephoned him on October 20 and explained that she was upset about the way the women players had been treated in 1970, and that she was in the process of arranging a number of women's prize money tournaments for early 1971. She also inquired about the possibility of getting USLTA and ILTF approval to stage the tournaments as "open-to-all," which would allow amateurs and registered players/independent professionals to compete against the *World Tennis* contract professionals without endangering their eligibility.³¹

During the course of the telephone conversation, Gladys got the impression that Colwell did not consider the women to be contract professionals. Such a concession by the USLTA would make the women players eligible for national rankings and eligible to play international team competitions, would eliminate the need to request "open-to-all" status from the ILTF for the tournaments, and would make the recruitment of other women players for the circuit much easier; some players were understandably fearful of playing on a tour that included contract professionals.³²

As soon as she finished her conversation with Colwell, Gladys sent out a flurry of telegrams and letters to each of the upcoming circuit's tournament directors and all of the *World Tennis* players. "We won!," she wrote. "We have our tournaments, they can be sanctioned and you are now a "Contract Independent Pro" ("Contract Registered Player"?)." ³³ Gladys also sent a cable to Karen Krantzcke, a top Australian player who wanted to join the upcoming women's tour but was apprehensive about the effects it might have on her player status.³⁴

NEW USLTA PRESIDENT-ELECT BOB COLWELL DOES NOT CONSIDER
OUR GALS CONTRACT PROS. INSTEAD I AM A TOURNAMENT
ARRANGER AND YOU ARE A CONTRACT INDEPENDENT PRO. YOU
CAN ANNOUNCE YOU ARE PLAYING FOR GROUP NOW IF YOU WISH.
LUV GLADYS

The next day, a relieved Gladys sent a letter to Colwell, along with the latest edition of *World Tennis* that included her editorial of the events in Houston. Sensing that she could develop a working relationship with the incoming USLTA president, Gladys recapped the events in Houston and offered some suggestions for future association policies in her correspondence.

Dear Bob:

I'm so glad I called you on the phone yesterday to talk about the situation with regard to the women. We were all so angry when Jack Kramer "changed his mind" after saying would not oppose a sanction for Houston, and we were even angrier when Stan Malless and Alastair Martin sided with Kramer. What was even worse was that Kramer decided to oppose the tournament after some of the girls had arrived in Houston and after the bleachers had been rented and many of the tickets sold. Not one girl who entered Houston had entered the Pacific Southwest, and when we had to get a last-minute replacement for Margaret Court who had hurt her ankle, I asked Kristy Pigeon, who had not entered the Pacific Southwest ...

Obviously the women are not Contract Pros in any sense of the word. They have signed with me to play a series of tournaments that do not compete with any other sanctioned events, just as they signed up with John Dewar in contract form to play the Dewar Cup Circuit. I am not taking expenses or commission or a salary but am simply trying to get up something for the women that should have been set up a long time ago. Therefore, since Kramer now admits that he changed his mind and since Stan Malless and Alastair Martin made a terrible mistake in refusing to grant the sanction because of Kramer's objection, the girls should not be penalized.

I do not believe the USTLA should give an Open sanction to any tournament that does not conform to the minimum prize money standards. Jack Kramer offered a ratio of 12 to 1 for men and women, and obviously the top women in the world would not compete in such an event. Minimum prize money

standards should be set for the girls, and they should be \$5,000 for eight women, \$10,000 for 16 women and \$18,000 for 32 women. If you allow an Open sanction for the Pacific Coast International at the ratio that Barry MacKay first offered - \$25,000 to the men and \$2,000 to the entire field of women – you literally force them to break away and establish their own prize money events. Barry eventually raised the prize money to \$11,000 and was supposed to place 12 women in a 16 draw, with 20 others qualifying for the last four places. If the best 16 players in the world had gone to California to play for only \$2,000, only four would have received prize money and the other 12 would have had to pay all their own travel! The women have been treated shamefully in the past, with no prize money tournaments for them from October through March, although every week there has been a prize money tournament for the men. I can't tell you how important it is to establish minimum prize money standards for the women. They are as much pros as are the men.

I am sure the girls would be happy to play Federation and Wightman Cup “for free,” and of course they will support all tournaments that have minimum prize money standards. ³⁵

Best regards.

Sincerely,

Gladys M. Heldman

Colwell received the letter on October 27 was completely perplexed by it. He could not understand how Gladys could have possibly believed that the *World Tennis* players were no longer considered to be contract professionals.

Dear Gladys:

Thank you for air mailing me the November issue of *World Tennis*, so I could get your editorial at an early date. You did this as a result of your call telling me that you were plenty upset about the way the women tennis players had

been treated by the tournaments this year and that you were very busy arranging about six or seven weeks of women's tournaments for the early part of 1971. The main purpose of your call was to ask me if I thought it would be possible to get USLTA sanctions for Open-to-All Tournaments for women who were world contract tennis pros. That is what I thought your phone call meant. However, I have today received your October 21st letter, in which you state the women are not contract pros in any sense of the word. In a number of different places in your own magazine, the women were referred to as contract pros and I was under the impression that you told me that at least twelve girls had signed up with you at the time of our phone conversation last week.

This is all very confusing, and I am sure that you understand players cannot switch back and forth from one day to the next day to being contract pros and to being players. The Houston event is an unfortunate thing of the past and I personally feel it was handled very poorly and I am sorry that it ever happened. I do feel that Stan Malless and Bob Malaga did the right thing under the circumstances and I would have done the same thing if I had been in his position.

I am sure that you realize that one of the basic things involved in this Houston situation, and in the proposed tournaments for 1971 is that unless one body controls the sanctioning of tournaments there would be a real mess and, in short, chaos. I would result in the bidding for players and dates and it would cause much more confusion than what it brought about by having to have the sanctions as required by the USLTA and the ILTF at the present time. In all fairness, you have to realize that the tournament managers have to be protected once they are given a sanctioned date. It is not fair to have it possible for lots of competition from various events. The only way this can be controlled is to have rules everyone abides by. As I stated in my phone conversation, the USLTA is most anxious to have as many tournaments as possible for the women contract pros, pros and amateurs. We are doing our level best to have a complete schedule for 1971. We will, however, protect those who have sanctioned tournaments and

we will protect the players who abide by the rules of their national associations. Some of the problems that developed in 1970 we hope to have ironed out in 1971.

What I said about the United States Lawn Tennis Association being anxious to have sanctioned tournaments for the women still stands. You stated that your group of players wanted to play in sanctioned tournaments, but they did not want to have events that were not sanctioned or were in conflict with other sanctioned events, but they would be willing to pay sanction fees and that if there were contract pro events, they would be open to players. If your players abide by those conditions, I believe that in the future we can work out sanctions that would include your players. However, this is a complicated problem, as you well know, and has to be funneled through our sanction and scheduling committee. As you know, this is Stan Malless' problem, so therefore I am enclosing your letter to him and trust that, for the good of the game, the two of you can work together.

You had said that you would send sanctions directly to me. I appreciate your confidence, but must remind you that the sanctions eventually have to go and be handled by the Schedule and Sanctioning Committee, therefore, I recommend that they all be sent directly to the chairman, but with a copy of the covering letter to me, so that I will know what is going on. Mr. Malless had done a good job for us and I think you will find him very fair.

Here's to hoping that 1971 will be the best tournament year for women that we have ever had.³⁶

Sincerely yours,

R. B. Colwell

While Gladys was arranging the women's circuit for 1971 and corresponding with USLTA officials, Billie Jean and Rosie pursued the idea of starting a women's professional tennis corporation, something that Larry had suggested earlier in the year. The purpose of the proposed corporation was twofold: to provide a safety net in the event that Gladys decided to relinquish her role as tour promoter, and to provide the women

professionals with more financial stability, even after they retired from competitive play. In late October, Rosie drafted a letter that was sent to Nancy Richey, Peaches Bartkowicz, Patti Hogan, Judy Dalton, Kerry Melville, Valerie Ziegenfuss, and Kristy Pigeon. The letter was not sent to Gladys or Julie Heldman.

Dear Judy:

I am sure that Gladys has been keeping you posted on all that has been happening in regards to the women. The USLTA reinstating us again, and allowing us to receive a ranking. They are also letting us to be available for Federation Cup and Wightman Cup. I don't think they had any alternative but to stick by the girls.

My main purpose in writing you, is to let you know what is becoming of our corporation. As I understand it, all the girls involved in the group, with the exception of Julie Heldman, expressed the desire to pursue the idea of having a corporation. I told Larry King to begin the necessary actions involved with the start of a corporation. This, he has done, and it will take from three to six weeks to become established. We need at least \$500.00 to \$1,000.00 in the "piggy" to make it official. When we are all together, we will determine how to handle this part of it.

If I am not mistaken, the reason for the girls setting up a corporation for the girls was for the sole purpose of remaining united in some way. Having a corporation, could also benefit us financially. It would be a business venture, which we could use to explore names through exhibitions, clinics, and having our girls available to be guest instructors at numerous Tennis Camps. We would also be able use the corporation to draw up Retirement plans for each of the girls, which will help you in paying less Income Tax. It will also secure you certain amount of money to be withdrawn when you reach a certain age, and are no longer able to play competitively.

Second of all, in the case that Gladys Heldman decides she no longer thinks it is necessary to remain acting on our behalf as organizer and promoter, the girls must have something to fall back on. If this were to take place, the girls without a corporation would be stranded. We must find a way to secure our interest in this matter and in the future of Women's Tennis. We would not like to return under the auspices of our respective L.T.A. Everything that Gladys and the girls have worked for, would then be lost.

We are not in any way going against Gladys. All we want to do is to secure our future and progress, our livelihood of being able to earn a living. Through our efforts we can turn these dreams into reality, we can prosper and we shall.³⁷

Love,
Rosie and Billie

In early November, Gladys visited the Westwood Racquet Club in Richmond, Virginia, to promote the upcoming Virginia Slims Invitational and meet with tournament organizer Dorothy Chewning. Speaking with Robert Merritt of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Gladys detailed her plans for the 1971 tour. "We won't really get things going until the beginning of the year. The prize money for January and February is over \$100,000."³⁸ Eleven tournaments were already scheduled, with the first four events – in Honolulu, San Francisco, Lodi and Long Beach – promoted by Larry and Dennis. The next three events were Virginia Slims Invitationals that offered \$12,500 in prize money; the first of these was planned to be played at Towson University in the Baltimore area, followed by Oklahoma City and Chattanooga. At the Philadelphia Indoor Open, the women professionals would share the stage with the men professionals from Lamar Hunt's World Championship Tennis (WCT) circuit. After Philadelphia, the tour would travel to George Liddy's clay-court event in Florida, and then another Virginia Slims sponsored event in Winchester, Massachusetts, traditionally called the National Women's Indoor Championships.

The field in Richmond included Darlene Hard and Stephanie DeFina Johnson, the latest additions to Gladys' roster of players. Darlene was the winner of twenty Grand Slam singles and doubles titles in the late 1950s and early 1960s. She gave up amateur tennis in 1963 to teach tennis in Southern California, and she returned to competitive tennis as a professional in 1969. Her comeback was highlighted by a last-minute partnership with Francoise Durr to win the 1969 U. S. Open women's doubles championship. Stephanie was a finalist in the 1966 USLTA National Clay Court Championships and a member of the 1968 Wightman Cup team, and she was ranked in the USLTA women's national top ten rankings on three occasions. One of the best wins of her career came during the Richmond tournament in 1969, when she defeated Nancy Richey in the semifinals.

Gladys told Merritt she hoped to persuade Margaret Court, the world's number one women's player, to play on the tour. "Barry Court said he would be happy to join," Gladys joked about Margaret's husband, "but if Margaret would rather not make the money – and she could make \$30,000 in January and February alone – it's her decision. We aren't trying to pressure anyone and we aren't blackballing anyone."³⁹

The Virginia Slims Invitational held in Richmond featured ten of the thirteen women professionals. The three absentees were Kerry Melville and Judy Dalton, who were at home in Australia, and Julie Heldman, who was still recovering from an elbow injury.

On Monday, November 2 – three days before the tournament began – Darlene Hard and Denise Carter arrived in Richmond in order to get some practice time on the indoor clay courts. Denise also spoke with Robert Merritt of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, and praised the work that Gladys was doing, saying she was "just amazing. She's just been running full force since Houston, and she keeps all of us fully informed as to what's happening. Almost every day we get a letter. It's just amazing what she's doing."⁴⁰

The following day, after a practice session with Rosie Casals, Billie Jean King sat down with Merritt and offered plenty of opinions covering a wide range of topics. "I want to be known as a pro," she said, "but when I first started saying it, the USLTA said

‘quiet down young lady or you’ll be suspended.’ ... I don’t want anything to do with them. They have just realized that they don’t have any power over anything anymore. They can’t tell me, or anybody else, what to do.”⁴¹

Expressing her displeasure with the shamateurism system, when the best-known amateur players were given tournament appearance fees under-the-table, Billie Jean was glad that making money playing tennis was finally out in the open. “For the past five or six years, I felt that we were being misrepresented,” she said, referring to her amateur status before signing a professional contract in 1968. “I make my living playing tennis and I love it. I’ve been a pro all along and I’m proud of it ... It’s much easier for the players. I can ask how much purse a tournament has and when she says \$8200, she can ask if I want to come.”⁴²

Billie Jean told Merritt that the women’s professional tour would attract more women and girls to the game. “With prize money,” she predicted, “the young people will realize, at least I hope, that tennis can be a career, or, if not a career, at least it can help get a player through college.” The amount of money that can be made on the tour, Billie Jean suggested, would create a new respect for women’s tennis. “That’s what’s making golf. That one putt on the 18th hole for fifty grand and everybody sits on the edge of their seat. Everybody can identify with the dollar bill. The fans can get involved. ‘That guy makes more money in a day than I make in a year,’ they say, but they like it.”⁴³

To attract more spectators to the game, Billie Jean believed that spectators at tennis matches should be allowed to express themselves. “Why should they pay money,” she asked, “to come out and sit on their hands? They want to emote. If they want to cuss and rave, it’s great. They are providing me with a living and I want them to enjoy it. But if I want to emote, they better let me, too. But if they boo me, that’s great, too, because they’re involved. They want their beer and hot dogs and want to yell ‘kill them’ and ‘rah rah.’” Another remnant of the amateur days, which often annoyed Billie Jean, was the practice of using club members as umpires and linespersons. “We have to become more professional. We have to be together,” she insisted. “The players are going to have to get someone to promote tournaments and eventually we will have professional umpires. The baseball umpires get a phenomenal amount, but in tennis they are volunteers and

sometimes you get a wishy-washy official. I'll take full advantage of them, if I think I can get away with it. But if one says, 'now, Mrs. King, continue ... play,' I listen." ⁴⁴ Ten months later, Billie Jean's impatience with volunteer linespersons would be the focal point of the year's most controversial match.

By Wednesday, November 4, most of the players had arrived in Richmond, with the exception of number-four seed Peaches Bartkowicz, a crowd favorite who won the tournament in 1968 and 1969, when it was called the Westwood Racquet Club Invitational. Reached at her parents' home in Hamtramck, Michigan on Wednesday evening, Peaches told Dorothy Chewing she was not feeling well and was unable to play. "I was about to ready to cry when Peaches told me that she couldn't be here," Chewing explained to Merritt. "She had waited until the last minute hoping that she would feel better ... I called Billie Jean and she gave me Ceci Martinez' telephone number." ⁴⁵ Ceci, along with Esme Emanuel, conducted the fan survey at the 1970 U. S. Open to gauge interest in women's tennis; she was also an accomplished player, reaching the Wimbledon quarterfinals earlier in the year with a win over Virginia Wade. She was thrilled at the opportunity to play in Richmond, telling Chewing she would take the next plane from San Francisco.

In front of a full house of 1300 spectators on Thursday evening, two preliminary singles matches were played, with winners advancing to Friday's quarterfinals. Darlene Hard and Denise Carter opened the tournament at 7:00 pm. Despite serving thirteen double-faults, a 0-3 deficit in the second set, and an attack of muscle cramps in the final game, the 35-year-old Darlene prevailed over her 20-year-old opponent, 7-6 7-5. "When you get to be my age," she conceded, "there's very little you can use but experience." ⁴⁶ In the second singles match of the evening, Valerie Ziegenfuss attacked relentlessly and used her overhead – one of the best in the women's game – to subdue Stephanie DeFina Johnson, 6-0 6-4. Finally, in a preliminary doubles match to qualify for the semifinals, Stephanie and Nancy Richey defeated Denise Carter and Kristy Pigeon, winning six games in a row after falling behind 0-3 in the third set. ⁴⁷

The following morning, in the Friday, November 6 edition of the *New York Times*, Neil Amdur broke the news – supposedly from a confidential source, according to

World Tennis – that USLTA officials wanted to change the status of their tournaments from “Open-to-All” to “Open.” This would bar contract players such as Rod Laver and Arthur Ashe from competing in the U. S. Open and other USLTA tournaments, since open tournaments were limited only to amateurs and registered players/independent professionals; in the United States, their only option would be to play in contract professional events, and only Lamar Hunt was holding those. The USLTA officials also called for any American amateur or registered player/independent professional who played in a contract professional event to automatically be considered a contract professional. In addition, it was proposed that contract professionals be restricted from USLTA national rankings, and all USLTA member clubs would be restricted from staging contract professional events.⁴⁸

The recommendations were an attempt by the USLTA to regain some of the control it had lost in recent months. Two months earlier, when Lamar Hunt announced the 20-city, World Championship Tennis (WCT) men’s tour, USLTA president Alastair Martin thought the concept was “terrific” and would be helpful in the growth of men’s tennis. The coordination of the \$1 million WCT tour and the ILTF Grand Prix (which included numerous USLTA prize money tournaments) would provide more opportunities for all of the world’s best male players – amateurs, registered players, and contract professionals. Martin’s enthusiasm soon dissolved, as three of the highest-ranked American men – Arthur Ashe, Charles Pasarell and Bob Lutz – signed contracts with WCT and removed themselves from USLTA jurisdiction. In the following weeks, the ILTF and USLTA realized that Hunt was developing the WCT tour exclusively for players who signed contracts with him; it would not be open to any other players.

From Hunt’s perspective, the decision to develop an autonomous circuit was the result of ILTF ineffectiveness. “WCT reluctantly concluded,” observed Rex Bellamy of the *London Times*, “that it was impossible to agree with an organization who could not agree among themselves and took months to reach a decision.”⁴⁹ Hunt’s goal was to secure enough of the world’s best men players to have a 32-player draw at each WCT tournament, many of which were in conflict with ILTF Grand Prix events. For any ILTF Grand Prix tournaments held during free weeks on the WCT tour – such as Wimbledon,

the U. S. Open and the French Open – Hunt wanted a percentage of the gate receipts in return for the participation of his contract professionals. For instance, he asked the British Lawn Tennis Association for 13 ½ % of the gate from the following year’s Wimbledon. ⁵⁰

When contacted by Amdur, USLTA Executive Director Bob Malaga admitted he saw no reason why the proposal to restrict contract professionals would not be passed, and allowed “we have no choice but to go our own way.” ⁵¹ The USLTA Administrative Committee, comprised of the presidents of the USLTA’s seventeen sectional associations, planned to vote on the proposal at a meeting in Cleveland on November 12. If the proposal was approved, the USLTA planned to ask other national associations to follow its lead and change their tournaments, including Wimbledon and the French Open, from “open-to-all” to “open.” Not invited to attend the meeting in Cleveland was Julie Heldman, the Players’ Representative on the Executive Committee, who was also a *World Tennis* contract professional. ⁵² Bud Collins of the *Boston Globe* felt the USLTA proposal was “suicidal” and would force clubs to leave the USLTA in order to stage tournaments featuring the world’s best players. ⁵³ Likewise, Gladys’ subsequent editorial in *World Tennis*, entitled “Sudden Death, Self Inflicted,” ridiculed the ideas and sarcastically predicted what would happen to tennis in the United States if the proposal was adopted. ⁵⁴

While the USLTA was preparing to go to war with Lamar Hunt and WCT, the British Lawn Tennis Association was developing a different approach to the crisis. The LTA wanted to ensure the world’s best men players participated at Wimbledon in 1971, and in that regard it desperately wanted to broker a peace settlement with WCT that was mutually beneficial. Gerald Williams, a sports journalist who was hired by the LTA to handle its public relations, asked dress designer Ted Tinling to arrange a series of meetings between LTA officials, WCT Executive Director Mike Davies, and WCT European Director John McDonald.

... it was Williams who first made a suggestion that I found almost comic. 'The establishment all know you and you are the one man who can talk sense to Davies. Do you think you could get the two sides to sit down together?' Williams asked me.⁵⁵

--Ted Tinling, 1979

A well-respected tennis historian who cared deeply about the game, Tinling agreed to mediate the meetings. They were scheduled to be held for two days at the LTA office in London, beginning on Thursday, November 12. Ironically, while the LTA was hoping to arrive at a peaceful solution to the WCT dilemma, the USLTA would be meeting on the very same day in Cleveland and deliberating a much more aggressive approach. Gladys was following the events closely; any decisions made about the WCT contract players would have a direct impact on her *World Tennis* players, who were also considered contract professionals.

At the Virginia Slims Invitational in Richmond, all four quarterfinal singles matches were contested on the evening of Friday, November 13. Rosie Casals and Kristy Pigeon opened the program at 5:00 pm in front of another near-capacity crowd. After splitting the first two games, Rosie got the first service break of the match when she lunged for a hard return and placed a backhand passing shot inches from the baseline. When Kristy double-faulted to fall behind 1-3 – after leading 40—love – the match was all but over. "It's one of those things that's not obvious to the public," Rosie said later, "but I could sense it kind of broke her when I came back like that."⁵⁶ In less than an hour, Rosie easily won the match 6-1 6-1.

Next on court, Mary Ann Curtis defeated Ceci Martinez, the last minute replacement for Peaches Bartkowicz, and then Billie Jean King lost only three games to Valerie Ziegenfuss. In the final match of the evening, Nancy Richey played Darlene Hard, and the significance of the encounter may have been lost on the spectators. Nancy and Darlene had not played each other since 1961, when Darlene was the reigning U. S. national champion and Nancy was working her way up the rankings. This was also a battle between two champions of the world's greatest clay court tournament; Darlene

won the French Championships in 1960, and Nancy won the title in 1968 when it was the first major championship to be held as an open. Nancy breezed through the first set 6-1, but Darlene offered more resistance in the second set, winning four games.⁵⁷

The tournament resumed at 10:00 am on Saturday morning. In the first semifinal, Billie Jean faced Mary Ann Curtis, the two-time national indoor champion who recently became a contract professional for Gladys and the women's tour. Despite playing on a slow indoor clay court, Billie Jean used a serve-and-volley strategy to win the opening game without losing a point. Mary Ann lost her serve in the second game, but broke back in the third game with a perfect lob and a series of strong forehands. Billie Jean won the next two games before Mary Ann finally held her service for the first time in the match. Serving at 4-2, Billie Jean held serve and broke serve once more to win the first set 6-2.

Billie Jean seemed to lose her timing in the second set, and a series of groundstroke winners by Mary Ann gave her a commanding 5-1 lead. Closing the gap slightly by winning the next two games, Billie Jean had a chance to get within striking distance when she served at 3-5. Mary Ann, however, kept her composure and broke Billie Jean to close out the set 6-3. "I don't know really what happened in that second set. Mary Ann is the type of player who doesn't let you get in the groove." The third set opened with five consecutive service breaks; Billie Jean finally held to pull ahead 4-2, and then she won two more games to take the set 6-2 and win the match. "My backhand wasn't as steady as I'd like it to be," Billie Jean analyzed after the match, "but everything is relative to your opponent."⁵⁸

The other semifinal was the eighth career meeting between Rosie Casals and Nancy Richey. Four months earlier, in the finals of the Western Championships in Cincinnati, Rosie earned her first clay court win against Nancy, a surprising 6-3 6-3 result. In Richmond, Nancy was determined to start strongly and not let Rosie pull ahead. The first six games of the matches were hotly contested. Nancy held serve to open the match, and then broke Rosie for a 2-0 lead. Rosie then won three games in a row, and the sixth game became the turning point of the match. With Rosie serving, the game went to deuce twelve times before Nancy got the critical break with a forehand

winner, a backhand passing shot and a winning service return. At 3-3, Rosie began to lose her patience and became too aggressive. Nancy ran out the final three games of the first set, and then closed out the second set 6-2 to finish the match.⁵⁹

A standing-room-only crowd watched Sunday's singles final between Billie Jean and Nancy. Their rivalry started in 1959, when Nancy beat Billie Jean in the quarterfinals of the National Junior Girls Championships. Going into the Richmond final, they had played thirteen matches throughout the years, and Nancy had won nine times. Billie Jean started nervously, and Nancy took an early 2-1 lead. Billie Jean leveled at 2-2, but in the following game she committed two forehand errors to fall behind again. "Whenever I play Nancy, I have to throw out all my instincts," Billie Jean said later. "I can't do anything instinctively, because she's always there. I can't give her anything. I can't tip her off. I felt like I was giving her some cheap games, like that fifth one." At that point, Billie Jean collected herself and reeled off four straight games to claim the first set, 6-3. "I was trying to hit high, looping shots at her to keep her deep, and then come to the net and put it away," explained Billie Jean. "You have a natural tendency to hit her hard shots harder, like I started out doing, and it got me in trouble because I was hitting a lot of shots long."⁶⁰

The second set followed a similar pattern; Nancy got off to an early 2-0 lead, and then Billie Jean won six of the next seven games to win the match by varying the pace of her shots, choosing the right time to attack the net, and making effective use of the drop shot. It was Billie Jean's first clay-court win against Nancy. "I got the lead and then she started moving me around," a disappointed Nancy said afterward. "She'd get me going one way, then come back to the other, and there was no way I could get back. What it amounted to, really, was that she played her own game, and didn't let me play mine. It was just one of those matches."⁶¹

After winning \$2,400 for the singles final and additional \$400 for taking the doubles with Rosie, Billie Jean was eager to discuss tennis politics with Robert Merritt of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. "They know they've lost," she said, referring to the USLTA proposal to bar contract professionals from its tournaments. "I just hope they'll think about a major junior development program. That's what we need. Maybe they

could be an amateur association and develop the young players. I've been really down on the USLTA for a long time. It's the same old story. The officials don't understand the players and the players don't understand the officials.”⁶²

While the Virginia Slims Invitational was being played in Richmond, a political battle over the USLTA's proposal to bar contract professionals was being contested. Earlier in the week, incoming USLTA president Bob Colwell had earlier given an interview to a United Press International reporter and explained his reasons for the proposal. “Without informing us, Mr. Hunt has announced that his contract players will establish and schedule their own events,” Colwell said. “Many will be in direct conflict with established USLTA tournaments. This would deal a severe blow to amateur tennis. The Lamar Hunt plan would greatly hamper our junior development and overall development of tennis for everyone ... They have said they would not pay the normal sanction fee to our association. This deprives the USLTA income it needs to continue its efforts to foster the sport of boys and girls and young competitors who are the lifeblood of the game.”⁶³ Colwell also said he was unhappy that WCT promoters planned to stage some of its tournaments at USLTA member clubs.

On Thursday, November 12, the USLTA Executive Committee met at the Somerset Inn in Cleveland, Ohio. Before the meeting was called to order, Derek Penman, the chairman of the British Lawn Tennis Association, telephoned from London and urged the committee to delay making a decision about barring contract professionals from USLTA tournaments.⁶⁴ The London meetings between LTA officials, WCT Executive Director Mike Davies and WCT European Director John McDonald were underway, and the LTA wanted to invite officials from the USLTA and the French Tennis Federation to join them as soon as possible. Representatives from the Lawn Tennis Association of Australia were not necessary, since the LTAA had already negotiated with WCT to have its players compete at the Australian Open.

The USLTA meeting in Cleveland covered a wide range of topics. There were numerous proposals to revise the organization's constitution, by-laws and standing orders. The executive committee was informed that three of the tournaments on the USLTA men's indoor circuit were scheduled to be televised live on the PBS Eastern

Educational Network, and two of the tournaments were to be televised nationwide. To help underwrite the production and broadcast costs, the committee voted to give \$20,000 to the project. Stan Malless, chairman of the Scheduling and Sanction Committee, proposed a revision of the sanction fees required from organizers who wanted to stage prize money tournaments. Malless was also commended for the way he handled the Houston Racquet Club's request to hold a sanctioned women's prize money tournament during the same week as the Pacific Southwest Open. Alastair Martin added that he and all the other USLTA officers stood behind the final decision to deny a sanction.⁶⁵

The major part of the meeting was spent discussing the proposal to bar contract professionals; a motion was made and unanimously passed to exclude them from the 1970 USLTA national rankings. As requested by Derek Penman, a decision about barring contract professionals from USLTA tournaments was delayed. "There was a great deal of sentiment for barring the pros immediately," USLTA Executive Director Bob Malaga told Neil Amdur of the *New York Times*. "But we've got nothing to lose by waiting. We're still hoping to work something out." The USLTA Executive Committee delegated Robert Colwell to meet with Mike Davies, John McDonald and officials from the LTA and French Tennis Federation on the following Monday. Joining Colwell on the trip to London would be Billy Talbert, tournament chairman of the U. S. Open, and Charles Tucker, president of the West Side Tennis Club. USLTA president Alastair Martin was glad the proposal to bar contract professionals was temporarily shelved. "I'm hopeful that the pros would agree to possibly open some of their events to 16 of our players for a 48-player draw," Martin told Neil Amdur. "Then perhaps we could work out some type of reciprocal agreement for the pros to participate in our opens. That would seem to be fair, don't you agree?"⁶⁶ Gladys was following the developments closely. "The decision was reached (by the USLTA) to delay any decision," she reported in *World Tennis*, "which was as good a decision as anyone could expect."⁶⁷

The second day of meetings in London concluded on Friday, November 13, and the attendees proposed that the LTA's Derek Hardwick should negotiate with WCT on behalf of the ILTF. Hardwick, a former LTA chairman and current chairman of the ILTF Action Committee, was responsible for inducing the ILTF to permit open tournaments in

1968. Some officials in the ILTF found the thought of negotiating with Lamar Hunt and Mike Davies as distasteful. “We agree with the basic sentiments,” said ILTF president Benjamin Barnett of Australia, “but we are not dictators, nor will we be dictated to. The ILTF has responsibility to lawn tennis all over the world and we are not going to sell our birthright to a millionaire in America.” LTA Chairman Derek Penman felt the ILTF had no other options. “It is our joint view,” Penman said, “that they (ILTF) must accept this proposal or be resigned to the fact that each nation is entitled to make its own arrangements.”⁶⁸

When the London meetings resumed on Monday, the representatives from the USLTA and French Tennis Federation were in attendance. After two days of discussions, it was agreed that each of the three tournaments – Wimbledon, the U. S. Open and the French Open – would negotiate individually with Lamar Hunt for the appearance of WCT contract professionals. “I’m going back home,” Colwell told Fred Tupper of the *New York Times*. “Our committee has been pledged to silence. Without violating that agreement, we’re nearly stymied. There are many ifs and buts and the situation is delicate and complex.”⁶⁹ The meeting with Hunt was scheduled to take place at his Dallas, Texas headquarters at the end of November.

Still, some of the attendees were skeptical about reaching an agreement with Hunt. U. S. Open tournament chairman Billy Talbert told Fred Tupper, “We respect Hunt’s position and we want the pros in our tournaments, but it can’t be all one-sided. A couple of years ago, the pros were yelling, ‘Open up the game!’ They all wanted to play at Forest Hills and Wimbledon. Well, they do now. Think of the money that comes to them and the titles and TV exposure as well. The increase in prize money ought to be their bag. Yet they demand a share of the gate.” Charles Tucker, president of the West Side Tennis Club, was concerned about his club putting up the U. S. Open prize money with no guarantee of securing the appearance of the world’s best players. “I have not been approached by WCT,” Tucker said. “But we’re putting \$160,000 on the line before we sell a ticket. We’re taking all the risk.”⁷⁰

*... In a subsequent report on what happened, J. L. Manning, London's Daily Mail sports-feature writer, commented, 'How sick can a sport be when it requires a dressmaker to solve its problems.' I did not exactly agree with him, but quite a few people thought he made an amusing point.*⁷¹

--Ted Tinling, 1979

As the London meetings were taking place, the Embassy Indoor Championships were underway at Wembley Arena and featured the best men's and women's tennis players in the world. The field's thirty-two men, which included WCT contract professionals Rod Laver, Ken Rosewall, Arthur Ashe and Pancho Gonzalez, and independent professionals Cliff Richey and Stan Smith, were competing for \$42,000 in singles and doubles prize money. The field of sixteen women, competing for nearly \$14,000, featured the women's professional group of Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals, Darlene Hard, Mary Ann Curtis, and Valerie Ziegenfuss, in addition to Ann Jones, Francoise Durr and Patti Hogan. It was the first time all four women from the old National Tennis League tour – Billie Jean, Rosie, Ann and Francoise – were together since Wimbledon, six months earlier. During their time in London, Billie Jean and Rosie hoped to persuade Ann and Francoise into joining the tour.

*The women who had played the first Slims tournament were very helpful in getting other players to sign up. Among the most important newcomers were Ann Jones, the Wimbledon champion, and Francoise Durr.*⁷²

--Gladys Heldman, 1979

The Embassy Indoor Open, which offered \$55,680 in prize money, was the third richest tournament in Europe, after Wimbledon and the French Championships. The field of thirty-two men competed for a total of \$42,120 in singles and doubles, while the sixteen women played for \$13,560. In the opening round, Arthur Ashe was upset by fellow WCT contract professional Cliff Drysdale, and then 42 year-old Pancho Gonzalez beat top-ranked American Stan Smith in three tiebreak sets, 8-9 9-8 9-8. Rod Laver

defeated Cliff Richey in the men's singles final, after Richey had beaten Ken Rosewall for the first time in his career. Laver collected \$7,200 for winning the tournament, pushing him closer to earning \$200,000 in one year. "When he's in a wheelchair, maybe I'll have a chance," Richey said about his inability to beat the Australian left-hander.⁷³

In the women's tournament, Rosie Casals was upset 7-5 9-7 in the first round by Francoise Durr, who was match-tough from playing the five-week Dewar Cup circuit. Ann Jones needed three sets to get past Virginia Wade in the semifinals, as did Billie Jean against Francoise. The final was a rematch of the 1969 final, when Ann won by the scores of 9-11 6-2 9-7. This time, Billie Jean turned the tables in another closely contested match. She served at 4-5 in the first set and fought off five set points with four winning volleys and an ace. Ann held to lead 6-5, and in the next game Billie Jean saved two more set points, this time with an ace and an overhead smash that clipped the top of the net and dribbled over. Billie Jean finally broke Jones to pull ahead 7-6, and she served out the set without the loss of a point. Despite losing the second set, Billie Jean kept attacking and closed out the match 8-6 3-6 6-1. Afterward, Billie Jean and Ann were cordial in an on-court interview with Jack Kramer, who was doing television commentary of the match for the BBC.⁷⁴

For Billie Jean, the Wembley tournament was satisfying for a number of reasons. In addition to earning \$3,120 for winning the singles title and \$960 with for winning the doubles with Rosie, she announced that her knee operation was a complete success. "It's the first time in a long time that I've been completely free of pain," she said. "I no longer have to pace myself and can play the only way I really know how – all out."⁷⁵ Billie Jean also spoke about her remaining goals in tennis, hoping to win the French Championships someday and regaining her number-one world ranking. She also clearly wanted the upcoming women's tour to be a success, and she and Rosie were finally able to convince Ann and Francoise to join the circuit in January.

Although Billie Jean and Rosie enjoyed financially successful results at the Wembley tournament, not every player in the women's professional group was as fortunate. Gladys felt personally responsible for those in the group who lost money, as she explained in a letter sent to all of the women players:

Dear Contract Independent Pros:

As many of you know, the Houston tournament had promised our group \$2,000 as a contribution to our slush fund. This money has never been paid, although I have been pressing the Racquet Club. As I understand it now, they will make a contribution but it will be much smaller than we anticipated!

Several exhibitions were cancelled without my knowledge during the week in between Richmond and Wembley, and I feel personal responsibility to those who were stuck for a week. Additionally, Derek Hardwick had promised that the girls who lost in the first round of Wembley would receive enough to cover their air travel. He was to have arranged clinics and exhibitions for first round losers, but unfortunately he failed to do so and two of the girls were actually out of pocket on air travel, not to mention room and board. Again I felt a personal responsibility here. Therefore World Tennis has sent checks in the amount of \$350 each to Darlene and Stephanie and \$200 to Val. If Houston does make a contribution to the slush fund, I will take back this amount (\$900 total), but if no slush fund ever develops, this will be my contribution to the group.

During the course of the year we may have some additional problems with guarantees being broken, and if we are to establish a slush fund, we will be able to repay girls who are out of pocket to a certain extent. If no slush fund is available, we hope that everyone in the group does make enough to take care of these unexpected contingencies ... ⁷⁶

Luv,

Gladys M. Heldman

On Tuesday, November 24, Michael van Straten, chairman of the Swiss-based natural food supplement company Bio-Strath, held a news conference in London to announce that his company planned to continue the sponsorship of a series of tournaments in Great Britain in 1971, as it had first done in 1970. One of those tournaments – the London Hard Court Championships, played at the Hurlingham Club in

May – would be the first international tournament to offer the women competitors more prize money than the men; the women would be competing for more than \$10,000 and the men would be playing for less than \$2,400. In addition, van Straten announced that he had recently reached an agreement with Gladys in which the women professionals committed to participate. Since the tournament met the women players' minimum standards of prize money for a 16-woman field, Gladys agreed to guarantee the appearances of Billie Jean, Rosie and the other professionals. Hoping to make the Hurlingham event a "showpiece of women's tennis," van Straten said that invitations would also be extended to the leading independent professionals, including Margaret Court and Virginia Wade.⁷⁷

Billie Jean and Ann, who won at Hurlingham in 1970, were in attendance at the news conference and expressed their pleasure with the increased prize money. "Women's tennis has recently tended to be pushed into the background because it has had a few lean years, because WCT has expanded," Ann said, "and because this year's Grand Prix was for men only. The Hurlingham tournament should help to restore to the women's game the status it deserves in this country."⁷⁸ The decision to showcase women's tennis at Hurlingham was also a savvy business move. In past years, Hurlingham was played during the same week as the German Championships in Hamburg, and the world's best players were divided between the two tournaments. For the 1971 event, the increased prize money and partnership with the women's professional tour would guarantee a strong field and successful tournament.

Referring to the "tremendous interest" in women's tennis, van Straten said he thought there was a reduced spectator enthusiasm for the men's game because of the dominance of the "big serve and the big volley." Actually, the Hurlingham tournament was played on clay, a surface that neutralized the serve-and-volley game that was commonly seen on faster surfaces, such as grass.⁷⁹ However, from a tournament promoter's point of view, the women were a better investment than the men for 1971; WCT withheld its players from the 1970 French Open due to financial disagreements, and the appearances of the world's top male players in ILTF events in 1971 was questionable.

Bob Martin of the Long Beach *Independent Press-Telegram* had the opportunity to meet Gladys on November 28, when both were attending the world premiere of the film *Brewster McCloud* at the Houston Astrodome. Talking about the most famous athlete to come from Long Beach, Gladys said that Billie Jean “has been superb. Without her, there couldn’t be a circuit. With her reputation, Billie Jean could get better offers as an individual than she can make with the group. But for women’s tennis to make a go of it at this time the girls have to act in concert. Otherwise, tournament tennis for women might not survive.”⁸⁰ Gladys also admired the solidarity of Nancy Richey, who “has been terribly important to our circuit. Berkeley offered her \$2,000 just to show up for the Pacific Coast Championships, but she wouldn’t go unless they took all our contract girls. Eventually, Berkeley raised the women’s prize money ... to \$11,000.”⁸¹ With Ann Jones and Francoise recently agreeing to join the tour, Gladys told Martin she hoped to secure the participation of Margaret Court and Virginia Wade. Similar to Lamar Hunt’s WCT men’s tour, the Virginia Slims Circuit had most of the world’s highest-ranked players. Unlike WCT, however, the women who were committed to the tour were free to play in other tournaments, as long as there were no scheduling conflicts.⁸²

The question of whether or not WCT would permit its players to appear in other tournaments during 1971 was answered in early December. WCT owner Lamar Hunt hosted Bob Colwell of the USLTA, Derek Hardwick of the LTA and Robert Abdesselam of the French Tennis Federation in his Dallas office for a series of meetings. After a week of discussions, it was tentatively agreed upon that the professionals under contract to WCT – including Rod Laver, Ken Rosewall, John Newcombe, Tony Roche, Arthur Ashe, Pancho Gonzalez and others – would appear at the French Open, Wimbledon and U. S. Open in 1971, in addition to ILTF Grand Prix events. In return, independent professionals such as Stan Smith and Cliff Richey would be permitted to compete in some of the tournaments on the \$1 million WCT tour.⁸³ Three months earlier, Hunt had threatened to keep his contracted players out of ILTF tournaments unless he received payments for their appearances. The ILTF, on the other hand, wanted the WCT contract players to compete only for prize money and receive no guarantees. The tentative agreement was a compromise; the ILTF agreed that its tournaments would make

payments for the appearance of WCT players. “Some of the ninety countries affiliated with the Federation may not be altogether pleased,” said ILTF president Ben Barnet, “but you cannot satisfy everybody and we have had to reach an agreement that was in the best interest of the game.”⁸⁴ It would prove to be a temporary peace settlement, but for the time being, everyone breathed a bit easier. It was also good news for Gladys, since the world’s national tennis associations – including the USLTA – agreed to accommodate contract professionals at their tournaments.

While the meetings between WCT and the ILTF were taking place in Dallas, Billie Jean, Larry and Rosie began promoting the two upcoming California tournaments on the women’s tour. In San Francisco on December 2, Billie Jean and Rosie told Ed Schoenfield of the *Oakland Tribune* that the tour was scheduled to open on January 6 with a \$15,000 tournament at the Civic Auditorium. “I think we will wind up playing for \$400,000 our first year,” Billie Jean predicted. “I could conceivably win \$100,000.” Rosie told Schoenfield there was no other option to creating a women’s tour. “We’d be finished otherwise,” Rosie said. “The men are only worried about themselves. We women were ignored.”⁸⁵

The following day, Billie Jean, Rosie and Larry held a news conference at the Long Beach Century Club to announce the \$14,000 Billie Jean King Invitational (which initially planned to offer \$10,000 in prize money), sponsored by the Long Beach *Independent Press-Telegram* newspaper, the Long Beach Parks and Recreation Department, and the Long Beach City College. The first two days of the four-day tournament, starting on January 14, were scheduled to be played outdoors at the Billie Jean King Tennis Center, a public tennis facility in Long Beach. The final two days of the tournament were scheduled to be played indoors in the gymnasium of the Long Beach City College.⁸⁶

In addition to announcing the tournament, Billie Jean discussed how the women’s tour offered unprecedented financial opportunities. “We have set up a program in which women tennis players have money purses up to \$140,000,” she said. “In fact, if a woman tennis player is good enough, she can win up to \$30,000 in two months. In golf, the best lady player can’t win \$30,000 during an entire year.”⁸⁷ Billie Jean also explained the

need for a women's-only tour, indicating "we're sick and tired of taking second place to the men. Us girls play like crazy and get only a fraction of the prize money. Now we have formed our own association and we expect to get the same rights as men." ⁸⁸

Rosie was asked about her opinions regarding how much prize money the women should receive, relative to what the men players were earning. Rosie, known for her sarcastic humor, suggested the women "should get more money than the men, if only to start a new trend. They are a lot more attractive than men players. The men come out to look at us. They like to look at our legs." Everyone was amused, but Billie Jean admitted there was truth in Rosie's observations. "That's a fact," she said, "they do come out to look at our legs." Billie Jean also explained that women's tennis was more instructional for spectators than men's tennis. "With men, it's strictly a power game so you can't learn much from them," she insisted. "Some weekend men players tell me they get more ideas watching us. We hit hard but our rallies are longer and our strategy is more apparent." ⁸⁹

Asked about the men's tennis players' reactions to the women's demands for fairer prize money distribution, Billie Jean said the "most greedy are Arthur Ashe and John Newcombe of Australia. They are trying to keep our women's tennis group out of existence. That's not fair. We're just trying to stay alive. They have no reason to shut us out. Arthur isn't fair. Women are definitely as strong as men and I don't see where he could consider us as equal to men with strength. Newcombe is a strong man, but he also shouldn't shout against women. They are entirely off base when they take off against girls. We are in this business for glory and money, too." ⁹⁰ Billie Jean was referring to comments made by Ashe and Newcombe in recent weeks. Ashe dismissed the popularity of women's tennis, saying it "doesn't draw flies," and Newcombe said, "except for maybe the top four girls, who wants to pay to see women play, anyway?"

Proceeds from the tournament, Larry announced, would be used to build permanent seating at the Billie Jean King Tennis Center. "This city has helped me a lot," Billie Jean said. "Now I have a chance to show my friends my gratitude. I just hope I can win this one. Do you know that I haven't played a tournament in Long Beach in ten years?" ⁹¹

The news conference at the Long Beach Century Club coincided with the publication of a full-page advertisement in the *Independent Press-Telegram* promoting the Billie Jean King Invitational. With action photographs of Billie Jean and Ann Jones, a list of the top players, and urging tennis fans to “Help Salute Long Beach’s Own Tennis Great,” the advertisement was displayed at the news conference and appeared in the newspaper frequently in the days leading up to the tournament. However, the advertisement erroneously listed Margaret Court as one of the participants.⁹² Despite Gladys and Billie Jean’s frequent comments to the news media that they hoped the world’s top-ranked player would join the group, Margaret had no intention of playing on the women’s professional tour. She planned to play a full schedule of Australian tournaments, culminating with the national championships in the middle of March, and then two tournaments in South Africa before traveling to Europe. In 1971, Margaret hoped to defend her titles at the world’s four major championships and repeat the Grand Slam. Since the fledgling women’s tour still had not settled its differences with the USLTA and ILTF, Margaret did not want to risk being suspended for playing in non-sanctioned events. Equally important to her, Margaret could make a substantial amount of money by playing in less competitive tournaments and receiving large appearance fees.

Virginia Wade was the other top player who had no interest in joining the women’s tour. Her schedule for late 1970 and early 1971 included only a handful of events: the Federation Cup, the Western Australian Championships, and the South African Open. After that, she wanted to take a break from the game. “It is hard to obtain a good balance between competition and practice. A let-down from the game will allow me to concentrate on basic practice, and if I have another bad year I think I may play in less tournaments,” she said. Unlike Billie Jean, who thrived on competition, Virginia felt her results would be better if she were able to rest between tournaments. “I think there should be a restricted number of major tournaments. I find I no longer love endless travel.”⁹³

The full-page advertisement in the *Long Beach Independent Press-Telegram* referred to the upcoming tournament as the “2nd Tournament (on the) \$100,000 Virginia Slims National Pro Circuit.” However, Gladys called the circuit the “World Tennis

Women's Pro Tour" and referred to it as such in the *World Tennis* results section; she also called the players the "World Tennis Professionals." Several titles – the Virginia Slims Circuit, the Women's Pro Tour, and the World Tennis Women's Pro Tour – were used interchangeably, the latter primarily by Gladys, until the spring of 1971 when Virginia Slims decided to expand its sponsorship for a summer and fall tour.

*Sometime during the search for sponsorship, Joe Cullman suggested that Philip Morris put up five percent of the prize money at every tournament they weren't even involved in, and that we call the circuit the Virginia Slims Circuit.*⁹⁴
 -- Gladys Heldman, 1979

As the featured speaker at the annual meeting of the New England Lawn Tennis Association in Framingham, Massachusetts on December 12, Bob Colwell received a warm round of applause when he told the gathering "a lot of people ask me, 'Why is the USLTA trying to control the professional part of tennis? Why don't we go back to the old days of worrying only about the amateur game and leaving the pros on their own?' I tell them that the only reason is that I want to keep some of that money from big events going back into the USLTA coffers so it can go to develop junior development, the administration of the game, and help all the sections of the country. We don't want the pro promoters to go in, take advantage of the athletes we have trained, use our facilities, our officials, the volunteers who have worked hard for us, without putting something back into the game for the millions who play it."⁹⁵

Earlier in the day, at a news conference at the Longwood Cricket Club, Colwell told reporters he was gratified "to meet Lamar Hunt and find him so reasonable. I believe we can trust him and cooperate with him to settle all the differences between WCT and the amateur association. I think he has tennis' interests at heart. Obviously he wants to make money, and why shouldn't he as long as he puts something back in the game?"⁹⁶

In the middle of December, the Virginia Slims Invitational planned for Towson, Maryland, needed to be canceled due to a scheduling conflict. Several other cities were

considered as possible replacements, but Gladys and Bill Cutler eventually decided on Milwaukee when they saw the facilities at the Brook Club. With only four weeks notice, Brook Club teaching professionals Jock Miller and David Saxe began preparing to host a Virginia Slims Invitational at their club, and they soon secured Kohl's Food Stores – a Milwaukee-based supermarket chain – as the local sponsor.⁹⁷

In addition to the tournament in Milwaukee, Gladys finalized another Virginia Slims Invitational – with \$15,000 in prize money – to be played at the historic 71st Regiment Armory, located at 34th Street and Park Avenue in New York City in late March. Freddie Botur founded the two-court Tennis Incorporated tennis club at the armory in 1964, and he hosted two men's professional events – with players such as Pancho Gonzalez and Rod Laver – in 1965 and 1967. Virginia Slims had only \$5,000 of its initial \$40,000 in sponsorship funds remaining. Botur could have invested \$5,000 or \$7,500, but he decided to contribute \$10,000 after Gladys assured him that he would make a return on his investment.⁹⁸ The main arena of the armory had a seating capacity for 3,500 spectators; hopefully, a large turnout of spectators in New York would prove that women's professional tennis could successfully be staged in one of the world's largest cities.

Several players in the women's group used their local contacts to bring tournaments to their hometowns. Valerie Ziegenfuss was hoping to bring a tournament to San Diego, and Mary Ann Curtis hoped to do the same in St. Louis. Peaches Bartkowicz was instrumental in bringing a tournament to Michigan. Shortly after the Virginia Slims Invitational in Houston, Peaches spoke to Ted Jax, a teaching professional at the Bloomfield Tennis House, about bringing the tour to the Detroit area. In turn, Jax asked Joanne Muerer, who frequently played tennis at the Bloomfield Tennis House and a member of the Junior League of Birmingham, if her organization would be interested in staging the event.

Muerer believed that a women's professional tennis tournament might be a profitable fundraiser, and she mentioned the idea to fellow Junior League member Sandy Lecklider. The opportunity was discussed at their next meeting.

We found out about it through Ted Jax, that the women were looking for sponsors and looking for cities to have tournaments, and I was on the Junior League board as the treasurer ... so we had a meeting, and I can remember the discussion, “Do you think people would really come to watch the women play? It’s the men that they come to watch play. Do you think we’d make any money?” We had that discussion and then we decided “Let’s go for it, let’s try it.” They asked me to be the chairman, and I said I would ... so I formed a whole bunch of committees ... we had someone in charge of training the ballboys, somebody in charge of getting line callers, somebody in charge of reception the night before, somebody in charge of getting men players, celebrities, to play in the mixed doubles event ... we just fanned out and really got into it, it was really fun ... and all the girls did a fantastic job, they were all smart, organized Junior League girls.⁹⁹

-- Sandy Lecklider, 2012

The tournament organizers wanted to stage the tournament’s first and second round matches at the Bloomfield Tennis House, and have the semifinals and finals played in the gymnasium at Oakland University, which could accommodate nearly 2,000 spectators. Ted Jax called Oakland University athletic director Holly Lepley, who assigned men’s basketball coach Eugene Boldon to the project.

A lot of things that were done around there, Holly Lepley would say, “Gene, you do it.” Oakland was a very young university ... there was nothing going on, so everything that I could promote, and gain some visibility for Oakland University, that was my responsibility ... or I accepted as my responsibility ... During that particular time, money was not the primary motivation there, it was the visibility of it all ... with Peaches being a Michigan native, it helped us to host it there at Oakland University.¹⁰⁰

-- Eugene Boldon, 2012

Although the Junior League of Birmingham and Oakland University were thrilled at the prospect of bringing the world's best women tennis players to southeast Michigan, they were less enthusiastic about the advertising of cigarettes. As a result, the Junior League initially decided that it would provide the \$10,000 in prize money. The organization had substantial financial assets, due in large part to its Bargain Box, a used clothing store that had annual profits of \$20,000. With its earnings, the Junior League of Birmingham provided many educational, social and cultural services in the Detroit metropolitan area, including a day-care center, a treatment center for emotionally disturbed children, a residence for disabled adults, and a resource center that provided donated furniture and appliances to clients of social service agencies. Shortly after the planning process for the tournament started, the Junior League obtained financial support from a well-known foundation that was based in the Detroit area.¹⁰¹

*Cindy Trabue, the president of the Junior League, and myself went to Kresge Foundation, which was about ten minutes from my house ... it was just a natural, they were right down the road ... we asked them if they'd donate the prize money, and they said if we called the tournament the K-Mart Invitational, they would give us \$10,000.*¹⁰²

-- Sandy Lecklider, 2012

The Virginia Slims Circuit was booked through the first week in March, and Gladys wanted to give the players a two-week break in case any of them wanted to participate in the Australian Open, which offered women's prize money of \$10,000. It was unlikely that any of the players would have wanted to travel to Australia for only one tournament; Gladys most likely did not schedule a tour event during the Australian Open to avoid problems with the ILTF. As a result, Gladys gave the tournament organizers in Birmingham the dates of March 16 through March 22 for their event, immediately following the Australian Open and preceding the Virginia Slims Invitational of New York.

The increasing number of tournaments that Gladys was scheduling created some concern with Cliff Turner. Since 1968, Turner helped Bill Riordan recruit players for the Caribbean Circuit, which traditionally started in February and continued into April. The circuit began in the 1953 and included, over the years, men's and women's tournaments in Florida, Texas, North Carolina, Bermuda, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and countries in Latin America. Turner was the Vice Chairman of the circuit's Women's Division, and he was disappointed to learn that Gladys had partnered with George Liddy to bring the women professionals to Pompano Beach in February. Since the women professionals insisted on limiting a \$10,000 tournament to only sixteen players – and all of those players would be those who were obligated to Gladys – Turner was concerned that other players who were not in Gladys' stable would be excluded.

Turner wrote a letter to Gladys in October, before she began working on her schedule of tournaments, and asked her not to interfere with the Caribbean Circuit by asking tournament directors to agree to exclusive agreements with her. In a letter to incoming USLTA president Bob Colwell, Turner related that Gladys indicated “she was only trying to arrange tournaments for her girls when there were none scheduled.”¹⁰³

In mid-December, tournament directors from the events in Caracas, Barranquilla, Curacao, St. Petersburg, Pensacola and Charlotte met in Miami to decide which applicants – men and women – would be invited to play on the 1971 Caribbean Circuit. The only tournament director who was absent from the meeting was Welby Van Horn, who directed the Caribe Hilton Invitational in San Juan, Puerto Rico. “After carefully considering all the applicants,” Turner wrote to Colwell, “we decided to invite sixteen women. Upon returning to Charlotte, I advised Welby Van Horn concerning the women players that will participate in his tournament. Several days later, I received notification from Welby stating that he had signed Gladys Heldman's group and would not be able to accept the girls on the Caribbean tour. Since his tournament was in the middle of the schedule, it will deprive the circuit players of a place to play that week. In light of this, I have no choice other than to cancel the entire circuit for the girls. I think that there is very unfortunate when some of us are trying to keep the women's program alive ... I wrote Gladys Heldman back in October and advised her of the possible conflicts ... In

light of her lack of consideration, I do not think that San Juan or Ft. Lauderdale should receive an open sanction.” Turner also expressed his regrets to Colwell that organizational divisions were corrupting the game so much.¹⁰⁴

With no women on the 1971 Caribbean Circuit, the Master’s Invitational in St. Petersburg, Florida would soon be stranded; the tournament organizers were notified by Bill Riordan, the USLTA Indoor Circuit/Caribbean Circuit chairman, that the men who had been assigned to their tournament – including top American independent professionals Cliff Richey and Clark Graebner – were being sent to a new, \$15,000 indoor tournament in Des Moines, Iowa during the same week. Since the Master’s Invitational was offering only a total of \$5,000 in prize money, it could only hope for a second-rate men’s field at best.

Gladys originally scheduled a pro-celebrity event in Los Angeles, sponsored by Party Tyme Wine, for the first week in early April. When the Los Angeles Tennis Club decided it did not want to host the pro-celebrity event because it was “too commercial,” Gladys contacted Ed Turville of the St. Petersburg Tennis Foundation, the organization that sponsored the Masters Invitational. Gladys offered the appearances of the women professionals and \$8000 in prize money from Virginia Slims, if the tournament provided an additional \$2000 for the women and changed its name to the Virginia Slims Masters. Within twenty-four hours, the St. Petersburg Tennis Foundation gladly agreed. With \$10,000 in prize money offered to the women and \$5,000 offered to the men, it was the first time in the history of American tennis that the women would receive a greater amount of money than the men.¹⁰⁵

The final stop on the 1971 Virginia Slims Circuit was scheduled to be played in mid-April in Las Vegas, following the Master’s Invitational. In early December, Caesar’s Palace – which was in the process of building a tennis facility – signed tennis great Pancho Gonzalez to a two-year contract as its head professional and tennis consultant. One week later, Gonzales announced the resort’s plans to sponsor two professional events in 1971: a men’s tournament with \$50,000 in prize money, and a women’s tournament that offered a record amount of \$30,000.¹⁰⁶ For Gonzalez, the announcement must have been a humbling experience. Only three months earlier, at the

Pacific Southwest Open in Los Angeles, Gonzalez told a reporter the women players should “take their tennis across the street and we will see how many people come to watch them.” Gonzalez was about to find out first-hand; with record prize money amount and the appearance of Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals, Ann Jones and other stars, the Caesar’s Palace tournament was advertised to be highlight of the women’s pro tour that offered total prize money of \$212,500.

In a December 7, 1970 letter to all the women professionals, Gladys updated the players with the most recent circuit schedule, her plans for proposed tournaments, and how the player status of the women were viewed differently by various associations:

Dear Contract Independent Pros:

I just received a letter from Judy Dalton with a number of questions, and in answering her I am sending you all copies since many of you may have wanted to ask the same thing.

The ILTF does not consider the group Contract Pros; the USLTA probably does consider them Contract Pros; the British probably do not consider them Contract Pros; the Australian LTA probably does consider them Contract Pros; the rest of the countries have not made any statement and so we have no idea how they feel. However, they switch from day to day and no one has bothered to make a statement as to the status of the girls.

... My guarantee to you is that I will always work for free, try my best for sponsorships, exhibitions, tournaments and endorsements as long as you all stick together. The Original Nine in Houston went out on a limb, as did the others who immediately joined them, and my object is only to protect them and make the best possible deal for all of you. Those who have not joined the group are those who only wanted to get the benefits without putting up a united front, and I feel no obligation to them since they risked nothing and wanted everything¹⁰⁷ ...

Luv,

Gladys M. Heldman

The 1971 Virginia Slims Circuit was scheduled to open on January 6 in San Francisco, and with three weeks left to prepare Gladys reached out to incoming USLTA president Bob Colwell for help. Since Billie Jean, Rosie, Nancy and the others were considered contract professionals by the USLTA, Gladys realized that she needed to get the circuit's tournaments approved by the ILTF as open-to-all. Otherwise, independent professionals such as Ann Jones and Francoise Durr would not want to jeopardize their eligibility by playing against contract professionals in non-sanctioned tournaments. In addition to USLTA sanctions fees of 6% of prize money per tournament on the circuit (which, for the \$15,000 BMW Invitation in San Francisco would amount to \$900), the fee for an ILTF sanction for an open-to-all tournament was \$480. Gladys was concerned that the tournament directors would be upset about the unexpected expense, and she asked Colwell if he could arrange for lower sanction fees for the women's tournaments. It would be much easier, Gladys asked Colwell in a letter she wrote on December 15, 1970, if the women who were considered contract professionals by the USLTA could get reinstated as independent professionals; that way, there would only be a need for a USLTA sanction and no need for an ILTF open-to-all sanction, and Ann and Francoise would have no concerns.¹⁰⁸

Colwell responded that Gladys needed to have the women players submit written requests for reinstatement by the USLTA as soon as possible, but he was not optimistic that Billie Jean and Rosie would get reinstated for a second time. "I do not believe that a request by King and Casals would be acted upon favorably by the Administrative Committee," he wrote, "and even if the USLTA approved, there is an ILTF ruling that prevents reinstating a player the second time, so you had better plan your tournaments to be open-to-all." Colwell also urged Gladys to submit the ILTF tournament sanction requests immediately, since "the USLTA is going to look pretty silly asking for ILTF open sanctions at the last second. We can still probably get these sanctions, but the ILTF doesn't rightly appreciate applications coming in at the last second. They have to contact people all over the world to get these approvals and it appears that we are pretty unreasonable when we wait so long ... Gladys, I can see trouble on the horizon for everyone if you can't get this group of tournaments for the girls organized and sanctioned

right away. If they all come in at the last second, I don't want you to blame me for not being able to do magic at the last second! It is so much easier to do things ahead of time.”¹⁰⁹ Typically, the ILTF expected requests for open-to-all tournaments to be submitted six months ahead of time, and the size of the draw required a minimum of thirty-two participants. All of the tournaments on the Virginia Slims Circuit planned to have only sixteen players, and the first tournament was scheduled to start in only three weeks. Colwell hoped to use his influence with ILTF officials to expedite the approval process, get an exception to the thirty-two player minimum, as well as get a reduced sanction for the women's tournament. “In all modesty,” Colwell once told Stan Malless, “I do have lots of friends in the ILTF of a few years standing.”¹¹⁰

At the end of 1970, the USLTA chose which American women would represent the United States at the Federation Cup, an international team event to be played in Perth, Australia. The 1971 Federation Cup was actually played in 1970, with team matches starting on December 26 and concluding on December 29. Several weeks before the competition started, the USLTA announced the members of the American team. None of the five women who heroically won the Wightman Cup in 1970 – Billie Jean King, Nancy Richey Julie Heldman, Mary Ann Curtis and Peaches Bartkowicz – were selected, and Rosie Casals was also bypassed, all because they were considered contract professionals by the USLTA and ineligible for international team. Instead, the USLTA chose Patti Hogan, ranked number five in the nation, and Sharon Walsh, the recent U. S. girl's junior champion.

The Lawn Tennis Association of Australia named Margaret Court, Lesley Hunt and Evonne Goolagong to its team; noticeably absent from the roster were Kerry Melville, the nation's second-ranked player, and Karen Krantzcke and Judy Dalton, who were ranked third and fourth and who won the Federation Cup for Australia in May, 1970. All three women had recently announced that they would not play the upcoming Australian circuit in order to play on the Virginia Slims Circuit. Australian players who were under the LTAA jurisdiction – including amateurs and independent professionals – were not allowed to play in foreign tournaments during the Australian tournament season without permission. Kerry, Judy and Karen were facing certain suspension by the LTAA

if they competed in the United States in early 1971. “It upset me a bit, but it doesn’t really worry me,” Judy remarked to Peter Stone of the *Melbourne Age* when she discussed the impending suspension. “I would have liked to defend the Cup for Australia, but I’m probably better off going to the States.”¹¹¹

The LTAA did not believe that Kerry, Judy and Karen were contract professionals; instead, the Australian association considered them registered players/independent professionals who were still under their jurisdiction. The ILTF let each national association determine the status of its own players; this put the Australian players in a particularly difficult situation. While the Americans could still participate in open-to-all tournaments – including the French Open, Wimbledon and the U. S. Open – the three Australian women were looking at the possibility of getting barred from all tournaments. If the LTAA decided to suspend Kerry, Judy and Karen, the ILTF would honor the disciplinary action and bar them from all tournaments throughout the world. It was a complicated situation that would take months to resolve.

Patti Hogan and Sharon Walsh performed admirably in their Federation Cup matches, their first international team competition. The Americans defeated Italy 3-0 in the first round, although Sharon admitted that she was “scared stiff” in her singles match against Daniela Porzio, ranked number three in her nation, dropping the first set and falling behind 0-2 in the second set before recovering to win, 3-6 6-3 6-2. In a quarterfinal match against South Africa, Sharon lost a close three-set match to Laura Rossouw. Patti saved the day by beating Brenda Kirk in singles and winning the deciding doubles match with Sharon. The Americans’ run ended in the semifinals after a 3-0 loss to Great Britain; Patti and Sharon played well in their singles matches against Ann Jones and Virginia Wade, but were both hampered by numerous double faults.¹¹²

The Federation Cup championship match, pitting the top-seeded British team against the second-seeded Australian team, was played in temperatures that reached 122-degrees; eleven of the 4,200 spectators collapsed from the heat. Virginia, a veteran of six Wightman Cup teams and four Federation Cup campaigns, was favored to win the opening singles match against the lesser-experienced Evonne. “The tension was marked,” Ann Jones reported in *World Tennis*, “everyone realized that the outcome of

this match was vital and the fact that the two had never met before made the match all the more intriguing, although the odds were on Virginia because of her much greater experience and world ranking.” At the outset of the match, Evonne easily returned Virginia’s best shots, causing the British player to become increasingly anxious. Virginia fell behind 1-4 and nearly leveled the score when she won the next two games. Evonne, however, closed out the first set, 6-4, as her opponent wilted in the oppressive heat. Trailing 0-3 in the second set, Virginia appeared to be on the verge of forfeiting. She sat in her courtside chair on the changeover, with her head between her knees, as team captain Winnie Shaw put a wet towel around her neck. Virginia managed to hold her service in the fifth game, after which Evonne won the next two games to secure the match 6-4 6-1 and give the Australian team an unexpected 1-0 lead.¹¹³

With the cup victory suddenly only one match away, Margaret Court “showed all the early nervousness that has marked her great career,” the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported.¹¹⁴ Against Ann Jones, Margaret played tentatively in the first set, losing her service twice and repeatedly hitting her shots into the net. Ann won the first set 8-6 but lost her momentum when she lost her serve at 3-4 in the second. Serving at 5-3, Margaret’s confidence grew as she closed out the set without the loss of a point. She broke Ann’s serve in the opening game of the third set, held again to lead 2-0, and then won four of the next six games to give Australian its fifth Federation Cup title in nine years. With the cup clinched, the doubles match was merely an exhibition, in which Margaret and Lesley Hunt defeated Virginia and Winnie, 6-4 6-4.¹¹⁵

In her *Tennis* magazine column, Patti Hogan wrote that she was “quite prepared to accept the word of Basil Reay, secretary of the ILTF, who said that these were the best Federation Cup matches he had ever seen. Thank you, Billie Jean; thank you, Rosie.”¹¹⁶ Patti was aware that it was the USLTA’s exclusion of America’s best players from the Federation Cup team – or perhaps the top American players’ lack of interest in playing – that gave her and Sharon such an opportunity.

The 1971 Federation Cup competition was a crossroads of players on different career paths. Margaret Court, Virginia Wade and Patti Hogan would have been welcomed to play on the upcoming Virginia Slims Circuit, but they preferred their own

independence and/or loyalty to their national associations. Evonne Goolagong was still relatively unknown, and it would not be until the following year's French Open and Wimbledon that she would emerge as the world's best player. Judy Dalton, Kerry Melville and Karen Krantzcke would have happily represented Australia in the Federation Cup, but their fight for fairer prize money put them at odds with the LTAA. Ann Jones and Francoise Durr had the best of both worlds; as independent professionals, they were in good standing with their national associations and free to earn as much money as they could on the Virginia Slims Circuit as long as the tournaments were approved by the ILTF as open-to-all. Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals, Nancy Richey and the other top Americans were not concerned about cooperating with their national association; they were looking forward to the future and a new horizon of women's professional tennis.

Notes

- ¹ Gladys Heldman, letter to Judy Tegart Dalton and Kerry Melville, September 28, 1970.
- ² Bill Cutler, interview with the author, May 17, 2012.
- ³ Gladys Heldman, "World Tennis Magazine Signs Nine Girls to Pro Contracts." *World Tennis*, November 1970, 14.
- ⁴ Gladys Heldman, quoted in Jay Stuller, "Gladys Heldman: A Few Words with the Architect of Women's Pro Tennis," *Women's Sports*, May 1979, 31.
- ⁵ Billie Jean King, quoted in Toni Waters Woods, "How It All Began," *Inside Women's Tennis*, July 1993, 4.
- ⁶ In the following day's *Baltimore Sun*, Jim Caffrey – citing an anonymous, "reliable source" – reported that an eight-city tour would be funded by Joe Cullman and Philip Morris, while no mention was made of Virginia Slims. The source (perhaps Dorothy Chewning, the tournament organizer in Richmond, Virginia and a friend of Gladys Heldman) also erroneously disclosed that Heldman had already signed nineteen women to professional contracts. This may have been a case of the source or the reporter skewing the facts, or Heldman's embellishment of the situation.
- ⁷ Billie Jean King and Frank Deforde, *Billie Jean* (New York: Viking Press, 1982), 155.
- ⁸ Gladys Heldman, quoted in Jay Stuller, "Gladys Heldman: A Few Words with the Architect of Women's Pro Tennis," *Women's Sports*, May 1979, 31.
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- ¹¹ Billie Jean King and Cynthia Starr, *We Have Come A Long Way: The History of Women's Tennis* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1988), 126.
- ¹² Advertisement, *World Tennis*, April 1967, 12.
- ¹³ Steve Chazen, interview with the author, October 30, 2011.
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- ¹⁵ Parton Keese, "Women Set Up Tennis Tour," *New York Times* (New York, New York), October 7, 1970.
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- ²¹ Françoise Durr, quoted in Rex Bellamy, "More Power to Women's Rights," *The Times* (London, England), October 14, 1970.
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- ²³ Ann Jones, quoted in Rex Bellamy, "More Power to Women's Rights," *The Times* (London, England), October 14, 1970.

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- ²⁵ Larry King, interview with the author, May 3, 2012.
- ²⁶ Larry King, interview with the author, May 3, 2012.
- ²⁷ Jerry Diamond, quoted in Wayne Kalyn, "Jerry Diamond is a Ladies' Man," *World Tennis*, November 1982, 42.
- ²⁸ Joyce Turley, interview with the author, May 5, 2012.
- ²⁹ Joyce Turley, interview with the author, May 5, 2012.
- ³⁰ "Embassy Open Lists Billie Jean Among Entrants," *Independent Press-Telegram* (Long Beach, California), November 2, 1970.
- ³¹ Gladys Heldman, letter to Robert Colwell, October 21, 1970.
- ³² Gladys Heldman, letter to Robert Colwell, October 21, 1970.
- ³³ Gladys Heldman, Western Union telegrams sent to Tom Raleigh, Larry King, Dorothy Chewning, Derek Hardwick, and women players, October 20, 1970.
- ³⁴ Gladys Heldman, Western Union telegram to Karen Krantzcke, October 20, 1970.
- ³⁵ Gladys Heldman, letter to Robert Colwell, October 21, 1970.
- ³⁶ Robert Colwell, letter to Gladys Heldman, October 27, 1970.
- ³⁷ Rosie Casals and Billie Jean King, letter to Judy Tegart Dalton, October 29, 1970.
- ³⁸ Gladys Heldman, quoted in Robert Merritt, "Women's Tour Makes Strides," *Richmond Times-Dispatch* (Richmond, Virginia), November 10, 1970.
- ³⁹ Gladys Heldman, quoted in Robert Merritt, "Women's Tour Makes Strides," *Richmond Times-Dispatch* (Richmond, Virginia), November 10, 1970.
- ⁴⁰ Denise Carter, quoted in Robert Merritt, "Virginia Slims Pros Praising New Group Leader," *Richmond Times-Dispatch* (Richmond, Virginia), November 3, 1970.
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- ⁴⁹ Rex Bellamy, "Tinling Move Can Give ILTF Hope of Decisive Voice," *The Times* (London, England), November 14, 1970.
- ⁵⁰ Fred Tupper, "Major Tennis Tourneys Decide to Bargain with Contract Pros," *New York Times* (New York, New York), November 18, 1970.

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- ⁵³ Bud Collins, "New USLTA Boss Bars Suicide Trend," *Tennis*, February 1971, 4.
- ⁵⁴ Gladys Heldman, "Sudden Death, Self Inflicted," *World Tennis*, January 1971, 18.
- ⁵⁵ Ted Tinling and Rod Humphries, *Love and Faults: Personalities Who Have Changed the History of Tennis in My Lifetime* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1979), 273.
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- ⁵⁷ Weldon Bradshaw, "King, Richey Win, Gain Tennis Final," *Richmond News Leader* (Richmond, Virginia), November 7, 1970.
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- ⁶⁴ Fred Tupper, "Peace Plan Offered World Tennis Unit," *New York Times* (New York, New York), November 14, 1970.
- ⁶⁵ "Administrative Panel Meets," *Tennis USA*, January 1971, 2.
- ⁶⁶ Alastair Martin, quoted in Neil Amdur, "Decision to Bar Contract Pros from USLTA Play Put Off," *New York Times* (New York, New York), November 13, 1970.
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- ⁹² Advertisement, *Independent Press-Telegram* (Long Beach, California), December 4, 1970.
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- ¹⁰⁰ Eugene Bolden, interview with the author, May 29, 2012.
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CHAPTER 5: BACK IN THE FOLD

Shortly before the 1971 Virginia Slims Circuit opened in San Francisco in early January, the *Melbourne Herald* reported that Australian Karen Krantzcke accepted an offer of \$20,000 to join the tour. “*World Tennis* now seems to be out to sign all the available women stars and take full control of all sections of the sport, from a promotional angle,” the *Herald* reported. “As well as her \$20,000 signing on fee, Karen is to receive a weekly guarantee of \$300 and prize money she wins above that amount.”¹ Actually, no such offer was ever made. “I wish I had been offered \$20,000 to turn professional, but it’s not true,” Karen said about the report. “I have received no financial offers or signed any contracts to become a professional. In fact, the whole business about accepting \$20,000 is rather embarrassing.”² Although Gladys did not offer any of the women players guarantee money, each player was in fact guaranteed a minimum of \$300 per week, since that amount was the given to first-round losers.

All players on the Virginia Slims Circuit paid their own travel expenses and lodging costs, unless housing at private homes was arranged. In 1970, typical travel, food and lodging costs for one week were approximately \$100, so first-round losers in the singles tournament could make a net profit of about \$200 each week, plus slightly more for playing doubles. Successful players were able to clear much more money. Table 5.1 shows the total prize money for each of the tour’s stops, the amount of prize money that each tournament needed to provide, and the amount of sponsorship from Virginia Slims:

Table 5.1 – 1971 Virginia Slims Circuit, Winter-Spring
(amounts shown are in U. S. dollars)

	Dates	Prize Money	Local Sponsor and Amount	Virginia Slims Sponsorship
San Francisco CA	Jan 6-9	15,000	British Motor Cars 15,000	0
Long Beach CA	Jan 14-17	14,000	Independent Press-Telegram 4,000	0
Milwaukee WI	Jan 21-24	12,500	Kohl's Food Stores	5,000
Oklahoma City OK	Jan 29-Feb 1	12,500	Local Patrons 10,000	5,000
Chattanooga TN	Feb 4-7	12,500	Chattem Medical and Chemical Southern Foundries 7,500	5,000
Philadelphia PA	Feb 9-14	12,200	Philadelphia Indoor Tennis Corp. 12,200	0
Pompano Beach FL	Feb 17-21	10,000	WLOD Radio 10,000	0
Winchester MA	Feb 26-Mar 1	12,500	None	12,500
Birmingham MI	Mar 18-21	10,000	Kresge Foundation (K-Mart) 10,000	0
New York NY	Mar 24-27	15,000	Freddie Botur 10,000	5,000
San Juan PR	Mar 29-Apr 4	10,000	None	10,000
St. Petersburg FL	Apr 5-11	10,000	St. Petersburg Tennis Foundation 2,000	8,000
Las Vegas NV	Apr 14-18	30,000	Caesar's Palace 30,000	0
San Diego CA		10,000	Local Patrons 5,000	5,000

Although the Virginia Slims management team determined how much money to allocate to each of the Virginia Slims Invitational events (in Milwaukee, Oklahoma City, Chattanooga, Winchester and New York), Gladys formulated the prize money breakdown for most of the circuit's tournaments. She decided that the winner of each singles tournament should receive one-fourth to one-third of the total prize money offered. Billie Jean preferred to have each week's winner to receive one-half of the prize money, since she believed that the public and media would take notice of the tour if the leading player

earned a substantial amount of money. Gladys, however, ultimately decided on a more balanced distribution for all the rounds of singles and doubles in every tournament, as shown in Table 5.2 and Table 5.3.

Table 5.2 – Singles Prize Money 1971 Virginia Slims Circuit, Winter-Spring
(amounts shown are in U. S. dollars)

	Winner	Finalist	Third Place	Fourth Place	Quarter Final	First Round
San Francisco	4300	2500	1400	800	600	300
Long Beach	3600	2200	1400	800	600	300
Milwaukee	2500	1800	1400	800	600	300
Oklahoma City	2500	1800	1400	800	600	300
Chattanooga	2500	1800	1400	800	600	300
Philadelphia	3000	2000	1200	1200	600	300
Pompano Beach	2000	1200	1000	800	500	250
Winchester	2500	1800	1200	1000	600	300
Birmingham	2000	1200	1000	800	500	250
New York	5000	3000	1300	1200	600	300
San Juan	2000	1200	1000	800	500	250
St. Petersburg	2000	1200	1000	800	500	250
Las Vegas	9000	4800	2400	2400	1200	500
San Diego	2000	1200	1000	800	500	250

Table 5.3 – Doubles Prize Money, 1971 Virginia Slims Circuit, Winter-Spring
 (amounts shown are in U. S. dollars; no doubles tournaments
 were played in Philadelphia and New York)

	Winners (per team)	Finalists (per team)	Semi-finals (per team)	First Round (per team)
San Francisco	500	300	200	0
Long Beach	500	300	200	0
Milwaukee	500	300	200	0
Oklahoma City	500	300	200	0
Chattanooga	500	300	200	0
Philadelphia	-	-	-	-
Pompano Beach	500	300	100	0
Winchester	500	300	200	0
Birmingham	500	300	100	0
New York	-	-	-	-
San Juan	500	300	100	0
St. Petersburg	500	300	100	0
Las Vegas	1000	500	250	100
San Diego	500	300	100	0

One week before the tournament in San Francisco, Gladys learned that her request for reduced USLTA sanction fees of \$240 per tournament was rejected by Stan Malless and Bob Malaga. Instead, Malless and Malaga insisted on the standard sanction fee of 6% of each tournament's total prize money.³ Although she was disappointed, Gladys realized that sanction approvals were necessary to protect the player status of Ann Jones and Francoise Durr. If a tournament were comprised solely of contract professionals, the USLTA and ILTF had no authority, and sanction approvals were not necessary. However, if a tournament included amateurs and/or independent professionals (who were still under the jurisdiction of their respective national associations), a USLTA sanction as well as an ILTF sanction for an "open-to-all" tournament were required. If not, an

amateur or independent professional who competed in an unsanctioned tournament with contract professionals would automatically be considered a contract professional, thereby unable to play in international team events or receive a national ranking.

Colwell planned to fly to London to have discussions with ILTF secretary Basil Reay about the status of the women players. Reay revealed that he had warned Ann Jones about playing on the Virginia Slims Circuit. "I have told her that if she plays in an unsanctioned tournament either with or against a player who is suspended, she herself will be suspended," Reay said just before the tournament in San Francisco was scheduled to begin. "But the position is quite absurd, and I am hoping my talks with the American official later this week will clear up the whole business."⁴

With the British Motor Cars Women's Tennis Championships only days away, Gladys had no choice but to pay the sanction fees; the USLTA 6% sanction fee for the \$15,000 tournament totaled \$900. "If we do not comply, the girls would be declared contract pros," she explained. "The European and Australian girls on this tour are not under contract. In order to gain time, I agreed to put up \$675 personally for the USLTA ... as the tour progresses, many directors are saying they will not meet these fees," she said. "They will continue even if the girls are unsanctioned, but we don't want these international stars to be suspended or barred."⁵ An additional sanction application was submitted to the ILTF for an "open-to-all" tournament, and the tournament directors hoped a favorable response would come before the end of the week.

The British Motor Cars Women's Tennis Championships, the first stop on the Virginia Slims Circuit, was scheduled to open on Wednesday, January 6, 1971. In addition to providing the \$15,000 in prize money, British Motor Cars businessman Kjell Qvale paid \$10,000 to rent the Civic Auditorium in downtown San Francisco. With seating for 7,200 spectators, it was an ambitious venue for a women's-only tennis tournament. "British Motor Cars fully expects to operate at a loss," the *San Francisco Examiner* reported. "It has already conceded that. It is the women themselves who are most concerned with the tournament's success."⁶

The tournament was underwritten by British Motor Cars ... It deviated in format from most previous tennis events in that it was sold to the public strictly on the merits of the tennis being offered. There were no appeals for donations under the guise of “junior tennis development” or “for the good of the game” ... We paid for advertising and the tremendous publicity the event received through the news media was a direct result of the public interest in this first 16-woman event .⁷

--Dennis Van Der Meer, 1971

For this tournament, and most of the other indoor tournaments on the Virginia Slims Circuit, a portable tennis court surface was installed on the floor of the arena. The court, which was comprised of eight ten-foot-wide panels, required several people and several hours to install. Two portable courts were needed for the tour; to allow for shipping time, a “leap-frog” strategy was used, with the portable courts used on alternating weeks.⁸

On the morning of Sunday, January 3, 1971 – the day after the ban on cigarette commercials on television went into effect, and three days before the tour opened in San Francisco – Philip Morris CEO Joe Cullman appeared on *Face the Nation*, the 30-minute CBS Television current affairs talk show. During the live broadcast, Cullman was questioned by George Herman of CBS News, Morton Mintz of the *Washington Post*, and Earl Ubell, the Science Editor for WCBS-TV News about his company’s marketing strategies as well as the health hazards of smoking.

Mintz: ... if your company sponsors a Virginia Slims tennis tournament ... isn’t that really an effort to get around the intent and spirit of the law? Which is, as I understand it ... to stop the use of the airwaves to promote cigarette smoking?

Cullman: ... our sponsoring the Virginia Slims Invitational tournaments is to help the ladies in tennis to get a chance to get prize money and to show their prowess before a lot of people in the areas where they are playing ... There is no plan to telecast these tournaments ...

Ubell: Your company makes a number of other products besides cigarettes. Do you have any plans, for example, to increase the amount of other products besides cigarettes? Do you have any plans, for example, to increase the amount of air advertising, broadcast advertising, for these products which may bear, shall we say, a name resemblance or a look resemblance to cigarettes?

Cullman: ... We don't happen to have any such products. We are also in other businesses, such as chewing gum and beer ... I would say that, no, there is no intention ... to circumvent the law ... We have been responsible in many ways. Over the years we have discontinued all campus promotional activities when this was brought to our attention as not being appropriate. We have discontinued advertising in college newspapers. We have discontinued the use of celebrities, the use of sporting figures, in our advertising, and the use of testimonials by them.

Ubell: ... now that you are not advertising on radio and television, you are going to have a little bit of money left over. I think in your company something like \$30 million a year perhaps ... Are you going to use that money, for example, to do more research to settle the health question?

Cullman: ... this is a very competitive business. We will continue to spend money for promotional purposes, and some of it will go in print, some will go in point of sales, some will go in on-premises promotion. We will be spending it on an expanded sales force, but a lot will go into expanded research in a desire to get the answers to these questions.

Herman: What is a lot? What percentage of your advertising budget, for example?

Cullman: Well, there is a question that I anticipated. I don't know how to answer that question; they are so different items. When you try to get a message through to 200 million Americans and 65 million smokers, and you compare that figure to

a figure for research, this is a very difficult figure to come up with. I happen to know roughly what our company is going to spend; I think it is a large figure. We are building right now a whole new research center in Richmond. We are expanding. We have been expanding our commitment to research, both product research, product improvement, and research in the area of smoking and health.

Herman: ... one of the most controversial of the recent experiments has been the one of the smoking beagles, who were forced by a hole cut in their throats to smoke cigarette smoke, and came up with a number of cancers, neoplasms, growths, tumors, all different kinds of words to describe it ... how many dogs or laboratory animals of comparable size has the Tobacco Institute financed experimentation of that kind on? How many beagles have you had smoking?

Cullman: Well, we've had animal inhalation tests going on all over the world not sponsored only by the tobacco industry, but sponsored by independent research ... for over twenty-five years.

Mintz: ... In an ad that you ran in newspapers ... you said that you had spent \$35 million to support independent research ... What are you spending on finding ways to make tobacco, cigarette smoking, less addictive?

Cullman: We have no program that I know of to try to help people to stop smoking. We do talk to the question of whether or not cigarettes are hazardous. We do not believe that cigarettes are hazardous; we don't accept that. But we are working with the government, working very hard with the government, on various methods of ascertaining whether or not cigarettes can be found to be hazardous.

Mintz: Do you believe that cigarettes are safe? Have they been proved to be safe, Mr. Cullman?

Cullman: I believe they have not been proved to be unsafe.

Mintz: Well, in view of the fact that they haven't been proved to be safe, what is the justification that you would offer for spending ... \$3 billion in the last twenty years to promote their use when there is that uncertainty, when we have an excess of 200,000 to 300,000 deaths a year, when there is all this evidence, which you don't feel is conclusive--what is the reason for promoting its use when it might cause cancer, heart disease and so forth?

Cullman: ... There are a great many people in the United States and all over the world who enjoy smoking, who find it satisfies a very important human need. We think these people are entitled to the best possible product we can produce. That is essentially our job.

Mintz: Now embryos don't have much choice, fetuses don't. They don't like to smoke. The British Medical Research Council did a study of all the 17,000 babies born in a single week in the United Kingdom, as you doubtless know. The Council found that those babies born to mothers who smoked during pregnancy were in significantly higher proportion small, weighing under five and a half pounds approximately than the babies born to mothers who did not smoke, and there was a higher rate of stillbirths and of deaths within twenty-five days of birth. My question is, in view of this study, which is the largest and the most elaborate of its kind ever made, is it right to promote smoking among women with Virginia Slims and the other brands especially marketed for them with no warning as to the danger to the embryo that may exist?

Cullman: I would say that I did read that report, and I concluded from that report that it's true that babies born from women who smoke are smaller, but they are

just as healthy as the babies born to women who do not smoke. Some women would prefer having smaller babies.⁹

The following day, Monday, January 4, Gladys traveled to San Francisco to have a meeting with all of the players. She informed the group that the USLTA was willing to reinstate the American players who became contract professionals in Houston, with the exception of Billie Jean and Rosie. According to the USLTA, since Billie Jean and Rosie became contract professionals in 1968, were reinstated as independent professionals in the spring of 1970, and became contract professionals for a second time during the Houston tournament, they were not eligible for another reinstatement. The other Americans were adamant in their solidarity; unless the USLTA included Billie Jean and Rosie, none of them were interested in reinstatement.¹⁰

The seedings for the tournament were determined, and since Billie Jean, Rosie and Nancy won the most recent tournaments, they were the top three seeds; Ann Jones was given the fourth seed. The field of sixteen players was supposed to include either Julie Heldman or Pat Walkden of South Africa. However, those two players were injured, and the final spot was filled by Esme Emanuel, a South African who was attending San Francisco State University. The singles and double draws were then made, and starting times for the matches were assigned.¹¹

For subsequent tournaments, seedings would be based on players' results in previous weeks' events. Since the process of making a tournament draw was an excellent story angle for sports reporters, draw selections would be part of a social event to which the local press would be invited. To add to the excitement, players were to be involved in draw proceedings by blindly choosing their own places on the drawsheet.

During the meeting between Gladys and the players, tour policies were discussed and established. Pip was given authority to fine any player \$50 for yelling at a linesperson, \$100 for throwing a racquet, or \$500 for arriving late for a match. Other policies, for the benefit of spectators, were adopted: yellow balls would be used, there would be no rest break if a match entered a third set, the tournament promoter had the choice of using a nine-point or twelve-point tiebreak, the losing singles semifinalists were

expected to play a third-place playoff match, and every player in the singles draw was expected to play doubles.¹²

In order to make the tour a success, every player needed to be actively involved in publicity and promotions. This included instructional clinics, newspaper and radio interviews, pro-am doubles tournaments, sponsor parties and other appearances. Players who lost early in the week were needed to travel to the next city on the schedule to promote the following week's event. It was going to be a hectic schedule, but all the players realized the necessity of making themselves available.¹³

*To build up interest in the circuit, I had made an agreement with the players that each would conduct a clinic every week, and do at least two TV or radio interviews.*¹⁴

-- Gladys Heldman, 1979

Gladys was grateful that Pip Jones was accompanying his wife Ann during the tour. Pip was the tour manager for the National Tennis League from 1968 through 1970, when Ann, Billie Jean, Rosie and Françoise Durr were contract professionals touring under George MacCall. Pip volunteered to be Gladys' tour manager, and in this capacity, he was given the responsibility of assessing player fines, scheduling media interviews, coordinating the transportation of the portable court surface to each city on the tour, and other duties.

Gladys told the players that she would keep them updated with the latest news via monthly letters that would be mailed in advance to tournament directors for distribution. In addition, Gladys would meet with the players on a monthly basis to discuss how the tour was progressing, address any problems and make suggestions for improvements. Future meetings were scheduled to be held during the tournaments in New York and Las Vegas.

The girls were wonderful. They helped sell the event, attended press luncheons, gave radio and TV interviews and made personal appearances. Rosie Casals had

*her own team of ticket sellers drumming up sales ... In contrast, the support from the Northern California Tennis Association was nil and only a very few of the approximately 60 tennis teaching pros participated in the selling of tickets.*¹⁵

-- Dennis Van Der Meer, 1971

Karen Krantzcke and Judy Dalton gave their opinions about the upcoming tour to the *San Francisco Examiner*. “All the men are quite established,” Karen said. “They don’t think we contribute anything and don’t deserve much prize money. We’re on this tournament circuit to get away for a bit, to avoid competing for fan interest with Rod Laver and Pancho Gonzalez, to prove we can draw on our own.” Judy added that she decided to play on the Virginia Slims Circuit “as a matter of principle. We are expected to play the Australian national circuit or face reprimands. Then they set up tournaments like that in Victoria with a draw of sixty-four and only \$600 prize money.”¹⁶

Most of the players stayed with local families to save money... and to ensure we had some supporters. I remember one night, my doubles partner Judy Dalton and I stopped off at a diner on our way back to the place we were staying. It was I am and we looked at one another, not knowing whether to order dinner or an early breakfast! ... Having California girls like Rosie and Billie Jean certainly helped bring people along to see the matches that week ...

-- Françoise Durr, 2010

When the tournament started at 11:00 am on Wednesday, January 6, the ILTF had not yet responded to the application for “open-to-all” status; Gladys and Larry hoped the approval would come before the tournament concluded. Meanwhile, Mary Ann Curtis opened the schedule with a 6-3 6-3 victory over Stephanie DeFina Johnson. Other matches in the day session, which had an admission charge of \$1.50, included a win by Billie Jean King over Esme Emanuel, Kerry Melville’s defeat of 35-year old Darlene Hard, and newlywed Nancy Richey Gunter – making her first appearance in a stylish tennis dress, after wearing shorts her entire career – easily advancing past Valerie Ziegenfuss 6-1 6-2. Denise Carter, scheduled to play Peaches Bartkowicz in the fifth

match of the day session, misunderstood her starting time and arrived late, resulting in a \$50 fine. Instead of earning \$300 for her first-round loss, Denise was given \$250.¹⁷

Three singles matches were played on Wednesday night. Everyone involved in staging the tournament must have been disappointed with the attendance of only 600 spectators. The evening session started at 7:30 pm, with San Francisco's own Rosie Casals serving five aces in overwhelming Australian Karen Krantzcke 6-2 6-0. "She just hit me off the court," Karen said after the match. Ann Jones then made a successful tour debut with a 6-4 6-3 win over Kristy Pigeon, another product of the Bay area. In the day's final match, Francoise Durr was tested by Judy Dalton before prevailing 6-2 7-5. Francoise's reward for her win was a second-round encounter with Billie Jean on Thursday night. "I'll try to do my best," Francoise told Ed Schoenfeld of the *Oakland Tribune*, "but Billie Jean's better than I am. She beats me nearly every time."¹⁸

*The tournament had several innovations, some good and some not so good. For the first time in tennis, officials were paid. We had set a budget of \$20 per match and equipped each one with an official's white and black striped shirt. We experimented with various methods of officiating to reduce the ridiculously large number of people it takes to umpire a match ... We tried new ways of presenting the players. We had them stand behind a curtain (out of reach of autograph hounds) and introduced them individually. Each walked onto the court separately. The spectators seemed to enjoy this approach.*¹⁹

-- Dennis Van Der Meer, 1971

On Thursday morning, Billie Jean and Rosie held a news conference via telephone with reporters in Milwaukee, where the tour was coming in two weeks. "It looks very good," said Rosie about the tour's debut the previous day. "The crowd hasn't been dominated by either men or women, but has been mostly mixed and there's a very good chance that we're going to make it as a tour just like the men have." The reporters inquired about the possibility of Margaret Court's participation on the tour, and Rosie

stretched the truth when she replied, “We’ve talked to her and she’s definitely interested. We’d like to have her, but no agreement has been reached.”²⁰

*Since I’m no women’s libber, I wasn’t crazy for an exclusive female tour. Naturally, I sympathized with the aim of increasing women’s prize money, but I honestly didn’t believe we were entitled to equal money with men until we could prove that the public wanted to see us play as much as they wanted to see the men. I did not want to confine my tennis to the United States since I felt an obligation to support my own association in Australia and do what I could to develop junior tennis at home. Also, we enjoyed traveling in Europe and South Africa ...*²¹

-- Margaret Court, 1975

Rosie’s 6-1 6-3 quarterfinal win over Mary Ann Curtis entertained the one thousand youngsters who were admitted free of charge to Thursday’s day session as part of a Kid’s Day promotion. Afterward, Ann Jones handed Kerry Melville one of the worst defeats of her career, a 6-1 6-0 demolition that took only forty minutes. Mary Ann and Kerry received some consolation by winning their doubles matches in the afternoon; Curtis and Valerie Ziegenfuss defeated Kristy Pigeon and Denise Carter 1-6 6-3 6-4, and Melville and Karen Krantzcke won against Esme Emanuel and Stephanie DeFina Johnson 1-6 6-4 6-1.²²

Only 750 spectators were on hand for Thursday’s evening session. After a brief pro-celebrity mixed doubles match, with Kristy Pigeon and Doug McClure defeating Denise Carter and James Franciscus 22-20, Billie Jean and Francoise Durr took the court for the feature match. Francoise won the first set 6-4 and was two games away from winning the match when the second set reached 5-5. At game point for a 6-5 lead, Francoise hit a passing shot that was out by less than an inch. It was the turning point of the match; Billie Jean went on to win that game and the set 7-5, and in the final set she allowed Francoise only one game. “I should have lost when the match reached five-all in the second. I was hitting the ball too hard and crashing it all over the court,” said Billie

Jean afterward. "I suppose that comes from not having played enough competitive tennis. The last tournament was Wembley, nearly eight weeks ago. When you are off, you do anything to win. I had to finally stay in the backcourt and play a soft looping game, which is not my style of play." Francoise was less talkative after the match, only saying "she's playing in America and has all the people for her" as she walked past reporters.²³

While Nancy Richey Gunter and Peaches Bartkowicz played their quarterfinal match, Billie Jean talked to reporters at length about her game, the challenges in promoting the tournament, and the latest political battle with the USLTA. She complimented Francoise for playing well, but was unhappy with her own performance. "I'm not volleying well at all. My serve is terrible, isn't it? It's my toss. I'm not getting two in the same place," she explained. Billie Jean attributed her difficulties to new contact lenses that she was wearing, in addition to not having enough time to practice leading up to the tournament. "I'm dead from too much promoting the tournament and not enough practice. I'm not prepared well enough," she said. Billie Jean was due back on the court when Nancy and Peaches were finished, in a doubles match with Rosie against Kerry Melville and Karen Krantzcke. "I'm really tired now but I welcome the chance to play doubles. It's the only way I can sharpen up."²⁴

Scanning the empty seats, Billie Jean admitted how disappointing it was to play in front of a sparse crowd. "I hate to play with no people in the stands, it drives me crazy. I need atmosphere to play," she explained. "It's like being an actress and walking on the stage to find the theater empty." Billie Jean suggested the low turnout was due to the fact that an all-women's professional tennis tour was "something new."²⁵

The reporters were very interested to learn about the USLTA's offer to reinstate all of the American women, with the exception of Billie Jean and Rosie. "It would seem that Bob Colwell is more concerned with his personal feelings than he is with the advance of tennis. He wants to keep us out on the grounds that we were tour professionals once before," Billie Jean revealed, referring to her and Rosie's contract in the National Tennis League from 1968 to 1970. In explaining the USLTA decision, Alastair Martin told UPI sports writer Bob Stewart that "all the girls, with the exception

of Billie Jean and Rosemary Casals, can be reinstated. Present regulations do not permit a player to change status merely by saying so. A contract pro can be reinstated once, as were Billie and Miss Casals. But you cannot have players flip-flopping and that is why the rules of the USLTA and ILTF wisely do not permit more than one reinstatement.”²⁶

Billie Jean may not have been aware of the regulation when she and the other players signed the one-dollar contract with Gladys during the Houston tournament three months earlier, since she initially told reporters that asking for USLTA reinstatement was a possibility. Nevertheless, Billie Jean was unconcerned with Bob Colwell’s stipulation that she and Rosie were the two exceptions to the USLTA offer. “He may be in for a surprise,” she told reporters in San Francisco. “We are all pledged not to return unless all of us are reinstated ... It really doesn’t matter to me if I’m reinstated or not. All I’d miss is the chance to play Wightman Cup and Federation Cup and I have no intention of playing either. In order to be accepted for Wightman Cup last year I had to go through ten days of applications and appeals. I really feel like they took advantage of me. I’ll never go through that again as long as the same people are running the USLTA.” Annoyed at the national association’s categorization of amateurs, registered players and contract professionals,” Billie Jean said, “I just want to play tennis, and forget about all the politics. It’s really stupid, all these labels. It’s simple just to call it pro tennis.”²⁷

*Scheduling 16 players in a four day event on one court presented some problems. Although we used a 9-point tie-breaker, the matches still went to one or two o’clock in the morning ... We compounded our scheduling problems by playing a few celebrity matches ... The problem with playing so late is that officials get tired and make bad calls, spectators who leave early feel cheated because they did not see all the tennis, and those who stay are so tired that they don’t show again the next night.*²⁸

-- Dennis Van Der Meer, 1971

Good news came from London on Friday, January 8 when incoming USLTA president Bob Colwell convinced ILTF secretary Basil Reay to give “open-to-all” status

to the first six tournaments on the Virginia Slims Circuit. Reay agreed to reduce the ILTF sanction fee from \$480 to \$240 for the tournaments in San Francisco, Long Beach, Milwaukee, Oklahoma City, Chattanooga and Philadelphia. With “open-to-all” tournament status, Ann Jones and Francoise Durr (considered independent professionals still under the jurisdiction of their national associations) could play against the American players (who were categorized as contract professionals) and not have their eligibility endangered. The reduced ILTF sanction fee would run only until the tournament in Philadelphia, the same week in which the USLTA annual meeting would be held. At that meeting, if the USLTA decided to reinstate the American women as independent professionals, there would no longer be a need for “open-to-all” status approval from the ILTF.

In addition to the \$240 ILTF sanction fee, all of the tournaments on the Virginia Slims Circuit were responsible for paying the full USLTA sanction fee of 6% of prize money. For Joyce Turley, the tournament organizer at the upcoming \$10,000 Virginia Slims Invitational in Oklahoma City, paying for the ILTF and USLTA sanction fees – a total of \$840 – would require additional fundraising.

*Gladys asked me to pay the fees ... that was like a million dollars back then.*²⁹
-- Joyce Turley, 2012

A reported two thousand spectators were present on Friday night to watch Rosie play Nancy in the first of two semi-final singles matches. Rosie employed Billie Jean’s game plan for playing Nancy, designed to defuse her powerful groundstrokes: hit deep soft shots down the middle of the court, make her reach for wide shots, and hit high-bouncing shots over her shoulder. When given the chance, Rosie hoped to move forward and use her excellent ability at the net. The match started evenly, as both players held serve for the first nine games. With Nancy serving at 4-5, Rosie finally broke through to take the set 6-4.³⁰

Rosie took a 4-2 lead in the second set before Nancy won three games to forge ahead 5-4. “When I got 4-2 in the second I started to play too cautiously and allowed her to catch me,” Rosie said later. “At that point all I wanted to do was keep the ball in play and maintain my serve.” Serving for the second set at 5-4, Nancy faltered and Rosie evened the set at 5-5. The score reached 6-6, and for the first time in the tournament, a nine-point tiebreak decided the set. Rosie took a quick 3-0 lead and closed out the match by taking the tiebreak 5-0. During the course of the two-hour match, Rosie served ten aces and dominated the net with ten overhead winners. “I have never seen Rosie play better tennis,” said Billie Jean. “She hit everything with control and had great second serves.”³¹

The other semi-final match was the twenty-ninth meeting between Billie Jean and Ann Jones. Throughout their ten-year rivalry, the two women played many memorable matches against each other. In 1967, Billie Jean defeated Ann in the finals of Wimbledon and Forest Hills, but Ann gained some revenge by ending Billie Jean’s three-year reign at Wimbledon in 1969. In two of their most pressure-filled encounters, Billie Jean was a three-set winner at the 1966 Wightman Cup and the 1970 Wightman Cup, both of which were crucial to the U. S. team’s victory. Since a close match in San Francisco was expected, everyone was shocked when Billie Jean won 6-0 6-0 in only 35 minutes. On only a few occasions did Ann come close to winning a game; in one instance she held a 40-love lead, only to see Billie Jean sweep five points in a row.³²

Afterward, Billie Jean said it was the best match she had played in over two years. While she admitted that Ann did not play nearly as well as she was capable, Billie Jean was happy with her improved serve. “In last night’s match, there was no consistency in my serve at all,” Billie Jean said. “I couldn’t seem to toss the ball up the same way twice in a row. Fortunately, we had to play doubles last night and allowed me to get straightened out. Or at least I think so.”³³ When asked about playing her best friend and doubles partner in the final on Saturday, Billie Jean observed that “Rosie is playing the best tennis of her life in this tournament. She really hit the ball solid tonight. She’ll be real tough to beat.”³⁴

An interesting observation was the tolerance of the players towards the numerous grinding TV cameras and towards the curious who came out to watch tennis for the first time and who were not familiar with traditional tennis etiquette. It seemed the players were so intent on the business of winning that these extraneous distractions were no longer as big a factor as they used to be when ego and alibi were more important than the prize money. ³⁵

-- Dennis Van Der Meer, 1971

On Saturday morning, J. Howard “Bumpy” Frazer – the tournament chairman of the Western Open in Cincinnati and a future USLTA president – opened the *New York Times* and read Billie Jean’s comments that she “couldn’t care less about reinstatement. The only tourneys they (USLTA) can keep me out of are the Wightman Cup and Federation Cups, and I have no intention of playing either.” Frazer photocopied the article and sent it to Stan Malless, with his comment that “Billie Jean has stated exactly why all professional tennis players will become contract pros as long as the present system prevails. She can play in every one of our tournaments which she wishes plus the contract pro circuit.” ³⁶

On Saturday evening, as Ann Jones and Nancy Richey Gunter opened the program with a third-place playoff match, Billie Jean stood in the lobby of the Civic Auditorium and counted the number of fans entering the doors. ³⁷ For the semifinals on the previous night, the attendance was reported as 2,000; for the last night of the tournament, the attendance was reportedly 3,200. Ann, after collecting \$1,400 for her 6-4 6-4 win over Nancy, told Eric Prewitt of the Associated Press that “the women have been getting a raw deal. Men control tennis. The promoters are men, and most of the players are men. Naturally, they make sure men get most of the money.” ³⁸

Attendance numbers are always hyped. We didn’t have 2,000 paid spectators for the whole week. Jerry could see the handwriting on the wall, this was going to be a big loser ... he went to Kjell the day before the finals and said, “Kjell, I’ve run this as well as I could, I’ve gotten great publicity.” We were front page of the

*newspapers, we had television there every night, it was great exposure, but he said, "Kjell, this is a big loser, we're going to lose \$15,000 in this first event ... When I'd walk into the arena and I'd see Jerry, he'd turn around and walk the other way. He so hated being connected with a loser."*³⁹

-- Larry King, 2012

The singles final between Billie Jean and Rosie lasted only 49 minutes. With Rosie having difficulty with her first serves, Billie Jean broke at 3-2 in the first set and at 3-3 in the second en route to a 6-3 6-4 win. "I played well tonight. I got a big percentage of first serves and first volleys in. Rosie played two loose games – she missed some first volleys – and those were the only service breaks ... With the kind of game that both Rosie and I play, it is imperative that we get in our first serve and first volley. That was the difference tonight. I just made fewer mistakes with my volleys. I really can't remember the last time I was that sharp at the net. I don't think I made more than two or three errors on volleys. The only times Rosie suffered a service break were when she missed a first volley coming to the net. I still say she's playing the best tennis of her life. Rosie is much sounder in all areas of her game."⁴⁰

When told she lost nine points on serve in the first set and only three points on serve in the second, Billie Jean admitted, "I can hardly believe it. I've served so badly lately. It just doesn't figure." She was also relieved to have all the problems with her knees finally put behind her. "I haven't felt so strong in three years," she said. "I got my wheels back. It's the greatest feeling in the world. I can run again to the net and get angles on my shots ... You can't imagine how good it feels to be able to go up to the net and play the volleys."⁴¹

Billie Jean and Rosie went back on court for the doubles final against Ann Jones and Francoise Durr. After winning the first set 6-4 and serving at 5-5 in the second, Billie Jean faltered and was broken for the first time all day. Billie Jean made two volley errors in the ensuing tiebreak, but it was only a temporary lapse; she and Rosie cruised through the decisive third set 6-1 and split the first prize of \$500.

The San Francisco tournament was a milestone for Billie Jean and women's tennis, in terms of the prize money offered. "That's the largest women's payoff ever offered in a one-week tournament," she noted. "First prize in the US Open was \$7,000 last year, but that was for two weeks. It's the most I've ever earned in week, that's for sure." Billie Jean collected a total of \$4,550 for the week and Rosie earned \$2,750, prompting Gladys to declare, "If we make our prize money sufficient, our women will have more dignity as well as more dough."⁴²

There were many skeptics, such as Eric Prewitt of the Associated Press, who were not convinced the women's tour could become a financial success. Despite the pleadings of Jerry Diamond, Kjell Qvale of British Motor Cars announced his company would renew its sponsorship of the tournament for the following year.

...when talking to Billie Jean on the court, Kjell said, "We're going to do it again, Billie Jean. We're going to come back next year." Jerry was just defeated, it was one of his worst fears. He'd done a great job and lost \$15,000. Kjell said, "We're going to do it again. I like the publicity. I couldn't have bought this publicity for British Motor Cars for \$15,000. I like the event, I like the crowds, I like everything about it. Jerry, we're going to do this again. I don't feel I'm losing money."⁴³

-- Larry King, 2012

On Sunday, most of the players prepared to travel to Long Beach for the next stop on the tour. Ann Jones and Nancy Richey Gunter flew into Chattanooga to promote the Virginia Slims Invitational that was scheduled to be played there in early February. On that same day, newspapers across the country published the recently released tentative USLTA national rankings for tournament results in 1970. As promised two months earlier, the USLTA did not include any contract professionals in the rankings. Cliff Richey and Stan Smith were correctly placed at the top two positions, followed by Clark Graebner and Tom Gorman. The remaining six spots in the top ten were filled by Jim Osborne, Jim McManus, Barry MacKay, Erik Van Dillen, Tom Edlefson, and Allen Fox

– a competent group of players, but hardly in the same class as Arthur Ashe, Marty Riessen, Bob Lutz, Charles Pasarell, Pancho Gonzalez and Dennis Ralston, all of whom were omitted due to their contract professional status.⁴⁴

The women's rankings were even more depleted. Patti Hogan, ranked fifth the previous year, was awarded the top position, followed by U. S. national Girls 18 champion Sharon Walsh and U. S. national Girls 16 champion Chris Evert. Seven members of the 1969 women's top ten – Nancy Richey, Julie Heldman, Peaches Bartkowicz, Mary Ann Curtis, Kristy Pigeon, Valerie Ziegenfuss and Denise Carter – were ignored due to their contract professional status, as were Billie Jean King and Rosie Casals. Actually, Billie Jean and Rosie had not held a USLTA national ranking since 1967, due to their contracts with George MacCall and the National Tennis League tour from 1968 through 1970.⁴⁵

Shortly after the release of the USLTA national rankings, Rex Bellamy of the *London Times* reported that the British Lawn Tennis Association intended to establish a precedent by listing British contract professionals – including WCT players Roger Taylor, Mark Cox and Graham Stilwell – for the first time in its national rankings. “Any national association excluding these players from rankings,” Bellamy wrote, referring to the USLTA, “are making fools of themselves and, at the same time, damaging the cause of open tennis and widening the breach between the national associations and the professional organization.”⁴⁶

Rosie Casals, speaking with Ron Rapoport of the *Los Angeles Times*, was just as critical of the USLTA rankings. “Patti is a good player, but she's not that good,” Rosie said about Patti Hogan's position at the top spot. “If I were her, I'd be embarrassed. It's bad for tennis and it's bad for her. It's an unfortunate thing that if you're a contract pro, you've lost your citizenship for some reason. I'm an American, and I'm entitled to an American ranking.” Rosie suggested that the professionals needed to develop their own rankings, perhaps based on prize money winnings and updated on a weekly basis, similar to the system established in professional golf. She agreed that independent professional Cliff Richey deserved to be the top-ranked U. S. men's player. “That's the only good

ranking there is,” Rosie allowed. “He would be number one in any case, but after that, there’s nothing. That’s exactly what the rankings mean now: nothing.”⁴⁷

Nancy Richey Gunter continued the criticism of the USLTA rankings during a press luncheon at the Parliament Club in Chattanooga on Monday, January 11. Speaking with Terry Hardwick of the *Chattanooga News-Free Press*, Nancy said she “really couldn’t care less” about being excluded from the rankings list from which she had been number one in four previous years. “The USLTA doesn’t have any money to play for. I’d rather make \$50,000 playing tennis than have a ranking,” Nancy laughed. “Look, we gave the USLTA two years to come up with some money and they said they couldn’t. Gladys Heldman called Virginia Slims and within a month they gave us a go-ahead.”⁴⁸

Ann Jones, whom Hardwick described as “an independent netter who is not a member of the boycotting group,” deviated from the tour’s party line when she said “I hope that neither side wins. I hope that whatever agreement is made, that it is for the good of tennis.”⁴⁹ Ann also expressed her hope that each side would be reasonable in its positions.

Joining Ann and Nancy in Chattanooga was Ellen Merlo, a Philip Morris employee who was an assistant brand manager for Virginia Slims cigarettes. Ellen came to work for the Philip Morris marketing department in 1969, and she was assigned to be present at all of the tour’s Virginia Slims Invitationals. Publicizing the tournaments was her primary responsibility, in addition to players’ media interviews and appearances. Ellen traveled the circuit with the players, usually arriving into town early for pre-tournament promotion.

Before the press luncheon in Chattanooga, Ann, Nancy and Ellen were given a tour of the Manker Patten Tennis Center, where the Virginia Slims Invitational would be played. Manker Patten was billed as the only complex in the world to have clay, grass, hard and indoor courts. Although the visitors “expressed delight” with the opportunity to play in Chattanooga, they were actually not impressed with the venue.

*We had to walk through a field to get to it. Nancy Richey walked in and was obviously disappointed. "I guess it will be all right when they put the lights on." Well, the lights were on.*⁵⁰

-- Ellen Merlo, 1986

*We did play in some hole-in-the-wall places ... one in Chattanooga, at a tennis club ... I was glad I went in early to do the press conference and scope out the facility ... I swear they only had four 60-watt bulbs in the ceiling, you could barely see your hand in front of your face. I decided to sit that week out after seeing that one.*⁵¹

-- Nancy Richey, 2004

*Actually, the lighting system was not bad. It was fluorescent, direct-lighting and the ceiling was not too high, so it was actually quite acceptable ... I know we did some testing for foot candles and things like that, so the lighting was have been appropriate ... the only thing that I can think about with Nancy is she went down there and they had the safety lights on, a couple of bulbs in the back or in the front, sort of a security lighting ... There were six courts between the clubhouse and the indoor facility, with a meandering walk to get to the indoor courts ... on the outside they had a stadium court, they had a clubhouse sitting up high so you could watch matches from up above, and they had the two indoor courts ... they actually had eight Har-Tru courts, they had four hard courts, and actually had two grass courts as well ... I thought it was well ahead of its time.*⁵²

-- Bill Tym, 2012

As Ann and Nancy were traveling back to California, Julie Heldman appeared at a press luncheon to promote the upcoming Philadelphia International Indoor Tennis Championships, the sixth stop on the Virginia Slims Circuit. The Philadelphia tournament was also a stop of the men's WCT tour, featuring thirty-two of the world's best male players. On Tuesday, January 12, at the Marriott Motor Hotel, members of the

media met with Julie, Arthur Ashe and tournament personnel. In discussing the women's professional tour, Julie insisted the group and its goals were not radical. "Don't get us wrong," she said. "This isn't women's lib. They are for the liberated militant. We aren't demanding. We aren't militant. We don't do a lot of thrusting. We just ask that you dig what we are doing."⁵³

The second stop on the Virginia Slims Circuit was the Billie Jean King Invitational, played at the Billie Jean King Tennis Center in the star's hometown of Long Beach, California. The tournament was promoted by Billie Jean's husband Larry, and thanks to the primary sponsor – the Long Beach *Independent Press-Telegram* newspaper – the event received weeks of advance publicity. Almost daily, the newspaper carried profiles on the tournament's participants, as well as prominent advertisements for the event. According to Larry, proceeds from the event – with tickets priced at \$4.00 and \$2.00 for adults, and \$3.00 and \$1.00 for youngsters – were to be used to build permanent spectator seating at the municipal tennis center, which was named in honor of Billie Jean in 1968.⁵⁴

The tournament was scheduled to be played the first two days – Thursday, January 14 and Friday, January 15 – outdoors at the park, with the semifinals and finals played indoors at the Long Beach City College gymnasium. Several days before the tournament started, most of the women professionals gave free tennis demonstrations and clinics at various locations throughout Long Beach, an effective method of promoting the upcoming tournament. On Monday, Billie Jean and Rosie gave two demonstrations for students at Long Beach Polytechnical High School, from which Billie Jean graduated in 1962. On Tuesday, most of the other women gave demonstrations and clinics. Darlene Hard and Judy Dalton appeared at Millikan High School, Mary Ann Curtis and Denise Carter went to Lakewood High School, Ann Jones and Pat Walkden gave a demonstration at Jordan High School, and Valerie Ziegenfuss and Peaches Bartkowicz went to Wilson High School.⁵⁵

The tournament was billed as a salute to the most famous tennis player to come out of Long Beach, and in every aspect it was a hometown event. Billie Jean's parents – Betty and Bill Moffitt – assisted in the promotion of the tournament, the Long Beach

Parks and Recreation Department was a co-sponsor, the ballboys and ballgirls were local junior tennis players, and the players were hosted by Long Beach families. The Moffitts, still living in the home where they raised their two children, hosted Rosie, Billie Jean and Larry.⁵⁶

Thursday's opening matches saw Valerie Ziegenfuss score a 7-6 6-3 upset win over Judy Dalton. Ann Jones repeated her previous week's success over Kerry Melville with a 6-3 6-2 win, and Mary Ann Curtis edged past Peaches Bartkowicz, 6-4 7-5. By the time Billie Jean faced Francoise Durr in the day's third match, there were 1000 spectators in attendance, eager to watch Billie Jean play her first tournament in Long Beach in ten years.

Just as she had done in San Francisco one week earlier, Durr started well and won the first set 6-4. When Durr reached 5-2 in the second set, Billie Jean was on the verge of an embarrassing first-round defeat. "Do you know what kept going through my mind?," Billie Jean said later. "I kept seeing people picking up tomorrow morning's paper and reading that I had been defeated. I said to myself, 'Oh no, don't let this happen this week. Next week, okay, but not this week. I can't get beat in my home town.'" ⁵⁷ Billie called on her reserves and leveled the set at 6-6, and the spectators prepared to watch the first tiebreak of the tournament. The nine-point tiebreak, appropriately nicknamed "sudden death," was won by the first player to win five points. In the nine-point tiebreak, if the score reached 4-4, it was simultaneous set point for both players – and in the case of a third set tiebreak, simultaneous match point for both players.

Billie Jean served the first two points of the tiebreak; she lost the opening point when Durr hit a forehand winner down the line, and she won the second point with a drop volley. Durr then served and forged ahead to 3-1 when Billie Jean made two consecutive backhand errors. The players changed sides and it was Billie Jean's turn to serve again. Durr won the point with an overhead smash, giving her a 4-1 lead and four match points. At a moment like this, interesting thoughts can creep into a player's mind. "I thought I had the match," Durr later told Larry King. "But do you know what was in my mind when I was a point away from victory? I thought, the tournament's going to hate me for this!" ⁵⁸ Such a lapse of concentration can be costly, and as a result, Durr lost the next

point when she failed to clear the net with a backhand return of serve. “When I was down 1-4 in the tiebreaker I was more resigned to losing,” Billie Jean admitted afterward, “but even then I was so nervous I almost lost grip of my racket. Luckily, Frankie hit the ball into the net.”⁵⁹ Serving at 4-2, Durr still had three more match points. Two nervous errors by Durr – one with a forehand, and another with a volley – made the score 4-4 and simultaneous match point for Durr and set point for Billie Jean. Durr served the “sudden-death” point, and both players cautiously played a lengthy baseline rally. When Durr finally made another forehand error – this time over the baseline – she sat down on the court, disgusted with herself for losing four consecutive match points. The third set was a mere formality and a repeat of their match in San Francisco the previous week; Durr’s concentration and motivation had evaporated, and a relieved and confident Billie Jean cruised with the loss of only one game.

After Stephanie DeFina Johnson defeated Darlene Hard 6-1 6-3 and Denise Carter won 6-1 6-4 against Betty Ann Grubb Hansen to complete the day session, Nancy Richey Gunter opened the evening program with a 6-3 6-3 win over Kristy Pigeon in front of 300 spectators. Rosie Casals wrapped up the first day’s matches with a victory over Australian Karen Krantzcke. Unlike their one-sided encounter the previous week in San Francisco, the two players had a close match, with Rosie eventually prevailing 6-2 7-6.

The following day, 900 fans assembled at the Billie Jean King Tennis Center to see the top seeds advance in their quarterfinal singles matches. Nancy was too steady for Denise Carter, and Mary Ann Curtis had difficulty returning Rosie Casals’ serve. Billie Jean raced through the first set against Stephanie DeFina Johnson, before meeting some resistance in the second. After her 6-1 6-4 win, Billie Jean talked about the pressures of promoting the tournament while being its headliner. “I’m just weary,” she told Bob Martin of the *Independent Press-Telegram*. “I started feeling tired before the end of the first set. I think I’m more mentally than physically exhausted. There have been so many places to go and things to do in helping to promote our women’s tournaments. The phone never seems to stop ringing when I’m home.”⁶⁰ Billie Jean was given a break before her next match, playing doubles with Rosie, while Denise Carter and Kristy Pigeon played Judy Dalton and Stephanie DeFina Johnson. After Denise and Kristy won

in three sets, Billie Jean and Rosie prepared to take the court against Darlene Hard and Betty Ann Grubb Hansen. Darlene was ready to play, but Betty Ann – who lived in nearby Santa Monica – had not yet arrived at the tennis center. Billie Jean and Rosie were given the win by default, and not wanting to deprive the fans of the final match of the day session (and another appearance by the tournament's top attraction), an exhibition doubles match was played. During the course of Billie Jean and Rosie's 10-6 win over Darlene and substitute partner Karen Krantzcke, Betty Ann arrived at the park; apparently she misunderstood her starting time and thought she was scheduled to play at a later time.⁶¹

In Friday evening's first match, Ann Jones crushed Valerie Ziegenfuss with the loss of only one game. Ann's win put her in Saturday's semifinals against Billie Jean, and a chance to make amends for the disastrous encounter in San Francisco, when Ann did not win a single game. Billie Jean knew she would have a challenging match with Ann, and was not expecting another one-sided result. "Oh, of course!" she told reporter Bob Martin. "That'll never happen again. That was just one of those nights when I could do no wrong and she never got started."⁶² Two doubles matches concluded the evening program at the outdoor tennis center – Ann Jones and Francoise Durr defeated Nancy Richey and Peaches Bartkowicz 6-1 7-5, and Kerry Melville and Karen Krantzcke won against Mary Ann Curtis and Valerie Ziegenfuss, 4-6 7-6 6-4.

During the windy and chilly evening, Rosie Casals sat among the 300 spectators in the bleachers and spoke with Ron Rapoport of the *Los Angeles Times* about the future of women's tennis and her own goals. Rosie said she was hopeful the tour would create interest in women's tennis, but she knew it was going to be a struggle. "Just the idea of women going out and making money has not been established," Rosie said. "But if we're going to spend the same amount of time on it and do the same work as men, we should make the same money as men." Part of the problem, Rosie explained, was getting better facilities for players and spectators. Overall, however, Rosie was confident the women would be successful. "It's something new and it's going to really grow. Women's tennis is good. You can't really compare it with men's tennis. They're two different games." Complimenting her good friend, Rosie told Rapoport that Billie Jean was "one of the

greatest players in the history of women's tennis. I don't think people respect her enough. They don't honor her game." Even though Rosie had won only four out of nineteen matches against Billie Jean, Rosie was hopeful that she might eventually turn the tide. "People think I can't beat her," she said. "They think I'm just her shadow. But I'm going to keep on trying." ⁶³

Saturday's semifinal matches started at 7:30 pm at the Long Beach City College gymnasium, with the portable Sportface court laid out over the wood floor. Earlier that day, in New York City, incoming USLTA vice president Walter Elcock issued a warning to the women players on the tour. Elcock was speaking at the annual meeting of the Eastern Lawn Tennis Association at the Roosevelt Hotel. Even though he was recently appointed by the USLTA to chair a committee formed to finding ways of cooperating with the women's tour, Elcock was less than diplomatic when he told the gathering "we have no intention of letting the girls dictate demands to the USLTA. If they continue to disrupt our tournaments, it will be our policy to bar the girls from championships like the United States Open until they get in line." Elcock was referring to the upcoming U. S. National Women's Indoor Championships in Winchester, Massachusetts. Several months earlier, Gladys offered the Winchester Tennis Association the appearances of the Virginia Slims players and \$12,500 in prize money if the event was renamed "Virginia Slims Nationals." Although Elcock did not approve of Gladys' negotiations with the Winchester Tennis Association, he did admit "we know we neglected the women in the past and we want to work out something to improve their position." ⁶⁴

In Long Beach, a near-capacity crowd of 3500 spectators arrived at the City College gymnasium to watch the semifinals. It was a repeat of the San Francisco semifinals, and with the same results. Rosie advanced easily against Nancy, whose concentration must have been affected when the portable net collapsed midway through the match. Rosie, no stranger to unusual playing circumstances from her days in the National Tennis League, found the incident amusing. After a twenty-minute delay to repair the net, Nancy offered little resistance, winning only one game in the second set. Billie Jean's match with Ann Jones was almost as one-sided as their match in San Francisco – a 6-2 6-0 affair that lasted only 34 minutes. "I thought I played my best

tennis of the week. I expected the match to be much closer. I thought Ann would really be psyched up after last week's loss. I think I played a little better against her in San Francisco. But I was getting a lot of first serves in, and I tried to keep forcing her all the time.”⁶⁵

For the finals on Sunday, another large crowd – nearly 3200 spectators – filled the gymnasium at Long Beach City College. In the opening third-place playoff, Nancy Richey reversed the results from San Francisco the previous week, defeating Ann Jones 8-6. In the championship singles match, Billie Jean continued her domination over Rosie, easily winning 6-1 6-2. Rosie held serve only once in the first set, and after taking a 2-1 lead in the second set, lost five games in a row. Billie Jean was nearly untouchable on her service games; except for one game, which went to deuce twice, she did not lose more than two points when she served. Accepting the winner's check from Larry for \$3600, Billie Jean thanked the *Independent Press-Telegram* “for taking a risk and sponsoring this tournament when almost no one seemed to think it would be a success.” She also expressed her gratitude to the fans of Long Beach for supporting the four-day tournament. “Bless your hearts for coming out,” Billie Jean told them. Rosie earned \$2200 for her runner-up placement, and told the crowd “the Old Lady played great tennis. Long Beach should be proud of her.”⁶⁶ Billie Jean and Rosie then collected an additional \$250 each for winning the doubles title over Ann Jones and Francoise Durr, 7-5 6-3.

Billie Jean's former boss from the National Tennis League, George MacCall, attended the matches on Saturday and Sunday and was impressed with the size of the crowd. He told Billie Jean's father, Bill Moffitt, that the crowd in Long Beach on Saturday night was bigger than the one drawn by Rod Laver and Roy Emerson the same night in Philadelphia in their \$10,000 winner-take-all match in the Tennis Champions Classic series. Bob Martin of the *Independent Press-Telegram* recalled that the last time there was a professional tennis event in Long Beach – in 1961 at the Civic Auditorium – only 277 fans showed up to watch the likes of Pancho Gonzalez, Andres Gimeno, Frank Sedgman and Barry MacKay. Billie Jean was elated with the strong turnout for the semifinals and finals at the Long Beach City College gymnasium. “Fantastic! Simply

great!” she told local reporter Bob Martin. “I knew it would be good, but I didn’t know it would be this good.”⁶⁷ The tournament was also a financial success. Larry King told Ron Rapoport of the *Los Angeles Times* that the gross receipts of \$30,000 were “exceptional.”⁶⁸

*... that was a bit of a promotion ... it was successful in that it turned a profit, some \$2,000 or \$3,000 ... but it was everybody pitching in a trying to get the thing accomplished with no structure. Don Desfor was teaching at Cerritos College and he was our tournament director, Harold Guiver was in charge of fundraising and he had a full-time job at Lincoln Mortgage. Pat Guiver helped with the tickets and Bill and Betty pitched in ... it was a bootstrap operation.*⁶⁹
 -- Larry King, 2012

The “exceptional” gross receipts included in-kind value of services and products from the *Independent Press-Telegram* newspaper, such as advertising, office space, and personnel to help with the tournament. The newspaper also contributed several thousand dollars in cash.

The Women’s Pro Tournament in Long Beach was superb! The first day’s King-Durr match was a classic from the psychological standpoint. Down three match points at 4-1 in the tiebreaker, Billie Jean showed the confidence and concentration necessary to be the champion. Durr seemed mentally unable to take the match that was in her hands – losing serve at 5-2 first set (two double faults) and 5-4, 6-5, second set. At these stages in the match it was definitely not Billie Jean’s play that made Durr lose. The match was a fascinating lesson. Billie Jean does so much good for tennis – all the clinics she gives, her sense of humor and her friendly attitude with the crowds are tremendous. If she could cut out the temperamental acts such as kicking balls and bouncing her racket on the court, all would be perfect. It’s interesting to note she does this only in matches that are one-sided and that do not force her concentrate – never in a close match. In terms

of excellent sportsmanship and charm (as well as good tennis), Mary Ann Curtis was tops.⁷⁰

Donna Judd

Fullerton, California

I am a physical education instructor at a local community college with a specialty in teaching and coaching tennis. Naturally, I was very pleased that the Virginia Slims Tennis Tournament held a tournament in a nearby area; I strongly encouraged the students in my service class and my tennis team members to attend the tournament, as well as attending myself. Without exception everyone, especially myself, enjoyed the tennis; women's play seems to be so much more interesting and exciting in terms of strategy. However, nearly without exception, my students mentioned the poor sportsmanship of the women "professionals." This impression is of real concern to me as I put a great deal of emphasis on the importance of good sportsmanship, especially with my teams. It is difficult for me to explain this seemingly double standard. "Professional" women are allowed to shout, throw rackets and step on them, hit balls out of the stadium, etc., while I expect my students to act like "professionals." There is an inconsistency here. How am I to explain this to a college student?⁷¹

Name withheld

Since they were not playing in the final day's matches in Long Beach, Judy Dalton, Kerry Melville, Karen Krantzcke, Stephanie DeFina Johnson and Valerie Ziegenfuss flew into Milwaukee on Sunday to promote the next tournament on the tour. The change in weather was jolting; the players departed California and its 70-degree weather and arrived in Milwaukee, where it was below 10-degrees. Many of the players were unprepared for the drastic temperature change and did not bring winter clothing with them.⁷²

The Milwaukee tournament, the first of several Virginia Slim Invitational events on the 1971 tour, was played at the Brook Club, an indoor facility located fourteen miles

from the city. On Monday, the five players practiced at the club and spoke with Phil Cash of the *Milwaukee Sentinel*. “I think it’s great,” Judy said about the women’s tour. “But the press hasn’t been entirely fair in presenting our side at times. Our rebellion came at the time when the women’s liberation was big and everyone thought we wanted an equal share of the money. That’s what the press was playing up and it was wrong. What we wanted was a more equal distribution in proportion to what the men were winning.”⁷³

Karen Krantzcke agreed with Judy, that the women players could not argue for the same amount of prize money as the men, but she also maintained that the women were more enjoyable to watch. “We couldn’t possibly be paid the same amount as the men, for then we would have to compete against them and that’s physically impossible,” she said. “I do feel that our women’s tour is more of a spectator sport than the men’s is because people are just getting tired of watching the one serve and return. The girls offer more rallies at the net, and that’s what everyone likes to see.”⁷⁴

The players talked about the joys and challenges in playing on the tour. “Personally, I like playing before an American audience,” Judy said. “They’re more vocal and applaud more enthusiastically than either the Australian or English crowds.” Valerie Ziegenfuss said she also enjoyed the appreciative crowds, but admitted that “the tour as a whole is very draining physically. For all of us, except Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals and Ann Haydon Jones, it’s a new experience. Billie Jean, Rosie and Ann have the edge on us right now. We’re not used to playing in the morning one day and then coming back the following night. It throws your whole system out of whack.”⁷⁵ Kerry Melville felt that she and her two fellow Australians were at a disadvantage since “we haven’t been in serious competition for about six months. The tournament in San Francisco and the Long Beach one were our first in a long time. We didn’t play in any Australian tournaments, because we’re at odds with our tennis federation. But once we get more playing time in, we’ll even out the competition in the tournament.”⁷⁶

Only a few hours earlier, and perhaps unknown to the Australian players at the time they spoke with Phil Cash at the Brook Club, the Lawn Tennis Association of Australia (LTAA) delayed its motion to suspend Judy, Kerry and Karen. The three

players skipped the Australian circuit – without permission from the LTAA – to play on the tour, which made them “not in good standing.” Confusion then arose over the players’ status. The LTAA did not consider Judy, Kerry and Karen to be contract professionals – probably because they were not receiving annual guarantees, as the male contract professionals on the WCT tour were getting – and felt they were still under its control.⁷⁷

Since the tournaments on the Virginia Slims Circuit were approved by the ILTF as open-to-all events, independent professionals Ann Jones and Francoise Durr could participate with no repercussions, and they could still represent their countries in international team events. The American players, still considered by the USLTA to be contract professionals, could play in any open-to-all tournament, and were only restricted from playing in Wightman Cup or Federation Cup, and were ineligible for inclusion in the national rankings. The three Australian players, however, were out on a limb. If the LTAA insisted on maintaining jurisdiction over them, the association could have them banned from all sanctioned tournaments, including the ILTF-approved open-to-all tournaments on the Virginia Slims Circuit as well as all the other major tournaments in the world.

The LTAA reprieve, as a result, was good news – at least for the time being. Peter Stone of the *Melbourne Age* reported that “the thinking of top tennis officials now is that these Heldman tournaments were started as a type of suffragette movement to get more prize money for women, and that all should be forgiven.” Stone indicated that the LTAA, which had earlier sent a cable to the USLTA declaring the Australian women as “not in good standing”, decided to delay any decision until a further investigation was made.⁷⁸

The Virginia Slims Invitational of Milwaukee opened on Thursday, January 21. Promoter Jock Miller, a teaching professional at the Brook Club, organized several pre-tournament events, including a pro-am mixed doubles event. In addition to the five players who flew into Milwaukee on Sunday, the other women were scheduled to arrive in town on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday. Nearly the same field from Long Beach was publicized to appear at the Brook Club, with one exception. Betty Ann Grubb

Hansen was not entered, and Tory Fretz – who achieved her best U. S. national singles ranking of number four in 1966 – traveled to Milwaukee for her tour debut. Billie Jean, Rosie, Ann and Nancy were once again placed in the four seeded positions.

Also present in Milwaukee was Bill Cutler, the assistant brand manager for Virginia Slims. Along with Ellen Merlo, Cutler made sure that Virginia Slims was represented correctly at every tour event that bore the brand name. The brand spared no expense in providing banners, press kits, programs, and a large scoreboard. The players were given attractive cardigan sweaters, trimmed in the brown and gold Virginia Slims colors and bearing a “Virginia Slims Invitational” patch.

Karen Krantzcke and I were promoting the tournament at Kohl’s Food Store, the local sponsor. A woman came up to us and said, “Cigarette smoking is terrible, you shouldn’t be doing this.” Karen was shocked and didn’t know what to say. I told the woman that Philip Morris wasn’t encouraging us to smoke and that they were doing a good thing by supporting us. Sometimes it wasn’t easy to convince people.

-- Judy Dalton, 2010

On Wednesday, Nancy Richey Gunter called tournament officials with the news that she was under doctor’s orders to rest for several weeks due to a tonsillectomy. In addition, Darlene Hard was a last minute withdrawal from the tournament, the result of a leg injury. The draw needed to be adjusted: Francoise Durr replaced Nancy as the fourth seed, and alternates Ceci Martinez and Esme Emanuel were placed in the two open spots.

That evening, 350 spectators arrived at the Brook Club to watch four first-round singles matches. Promoter Jock Miller included four local players in the draw, hoping to create some interest on the opening night of the tournament. Billie Jean was scheduled to play against 45-year old Barbara Scofield Davidson, a moderately successful former player who won the U. S. National Hardcourt women’s doubles title twenty-one years earlier. Since Davidson was unable to play due to illness, the evening program was reduced to three matches. Francoise Durr played Janet Smith, and Peaches Bartkowicz

had a familiar opponent in Sharon Pritula Banzhaf. Sharon played junior tennis in the Detroit area in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and she later relocated to Wisconsin and earned the state's number-one singles ranking. Peaches and Francoise probably did not want to humiliate their local opponents in front of their hometown crowd and allowed them one game; Peaches won 6-1 6-0 and Francoise won 6-1 6-0.⁷⁹

Rosie Casals was also on the schedule that evening, and her opponent was 50-year old Valerie Scott, a teaching pro at the River Club in Milwaukee. Rosie was not happy about the situation. "Something like this should never happen," she said after winning the match, also with the loss of just one game. "People pay to see us go all out, and in a case like this, you are cheating the public." Rosie suggested that local players "should play each other in the opening round, not one of the seeded players. It just isn't fair to the fans, nor to the tennis players." During Rosie's match, the spectators became restless, prompting the chair umpire to call for silence several times. Asked afterwards if the noisy crowd disrupted her concentration during the easy match, Rosie said, "I couldn't care if they get stoned."⁸⁰ Judy Dalton and several other players sat in the bleachers and found Rosie's predicament amusing, and they were thankful they were not the ones drawn to play against the local players.

For the tournament's matches on Thursday, 900 of the 1400 available seats were filled. Billie Jean defeated Kerry Melville, 6-1 6-3, but the match was closer than the score indicated. Kerry engaged Billie Jean in many lengthy rallies, but could not capitalize on the important points. "It's been rather frustrating," Kerry said after her third first-round loss in three weeks. "I've been paired with Ann Haydon Jones in the first two tournaments and now Billie Jean. They are both great tennis players, but I want to win one. I had my opportunities to win, but I just couldn't make the most of them. I was dropping too many shots."⁸¹ All of the other first-round matches were also decided in straight sets, with the exception of the final match of the night, an encounter between Ann Jones and Peaches Bartkowicz.

Ann had won four of five previous matches against Peaches, including quarterfinal meetings at Forest Hills in 1967 and 1968. When Peaches defeated Ann in the finals of the Border Championships in South Africa in December 1969, Peaches

called it “the greatest win of my life.” Ann’s game presented all sorts of problems for Peaches, as it did for many other players. Ann liked to disrupt her opponent’s rhythm with a variety of high looping topspin shots and low skidding slices. Unless a player was very effective at attacking the net – which Peaches was not – she was at the mercy of Ann’s spinning shots during backcourt rallies. Peaches’ flat groundstrokes were effective in their own way; her forehands and backhands were hit with a short punching motion, yet she was very accurate and could keep the ball deep.

Peaches started well, racing to 5-1 in the first set and holding two set points before Ann came back to level at 6-6. Ann reached 4-3 in the tiebreak but could not close it out, losing the 4-4 sudden-death point. Unshaken by her missed opportunity, Ann slowed down the pace of the match, taking her time on the changeovers. She sat down, leisurely toweled off and sipped water, while an impatient Peaches paced along the baseline and fumed. “I haven’t been playing in tournaments for seventeen years without learning a few of the tricks,” Ann admitted after the match.⁸² She won the second set in another tiebreak, and the players battled to 4-4 in the third set. Ann broke Peaches in the ninth game, and then held her own serve to win the two-hour match.

The Friday quarterfinals provided no surprises; the four seeds advanced easily, although Françoise Durr was tested in her match with Valerie Ziegenfuss. After cruising through the first set 6-1, Durr lost the second set in a tiebreak before re-establishing herself and winning the final set 6-2. Saturday’s singles semifinals were set; for the third week in a row, Billie Jean was scheduled to play Ann Jones, and Rosie hoped to reverse the results of her previous match with Françoise, when the Frenchwoman won 7-5 9-7 at Wembley in November 1970.

In the semifinals, Billie Jean won four of her first five service games against Ann without the loss of a point. Leading at 6-5, she broke Ann to win the first set, and then won the second set at the cost of three games. After her third loss to Billie Jean in as many weeks, Ann said, “I’m getting closer and perhaps by the end of the tour, who knows? Billie Jean was awfully strong on her service and following volleying and it was difficult to anticipate what corner to which she was going to hit the ball.” Billie Jean agreed with Ann’s assessment of her game. “I’ll admit my volleying was good,” she

smiled. “My service was just so-so, but Ann has played me enough to know where I’m going to put the ball.”⁸³ Rosie then played Francoise Durr in the other semifinal match. Francoise’s baseline skills and great defensive abilities forced Rosie to play numerous lengthy rallies. After losing the first set 3-6, Rosie came back to win the second and third sets by identical 6-3 scores, serving four aces in the process.

For the third consecutive week, Billie Jean played Rosie in the singles final, and once again Billie Jean won in straight sets. The 55-minute match, played in front of 1,300 spectators, was worth \$2,500 for the winner and \$1,800 for runner-up. “Compared to my last two tournaments, this was not one of my better showings,” Billie Jean said after the 6-3 6-2 win. “I don’t know what it is about Milwaukee, I’ve played here a couple of times, and I find myself playing poorly here.” Billie Jean analyzed that Rosie “had difficulty getting her first service in. If she would have gotten a couple of her passing shots in, then it would have been a different match.” Rosie noticed that Billie Jean’s “legs are better, and her service is so deep that she has lots of opportunities to set up winning volleys.”⁸⁴

Twenty minutes after the conclusion of the singles final, Billie Jean and Rosie went back on court and won the doubles title over Ann and Francoise, 3-6 6-1 6-3. During the match, a linesman made a call that Francoise did not agree with. When Francoise’s request to remove the linesman was denied by the chair umpire, Ann aimed one of her shots directly at him. In an attempt to defend her actions, Ann explained “it was Francoise’s right to have the linesman replaced if she thinks he hasn’t done an adequate job.”⁸⁵

Billie Jean’s outgoing personality and presence in every singles and doubles final was one of the keys to the success of the circuit. “She was, in every way,” wrote Phil Cash of the *Milwaukee Sentinel*, “the superstar of this stop on the Virginia Slims tour.”⁸⁶

The player who was giving the most of herself, because she was so much in demand, was Billie Jean. She was winning practically every tournament and going on television or radio shows or being interviewed by the press constantly. I

*don't know how she even played a match, because she couldn't walk ten feet without being stopped by the press and surrounded by a hundred fans.*⁸⁷

-- Gladys Heldman, 1979

Although the tournament did not make a profit – none of the tournament's five nights were sold out – promoter Jock Miller told Phil Cash of the *Milwaukee Sentinel* that he was pleased with the event. The tournament donated all of its courtside box seats to the Wisconsin Tennis Patrons Foundation, and through the sale of these seats, the organization raised \$1,400 for junior tennis programs in the area. Herb Kohl, a grocery chain executive whose company sponsored the tournament, hoped the women's tour would return to Milwaukee the following year. Even though tour coordinator Pip Jones said the Brook Club setting was “the finest the women's troupe had played in so far,” Kohl commented “the girls felt sort of lost out here, fourteen miles from town, and perhaps they should be closer to the heart of the city.” Kohl felt that at least part of the following year's tournament should be staged at the Milwaukee Arena.⁸⁸

Cash spoke with Bill Cutler about the lessons learned from staging the Virginia Slims Invitational at the Brook Club. “This is a great sports town, but one has to take in consideration that this is the only city in the country where the Beatles flopped,” Cutler said. “We didn't lose any money here. In fact, I think we laid the ground work for bringing this tournament back. There's interest here now and next year we'll have more time to generate it.” Cutler also disclosed the marketing strategy that the Virginia Slims Circuit was implementing. “Tennis has been a sport that has mainly been on the East and West coasts. In planning this first female professional tour, we wanted to get into the Midwest and give people there a chance to see top tennis. Milwaukeeans illustrated that this is tennis country.”⁸⁹

*It was the inaugural voyage for the gals, but sparse turnouts at the Brook Club made it a financial Titanic.*⁹⁰

-- Phil Cash, 1975

After three weeks on the circuit, Billie Jean won three singles titles and three doubles titles with Rosie. Her tour earnings of \$10,650 amounted to one-fourth of the total prize money offered in the first three tournaments. “I want to win everything,” she told Cash early in the week. At the tournament’s conclusion, Billie Jean admitted “I may sound rather greedy. But someone has to win and I’d rather it have to be me than anyone else.” Bill Letwin of the *Milwaukee Journal* found the dynamics of the fledgling tour to be quite interesting. “Billie Jean seems to be involved in a comfortable format,” Letwin observed. “Lots of attractive early-round cannon-fodder and generous financial backing – that should permit a continuing series of King conquests, and accumulation of King cash – as long as the girls hang in together.”⁹¹

During her week in Milwaukee, Billie Jean continued to criticize the USLTA as “a group of rich old people who have no contact with the tennis players. These rich people have no idea how badly some of us need the money to make expenses.”⁹² Joe Cullman agreed with Billie Jean. At a lunch interview with Neil Amdur of the *New York Times*, Cullman characterized the USLTA as “well-meaning but out of touch with reality.” Cullman felt “the USLTA doesn’t represent the game of tennis anymore ... It doesn’t make any sense to have Patti Hogan ranked number one and representing the United States,” a reference to Hogan’s selection to the U. S. Federation Cup team. “They’re very good at laying down the rules about what you can’t do,” Cullman continued. “You look at the people coming up (in the organization), and it doesn’t give you much hope for the future. I’m terribly upset.”⁹³

Cullman told Amdur that tennis was at a crossroads, and the following two years were crucial to the sport’s survival. He was in favor of establishing “a new body, combining all the various elements of the sport. We need a small, streamlined organization for tennis, with people who can move rapidly and initiate programs. The USLTA has its role, but it would be just one of the areas in the new structure.” Despite his critical opinion of the organization, Cullman felt that outgoing USLTA president Alastair Martin performed admirably under difficult circumstances. “Alastair treated me beautifully,” Cullman said, referring to his two-year tenure as chairman of the U. S.

Open. “He was a great president, a bright hope, who sincerely tried to put the game where it belonged. He applied himself to an almost impossible task.”⁹⁴

Martin, criticized by Gladys and the other women for his handling of the Houston tournament, was actually progressive in many of his ideas. He did not agree with the ILTF ruling that tennis players who wanted to accept prize money be categorized as either contract professionals or independent professionals; Martin felt there should simply be amateurs or professionals. “I think the ILTF should restrict itself to the playing rules and the coordination of schedules,” he argued. Martin was proud of his efforts in getting the nine-point sudden-death tiebreak established at the 1970 U. S. Open, which proved to be immensely popular with the fans. On the other hand, Martin expressed regret that his administration’s relationship with the top U. S. male players was not always congenial. “I would not say that we had the greatest rapport,” he admitted, “but Arthur Ashe, Stan Smith, Bob Lutz and the others – we reached compatibility. It is one of my regrets that Arthur and several other players of such top quality chose to leave us for the contract ranks, purely on account of dollar bills.”⁹⁵

Regarding his relationship with the women professionals who broke away from the USLTA, Martin was disappointed that he was unable to arrange an amicable agreement. It was their choice to play in an unsanctioned tournament and sign professional contracts with Gladys, he contended, and he subsequently had no alternative to removing them from the national rankings and barring them from the Wightman Cup and Federation Cup. “It was, on the whole, a satisfying time,” Martin reflected, “but looking back I can see where there were some things I wish had worked out better than they did.”⁹⁶

After Milwaukee, the tour traveled to Oklahoma City for another Virginia Slims Invitational. The tournament was held in the Frederickson Fieldhouse on the campus of Oklahoma City University, on the same floor where the OSU men’s basketball team played its home games. The OCU Chiefs played a home game on Thursday evening, and as a result, the portable Sportface court could not be installed until midnight, with first round matches being played on Friday. Working late into the night, the volunteers recruited by tournament chairperson Joyce Turley converted the floor of the Frederickson

Fieldhouse into a center stage for tennis. For Joyce, it was a typical day in the three months' planning for the tournament.

*I got a lot of criticism because we were sampling Virginia Slims cigarettes ... I got a lot of flak from my sponsors, who didn't want to sponsor it because of the cigarettes. I got one hundred sponsors for one hundred dollars apiece. I'd start out in the morning and I wouldn't go home until I had three sponsors. I raised \$10,000 that way ... it was like selling pencils on a street corner ... I worked maybe twelve hours a day for three months to get it going, because I didn't know what I was doing. Larry came out a couple of times and helped me.*⁹⁷

-- Joyce Turley, 2012

When the players arrived in Oklahoma City, copies of a letter from Gladys were waiting for each of the players. Gladys relayed the good news that she was hoping to get tournaments organized in St. Louis and Syracuse, New York. In addition, to celebrate the one-year anniversary of tour, Gladys wanted to stage a \$50,000 event in Houston, two weeks after the U. S Open. She also gave the players some "tougher news" regarding the last-minute withdrawal of Darlene Hard from the Milwaukee tournament.

... As you know, I am paying all my expenses, telephone calls, travel, etc. in connection with promoting the Women's Pro Tour. I have even paid personally the \$675 for the sanction fee for the tournament in San Francisco, as well as several substantial checks to individual women in the group when some exhibitions fell through, or a tournament did not come through with the guaranteed money. I was happy to do so, but I will no longer have any part of the group, now and forever, if a girl disappoints everyone by a last-minute telegram that she cannot show at a tournament after the draw has been made. Sometimes this will be unavoidable, as in the case of Nancy Gunter when she had to have her tonsils out. The draw at Milwaukee had to be remade because one of the players didn't bother to let anyone know that she wasn't coming until it was too late. The

fine is \$100 for this player, but in the future it will be \$500. If ever, for any reason, you cannot play in a tournament, you must let Pip Jones know just as soon as possible. All of you will get moments when you don't want to play, and if Pip can possibly arrange it, you don't have to play. As long as you notify him in advance, there are no problems.⁹⁸

On Wednesday, a news conference was held in the OCU Student Union, next door to the Frederickson Fieldhouse. After blindly choosing their places in the draw and determining the first day's schedule of matches, the players spoke with Bob Hurt of the *Daily Oklahoman* about making the tour appealing to spectators. "The more emotional they get, the more involvement we get, I'm for it," Billie Jean said. "I can get used to anything. But I doubt if the other girls feel that way." Kerry Melville told Hurt that the crowds in Long Beach were so enthusiastic, they applauded for good shots during the players' pre-match warm-ups. During the matches in Long Beach, the fans "got so excited, it excited me and I missed a point," remembered Billie Jean, "but I liked it." Billie Jean estimated it would take a year for a player to become accustomed to a type of cheering crowds common at basketball or football games. "But until the fans become involved, they are not part of it," she concluded. "I want them to be part of it." Francoise Durr agreed with Billie Jean's preference for fan involvement, saying "we must do anything to get a little kick out of the game for people who come."⁹⁹

We worked hard at it, those girls really cooperated ... they went to high school assemblies, they went to radio interviews, we went to the governor's mansion to say hello ... I really dragged them around town ... but they had a great time. Ruder Finn came and gave a roast beef dinner for my press conference ... they flew in their people ... they added a lot to it.¹⁰⁰
 -- Joyce Turley, 2012

After the OCU basketball game on Thursday evening, the Sportface court was laid on the wood floor of the gymnasium. When the players arrived on Friday morning,

they were in for a surprise; directly overhead, a low-hanging electronic scoreboard was suspended from the ceiling. According to the rules of tennis, any shots that hit the ceiling – or any structures that were part of the facility – would result in the loss of the point, but this would be an especially difficult distraction. Billie Jean, Rosie, Francoise and Ann were used to such challenges from their days on the National Tennis League tour; the other women on the Virginia Slims Circuit were quickly adjusting.

All eight first-round singles matches were played on Friday, and there were no major surprises. Kerry Melville finally broke through and won her first singles match on the tour, a 7-6 6-2 win over Esme Emanuel. Despite losing her fourth first-round loss in as many weeks, Kristy Pigeon pushed number-four seed Francoise Durr in a three-set battle. In addition to Kristy, Judy Dalton and Ceci Martinez were two other players who had failed to win a singles match on the tour. After withdrawing from Milwaukee, Nancy Richey was still recuperating from a tonsillectomy, and Darlene Hard had not recovered from a leg injury. For the thirty-five-year old Darlene, the Long Beach tournament would turn out to be her final appearance on the women's pro tour.

*We had the Omelette King flip omelettes ... this was unheard of then, you only just got a hot dog, maybe, at a tournament ... and you could get a Coke and an omelette filled with all these different fillings ... so people would come early and even during lunch hour and watch the tournament because they had a good lunch, sitting in the bleachers.*¹⁰¹

-- Joyce Turley, 2012

In the featured evening match, Billie Jean easily won the first set against Valerie Ziegenfuss before briefly falling behind. Valerie broke Billie Jean's serve in the opening game of the second set, lost her own serve, and then broke again to take a 2-1 lead. While chastising herself about her own level of play, and after having a linesman removed, Billie Jean regained control of the set and finished the match comfortably. Afterward, she said the atmosphere in the college gymnasium was an enjoyable experience. "I love the crowd," Billie Jean told Ray Soldan of the *Daily Oklahoman*.

“The people aren’t tennis oriented and I guess there were some distractions. But I think we’re going to have to change, not the people.”¹⁰²

*During the tournament, I had help at my house around-the-clock so anyone could stop in for coffee or whatever ... it was a down-home tournament – it was fun!*¹⁰³
 -- Joyce Turley, 2012

While Friday’s matches were being contested in Oklahoma City, incoming USLTA president Bob Colwell, on his way from his home in Seattle to the USLTA Executive Committee meeting in Clearwater, Florida, stopped in Houston to visit with Gladys. “It was simple,” Gladys told Jack Gallagher of the *Houston Post*, “and we talked about the situation. We reached a nice, wonderful compromise.”¹⁰⁴ Colwell considered the agreement “experimental,” one in which his goals were to “bring the women players back into the USLTA fold, work out a friendly understanding with World Tennis, take advantage of Gladys Heldman’s outstanding ability to produce large prize money tournaments for the women and have a series of tournaments that would be successful with the public.” Colwell and Gladys agreed on a number of points, which were to be finalized at the USLTA Executive Committee meeting the following week:

- All of the American women on the Virginia Slims Circuit, including Billie Jean King and Rosie Casals, would be reinstated and restored to independent status by the USLTA, making them eligible for U. S. national rankings and selection for international team competitions (the status of the Australian players on the circuit – Kerry Melville, Judy Dalton and Karen Krantzcke – was still to be determined by the Lawn Tennis Association of Australia)
- All of the tournaments on the Virginia Slims Circuit would receive USLTA sanction approval for a reduced fee of \$480 each
- The Virginia Slims Circuit tournaments would be open to all qualified players
- The women players would be allowed to choose which tournaments they wished to play

- All USLTA tournament regulations would be followed
- Each tournament on the Virginia Slims Circuit would be sanctioned by the respective USLTA section
- The agreement would last for fourteen Virginia Slims Circuit tournaments, commencing (retrospectively) with the British Motor Cars Invitation in San Francisco in January and continuing until April 24, 1971. At that time, the agreement would be evaluated before making further commitments ¹⁰⁵

In Friday's matches in Oklahoma City, Billie Jean was the only seeded player who came close to losing. With four wins in nine matches against Billie Jean, Kerry Melville must have felt her chances to win were reasonable. Playing in the last match of the evening session, Billie Jean and Kerry each held serve five out of six times in the first set to level at 6-6. On the first point of the tiebreak, Billie Jean lost her composure when one of her shots was called out by a linesman. "I don't believe it!" she exclaimed. Billie Jean then played the remaining points of the tiebreak without trying, allowing Kerry to win it 5-0.

Billie Jean regained her composure to win the second set 6-2, and Kerry reversed the momentum to surge to 4-2 in the deciding set. Serving to take a 5-2 lead, Kerry could not take advantage of the opportunity and double-faulted to give Billie Jean the service break. At 3-4, Billie Jean held serve, broke Kerry once more, and then held for a final time at 5-4 to close out the match. "I let circumstances bother me," Billie Jean said after the match. "I was playing two people, her and myself. I'm a pretty emotional player. That's why my record over the years is so up and down." ¹⁰⁶

Some people from Ruder Finn came out to Oklahoma City and they thought, "Oh, these dumb little settlers here," and they started bossing my volunteers – who were giving their blood – they started bossing them around. I called up Ruder Finn and said, "Look, this has got to stop. These people are doing me a favor,

*they are my volunteers, and I want more respect,” and I mean they cleaned it up and stopped.*¹⁰⁷

-- Joyce Turley, 2012

On Sunday afternoon, before the evening’s singles and doubles semifinals, Bob Hurt of the *Daily Oklahoman* spoke with the players about the pressure of playing for money on the tour. Many of the players were at the Frederickson Fieldhouse participating in a pro-am mixed doubles event, which did not offer any money but plenty of competitive spirit. Talking about money, Billie Jean told Hurt, “You play for pride. It kills you to lose. It’s not the money you don’t get. It’s losing.” Stephanie Johnson said she might think of the money she could have won after losing a match, “but not when I’m playing. I don’t think any of us need it that badly. Money may mean more to men. But it’s a girl’s pride. You hate to lose. I think the money may make the pro tour seem more important from the fan’s viewpoint.” Denise Carter admitted the first time she thought about money during a tennis match – in the finals of a tournament in Kansas City against Kristy Pigeon, where the winner received \$1000 and the loser was given \$500 – the pressure affected her. “I got to thinking about money and played poorly. It was a horrible match. She won 6-1 1-6 6-1. I don’t know why I started thinking about money. It was stupid.” Kristy did not think the pressure of playing for money was the cause of both players’ poor performance in the finals of the Kansas City tournament, saying “we’re both mental cases anyway.” Kristy was the only player interviewed who admitted she thinks of cash during a match. “Sometimes I’ll say to myself I’ll get a new dress or something if I win,” she told Hurt. “You play harder with money at stake.”¹⁰⁸

It was incredibly hard work, but a lot of funny things happened on the Virginia Slims circuit that first year ... Basically it was just us girls traveling around. The one thing that came out for me was the voraciousness of women competitors... I think women are more competitive than men ... Lots of squabbles but also great camaraderie. Good times.

-- Kristy Pigeon, 2010

In Sunday evening's opening semifinal match, Rosie met Ann for the first time on the tour and won easily, jumping to quick 3-0 leads in each set. "I don't think she was playing her game tonight," Rosie said after her 6-2 6-1 win. "I've played Ann too many times to know that wasn't her best." Ann contributed to her undoing by committing four double-faults. Since Rosie was returning serve so aggressively, Ann felt she needed to gamble and hit her second serves harder than usual. "There wasn't much I could do about it," Ann said about her decision to end points quickly. "She has younger eyes than I have. I can't see in here."¹⁰⁹

For the third time in four weeks, Billie Jean continued her domination of Francoise Durr, this time by the comfortable score of 6-2 6-2. Billie Jean was quietly efficient and showed no angry outbursts, as she had in her previous matches against Valerie Ziegenfuss and Kerry Melville. Billie Jean went onto the court determined to keep her composure. "I had to think about it all day though, to make sure I'd control myself," Billie Jean joked after the match. Francoise was less jovial after the match, saying "she had everything going for her. She's the best player anyway and got all the breaks and all the good calls."¹¹⁰

Billie Jean and Rosie were clearly the best doubles team on the tour, since they won the titles in San Francisco, Long Beach and Milwaukee. With their semifinal win over Esme Emanuel and Ceci Martinez, they were in their fourth consecutive doubles final in Oklahoma City. The second best team on the tour was the combination of Francoise and Ann, who had reached the doubles final of the first three tournaments. Their runner-up streak came to an end in the Oklahoma City semifinals, when they lost in three sets to Mary Ann Curtis and Valerie Ziegenfuss. An experienced pair, Mary Ann and Valerie were the top-ranked U. S. women's doubles team in 1969, although this was during the time period when Billie Jean and Rosie were not ranked due to their professional contracts. Francoise and Ann seemed headed for their fourth consecutive final when they won the first set 6-2. Mary Ann and Valerie then turned the tables, winning the final two sets 6-2 6-1. "We probably have lost to them four or five times," Mary Ann said after the win. "Our first set tonight was typical of our matches with them.

We come close, play some good points, but lose. We played well and I guess we caught them on an off night.”¹¹¹

A crowd of 3,000 spectators was present at Frederickson Fieldhouse on Monday night to watch the singles final. Rosie opened the match by holding serve; she then broke Billie Jean’s serve and held again to lead 3-0. Billie Jean then held serve to win her first game of the match. Serving at 3-1, Rosie raced through the next three games to clinch the set 6-1. They battled to 5-5 in the second set, when Rosie broke Billie Jean’s serve in the eleventh game to go ahead 6-5. After changing sides, Rosie went back onto the court and prepared to serve for the match – and her first win over Billie Jean in nearly four years.¹¹²

Rosie started the game poorly, missing an easy volley on the first point and then falling behind 0-40. She then won three consecutive points to level the game at deuce – only two points from victory – but it was Billie Jean who won two consecutive points to even the set at 6-6 and force a nine-point tiebreak. Billie Jean served the opening two points of the tiebreak; after winning the first point, she benefited on the second point when one of her shots hit the top of the net and somehow rolled over and landed on Rosie’s side. It was then Rosie’s turn to serve again, and she won the next two points to even the score at 2-2. Billie Jean then nudged ahead 3-2, and on the sixth point of the tiebreak, the net once again came into play and allowed one of Billie Jean’s shots to dribble over the net. Billie Jean then won the next point to claim the tiebreak 5-2 and close out the second set.¹¹³

In the third set, neither player lost her serve until Rosie stood at 4-5. On the first two points of the game, Billie Jean scored with successful lobbs over her net-charging opponent. Rosie missed a volley to fall behind 0-40, and two points later Billie Jean won the match with another shot that bounced off the net tape. Afterward, Billie Jean admitted she was lucky to win the match, and said “Rosie’s getting closer every week. I think I’d better quit next week. That last game I lobbed well. I got two over her and that ended it.” Although Rosie realized she missed her opportunity when she served for the match at 6-5 in the second set, she was satisfied that “a lot of points were scored on good shots – not on errors.”¹¹⁴

Many of the other tour players enjoyed watching the match between Billie Jean and Rosie. Stephanie Johnson called it “a fantastic match, one of the best matches I’ve ever seen,” and Kerry Melville said “a little bit of luck and she would have won. It’s the best I’ve seen Rosemary play.” Rosie agreed she had played well. “I served very well, my first serves were going in better than usual,” she told Ray Soldan of the *Daily Oklahoman*. “My first volleys were a lot better also.” Speaking to the crowd through the courtside microphone, Rosie thanked everyone involved in the tournament and jokingly referred to Billie Jean when she said, ‘I can’t say thank you to the Old Lady. Somehow with a bad arm or a bad knee, she somehow seems to win. Don’t you think it’s my turn, Old Lady?’”¹¹⁵

The spectators in the Frederickson Fieldhouse were treated to another three-set match – and possible upset – when Billie Jean and Rosie went back on court to play Mary Ann Curtis and Valerie Ziegenfuss in the doubles final. Mary Ann and Valerie won the first set in a tiebreak, and then Billie Jean and Rosie won the second set without the loss of a game. The match reached 5-5 in the third before Billie Jean and Rosie got the critical break and closed out the match, 6-7 6-0 7-5. The winning team shared \$500, and Mary Ann and Valerie split \$300. For the tennis fans in Oklahoma City, it was a fitting end to an exciting week of tennis.

*I loaned \$1,500 to the tournament to get it started, and I got paid back. We came out with a \$147 profit, which went to the Oklahoma City University tennis team. We had more inches of newspaper print than the Oklahoma University football team had in the previous season ... it was almost unheard of that someone could beat the football team!*¹¹⁶
-- Joyce Turley, 2012

With five tournaments on the 1971 circuit completed, Virginia Slims brand manager Steve Korsen was ready to analyze the tour’s impact on cigarette sales. “Our sales are up twelve to eighteen per cent over the same period last year,” Korsen told Jack Gallagher of the *Houston Post*. “I can’t say the increase is the popularity of women’s

tennis. But it is the total impact of all our women's activities that also include a national women's opinion poll, sponsorship of the Powder Puff Derby, plus an air race in England. However, the tennis package has been unbelievable. It has been so successful that we're investigating the addition of other major women's tournaments.”¹¹⁷

Gladys told Gallagher she was happy with the progress of the tour, but she needed to impose a new rule. “At Oklahoma City, Billie Jean three times had a linesman removed,” she said. “There is so much money involved, the women are often exhausted physically, and the excitement of a bad call is so great that they're liable to go haywire. So I had to issue an order. No more removing of linesmen.”¹¹⁸ Gladys' words were prophetic; before the end of the year, a physically and mentally exhausted Billie Jean would make national headlines for “going haywire” after demanding the removal of a linesperson.

On Tuesday, February 9, all of the players and tour personnel – including Pip Jones and Bill Cutler – flew to Chattanooga for the next stop on the circuit, another Virginia Slims Invitational. Joining the tour in Chattanooga was Ellen Merlo, the Virginia Slims assistant manager of product publicity. Everyone appeared at a press luncheon the following day, at which Terry Hardwick of the *Chattanooga News-Free Press* talked to the players about the possibility of becoming reinstated by the USLTA. Hardwick heard the news earlier in the week, and he was interested in the American players' reactions to once again coming under the jurisdiction of the national association. Billie Jean told Hardwick that she did personally did not care about getting reinstated; throughout her career, she said, the USLTA took advantage of her and hindered her development. Billie Jean was referring to a time when, before she became a contract professional in 1968 for George MacCall's National Tennis League, she – and most other American players – were required to return to the United States immediately after Wimbledon to play in the U. S. amateur summer circuit. Billie Jean felt her tennis could have developed better – and she could have earned more money under-the-table – if she played in the post-Wimbledon summer clay court tournaments in Europe. Despite the long-standing grudge, Billie Jean told Hardwick she would consider rejoining the USLTA only if it benefited her fellow players and the sport.¹¹⁹

In the afternoon, six of the women – Mary Ann Curtis, Karen Krantzcke, Valerie Ziegenfuss, Kerry Melville, Francoise Durr and Judy Dalton – went to the Manker Patten Tennis Club to play in a pro-am tournament with local male club players. The first Virginia Slims Invitational, played in Houston in September of 1970, included a pro-am mixed doubles tournament that raised money for the tournament's prize money. The pro-ams were a regular feature on the 1971 circuit. In Milwaukee, Oklahoma City and Chattanooga, there was no shortage of male players who were eager to pay for the opportunity to play doubles with some of the world's best female tennis players. David Hall, a Chattanooga doctor, organized five of his fellow physicians to participate in the pro-am at the Manker Patten Tennis Club. The small, two-court indoor facility was full of noise; construction workers were installing bleachers on one of the courts in preparation for Friday's matches, and a steady rain could be heard on the building's metal roof. Still, anyone who wanted to watch the matches was admitted free of charge, and all of the players competed with a good-natured spirit. Mary Ann Curtis and Benneth Caughran won two one-set matches to reach the final, as did Karen Krantzcke and Powell Hutcherson. The finals of the pro-am – along with a third-place playoff between Francoise Durr-David Hall and Judy Dalton-Jack Evans – were scheduled to be played on Saturday evening, after the singles and doubles semifinals.¹²⁰

A cocktail party for the players, their hosts, the tournament officials and box seat holders was held on Wednesday night at the Fairyland Club, an historic and charming private club located on the top of Lookout Mountain, across the state line in Georgia. Unfortunately, the rain that had started during the afternoon developed into an ice storm by evening, which made driving up Lookout Mountain treacherous. Only three players – Ann Jones, Mary Ann Curtis, and Francoise Durr – and twelve others braved the slick roads and made it to the party. Several of those who attended had minor car accidents on the way, including tournament director Steve Chazen. Before Chazen left his home in Chattanooga, his wife – who was already at the club – telephoned to say the roads were fine. By the time Chazen arrived, the pavement was so icy that some people had to push their cars into the parking spaces.¹²¹

The Virginia Slims Invitational of Chattanooga was played at two locations. Thursday's first round matches were played at the Charlotte Guerry Tennis Courts, a three-court indoor tennis facility on the campus of the University of the South, in Sewanee, Georgia. The remainder of the tournament – on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday – was played at the smaller two-court Manker Patten Tennis Club in Chattanooga. Sewanee was located 50 miles from Chattanooga, and the only way to travel there was on the winding U. S. Highway 41 – not a pleasant drive in the middle of winter. However, tournament promoter Alex Guerry wanted to play the first day's matches in Sewanee for personal reasons. His father, Alexander, was the vice chancellor of the University of the South from 1938 to 1948, and the tennis building was a gift from the Guerry family in 1964. It was the site for numerous local tournaments since it was built, and Alex Guerry wanted to have the women's professional tour play at the facility that bore his mother's name.

Alex wanted to play the first day in Sewanee ... because the Guerry name is synonymous with the University of the South ... I remember Alex saying about playing up in Sewanee, "We'll get a big crowd!" ... Sewanee sits on top of Eagle Mountain on U.S. Highway 41, and this was before the interstate highways were built ... U. S. 41 was a very dangerous road that winds up the mountain, and then you go down the mountain. The tractor-trailers would lose control, things like that, and in the wintertime, sometimes, it would be closed because of snow or icy conditions. You're talking about a two-lane highway over a mountain. So we played that first day up on the mountain, and it was foggy and cold and icy, pretty bad weather ... the players complained about it.¹²²

-- Steve Chazen, 2011

The walls in the Charlotte Guerry Tennis Courts building were a very light color; as a result, it was very difficult for a player to visually track either a white or yellow tennis ball during the course of a point. Local tennis professionals Bill and Alice Tym

told the players about their remedy; fuchsia-colored tennis provided slightly better visibility, and it was decided that the darker balls would be used.

We'd use fuchsia balls you couldn't see, and sometimes the courts would be horrible. And of course we'd say, 'Gosh, the courts are great, the lighting is wonderful, everyone's been so good to us here.' I used to tell the players not to say anything bad about anything, because when we left, those people still had to live there. I'd tell them, 'Just remember, this is the beginning... say it's good!' ¹²³
 -- Billie Jean King, 2012

Only 100 spectators were on hand for the day session in Sewanee. Karen Krantzcke opened the program at 10:00 am with a three set win over Tory Fretz, after which Kerry Melville, Ann Jones and Francoise Durr won their matches in straight sets. The final match of the day session presented an unusual pressure for both players. Judy Dalton and Kristy Pigeon were both winless in singles matches during the first four weeks of the tour; the winner of the first-round match in Sewanee would earn at least \$600 for reaching the second round, and the loser would once again have to wait until the following week's tournament for a chance to break through. Both players held serve until 4-4 in the first set, when Kristy earned the first service break of the match to lead 5-4. Kristy won the next game – and the set – without losing a point, and she rolled through the second set 6-2 for her first singles victory on the tour. ¹²⁴

For the evening matches, the attendance was slightly better, with 200 fans present to watch Rosie Casals play Esme Emanuel, Billie Jean King play Ceci Martinez, and two doubles matches: Emanuel and Martinez against Kerry Melville and Karen Krantzcke, and Ann Jones and Francoise Durr versus Kristy Pigeon and Denise Carter . Before those matches, however, Peaches Bartkowicz was scheduled to play Carter, and it turned out to be the most exciting match of the entire day. ¹²⁵

For Peaches, the Virginia Slims Invitational of Chattanooga was a homecoming of sorts. In 1960, 11-year-old Peaches made her first trip to Chattanooga to play in the inaugural USLTA National 11 and Under and National 13 and Under Championships.

Peaches won the singles titles in both age divisions that year, along with the 11 and Under doubles championship. She returned to Chattanooga the following three summers, adding four more junior national titles to her collection; by then, her reputation for never losing to anyone in her age category was well established. Peaches' last appearance in Chattanooga as the nation's girls 14 and under player was in 1963, and many local tennis fans never forgot the skinny girl with the unerring groundstrokes.

Peaches took the first set 6-2, and Denise evened the match by winning the second set 6-3. In the third set, Peaches was serving at 3-1 and led 40-15, but Denise refused to concede and battled to 6-6 and a nine-point tiebreak. Once again, Peaches got the early lead, winning the first two points on her serve. Denise won only one of her two service points, and Peaches lost the next point on her serve. On the next point, Peaches hit a serve that Denise thought was out. The chair umpire refused to overrule the linesperson, and Denise hurled her racquet across the court in disgust. Down triple match point, Denise served and the players engaged in a cautious baseline rally. When Denise finally hit a shot over the baseline, Peaches leapt with joy and ran to the net to shake her opponent's hand. Afterward, Peaches was typically critical of her own play. "I was lousy. I just didn't hit the ball well," she told Terry Hardwick, although the reporter noted that many of the spectators were impressed with accuracy of Peaches' shots.¹²⁶ After the match, Peaches told Hardwick she liked playing the tiebreak to decide a set at 6-6, but preferred the twelve-point version that required a player to win by a margin of two points.

In Friday's second round matches at the Manker Patten Tennis Center, in front of only 150 spectators, Ann Jones defeated fellow left-hander Kristy Pigeon 7-5 6-0. Kristy started well and got off to a 4-1 lead, but eventually Ann worked her way into the match and took the first set 7-5. Discouraged by her lost opportunity, Kristy did not win any more games. Francoise Durr comfortably won the opening set against Karen Krantzcke, 6-2. Karen then started to play her best tennis since the tour opened; the six-foot tall Australian hit some blistering serves and smacked forehand crosscourt winners. It took all of Francoise's defensive abilities – one of the local news reports called her a "roadrunner" – to regain the momentum and win the final set 6-4.¹²⁷

The last match of Friday's day session was another three-set struggle. Rosie Casals won the first set against Kerry Melville 6-4, and the two battled to 5-5 in the second. In this critical game, Kerry double-faulted three times and Rosie served for the match at 6-5. Kerry's sharp service returns kept Rosie from closing out the match, and at 6-6 the nine-point sudden death tiebreak was played. Kerry served the first two points and won them both, as did Rosie on the next two. Kerry won two more points on her serve to lead 4-2, giving her three set points. Rosie served the seventh point and erased one set point, but at 3-4 she double faulted to hand Kerry the set. In the final set, Kerry got a crucial service break and climbed to 5-3. Rosie served in the ninth game, fighting off one match point, and she broke Kerry to level at 5-5. Once again, at the most critical juncture of the match, Rosie lost her service game, and Kerry finally served out the set to win 4-6 7-6 7-5. It was the first time that Rosie had lost to anyone on the tour besides Billie Jean.¹²⁸

Attendance at Friday night's matches was better than the day session turnout. 350 spectators came to Manker Patten that evening, during the same time that 5500 people were watching a high school basketball game at Memorial Auditorium between local rivals Riverside High School and Howard High School. For the first time in her career, Peaches Bartkowicz won a set from Billie Jean King, hitting forehand crosscourt winners and backhands down the line for a 6-3 lead. Winning the first set may have affected Peaches' concentration, and losing it may have given Billie Jean a wake-up call. The match suddenly turned; Billie Jean won six games in a row to take the second set 6-0, lost the first game of the third set, and then won six more games to win the third, 6-1. Despite the disappointing loss, Peaches went back on the court with Judy Dalton to register an impressive doubles win over the top American pair of Mary Ann Curtis and Valerie Ziegenfuss, 6-4 4-6 7-6. In the evening's final match, Billie Jean and Rosie advanced to the semifinals with a 6-2 6-3 victory over Tory Fretz and Stephanie Johnson.¹²⁹

Billie Jean was like a general, everything had to be done just right ... She would take the balls and throw them to the other side of the court, to show the ballboys

*the correct way to do it.*¹³⁰

-- Wesley Cash, 2012

*Alex Guerry was one of the linespersons, and Billie Jean had him replaced!*¹³¹

-- Bill Tym, 2012

*... the tour came first, and everything had to be exactly right. When it wasn't, I admit I got pretty impatient. My friends said I was too intense. They told me to take it easy, that in life you were allowed some fun and games, at least once in a while. I just couldn't relax, though. Practically overnight, we women were trying to change a tennis structure that had existed for a hundred years, and when things didn't happen as fast as I felt they should have, I had to know why. If there wasn't a good crowd someplace, I had to find out if the promoter had really been doing his job. If the press coverage was lousy, I got curious about whether the public relations person was on the ball. I wanted my interviews to be just right, too ...*¹³²

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Jay Searcy of the *Chattanooga Times* wrote humorous, human-interest profiles about the women all week. He was amused that Judy Dalton tried to negotiate the price of a pair of boots with a Chattanooga sales clerk, and that Francoise Durr took the advice seriously to “to make sure the town was open” before she arrived.¹³³ After her first lesson as youngster, Searcy told his readers, Billie Jean told her mother she wanted to become the world's best tennis player, and Betty Moffitt's reaction was, “That's nice, dear.”¹³⁴

*Jay Searcy couldn't get enough of it. He said the players made good copy, made for good reading.*¹³⁵

-- Steve Chazen, 2011

A near-capacity crowd of 700 came to watch the singles and doubles semifinals on Saturday. Kerry Melville used her penetrating sidespin forehand to set up putaway volleys and take the first set 6-1 against Ann Jones, who started the match slowly due to a sore shoulder. Ann, with her looping topspin forehand and low bouncing slice backhand, worked her way into the match and took a 5-2 lead in the second. Kerry then held serve, broke Ann's serve, and held a game point in her next service game to level at 5-5. Ann saved the game point, and two points later the set was hers, 6-4. In the final set, Kerry took a 4-2 lead, and at 4-3 she reached 40-love on her serve but could not secure the game. Ann broke to even the set at 4-4 and then held serve to lead 5-4. Both players then won their next service games at love, and Ann broke Kerry once more to finish the match 1-6 6-4 7-5. "This was a typical match for us, I believe," Ann said later. "I don't usually lose to Kerry and I felt like I could come back in the third set. Kerry helped her confidence a lot with the victory over Rosemary on Friday."¹³⁶

In the next semifinal, Billie Jean and Francoise Durr battled to 3-3 in the first set. "Then," wrote Wirt Gammon of the *Chattanooga Times*, "the California cannonade started." Firing from the baseline, she bombarded Francoise with a mixture of crosscourt projectiles which ran the French gal from side to side and often left her breathless." Once, when a backhand overhead from Billie Jean caught Francoise running in the wrong direction, the French player yelled, "Oh, you're too good!" Billie Jean closed out the first set 6-3 and concluded the match with a 6-2 second set. Francoise and Ann were then scheduled to play doubles against Kerry and Karen Krantzcke, but the match was canceled when Kerry decided that a stomach injury sustained during her singles match made it too difficult to play. Billie Jean then went back on court with Rosie to play the other women's doubles semifinal against Peaches and Judy Dalton. Usually Peaches remained on the baseline when she played doubles, but Judy – one of the world's best doubles players – insisted that Peaches take her position at the net. With Judy's strong serves and Peaches' searing service returns, Billie Jean and Rosie were challenged but came away with a 7-5 7-5 win.¹³⁷

There was seating for only 800 spectators on the bleachers that were installed at the Manker Patten Tennis Center indoor courts, and there was a near capacity crowd to

watch the singles and doubles finals on Sunday afternoon. Hours before the matches were scheduled to start, the players and tournament personnel stood on Riverfront Parkway, the state highway a short distance from the Manker Patten entrance, to promote the tournament.

*We were all out in the streets, man, stopping the cars, pleading with people, giving out tickets. We were in Chattanooga wearing Davy Crockett hats... we'd see a station wagon full of kids and we'd stop them. All of us would do it, everyone helped. Anything to fill the seats, baby!*¹³⁸
 -- Billie Jean King, 2012

*The day of the finals, all of the players and staff went out on the road with placards that said Women's Tennis Here! Billie Jean was out there, and she was in the finals. I think we got about a thousand people.*¹³⁹
 -- Ellen Merlo, 1986

*Other than just directing people to the tennis center, who were not familiar with it ... there was not that much traffic up in that area. So, I don't know if that would have been helpful to bring in spectators so much as it might have been more to direct people to get to the tennis center ... it was a difficult thing to get down the road, off the main road, and down into the tennis center ... it was hidden ...*¹⁴⁰
 -- Bill Tym, 2012

Sunday's matches opened with a third-place singles playoff between Francoise Durr and Peaches Bartkowicz. Although third-place playoffs usually involved the two losing semifinalists, Peaches was selected by a blind draw when Kerry Melville decided she did not want to aggravate her pulled stomach muscle. Peaches took a 3-1 lead in the eight-game pro set, but lost her intensity as Francoise worked her way into the contest. "Miss Bartkowicz, overweight and seemingly very tired, appeared to quit trying after the set had reached four-all," observed Terry Hardwick of the *Chattanooga News-Free*

Press. “After that she lost her edge and couldn’t keep the ball inbounds. She didn’t chase Frankie’s shots, preferring to give up the point instead.” From 4-4, Françoise quickly closed out the set and earned \$1,400 for third place.¹⁴¹

In the singles final, Billie Jean constantly attacked and never lost her serve against Ann Jones. When Ann served, Billie Jean continued to press forward, and the strategy caused Ann to take more chances on her serve, resulting in numerous double faults. Billie Jean broke Ann’s serve to lead 4-3 and then she held at love to reach 5-3. Two games later, she wrapped up the set 6-4 with a winning crosscourt volley. In the second set, Billie Jean lost only one game as she closed out the match 6-4 6-1 for her seventh consecutive singles title and fifth win on the 1971 tour.

In post-match awards ceremony, Billie Jean thanked the spectators for “coming out to watch us little old ladies play. I would particularly like to thank the ballboys, ballgirls and linesmen. They did an outstanding job. I know there’s a lot of young people here this week who want to play tennis seriously. My advice to you is to practice every day and never give up.” Billie Jean was given a bouquet of roses, a raccoon cap and a squirrel gun. In addition to earning \$2,500, she was also made into an Honorary Tennessee Mountaineer. After the ceremony, Billie Jean talked with local reporters about the match. “I served real well today,” she said. “And when you serve well, the other things seem to fall into place. I tried to kick the ball out to Ann’s backhand, because she cuts the ball out there and doesn’t get a solid return.” Referring to her impressive winning streak of seven consecutive tournaments, Billie Jean admitted “I believe I play better in the big matches, the finals and the semifinals. I can psyche myself up better for a finals match.”¹⁴²

After speaking with the reporters, Billie Jean went back on court to continue her doubles winning streak with Rosie. For the fourth time on the tour, they defeated Ann and Françoise, this time by the scores of 6-4 6-4. Billie Jean earned a total of \$2,750 in Chattanooga, and Ann was second-best with a payday of \$1,950. As the players departed Philadelphia for the next stop on the tour, the tournament organizers in Chattanooga realized they probably would not host another women’s professional tournament in the future.

We lost money, even with that type of contribution (from Philip Morris), and we did not have the facilities ... it's the type of program that had to go to an arena. We originally had three sponsors: Southern Foundries, Chattanooga Medical, and Loveman's department store. When it was over, Richard Moore of Loveman's said he didn't get anything out of it. Alex suggested that he and I cover his share, I said "that's fine." ... I think it was the hardest job I've ever done in my life. I didn't delegate, I didn't create committees. I basically just did it, including the ticket sales, which was the hardest part ... It was the hardest job I've ever enjoyed. ¹⁴³

-- Steve Chazen, 2011

The Philadelphia tournament was directed by the husband-and-wife team of Ed and Marilyn Fernberger. The Fernbergers first became involved in the promotion of world class tennis when they volunteered to help with the U. S. Professional Indoor Tennis Championships in Philadelphia in 1962. By 1968, the Fernbergers were the tournament's key promoters, and they moved the event from St. Joseph's College to the newly-built 15,000-seat Spectrum. The tournament was strictly a men's event until 1970, when Gladys contributed \$7,500 for an eight-woman field.

The Fernbergers were considered interesting characters in tennis circles. Ed was an accomplished photographer, and his action shots of tennis players often appeared in *World Tennis*, and sometimes on the magazine's cover. Marilyn was instrumental in raising funds for junior tennis programs in Philadelphia and promoting the sport to people of all ages. Her sense of fashion was somewhat ostentatious; she liked to wear flamboyant clothing and jewelry, she was perpetually tanned, and her hair was always dyed a jet black.

In 1971, the Philadelphia International Indoor Championships became the first stop on the World Championship Tennis circuit, a \$1 million, 20-city tour funded by Lamar Hunt. While the men were competing for \$50,000 in Philadelphia, the women professionals were sharing the stage with them and competing for \$12,500, provided by Philip Morris. The Philadelphia event was the first time the women professionals were

re-united with their male counterparts since the Virginia Slims Circuit started. With the likes of Rod Laver, Ken Rosewall, Arthur Ashe and John Newcombe competing in the world's richest indoor men's event, many observers wondered if the women would once again be relegated to second-class status.

The tournament opened on Tuesday, February 9 with matches played on two adjacent Sportface courts. Several journalists snickered at the court setting; at either end of the court, the pronouncement "PHILADELPHIA: HOST TO THE WORLD – 1976" was emblazoned in large red and blue letters on the white hockey boards. "It's nice of them to make the invitation," said one British writer, perhaps unaware of the upcoming bicentennial celebrations, "by why in God's name would the world want to come to Philadelphia?"¹⁴⁴

The men's tournament included 32 singles players and 16 doubles teams, while the sixteen players from the women's tour were playing singles only. Half of the men's singles draw – sixteen players competing in eight matches – and half of the women's singles draw played on the opening day. Top-seeded Rod Laver, Tony Roche and Arthur Ashe advanced in straight sets, and there was a minor upset when John Alexander, a young Australian, defeated Marty Riessen in a second set tiebreak. In Philadelphia, the men – as well as the women – played a twelve-point tiebreak. Unlike the nine-point sudden-death tiebreak used on the women's tour, the twelve-point tiebreak was won by the first player to win seven points. If a tiebreak reached 6-6, however, the tiebreak could only be won by winning two consecutive points. In this system, a tiebreak could last indefinitely.

In women's action on Tuesday, Karen Krantzcke almost defeated second-seeded Rosie Casals; Karen won the first set 6-3 and led 4-2 in second before Rosie came back to even the set at 6-6. After Rosie won the tiebreak 7-2, Karen was physically and mentally spent and did not win a game thereafter. The other women's matches on Tuesday were hardly an argument for depth in the women's field: Ann Jones beat Stephanie Johnson 6-0 6-0, Kerry Melville defeated Peaches Bartkowicz 6-1 6-1, and Judy Dalton earned her first singles win on the tour with a 6-0 6-1 win over Ceci Martinez.

Wednesday's session saw the appearance of Ken Rosewall and John Newcombe, the second and third seeds. In front of 5623 spectators, Owen Davidson defeated Rosewall 6-3 6-4 and said afterward it was "like beating the teacher."¹⁴⁵ The closest match of the day – in either the men's or women's matches – was Denise Carter's 5-7 6-2 7-5 win over Kristy Pigeon. In another closely contested women's match, Mary Ann Curtis lost the first set and then won the second set against Billie Jean King, before Billie Jean prevailed 6-2 in the third.

The Philadelphia tournament marked the return of Julie Heldman to competitive tennis and her debut on the Virginia Slims Circuit. Although she was one of the nine players who signed one-dollar contracts in Houston, Julie had not played a competitive match since losing to Patti Hogan at a grass tournament in England the previous summer. Against Tory Fretz at the Spectrum, Julie won the first set 6-1 and led 2-0 in the second before she appeared to tire. Tory subsequently won twelve of the next thirteen games, earning a 1-6 6-3 6-0 victory and at least \$600 for reaching the second round. Afterward, Tory made good on a promise she made to fellow tour players Ceci Martinez and Esme Emanuel. "I don't mind buying dinner. It was worth it," Tory said happily after one of the best wins of her career.¹⁴⁶

No women's matches were played on Thursday; all eight men's second-round matches were played on the two side-by-side courts in front of 7043 fans. Five of the remaining seven seeded players advanced, including Laver, Newcombe, Tom Okker, Roy Emerson and Arthur Ashe. In his match against Nicki Pilic, Ashe lost the first set in a tiebreak and won the second set 7-5. Pilic dove for a shot in an attempt to save the second set; in doing so, he injured his left hand and had to retire from the match after playing three points in the final set. Two seeded players lost on Thursday: Australian Brian Fairlie, playing on the professional circuit for the first time, defeated veteran Andres Gimeno 5-7 7-6 7-6, and Dennis Ralston eliminated Tony Roche 7-5 6-4.

After his win over Roche, Ralston criticized the playing conditions. "It's tough to concentrate with all the confusion of the two courts, the two mikes, and the announcer calling out lucky lottery numbers during the match," Ralston complained. "And then they should really do something about that background. Tony missed a lot of shots he

just didn't see. I think the tennis would be better if they put up a dark background.”

Ralston later said that he and several other players – including Rod Laver – spoke to the Fernbergers about changing the background. “They said no, it had cost \$450 to paint those signs. I asked how about if the players got together and paid you for it? They said no, there was nothing they could do about it,” Ralston told reporters.¹⁴⁷

Although there were no women's matches played on Thursday, they dominated the tennis news that day. Incoming USLTA president Bob Colwell, in Florida for the association's annual meeting, confirmed that the women professionals were reinstated. The previous week's negotiations between Colwell and Gladys were productive, and the USLTA executive committee agreed to restore the status of the women professionals. “Everything is peaches and cream,” Colwell gushed, “and the suspension has been lifted.” With the reinstatement, Colwell said that the women professionals would once again be eligible for international team competitions. When Colwell was asked how he felt about Billie Jean King and whether he would want her to represent the United States in the Wightman Cup, Colwell replied, “It would be a great honor for the USLTA to have her play for us.”¹⁴⁸ Colwell also indicated that the women professionals, in addition to the male professionals who were under contract to WCT, could possibly be included in the national rankings, pending approval from a committee that was scheduled to meet on Saturday. For the women, it was a significant victory. “We're back in the fold. I guess I have to give my dollar back,” said Julie, referring to the professional contracts that the original nine players signed with Gladys in Houston five months earlier.¹⁴⁹

Friday's schedule included the men's and women's quarterfinals – four men's matches and four women's matches. The four women's seeds – Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals, Ann Jones and Francoise Durr – advanced easily, as did the top-seeded Rod Laver. With 8215 spectators watching, Cliff Drysdale outlasted Roy Emerson 6-1 in the third set, and in the most exciting match of the day, John Newcombe defeated Tom Okker in a third set tiebreak. Dennis Ralston had his chances against Arthur Ashe in the other quarterfinal on Friday night. He barely lost the first set in an extended tiebreak and won the second set 6-4 before fading in the third, only winning one more game. Ralston's lost opportunities caused him to lose his temper in a locker room discussion

with tennis writers. “It’s ridiculous to have two adjacent courts going at the same time. It’s ridiculous to have two microphones on at the same time. It’s ridiculous to have a background that is so bloody bad that you can’t see the ball,” Ralston fumed. “And I’ll tell you something else. I wouldn’t pay to see the tennis out there. There is no tennis out there, in my estimation. You have to come running in, fishing for volleys ... and the guy who gets lucky and connects to hit a few wins the match.”¹⁵⁰

For Saturday’s semifinals, several changes were made. One of the two portable Sportface courts was removed, and artificial trees that were originally placed in the corners were moved in front of the white hockey boards in an attempt to improve visibility. In addition, the men’s singles matches were extended to best-of-five sets. Rosie Casals opened the program in front of 6353 fans with a comfortable 6-2 6-2 win over Ann Jones. In the first men’s singles match, Cliff Drysdale seemed ready to take out the reigning Wimbledon champion when he won the first two sets against John Newcombe with a series of accurate passing shots. The match quickly turned in the third set, when Drysdale lost his concentration and Newcombe seized it 6-1 by continuing to attack. “When you are two sets down, the only thing you can do is charge,” Newcombe said later. After Newcombe won the fourth set 6-4, each player held serve until 6-6 in the fifth set, setting up a tiebreak that would determine the winner of the match. For Drysdale, an unlucky net cord on the fifth point of the tiebreak was the turning point; Newcombe closed it out 7-4 with an ace on match point.¹⁵¹

In the meantime, USLTA officials and delegates were meeting for the fourth and final day in Florida. The ranking committee agreed, for the first time in the association’s history, to include men and women contract professionals in the national rankings. For the men, two separate rankings were compiled: a USLTA ranking, for amateurs and independent professionals still under USLTA jurisdiction, and an All-American ranking that included amateurs, independent professionals and contract professionals. In both lists, independent professionals Cliff Richey and Stan Smith were placed at the number one and two positions, respectively.¹⁵²

The women’s rankings included all of the American women playing on the Virginia Slims Circuit. The top four positions were awarded to Billie Jean King, Rosie

Casals, Nancy Richey Gunter and Mary Ann Curtis, in that order. Patti Hogan, controversially placed at the number-one spot in the tentative rankings, was dropped to number five. The remaining positions in the top ten were given to Peaches Bartkowicz, Valerie Ziegenfuss, Kristy Pigeon, Stephanie DeFina Johnson and Denise Carter. Two of the nation's most promising young amateurs were dropped out of the top ten in the final rankings; Sharon Walsh was given the number twelve spot, and Chris Evert was placed at number sixteen.¹⁵³

In Philadelphia on Saturday night, Billie Jean King and Francoise Durr played their semifinal match in front of 8744 spectators. Billie Jean was the overwhelming favorite to win; she had beaten Francoise in four previous meetings on the 1971 tour, although Francoise had come very close to winning in San Francisco and Long Beach. Billie Jean came into the Philadelphia tournament undefeated in her seven previous tournaments; her last loss was to Nancy Richey in the semifinals of the Pacific Coast International Championships in Berkeley, California in early October 1970. For Billie Jean, with a winning streak of 27 singles matches, the expectation to win had to be enormous.

Billie Jean started the match slowly, losing the first four games and allowing Francoise to settle into her game of lobs and passing shots. At 0-4, Billie Jean slammed a ball into the hockey boards when a fault was called on one of her serves. She held serve in that fifth game, but Francoise eventually closed out the first set 6-2. It was not until the third game of the second set when Billie Jean seemed to gain control of her game and impose some power and accuracy on her opponent. There were five service breaks in the second set, and Billie Jean finally won it when Francoise was serving at 5-6 and hit a backhand into the net at set point.¹⁵⁴

Francoise raced to a seemingly insurmountable lead in the third set, as both players demonstrated their frustrations in the tense match. "Between Miss Durr hitting herself on the head with her racquet, Mrs. King kicking the dashboards, and assorted racquet flips and tosses, Mrs. King crumbled in the third set, 1-5," observed Roger Keim of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Billie Jean held serve in the seventh game, and as the players rested on the changeover, Francoise braced herself to serve for the match at 5-2.

Both players undoubtedly recalled their match in Long Beach one month earlier, when Francoise won the first set and served for the match at 5-2 in the second, only to lose after having four match points.

In front of 8,744 expectant spectators at the Spectrum, Francoise walked to the baseline to start her service game. She soon reached match point, but could not put Billie Jean away. Once more she held match point, and once more Billie Jean denied her. With her confidence suddenly lifted, Billie Jean won fourteen of the next seventeen points. Ann Jones, who lost in the semifinals to Rosie Casals earlier in the afternoon, watched the match and observed, “there is a moment when you think she must be beaten, but she suddenly starts hitting and if she wins one game, her confidence builds up and she starts believing she can win the whole thing.”¹⁵⁵ Francoise soon found herself serving at 5-6 to stay in the match, and when she hit a forehand wide, Billie Jean finally arrived at her first match point. Francoise refused to surrender; after Billie Jean netted a volley to lose the twelfth game, the players entered a tiebreak to determine the winner of the match. The spectators were silently enthralled with the drama on the court, and David Gray of *The Guardian* noted “the lines-judges had to make so many close decisions that it was surprising they did not ask for extra pay and danger money.”¹⁵⁶ Billie Jean took a 4-1 lead in the tiebreak, and Francoise – barely tapping her serves into play – won the next two points on her serve. Continuing to play cautiously, Francoise won another point, this time on Billie Jean’s serve, to level at 4-4. Billie Jean then reached 5-4 on her serve, and when she won the following point on Francoise’s serve, she earned two more match points. Serving at 4-6, Francoise put her soft serve into play and Billie Jean buried a short forehand into the net.

*That serve of hers is more difficult to handle than it looks. She’s always ready for your return, and if you step up and really try to put her serve away, you get the strangest sensation. It’s like swinging at a nothing ball. You can’t tell what you’ve hit.*¹⁵⁷

-- Billie Jean King, 1972

At 6-5 in the tiebreak, Billie Jean finally had a chance to serve on match point. Billie Jean advanced forward, and Francoise responded by hitting a passing shot down the line that barely landed inside the sideline. After seeing where the shot landed, Billie Jean stopped and looked upward in disbelief. Neil Amdur of the *New York Times* reported that Billie Jean “served the thirteenth point and, perhaps unnerved by her opponent’s comeback, slapped a tentative approach volley into the net” to fall behind 6-7 – match point against her. Francoise served, and Billie Jean hit a deep return to her opponent’s backhand corner and rushed the net. Francoise responded with a low, crosscourt backhand that forced her opponent to bend low for the volley. Billie Jean was unable to give the volley a solid punch, and when she pushed the shot into the net, the crowd that had been tensely quiet during the tiebreak erupted and gave Francoise a standing ovation.¹⁵⁸

After the match, Francoise told Amdur how discouraging it was to see her 5-1 second set lead disappear. “I thought at 5-all I was out of it. She was so keen again. I was getting shaky. I tried to keep calm, but it was so hard to believe I could come back, especially at 2-4 in the tiebreaker.”¹⁵⁹ David Gray, writing for *Tennis World*, called the contest a “stunning match ... the kind of match that makes utter nonsense of the theory that no one wants to see women’s tennis. This match had everything – a splendid contrast in character, the challenge of Europe to America, comparative orthodoxy against almost eccentric unorthodoxy, deep knowledge of the game and considerable shrewdness on both sides of the net.”¹⁶⁰ Bud Collins of the *Boston Globe* watched from the press box, and when it was over he exclaimed, “Vive La France! C’est magnifique! Even Ralston would have paid to see that match!”¹⁶¹

Rod Laver and Arthur Ashe then took the court for the second men’s semifinal – and even with their popularity, it was difficult to upstage the women’s match that preceded them. Laver lost a set for the first time in the tournament in winning the match, 6-3 7-6 3-6 6-1, saying afterward “I was just void of concentration in that set.”¹⁶² The men’s singles final was set, with Laver squaring off against John Newcombe the following day at 1:30 pm. Since Laver and Newcombe were also still involved in the men’s doubles tournament – in opposite halves of the draw – it was announced to the

crowd that the men's doubles semifinals and finals would be completed on Sunday afternoon, after the singles final. The schedule change allowed Laver and Newcombe to get sufficient rest before their singles match.

On Sunday morning, the day of the men's and women's singles finals, an article by Neil Amdur entitled "Women Revolt in Tennis" appeared in the *New York Times*. The Philadelphia tournament was the first time Amdur was in the presence of the women professionals since the U. S. Open the previous summer. At Forest Hills, Amdur aided the cause of the underpaid women professionals by inviting Ceci Martinez, Esme Emanuel and other women players to the Lawn Tennis Writers meeting, and his subsequent reporting of their unfair treatment publicized the problem to a wider audience. In Philadelphia, Amdur wanted to chronicle how far the women had come in the previous six months. "It's been great," Billie Jean told Amdur. "It's been the best thing that could have happened to us. The girls have more identity, we're finally being paid well, people are beginning to realize that we can hit a ball, and we don't puff up our attendance figures like they do on the men's circuit."¹⁶³

Amdur noted that the women's tour was experiencing growing pains, typical of the administration of any professional sport. Some players were penalized with fines – for arriving late for matches or for using foul language on court – and others were quick to complain if a player was avoiding compulsory attendance at cocktail parties, instructional clinics, and media appearances. One player, who asked Amdur not to mention her name, complained, "Some girls like to pick on little things. They'll say things like 'so-and-so is not doing this,' or 'so-and-so missed a cocktail party, what are we going to do now?' It's mostly girl talk, though." Tory Fretz, however, saw the broader picture. "You've got to rise above the pettiness," she argued. "We're making more money than we ever thought possible, and we've got certain obligations. We can't afford to remain smug."¹⁶⁴

Several women players told Amdur it was enjoyable to play alongside the men at the Philadelphia tournament, and they missed the camaraderie of the co-ed circuit. "But," said one of them, "I think they miss us, too." Amdur noted that many of the women were under more pressure to win, due to the money at stake, and such mental strain was

increased since the 16-player draws meant there were no longer any easy early-round matches. For that very reason, some of the players maintained, Margaret Court was reluctant to join the tour. They admitted that Court could earn more money by negotiating appearance fees with promoters of smaller tournaments than she could make in tough weekly competition on the women's tour.¹⁶⁵

Sunday's men's singles final was played in front of 8760 fans and broadcast to a 22-station television network. Laver entered the match with a 17-match winning streak that had begun in Tokyo two months earlier. From the start of the match, Newcombe hit a variety of soft shots, slices and lobs, forcing Laver to generate his own pace. Unhappy about playing with the lighter Rawlings tennis balls, Laver found himself second-guessing his approach shots and overheads, and he was unable to create his usual amount of topspin. Newcombe won the first set in a tiebreak, coming back from 4-5 when Laver made three consecutive backhand errors. "As soon as I won the first set," Newcombe said later, "I knew that if he was going to win the match, he'd have to work his tail off and hit a thousand smashes. I wanted to make him play every ball."¹⁶⁶ Newcombe won the second set in another tiebreak, and the third set 6-4 to earn \$10,000 and his third win in thirteen matches against Laver. For Laver, the runner-up finish was worth \$5000.

The television cameras were not rolling when Rosie Casals and Francoise Durr played the women's singles final. Rosie won the first set 6-2, Francoise won the second set 6-3, and Rosie took the third set 6-2 to win the match. As soon as the women were presented with their prize money – Rosie earned \$3000 and Francoise was given \$2000 – an announcement was made that the men's doubles competition would be canceled since the arena needed to be prepared for an upcoming Ice Capades Show. The men's doubles prize money was to be evenly divided among the four remaining teams. "Simply ridiculous," muttered Ken Rosewall, who rarely complained about anything.¹⁶⁷ Amid loud booing, Rosie and Francoise were still at courtside when workers came onto the floor of the Spectrum to dismantle and remove the portable Sportface court.¹⁶⁸

Off the arena floor, Rosie told Roger Keim of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* that she "couldn't get any rhythm going or get it all together. I was lucky. She could have broken me a lot more." Rosie also used the opportunity to make a case for equal presentation of

women's tennis. "So why wouldn't they put any of the women's final on TV after giving the men two and a half hours? ... I have a hell of a lot of feeling about that. Women's tennis should be given the same time, court and TV scheduling and equal prize money. We have to practice the same amount of time. We have to hit the same shots and play the same game and some day it will be equal." When asked about the recent news from the USLTA annual meeting in Florida, in which she and the other American women professionals on the tour were reinstated and included in the national rankings, Rosie smiled and said, "I really don't know what went on there. Does it really matter?"¹⁶⁹

While Rosie and Francoise were playing in the final, most of the other women professionals were preparing to travel to Fort Lauderdale, Florida for the next stop on the tour. At the same time, in Clearwater, Florida, USLTA officials were packing their suitcases and returning home after concluding a successful annual meeting. In addition to approving the revised national rankings – which included men's contract professionals for the first time – the leadership of the USLTA was passed from Alastair Martin to Bob Colwell, and significant revisions were made to the association's bylaws and standing orders. A new Disciplinary Committee, which replaced the Rules and Discipline Committee, was given the power to fine or suspend any player who violated USLTA regulations. Most likely as a result of the Houston tournament, the USLTA decided to require member clubs to receive sanction approval in order to hold contract professionals events.¹⁷⁰

In response to an increasing number of incidents of poor sportsmanship, and its effect on junior players and spectators, the USLTA adopted a player's code of conduct. For any player whose conduct was detrimental to the game, a tournament chairman was given the authority to withhold prize money or expense payments, and the USLTA established fines up to \$1,000. Any player charged with improper conduct would have the right to a hearing before the USLTA Disciplinary Committee. After such a hearing, the committee could then reprimand, fine or suspend the player from tournament competition.¹⁷¹

According to the new USLTA rule, examples of detrimental conduct included cursing at an official, spectator or opponent, throwing a racquet or hitting a ball at an

official or spectator, using obscene gestures or threatening bodily harm to anyone, gambling on any tennis match or associating with professional gamblers. In addition, any tennis player who defaulted a match – unless due to injury – was subject to the withholding of prize money and a hearing before the USLTA Disciplinary Committee. It was a new policy that Billie Jean and Rosie would put to the test seven months later.

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¹⁶⁹ Rosie Casals, quoted in Roger Keim, "Rosemary Casals Makes Big Point For Women's Lob," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, February 15, 1971.

¹⁷⁰ Charles Friedman, "Fines Advocated By Tennis Panel," *New York Times* (New York, New York), February 3, 1971.

¹⁷¹ Charles Friedman, "Fines Advocated By Tennis Panel," *New York Times* (New York, New York), February 3, 1971.

CHAPTER 6: SHE'LL HAVE TO WIN IT FROM ME

Before the Virginia Slims Circuit started in 1971, there were only a handful of top-level women's-only tournaments held in the United States, much less anywhere else in the world. The USLTA held its first national championships for women in Philadelphia in 1899, and it was not until 1921 when the women joined the men at the West Side Tennis Club in Forest Hills, New York. The USLTA National Women's Indoor Championships dated back to 1907 and was held at the 200-seat indoor facility at the Longwood Cricket Club in Massachusetts before moving to the Winchester Indoor Lawn Tennis Center in 1966. For five years – from 1966 through 1970 – the New England Women's Indoor Championships were held in Agawam, Massachusetts as a lead-up tournament to the women's national indoor event. These were all amateur tournaments that usually only provided the top-seeded players any expense money.

In 1970, the USLTA National Women's Indoor Championships offered prize money for the first time. Of the \$4000 total prize money, underwritten by the Boston Globe newspaper, the American Bilrite Rubber Company and the Bonne Belle Cosmetics company, the singles winner earned \$1500 and the winning doubles team shared \$400. That same year, the New England Women's Indoor Championships in Agawam offered a total of \$1000, with only the finalists in the singles and doubles receiving any prize money.

Dating back to the early 1920s, there were two well-known women's-only tournaments played during the summer at exclusive country clubs. The Essex County Club Invitation, inaugurated at the Essex County Club in Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts in 1925, was a mainstay for top-level women on the eastern grass court circuit until the advent of open tennis. Not interested in offering prize money and

opening its doors to professionals when the game became “open,” the club did not renew the tournament after 1968. A

Another women’s-only tournament on the summer circuit was the Maidstone Women’s Invitational, played at the Maidstone Club in East Hampton, New York. The tournament was established in 1926 by USLTA president Julian S. Myrick, who was also a member of the club. For nearly thirty years, many of the world’s best women competed at Maidstone, including Helen Wills, Helen Jacobs and Alice Marble. The tournament was canceled in 1956, supposedly due to the fact that it was usually scheduled just prior to the U. S. National Doubles Championships in Longwood, Massachusetts, and an increasing number of women did not want to participate in a competitive tournament one week before the national doubles event. “Another reason for the cancellations, particularly in the case of (Maidstone),” wrote Allison Danzig of the *New York Times* in 1956, “is the problem of putting up the players. To hold down expenses, it is customary for club members to invite players into their homes as guests for the week. However, the help problem has caused many members to beg off.”¹

Dorothy Chewning inaugurated the Westwood Women’s Invitational – a small women’s tournament at the Westwood Racquet Club in Richmond, Virginia – in the fall of 1968 and attracted the likes of Nancy Richey, Maria Bueno, and Peaches Bartkowicz, the surprise winner. The success of Chewning’s first tournament resulted in another event in 1969, again won by Peaches. After the inaugural Virginia Slims tournament in Houston in September of 1970, Chewning’s tournament in November of that year was sponsored by Virginia Slims and renamed the Virginia Slims Invitational as a trial event for the upcoming 1971 Virginia Slim Circuit. There was no women’s tournament at Westwood in 1971, but the Virginia Slims of Richmond returned there in 1972 and in 1973, the final year of the event.

In early 1970, seven months before the inaugural Virginia Slims Invitation in Houston, two other women’s-only events were held for the first time. Geza Gazdag, an immigrant from Hungary, opened the two-court Vanderbilt Athletic Club in 1965 on the third floor of the Grand Central Terminal in New York City, where CBS Television once had a soundstage. Gazdag staged the Vanderbilt Ladies Invitational, an eight-woman

open tournament that offered \$5,000 in prize money. Sellout crowds of 1,200 on the last two days of the tournament prompted Margaret Court, who won \$1,500 for defeating Virginia Wade in the final, to say “I think people are finding that when you get the top eight girls in the world, there is very interesting tennis among us.”²

The following week, the Maureen Connolly Brinker Memorial was organized by Nancy Jeffett in Dallas, Texas. No prize money was offered in this inaugural event; it was a charity effort to raise funds for the Maureen Connolly Brinker Foundation. The players competed in Dallas to honor Connolly, the American tennis champion who died nine months earlier, and \$25,000 was raised for the foundation. “Maureen did an awful lot for tennis,” Margaret Court said, “and I think it is only right that a lot of the girls came here in remembrance of her and help out in the tennis development program.”³ The success of the tournament resulted in it becoming an annual event, and eventually one of the richest women’s prize money tournaments in the world.

George Liddy was another person who envisioned the commercial appeal of women’s tennis. The vice president and general manager of Florida radio station WLOD, Liddy was watching a men’s and women’s tennis tournament at Holiday Park in Fort Lauderdale in early 1968. Wandering to a side court, he was impressed with the aggressive play of Mary Ann Eisel, then the number-three ranked woman in the nation.

*I thought to myself, “You know, I’ve never seen Nancy Richey play, and I’ve never seen Billie Jean King play” ... It hit me right then. How about an all-woman professional tour?*⁴

-- George Liddy, 1987

Within only a few months, Liddy organized the Broward County Women’s Invitation. With the help of Peachy Kellmeyer, a fellow Floridian who was the tenth-ranked U. S. singles player in 1966, Liddy secure the participation of twelve top-level women players and he found a site at the Lighthouse Point Yacht and Racquet Club in Pompano Beach. Staged in late April, the tournament was given a spot on the Florida-

Caribbean circuit. Judy Dalton won the singles title and the doubles title, partnering with Lesley Bowrey, and was given a trophy and a small radio.

*My lack of knowledge was appalling. I think if I had reasoned it out, it wouldn't have happened. I wanted to see the tournament go off. I thought it would be good for the community to see international players.*⁵

-- George Liddy, 1987

*I guess George was the first one to ever put on an all-women's tournament. I remember when he first came to me with the idea over lunch one day and I thought he was nuts. I really didn't think it would work but I wanted to help him however I could because he was an honest guy with a good goal.*⁶

-- Peachy Kellmeyer, 1998

By 1969, the tournament was renamed the WLOD International and featured \$2000 in prize money and eighteen of the best women's players in the world, including Margaret Court and Virginia Wade. Liddy also wanted the participation of Chris Evert, the reigning national Girls 14 champion. Liddy was a friend of Chris' father Jimmy Evert, a well-known teaching professional at Holiday Park in Fort Lauderdale, and he knew that Chris could very well give any of the other women in the tournament a competitive match. The gamble paid off; Chris defeated the more experienced Marilyn Aschner in the first round, and she easily dispatched 1968 national clay court finalist Linda Tuero in her next match. Her run ended in the quarterfinals, when eventual champion Julie Heldman beat her 6-4 6-1. It was a successful tournament; years later, Liddy recalled that nearly 10,000 fans attended the week-long tournament.

I remember everybody in Fort Lauderdale was giving me credit for promoting what people were saying was the first women's only event. But the credit and excitement came from Chris Evert and the fact that she did so well by reaching

*the quarterfinals. She has never boasted about herself but Chris was the key to that start.*⁷

-- George Liddy, 1998

*George always had a vision and in his way he was a bit of a maverick. I don't think anybody really fully believed in women's tennis at the time he began, but for some reason he thought it was the greatest thing. He had such a passion for women's tennis, and coming from a man thirty years ago, that was unheard of. But he has always been very soft-spoken and gentle, and not a high-powered guy with a cigar in his mouth. The way he did it, you hardly knew he was behind all those tournaments.*⁸

-- Chris Evert, 1998

The WLOD International continued in 1970, with Liddy once again including Chris Evert as well as another young Floridian, Laurie Fleming. Chris had another impressive string of wins, defeating Pam Teeguarden 6-1 6-1 and Linda Tuero 6-0 6-2 before falling in three sets to top-seeded Nancy Richey in the semifinals. Nancy earned \$1000 for defeating Peaches Bartkowicz in the final, and then shared \$600 with Peaches for winning the doubles title over Kathy Harter and Patti Hogan.

When she began organizing the women's tour in the fall of 1970, Gladys Heldman asked Liddy if he was interested in having his tournament included on the circuit. Liddy gladly accepted, and in return he was guaranteed the appearances of Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals, and the other *World Tennis* contract professionals. The tournament was scheduled for mid-February, immediately after the Philadelphia Indoors.

Liddy was undoubtedly relieved when he learned the USLTA reached a peace settlement with Virginia Slims Circuit one week before his tournament started in February 1971. Since the USLTA reinstated the women contract professionals to registered player/independent professional status, and gave sanction approvals to the Virginia Slims tournaments, amateurs would be permitted to participate in any of the tour's events. Once again, Liddy offered wildcard spots to local favorites Chris Evert

and Laurie Fleming. By February 1971, Chris had become a hometown heroine and was very familiar to tennis fans nationwide. The previous summer, she won the national Girls 16 singles title, and at a tournament in Charlotte, North Carolina, she dismantled Francoise Durr and then stunned the recent Grand Slam champion Margaret Court in two thrilling tiebreak sets. Laurie, one of Chris' best friends, won the national Girls 14 title in 1969 and would go on to win the national Girls 16 title in the summer of 1971.

Several of the Virginia Slims Circuit professionals arrived at the Pompano Beach tournament with renewed confidence. Rosie Casals had just won her first singles title of the year in Philadelphia, Francoise Durr had registered her first tournament win over Billie Jean King and reached the Philadelphia final, and Judy Dalton had scored her first singles win on the circuit during the previous week and was starting to regain the power and accuracy in her serve. Judy was also a former champion of the Pompano Beach tournament; she won the inaugural event in 1968, when it was called the Broward County Women's Invitation. Finally, Denise Carter came to Florida match-tough from her three-set win over Kristy Pigeon in Philadelphia.

Three tour regulars did not make the trip to Pompano Beach; Mary Ann Curtis and Peaches Bartkowicz took the week off, and defending champion Nancy Richey was still recovering from a tonsillectomy. Fifteen professionals were on hand for the tournament, in addition to amateurs Chris Evert and Laurie Fleming – a total of seventeen players, one more than needed for a sixteen-player draw. Two of the lesser-ranked players were required to play a preliminary match, with the winner advancing to the main draw. Ceci Martinez and Esme Emanuel were the tour alternates, and Ceci unluckily was chosen to play Laurie in the preliminary match. Chris drew a spot in the main draw, and was paired against Denise Carter in the first round.

Matches began on Wednesday, February 17, on the green clay courts of the Lighthouse Point Yacht and Racquet Club. Ann Jones and Francoise Durr won their first-round matches handily, and top-seeded Billie Jean King had a slightly more difficult time with Kristy Pigeon, winning 6-3 6-3. Judy Dalton lost the first set 1-6 against Julie Heldman and won the next two, 6-2 6-4, in an encounter the *Fort Lauderdale News* described as “worthy of a final and not a first round match.” Ceci Martinez, who was

still winless on the tour, had a heartbreaking loss in a preliminary match against Laurie Fleming. Ceci won the first set 6-4, Laurie won the second set 6-3, and the third set reached 5-5 before the young Floridian won two consecutive games to win the match – and a spot in the main draw.⁹

On Thursday, the four remaining first-round singles matches were played. Number-two seed Rosie Casals defeated Tory Fretz 6-4 6-4, and Kerry Melville ended the run of Laurie Fleming, winning 6-2 6-4. Valerie Ziegenfuss had her best win on the tour when she defeated Karen Krantzcke 6-4 4-6 6-2. In the final match of the day, Denise Carter and Chris Evert took the court late in the afternoon. Chris and Laurie created some resentment among the original tour members, who felt the youngsters were benefiting from what they had worked so hard to establish. When Denise and Chris started their match, many of the tour regulars were watching, hoping that Denise would beat the local upstart.¹⁰

Denise won the first set 6-2, and Chris responded by winning the second set in a tiebreak. The umpire then called for the traditional ten-minute break before the third set started, which annoyed Denise. Not only was the daylight fading, but earlier in the year the players on the tour agreed to eliminate rest periods before the start of a third set. When the match resumed, Chris pulled ahead 3-1 in the deciding set. Denise was serving in the fifth game, and a mistake by the chair umpire may have helped her win the match. At 15-40, Denise won the point to make it 30-40. The umpire, however, erroneously called the score as 40-30. The players were caught up in the heat of the battle and apparently unaware of the score confusion. Chris won the next point, which should have concluded the game and put her ahead 4-1. The chair umpire, still off by two points, announced the score as deuce. Denise eventually won the game to narrow Chris' lead from 3-1 to 3-2. On the changeover, spectators and reporters were puzzled at what just happened, but by then it was too late to do anything about it. In the fading light, Chris held serve to pull ahead 4-2, and the chair umpire announced that the match would be halted due to darkness. Their match was scheduled to resume the following morning.¹¹

The next day, Denise started strongly, and Chris uncharacteristically lost four games in a row. Denise won the match 6-2 6-7 6-4 and needed to be back on court later

in the day for her second round match against Francoise Durr. Although Denise lost to Francoise, she was satisfied with her earlier win over Chris, who was quickly becoming a star in her home state of Florida.¹²

*Denise and I were housing with a nice lady who had a spanky, brand new convertible Jaguar XKE. She told Denise if she beat Chrissie she would give us the car to use for the rest of the week! After Denise beat her in a long, hard-fought match, we spent the evening cruising up and down the strip in Fort Lauderdale in the Jag!*¹³
 -- Kristy Pigeon, 2012

In the meantime, Rosie advanced past Valerie, 6-2 6-2, and Billie Jean was pushed to a first-set tiebreak in her 7-6 6-2 win over Judy Dalton. “I’m starting to slip from my best,” Billie Jean said after her win, “and the other girls are improving.”¹⁴ Francoise easily beat Denise 6-2 6-1 in the last singles match of day; Kerry Melville was given a walkover into the semifinals when Ann Jones withdrew due to illness.

The previous week, during the tournament in Philadelphia, the American women were reinstated by the USLTA. No longer considered contract professionals, the reinstatement to registered player/independent professional status made them eligible for national rankings and participation in the Wightman Cup and Federation Cup. For the Australian players, however, it was a different story. The Lawn Tennis Association of Australia (LTAA) was still annoyed that Judy Dalton, Kerry Melville and Karen Krantzcke were absent from the traditional Australian tournaments – without LTAA permission – to play on the Virginia Slims Circuit. On Friday, February 19, during the WLOD International, an article appeared in the *Melbourne Herald* under the headline “Rebels Land In Hot Seat.” Well-known Australian sports journalist Don Lawrence indicated that the LTAA gave the Australian players until March 10 to explain if they were contract professionals or not. If they could not prove that they were contract professionals, the LTAA would declare them under its jurisdiction and would consider suspending them from all tournaments for their failure to stay home and participate in the

Australian events. According to Lawrence, the situation had become so convoluted in recent weeks that no one at the ILTF could make sense of it. “The unfortunate part of the whole deal,” Lawrence maintained, “is that the Australians only took their stand to back a group of American girls who were urging for better prize money for women ... the nine Americans have been accepted back into the USLTA fold.”¹⁵

When Billie Jean lost to Francoise Durr one week earlier in the semifinals of the Philadelphia tournament, ending her 27-match winning streak, she said “I will be psyched up the next time I face her.”¹⁶ Billie Jean got her chance for redemption in Pompano Beach; in Saturday’s semifinals, she beat Kerry Melville 7-5 6-4 and Francoise defeated Rosie 5-7 6-4 6-3 to set up the championship match. In the finals the following day, Francoise won the first set 6-3 and Billie Jean took the second set 6-3. At 3-3 in the third set, Billie Jean lost her serve on a double-fault. With Francoise leading 4-3, the game went to deuce, and Billie Jean made two consecutive forehand errors to fall behind 3-5. Down match point in the next game, Billie Jean double faulted to surrender the match. For Francoise, who told reporters she preferred playing on the green clay surface, the tournament victory was worth \$2000. Billie Jean received some consolation when she and Rosie won the doubles title over Francoise and Ann Jones, 7-6 6-4 to remain undefeated on the 1971 tour. Billie Jean and Rosie split \$500 for winning the doubles tournament, and Ann and Francoise shared \$300.¹⁷

The Women’s Pro Tournament at Lighthouse Point, Florida, was without a doubt the best thing that has happened to Florida to help the women’s game. This tournament made money for the first time and the crowds were great. It is a talented group of girls who smiled all the way, even if the wind didn’t stop blowing the entire week. The matches were so outstanding that last year’s couldn’t begin to compare with them. These girls were far superior.

If men had been included in the tournament, I doubt if Billie Jean King would have been mentioned in the papers.¹⁸

Linda Manning

Lighthouse Point, Florida

After the WLOD International in Pompano Beach, the tour traveled north for a tournament played at the Winchester Indoor Lawn Tennis Club, located outside of Boston. The name of the tournament created some controversy and confusion. For all practical purposes, it was the 65th annual USLTA National Women's Indoor Championships – organized by the same committee, played in the same facility, and played during the same time of the year as the previous five national women's indoor championships. However, for the 1971 tournament, Philip Morris contributed the \$12,500 in prize money on the condition that the event be named the Virginia Slims Nationals and become part of the Virginia Slims Circuit. “And so the tournament committee found itself squeezed in the middle,” wrote Barry Lorge of *Tennis Magazine*. “It wanted to keep the prestige and heritage of the Nationals, but was dependent on Philip Morris for money and top players; nine of America's top ten and four prominent foreigners were contract professionals on the Virginia Slims \$100,000-plus women's circuit ... Officially the obligation remained to call the tournament the Virginia Slims Nationals. The tournament committee honored that obligation, but also followed the path of least resistance and did not press the point. In effect, they let everybody call it what they wanted.”¹⁹

On the day before the tournament started, Billie Jean spoke about the responsibilities that came with being the top money earner on the circuit. “Sure it's great,” Billie Jean said. “Probably the best I'd done was \$7000 or \$8000 before and all of a sudden the whole thing is fantastic. I'm not making any excuses. The pace of promotional activities is a real killer. The money is suddenly worthwhile, but they're really socking it to us. I've got to get some rest. I'm grateful to them for making it all possible.”²⁰

Fourteen of the tour regulars were in Winchester for the tournament, along with the latest tour member Wendy Gilchrist, an Australian who had relocated to New York, and two amateurs: seventeen-year-old Andrea Voikos of Rhode Island, the number-one ranked woman in the New England section, and fifteen-year-old Laurie Tenney of Los Angeles, the top-ranked junior girl in Southern California. Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals, Françoise Durr and Ann Jones were the top four seeds.

A tournament of seventeen entrants meant that two players needed to play a preliminary match, with the winner advancing to the round of sixteen. Mary Ann Curtis and Peaches Bartkowicz were the unlucky players, drawn to play each other in a match in which the loser received no prize money. At the same time, the two amateurs who were unable to accept any prize money – Andrea Voikos and Laurie Tenney – found themselves safely in the round of sixteen. “Some of the Virginia Slims girls were very disturbed at the draw which resulted in some of the (Virginia Slims) players playing each other in a preliminary round (round of 32),” tournament chairman Tom Raleigh reported to Stan Malless. “Gladys had requested that the (Virginia Slims) girls be put straight into the round of 16. Our position was that we would make the draw in accordance with USLTA rules, which we did. The night before the tournament we had a very heated discussion with the girls and they held a meeting among themselves which resulted in the “request” to the tournament committee that a new draw be made (we understand that a motion to “demand” a new draw was defeated) ... I thought you should know about this, Stan, as this may become a problem for future USLTA sanctioned events. The Virginia Slims representatives (Bill Cutler and Pip Jones) were most helpful in settling this matter with the girls. The problem seems to me to have emanated from Mrs. Heldman.”²¹

Before the tournament opened at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, a Ladies Day event offered women and girls the opportunity to meet the players at the club. A special guest at the gathering was Boston resident Hazel Hotchkiss Wightman, the founder of the Wightman Cup women’s team competition between the United States and Great Britain. Rosie opened the afternoon program with a 6-1 6-2 demolition of Valerie Ziegenfuss that impressed *Lowell Sun* sportswriter Eric Best, who wrote that the number two seed played “with the speed and power that makes her tough to beat and heart-stopping to watch.”

Ann Jones watched the match and explained why Rosie was such a tough competitor. “Rosie is greatly improved this year,” Ann told Best. “The best part of her game is her serve. She can hit everything – the big one, the twist, and the slice. And when she gets in trouble during a point she hits the ball harder and still pulls it down into the court.”²² After Rosie’s match, Judy Dalton won against Esme Emanuel, 6-3 6-2, and Kerry Melville defeated Andrea Voikos, 6-3 6-3. Francoise Durr and Ann Jones concluded the afternoon session with a 6-2 7-5 doubles win over Emanuel and Ceci Martinez, 6-2 7-5.

Later that evening, Peaches and Mary Ann played their preliminary match. Peaches swept the first set 6-1 as Billie Jean, who was waiting to play the following match, watched from the stands. “Look at Peaches,” Billie Jean told Bud Collins of the *Boston Globe*, “she really wants to win tonight.” Mary Ann tried to get Peaches off the baseline and moving forward by hitting drop shots. A moody player who sometimes gave the impression that she did not care if she won or lost, Peaches hustled for every one of Mary Ann’s drop shots. At 4-4 in the second, Peaches broke Mary Ann at love and prepared to serve for the match. Mary Ann broke right back with two unreachable drop shots to level the set at 5-5. Unaffected by her lost opportunity, Peaches broke Mary Ann’s serve one more time, and once again stood at the baseline to serve for the match. At 15-15, Peaches surprised Mary Ann with a second serve ace. Not one to typically hit service aces, Peaches later confessed, “I just closed my eyes and hit it.” A few points later, Peaches won the match and earned a guaranteed \$300 for reaching the main draw. “About time I beat Mary Ann,” Peaches said after the match. “It’s been five years since I beat her. I’ve been pretty terrible on the tour this winter and if I lost this one I wasn’t going to get any money.”²³

Billie Jean then beat Laurie Tenney as thoroughly as she possibly could, winning 6-1 6-2 in only thirty-four minutes. “I remember when I was her age,” Billie Jean recalled. “I played Maria Bueno when she was on top of the game. She didn’t give me any breaks and I wasn’t looking for any. She wanted to kill me. Man, she tried to bomb me on every shot. I took her to three sets, but I got great satisfaction out of knowing that she was going all out on every shot. If she hadn’t, I think I would have been furious. And I hope that Laurie would have felt the same way tonight ... Anything she got tonight,

she earned.”²⁴ Laurie was back on the court immediately after her singles loss, teaming with fellow junior Andrea Voikos in a doubles match against Mary Ann Eisel Curtis and Valerie Ziegenfuss. The youngsters took the first set 7-5 before the defending champions won the next two sets 6-1 6-3.

The remaining first round singles matches were played on Thursday, February 25. Peaches, who survived the preliminary match on Wednesday, advanced to the quarterfinals and increased her singles winnings to \$600 by beating Wendy Gilchrist by the scores of 3-6 6-3 6-1. Kristy Pigeon had one of the best wins of her career when she defeated Julie Heldman, 6-3 0-6 7-5, in a two hour match. Julie played patiently from the baseline, hitting looping forehands to Kristy’s backhand. “But the persistent Pigeon was not to be denied,” observed Eric Best of the *Lowell Sun*, “and contained her rising frustration during interminable rallies to exploit her big, twisting serve and finish off her equally exhausted opponent after one hour and 56 minutes.”²⁵ For Julie, it was her third consecutive first-round loss after returning to competitive play. In the final match of the afternoon, Francoise Durr scored a 6-2 6-2 win over Ceci Martinez, who was still winless in her sixth appearance on the tour.

Following an instructional clinic for youngsters, Ann Jones was featured in the first singles match of the evening session, winning 6-3 6-4 against Denise Carter. Rosie Casals and Kerry Melville then played a quarterfinal singles match, one round ahead of everyone else. Rosie showed the full repertoire of her arsenal - when Kerry approached the net, Rosie passed her with topspin forehands, and when Rosie came forward, she often won the point with leaping overheads. In the second set, Rosie made use of the drop shot, one of her favorite tactics. Throughout the 6-3 6-3 win, Rosie double faulted nine times, prompting Francoise Durr to say, “Rosie has so many different shots she can hit that it’s too many for her own good – she hit the wrong one at the wrong time.” Rosie felt the service errors were not due to having too many choices. “The court peaks in the middle and makes the net look about a foot higher. I tried everything I could to correct my problem – throwing the ball higher, everything – but the balls are light and that doesn’t help either. It’s tough enough when you’re short, without having anything else added to it.”²⁶ Rosie and Billie Jean then had a scare in their doubles match; Judy

Dalton and Kerry Melville won the first set 6-2 and reached 6-6 in the second set. After winning the ensuing tiebreak, Rosie and Billie Jean cruised 6-2 in the final set. Peaches Bartkowicz, a winner in singles earlier in the day, partnered with Julie Heldman for a good win over Kristy Pigeon and Denise Carter, 6-3 6-4.

With no day session matches scheduled for Friday, the remaining three quarterfinal singles matches were played on Friday evening, after a buffet and social hour allowed fans to meet the players. A capacity crowd of 1800 spectators saw Billie Jean open the program against Judy Dalton. After Billie Jean overwhelmed Judy in only forty minutes, winning 6-0 6-2, she said it was the best tennis she played in the previous four or five weeks. "Sometimes you go out there and all you see is what's going on," Billie Jean said. "It's like there's a large curtain drawn around the court. The spectators and everything else are just a haze. You're concentrating only on what you're doing. The ball looks like a football or a basketball, you can see it so well. That's the way I felt tonight ... Tonight, I just seemed to do everything I wanted."²⁷ In the next match, Peaches Bartkowicz started strongly against Ann Jones, winning the first set 6-1 before Ann turned the tables and won the next two, 6-1 6-4. The evening session was concluded at 11 pm after Francoise Durr won against Kristy Pigeon, 6-2 6-1.

Another capacity crowd of 1800 turned out to watch the singles and doubles semifinals on Saturday. In her 6-3 6-2 win against against Francoise Durr, Rosie employed high looping forehands with extreme topspin. "Moonballs, that's what I call them," Rosie said after the match. She said she began hitting them eight years earlier, during a junior tournament in Burlingame, California. "It was on a cement court, and I found that if I put enough topspin on the ball it would bounce over the fence. That makes it pretty hard to get."²⁸ Rosie's high spinning shots were especially effective on the woven fiber NeoTurf courts at the Winchester Indoor Lawn Tennis Center. "I could get them if there was enough room behind the court, but I ran into the wall," a frustrated Francoise said later. After one of the moonballs landed deep in the court and bounced over her head, Francoise sarcastically complained to the chair umpire, "Is there something you can do about the wall? You must move the wall."²⁹

Billie Jean then defeated Ann Jones in the other semifinal 6-2 6-2. Ann's concentration was constantly disrupted by noise and movement from spectators, which was something that Billie Jean always embraced. Billie Jean and Rosie were back on court a few minutes later to win a doubles semifinal against Mary Ann Eisel Curtis and Valerie Ziegenfuss, 6-2 7-5. "The match produced some of the hottest rallies yet in the tournament," reported Eric Best of the Lowell Sun, with Rosie "blowing the ball past her opponents with a fury that left the crowd gasping."³⁰ In the other doubles semifinal, Ann Jones and Francoise Durr dominated the net and put Peaches Bartkowicz and Julie Heldman on the defensive. The more aggressive team punched away volleys and slammed overheads in the course of a decisive 6-3 6-2. Playing doubles from the backcourt often worked for Peaches and her partners, but in this match the strategy was not effective. "No teamwork," said Peaches after the match, "we just weren't playing together."³¹

Looking ahead to Sunday's singles final against Billie Jean, Rosie said she hoped to turn the tables on her good friend. "People ask me if our friendship distracts me, if I have a psychological hangup about beating her," she said, "but they overlook the fact that Billie Jean is a very good player. She's playing fantastically well. I think she could kill Margaret Court right now, she's playing that well. But I don't intend to play in her shadow until she decides to quit. I'm out to beat her tomorrow."³² Rosie and Billie Jean had played nineteen previous matches, and Rosie had only won four of those meetings.

On Sunday, February 28, another sold-out crowd of 1800 spectators – including Billie Jean's husband, Larry – watched Ann Jones open the schedule with a third-place playoff win over Francoise Durr, 8-3. In the championship match, Rosie won the first set and Billie Jean took the second; with Rosie serving at 1-2, Billie Jean got the critical break. Billie Jean never relinquished her lead and closed out the third set, 6-3. There was one recurring pattern during the match; when Rosie charged net, Billie Jean lobbed into her opponent's backhand corner and counterattacked. As Rosie retreated to retrieve the lobs, Billie Jean took control of the net. "You see how one weakness can be fatal? She missed some crucial backhands when she needed them," analyzed Billie Jean after the 4-6 6-2 6-3 victory. "One flaw like that will kill you every time."³³

*I got pregnant in late February, 1971 ... the night before the finals of the Women's National Indoors in Winchester, Massachusetts. I am sure, I am positive it was then because the next day I started getting hot flashes on the court. I thought – I hoped – I was getting sick. No such luck. In the next few days coffee started smelling bad and tasting worse ...*³⁴

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Billie Jean and Rosie then defeated Ann and Francoise, 6-3 7-5, for their thirtieth consecutive doubles match. Despite their successes on the tour, the players talked about the difficulties in playing eight tournaments in as many weeks. “It’s tough to keep adjusting your game and your legs to constantly changing surfaces,” said Billie Jean, referring to the different type of courts that were used in the last three tournaments; Philadelphia was played on Sportface, Pompano Beach was played on Har-Tru clay, and Winchester on NeoTurf. For Francoise Durr, the constant travel was one of the greatest challenges. “I need a rest,” she said. “I’m not sure I’ll be back next year. After six years of traveling like this, there has to be a place to stop.”³⁵

Francoise Durr actually would play on the tour for many more years, but Winchester would never again be the site of a women’s professional tennis tournament. For the tournament organizers, running the event in 1971 was an unpleasant experience. One volunteer felt that the players, in their drive to win prize money, had become more demanding and less appreciative than they were in the amateur days. “The players just weren’t the same anymore,” he said. In one instance, Mary Ann Eisel walked into the players’ hospitality room to get a meal after one of her matches. Looking at the free food spread out on the table, she said “Who the hell put this out?” Mary Ann’s housing hostess, standing nearby, heard the comment and tapped her on the shoulder. “Mary Ann,” she said, “I did.”³⁶ Despite the numerous problems, the tournament was a financial success; it raised \$5000 for the Youth Tennis Foundation of New England.

Dear Sirs:

I was disappointed to see the Ladies play this last Friday, February 26. Enclosed is the paper sent to me publicizing this event. Friday afternoon and evening matches are indicated for 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm. We arrived from New Hampshire for the afternoon (having excused our two sons from school) and were told by a gentleman that there were no afternoon matches. This was a bit of a disappointment.

We then left and came back at 7:00 pm, and were told that the matches would not begin until 8:00 pm. It was obvious most people knew this because of the few occupants in the stands. When the play did begin about 7:40 pm, there was a party being held in the other court area of the club. This party was so loud and rude that it disturbed the players, Mrs. Dalton and Mrs. King. About this time I began to feel the U.S. Women's Indoor Tennis Championships were not for the general public but solely for the members of the host club. They seemed to be having a big party oblivious to all.

The ball girls were very poor and unbusinesslike and the umpire during the Ann Jones vs Peaches Bartkowicz match couldn't keep score. In summation, if a national tournament is hosted by anyone it should be done on a businesslike basis with dignity and with proper consideration given to the players and gallery alike. I enjoy ladies' tennis and there is no quicker way to kill it, in my opinion, than by the performance at Winchester on Friday, February 26. ³⁷

Sincerely,
Philip Baker

Dear Mr. Baker:

I have received your copy of your letter of March 2nd in which you point out some faults, disappointments, and unbusinesslike aspects of the recent women's tournament in Winchester ... I agree with you completely ... It should be pointed out, however, that this year's tournament was not typical of previous tournaments. It was not the official USLTA Indoor Championship this year, and was sanctioned only as a Virginia Slims Invitational. The sponsor was not authorized to advertise it as shown in the copy of the announcement you sent to me ... The New England Tennis Association is familiar with this situation, and hopefully, next year things will be different. Thank you for your communication, and we are very sorry that you were inconvenienced by the operation and scheduling of this event.³⁸

Sincerely,

Stanley Malless

Chairman, Sanction & Schedule

After the Winchester tournament, the Virginia Slims Circuit took a two-week break, in case any of the players wanted to play in the Australian Open. It was unrealistic to expect any of the Virginia Slims players to travel to Australia for one tournament; Gladys most likely scheduled the break in order to avoid angering the ILTF and the LTAA. The American players from the Virginia Slims Circuit went home for two weeks, while the Australian players – Judy Dalton, Kerry Melville and Karen Krantzcke – went to Houston, where Gladys arranged housing for them.

The day after the Winchester tournament, on Monday, March 1, Billie Jean and Ann Jones held a news conference at the Philip Morris headquarters to discuss details of the upcoming \$15,000 Virginia Slims Invitational of New York. Scheduled for March 24 through 27 at the 34th Street Armory, the event featured a first prize of \$5000 – the most ever offered to a women's winner. Billie Jean called the tournament “probably my supreme challenge,” and both players talked about the importance of having a tour event

in New York City. Although the tour stops in Long Beach, Oklahoma City and other cities were successful, having a presence in New York was important in order to prove that the women could appeal to spectators in larger cities. “The tour is going just great,” Ann said. “We have proved that we can draw crowds, and we now have our self-respect.”³⁹

During the news conference, tournament director Freddie Botur asked Harry Hopman, the famed Australian Davis Cup coach who had relocated to the United States in 1969 and was teaching tennis in the New York area, to say a few words. Hopman criticized the Virginia Slims Circuit for being too exclusive; he said that it catered to the established stars and was not creating enough opportunities for promising junior players. When the top players began to decline, Hopman insisted, there would be no good players to take their places.⁴⁰

Gladys took issue with Hopman’s assessment. She insisted that no youngster or amateur could play on the tour in January or February, before the women were reinstated by the USLTA, without being declared a contract professional and losing her amateur or registered player status. In addition, since many of the tournaments were held one on indoor court, it was necessary to limit the draws to the top sixteen players. Gladys also pointed out that the recently completed WLOD International in Florida and the Virginia Slims National Indoor Championships in Winchester included the young amateurs Chris Evert, Laurie Fleming, Laurie Tenney and Andrea Voikos. Finally, Gladys said, the upcoming Virginia Slims Invitational in New York would include a qualifying tournament, in which eight women would compete for four spots in the main draw.⁴¹

Perhaps stung by Hopman’s criticism, Gladys devoted her next *World Tennis* editorial to the development of a secondary circuit for upcoming and promising players – one which fed the best players into the men’s and women’s primary prize money circuits. “The lesser players need to play the better ones if they are to improve,” she wrote, “(and) the better ones also need to play each other to learn what it is to play under pressure.” Gladys offered to work with a women’s secondary circuit (if someone were to organize one) by offering places in the Virginia Slims tournaments to the top two or four secondary players each week. She suggested that the Virginia Slims tour “now

contributes \$480 a week to the USLTA (in sanction fees); this amount could be turned over by the USLTA to the secondary tournament for prize money or their expenses.” Gladys believed that the best candidates to sponsor a secondary circuit were the individual tennis clubs across the United States; since crowds would be small, there would be no need for large seating capacity, promotion, player expenses or programs. The only risk for the clubs would be the loss of court time, and there remained the possibility of finding a corporate sponsor for a five-week secondary circuit. Time was of the essence; Gladys hoped that a secondary circuit could be developed in time for the upcoming summer months.⁴²

On March 13, Gladys proposed her ideas at the USLTA Executive Committee meeting in Chicago. She explained that Virginia Slims was offering enough sponsorship money to stage fourteen \$20,000 tournaments during the summer and fall. She wanted each of these tournaments to have a 32-player or 64-player qualifying tournament. The final eight women in the qualifying tournament would join eight other (higher ranked) women in a 16-player preliminary tournament; the final four women from the preliminary tournament would then be entered in the championship flight with twelve of the best women players in the world. Gladys also envisioned a feed-in consolation tournament for those who lost in the qualifying tournament. In effect, all of the Virginia Slims Circuit tournaments proposed for August and September would be four tournaments in one, and each woman player was guaranteed to play at least two matches. With this tournament format, Gladys felt, the younger and less experienced players would have the chance to compete against the better players, and future top players could be developed. This was an entirely new concept for the USLTA officials; the official yearbook had specific instructions for the tournament draws, specifically, a traditional single-elimination format. Gladys had hoped that the USLTA would embrace her concept and collaborate with her during the upcoming summer tournaments.⁴³

In keeping with her editorial in the April, 1971 issue of *World Tennis*, Gladys also proposed to develop a series of qualifying tournaments for male players. Those who came through the qualifying would earn spots in the USLTA major summer tournaments, such as the Washington Star International and the National Clay Court Championships.

Gladys hoped that these tournaments would have the USLTA and ILTF sanction fees waived, in order to encourage clubs to host them.⁴⁴

The controversy concerning the recent Virginia Slims tournament at Winchester, Massachusetts was also discussed. Stan Malless, Chairman of the Sanction and Schedule Committee, determined that the Winchester tournament would not be recognized as the National Women's Indoor Championships. "The Winchester tournament had been sanctioned with the Virginia Slims name," Malless announced, "but definitely not as a USLTA National Championship." For Bill Cutler, assistant brand manager for Virginia Slims and one of the tour's managers, the decision came as a surprise. "This is another experience which has to go down in the memory book. It was our understanding that this was the official National Women's Indoors," Cutler told Barry Lorge of *Tennis Magazine*. Cutler related how an officer of the New England Tennis Association, "came to Winchester during the tournament and spoke with us and the girls. He said that everything was fine and that the USLTA would cooperate with us in trying to establish a good women's circuit." USLTA officials were not sympathetic. "New England (Tennis Association) doesn't speak for us," they told Lorge. "We didn't agree to any diplomatic solution. We never agreed to the Virginia Slims name for a National Championship, even tacitly."⁴⁵

Gladys' concept for a feed-in consolation format for tournaments was not well received at the meeting in Chicago, primarily because it was too much of a departure from long-standing USLTA regulations. On the other hand, Stan Malless' 1971 summer tournament schedule (Table 6.1) – which included women's prize money that was well below Gladys' minimum prize money standards – was accepted.

Table 6.1 – 1971 Men’s/Women’s U. S. Summer Prize Money Tournaments

Week of:	1971 USLTA Summer Circuit Men’s Tournaments	1971 USLTA Summer Circuit Women’s Tournaments
Jul 12	Washington Star International Washington, D. C. 64 players - \$50,000	Northwood Women’s Open Midland, Michigan 32 players - \$7500
Jul 19	Tanglewood International Winston-Salem, North Carolina 64 players - \$25,000	Tanglewood International Winston-Salem, North Carolina 32 players - \$5000
Jul 26	Buckeye Tennis Championships Columbus, Ohio 32 players - \$15,000	Chicago International Invitational Chicago, Illinois 16 players - \$5000
Aug 2	Western Championships Cincinnati, Ohio 64 players - \$22,500	Western Championships Cincinnati, Ohio 32 players - \$7500
Aug 9	National Clay Court Championships Indianapolis, Indiana University 64 players - \$40,000	National Clay Court Championships Indianapolis, Indiana 32 players - \$10,000
Aug 16	Pennsylvania Lawn Tennis Championships Haverford, Pennsylvania 64 players - \$12,400	Pennsylvania Lawn Tennis Championships Haverford, Pennsylvania 32 players - \$2600
Aug 23	Eastern Grass Court Championships South Orange, New Jersey 64 players - \$20,000	Eastern Grass Court Championships South Orange, New Jersey 16 players - \$5000
Sep 1	U. S. Open New York, New York 128 players - \$121,000	U. S. Open (64) – 39,000 New York, New York 64 players - \$39,000
Sep 13	National Hard Court Championships Sacramento, California 64 players - \$21,400	National Hard Court Championships Sacramento, California 32 players - \$3700
Sep 20	Pacific Southwest Championships Los Angeles, California 64 players - \$55,000	Pacific Southwest Championships Los Angeles, California 32 players - \$10,000
Sep 27	Pacific Coast International Berkeley, California 64 players - \$20,000	Pacific Coast International Berkeley, California 32 players - \$5000

While the inaugural Virginia Slims Circuit was touring the United States in early 1971, the annual international grass court tournaments in New Zealand and Australia were underway. Among the women, the top competitors included Margaret Court, the winner of the Grand Slam in 1970, Patti Hogan, the fifth-ranked American who decided against joining the Virginia Slims group, and Evonne Goolagong, a 19-year old Australian who created a sensation during her first overseas trip in the spring and summer of 1970.

Under the close guidance of coach Vic Edwards, Evonne Goolagong became the best junior player in Australia in the late 1960s. In the spring of 1970, after she graduated from high school, Evonne traveled with Edwards and several of his other students on a five-month tour of Great Britain, Holland, Germany and Austria. Unknown outside of her home country, Evonne won her first tournament on the En-Tout-Cas circuit, a series of minor tournaments in England, easily defeating Great Britain's number-five player Joyce Williams on red clay in the final at Southport and winning \$96 for her efforts. Joyce turned the tables in the finals of the next two indoor tournaments, in Stalybridge and Poole, but by then British observers were taking notice of the athletic and graceful Australian teenager.

In her fourth consecutive tournament, Evonne won the women's singles title at the Cumberland Club tournament in Hamstead, defeating the tenth-ranked British player Jill Cooper, 6-2 9-7 in the final. The following week, Evonne was entered in the Sutton Hard Court Championships, an event that included Margaret Court and Ann Jones, the reigning Wimbledon champion. In the quarterfinals, Evonne won the first set from Ann before eventually losing 4-6 6-3 6-4. The stage was set for Evonne's emergence on the big stage at the British Hard Court Championships in Bournemouth, played on red clay at the West Hants Club.

At Bournemouth, after easily beating British number-eight Nell Truman in the second round, Evonne faced Rosie Casals, the world's sixth-ranked player. Evonne won routinely, 6-2 6-3, prompting Rex Bellamy of *The Times* to observe that "the most exciting display in the women's event was that of 18-year-old Evonne Goolagong, who conceded only five games to Miss Casals, three years older and vastly more experienced

... Miss Goolagong's tennis was so competent and mature that a casual observer might have thought it was the Australian who was the circuit-hardened competitor."

I went onto the court annoyed, unusual for me. I'd heard that Rosie and the other Americans were saying I'd had too much publicity and was overrated, that I'd crumple now that the strong women had appeared. They were right about the publicity – if they had in fact said it. I never found out if they did, but I was a little toey – riled up – and I had a good day against Rosie. She didn't like the slippery clay or the bleak, raw weather, and I was getting used to both.⁴⁶
 -- Evonne Goolagong, 1974

Evonne's win over Rosie put her in the quarterfinals against world number-five Julie Heldman, a much more proficient clay court player who won the prestigious Italian Open the previous year. On a drizzly day, Julie won the first set 6-1, although it took fifteen minutes of grueling backcourt rallies to win the second and third games. Evonne responded by winning the second set 6-1, and then found herself down 3-5 in the third set, with Julie serving and holding two match points. Evonne survived that game and then served at 4-5 to stay in the match, leveling the set at 5-5. The set continued to 10-10, when Evonne broke through and served for the match at 11-10. Evonne held two match points in that game but could not capitalize; it was not until she served at 12-11 did she finally secure the match, winning 1-6 6-1 13-11 in a third set that lasted ninety-seven minutes.

I knew Julie Heldman would be tougher than Rosie because Julie can stay out there all day and hit groundstrokes from the baseline. She loves a slow court, and she's as smart as she is steady. I just made up my mind that I was going to stay with her until one of us gave way. Up the score went in the third set, and down came the rain. Back and forth went the balls, muddy red clods that felt like bowling balls clunking off our rackets. The rallies were as steady as the rain.

But Julie made a few more mistakes than I did, and I won the longest set I've played, 13-11, and a spot in the semis. The Americans were all very complimentary. Now I felt I belonged on the international circuit, and I was not embarrassed by the publicity that week. ⁴⁷

-- Evonne Goolagong, 1974

Margaret Court ended Evonne's run in the semifinals, 6-1 6-4, but by then the younger Australian's potential as a world champion was clearly established. After two more clay court events – losing to French clay court specialist Gail Chanfreau in the quarterfinals of Guilford, and pushing Ann Jones to 7-5 in the third set in the semifinals of Hurlingham – Evonne prepared for her upcoming Wimbledon debut by playing in a series of grass court tournaments.

Surprisingly, Evonne's grass court results leading up to Wimbledon were not as impressive as her record during the British clay court season. She lost to Joyce Williams at Surbiton, Kristy Pigeon at Manchester, Patti Hogan at Beckenham, and British number-nine Janice Townsend at Queen's Club. At Wimbledon, Evonne won her first round match against Frenchwomen Odile de Roubin, 6-1 6-2, setting up a second-round encounter with Peaches Bartkowicz that was scheduled to be played on Centre Court in front of 12,000 spectators

My first Centre Court appearance did give me the all-time shakies ... I don't remember anything about it, a 6-4 6-0 beating ... I only looked up once. From then on I kept my eyes on the ground. Occasionally I looked at the ball, but I just wanted it to end as soon as possible ... When we changed ends of the court, I kept walking, never stopping so much as touch a towel to my brow. If I perspired at all, it was a cold sweat ... I wanted out and Peaches let me out quickly enough – mercifully. That wasn't the end of the ordeal. There were still the reporters and the same old questions ... What was it like, they wanted to know, to be the first Aborigine at Wimbledon, on Centre Court, playing tennis at a high level? Was my color a problem? Had I been discriminated against? How did I relate to

Arthur Ashe? ... Couldn't I be treated merely as a promising young Australian tennis player? Why should reporters be interested in an eighteen year old who had lost a second round match to an unseeded and not overly prominent American? ⁴⁸

-- Evonne Goolagong, 1974

Evonne quickly recovered from her loss to Peaches and won four consecutive titles in the month of July. She entered and won the Wimbledon Ladie's Plate, a consolation tournament for those who lost in the first or second round of the main draw. After Wimbledon, she then took the Welsh Open title with a 6-0 8-6 final round win over Patti Hogan, the North of England Championships in Hoylake with victories over Kerry Melville, Judy Dalton and Karen Krantzcke – the second, third and fourth-ranked Australian players – and the Midland Open in Leicester, again beating Patti in the final.

After England, Evonne and Edwards' other students played a series of tournaments in Holland, Germany and Austria. Evonne lost to Margaret Court in the semifinals of the Dutch Open, defeated fellow Aussies Kerry Melville and Karen Krantzcke to win the Bavarian Open in Munich, lost to Helga Niessen in the semifinals of the German Championships, won a small event in Innsbruck, Austria and concluded her first overseas tour with a runner-up finish to Niessen in the final of Kitzbuhel. For Evonne, it was a lengthy but rewarding tour; she won seven of nineteen tournaments entered and defeated four of the world's top-ten players. Edwards decided it would be best if Evonne did not play in any of the North American tournaments in 1970, including the U. S. Open, and they returned home to Australia to prepare for the upcoming Australian and New Zealand tournaments.

Quickly blossoming into a world's top-ten player, Evonne won the Australian Hard Court Championships in early November and the Queensland Championships later that month. In early December, she was named to the Australian Federation Cup team. Since Kerry Melville, Judy Dalton and Karen Krantzcke announced their intentions to play on the Virginia Slims Circuit and skip the traditional Australian tournaments without LTAA permission, they risked a possible suspension from the national association. As a

result, they were not named to the Federation Cup team, which created an opportunity for Evonne.

In the twelve-team Federation Cup draw, the second-seeded Australian squad received a first round bye and was supposed to play either Yugoslavia or Rhodesia in the second round. The Yugoslavians, however, were a last-minute withdrawal, due the illness of their top player, and the Rhodesian team was also absent. As a result, the first match for the Australians was a semifinal encounter with the fourth-seeded French team, consisting of Francoise Durr and Gail Chanfreau. Francoise won the French Championships in 1967, the same year she began a five-year winning streak in that tournament's women's doubles competition; two of the titles were achieved with Gail as her partner.

5,000 fans were present on Sunday, December 28 to watch Australia play France in the semifinals. Evonne started the match against Francoise with a service ace and quickly raced to a 3-0 lead. Nine months earlier, Francoise easily defeated Evonne in the first round of the New South Wales Open. Evonne, however, gained valuable experience on her first world tour in 1970, and by the time she played Francoise again in the Federation Cup semifinals, she was a much improved player. Evonne won the first set by attacking the net and volleying brilliantly; Francoise claimed the second set by slowing down the tempo and keeping her opponent on the baseline with deep shots and well-placed lobs.

During the ten-minute intermission before the start of the third set, Evonne's confidence was slightly shaken. In the locker room, Margaret urged Evonne to hit with more power and keep attacking the net. The third set lasted only fifteen minutes, during which time Evonne hit winners from all parts of the court; Francoise stood in amazement as the ball flew past her. After her 6-3 3-6 6-0 win, Evonne admitted that the third set was the best tennis she had ever played. Francoise thought that Evonne's quality of play in the first set, when she quickly won the first three games, could not have been surpassed even by Margaret, the world's best player.

Margaret then secured Australia's place in the Federation Cup final by overwhelming Gail Chanfreau, 6-1 6-1. With the victory over France clinched, the

doubles match pitting Margaret and Evonne against Francoise and Gail was played in “almost a picnic atmosphere,” with the Australians winning comfortably, 6-3 6-3.

The Federation Cup championship match, pitting the top-seeded British team against the second-seeded Australian team, was played in temperatures that reached 122-degrees; eleven of the 4,200 spectators collapsed from the heat. Virginia, a veteran of six Wightman Cup teams and four Federation Cup campaigns, was favored to win the opening singles match against the lesser-experienced Evonne. “The tension was marked,” Ann Jones reported in *World Tennis*, “everyone realized that the outcome of this match was vital and the fact that the two had never met before made the match all the more intriguing, although the odds were on Virginia because of her much greater experience and world ranking.”⁴⁹ At the outset of the match, Evonne easily returned Virginia’s best shots, causing the British player to become increasingly anxious. Virginia fell behind 1-4 and nearly leveled the score when she won the next two games. Evonne, however, closed out the first set, 6-4, as her opponent wilted in the oppressive heat. Trailing 0-3 in the second set, Virginia appeared to be on the verge of forfeiting. She sat in her courtside chair on the changeover, with her head between her knees, as team captain Winnie Shaw put a wet towel around her neck. Virginia managed to hold her service in the fifth game, after which Evonne won the next two games to secure the match 6-4 6-1 and give the Australian team an unexpected 1-0 lead.

With the team victory suddenly only one match away, Margaret Court “showed all the early nervousness that has marked her great career,” the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported.⁵⁰ Against Ann Jones, Margaret played tentatively in the first set, losing her service twice and repeatedly hitting her shots into the net. Ann won the first set 8-6 but lost her momentum when she lost her serve at 3-4 in the second. Serving at 5-3, Margaret’s confidence grew as she closed out the set without the loss of a point. She broke Ann’s serve in the opening game of the third set, held again to lead 2-0, and then won four of the next six games to give Australian its fifth Federation Cup title in nine years. With the cup clinched, the doubles match was merely an exhibition, in which Margaret and Lesley Hunt defeated Virginia and Winnie, 6-4 6-4.

After her brilliant performances in the Federation Cup, Evonne stalled in her next two tournaments, losing consecutive second round matches to Betty Stove of The Netherlands in the Western Australian Championships and the New South Wales Open. In the final of the Victorian Championships in February, Evonne ended Margaret Court's seven-year reign with a 7-6 7-6 victory – her first win over her idol. When Margaret barely defeated Evonne in the final of the Auckland Centennial Open in New Zealand, the stage was set for a showdown at the Australian Open in March.

In a depleted women's field – Margaret and Evonne were the only top-ten players in the draw – the two Australians advance easily to the final. In front of sellout crowd of 9,000 fans at White City Stadium in Sydney, Evonne cruised through the first set 6-2 before the match became close and the second set was tied at 6-6. When Margaret won the tiebreak without losing a point, it appeared the momentum had swung in her favor. Evonne, however, raced to a 3-0 lead in the third set and was only a few points away from the Australian Open title when she reached 5-2. The length of the match, combined with the sweltering heat, suddenly caused a painful cramp in Evonne's left leg which almost made her collapse. Although Margaret won five games to complete a 2-6 7-6 7-5 victory and her tenth Australian singles title, many spectators agreed with Rod Humphries of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, who wrote that "it may not be too long in the future before the tide will turn." Several months earlier, Margaret acknowledged that Evonne was destined for a spectacular tennis career. "I think, at last," she said during the Federation Cup matches in Perth, "I have found an Australian to take my place."⁵¹ No one could have predicted that Evonne would ascend to that position in only a few months.

While Margaret and Evonne were contesting the final of the Australian Open, halfway around the world, the Virginia Slims Circuit was preparing to resume with the K-Mart Invitational in Birmingham, Michigan. At the conclusion of the Virginia Slims National Indoors in Winchester, Massachusetts on the last day of February, the tour took a two-week break in case any of the players wanted to compete in the Australian Open. None of them did; Billie Jean and Nancy played each other in an exhibition match in Denver on March 2, Valerie Ziegenfuss went back to San Diego to announce that a newly-scheduled Virginia Slims Invitational would be played in her hometown in late

April, Ann and Pip Jones returned to England, and the Australians Judy Dalton, Kerry Melville and Karen Krantzcke spent two weeks in Houston. The ultimatum given to the Australian players by the Lawn Tennis Association of Australia (LTAA) – demanding that they prove whether or not they were contract professionals by the March 10 deadline – came and went, and the LTAA was still trying to determine the status of the three players. It would not be until June 25, 1971, that the LTAA notified the Australian players that they were considered in good standing, “in view of the confusion caused by the changing decisions of the ILTF and USLTA.”

The K-Mart Invitational was organized by the Junior League of Birmingham, Michigan. Cindy Trabue, the organization’s president, and Sandy Lecklider, treasurer of the group, convinced the Kresge Foundation in Birmingham to provide \$10,000 for prize money. The first two days of the six-day tournament were played at the Bloomfield Tennis House in Birmingham, and the quarterfinals, semifinals and finals were played in the gymnasium on the campus of Oakland University. The Junior League of Birmingham asked Sandy to be the chairman of the tournament, and she devoted several months planning and preparing for it. Although Sandy frequently played tennis at the Bloomfield Tennis House, she had never organized any type of tennis tournament before. She was, however, a world-class athlete in her own right; she won the women’s jumping event at the 1956 National Water Ski Championships. In organizing her first professional tennis tournament, Sandy’s first step was to organize all of the members of the Junior League.

They asked me to be the chairman, and I said I would, so I formed a whole bunch of committees. We had the girls doing everything. We had somebody in charge of training the ball boys, we had some in charge of getting line callers, we had somebody in charge of the reception on the night before, we had somebody in charge of finding good men players and celebrity men play with the girls in the mixed doubles event. We just fanned out, everybody got into it ... all the girls did a fantastic job, they were all smart, organized Junior League girls ... I had no idea what a big job this was going to be, I was absolutely going crazy with it. ... I

*had no manual or anything. My contact was Pip Jones, husband of Ann Haydon-Jones. I talked to him a lot ... I called him whenever I had a question.*⁵²

-- Sandy Lecklider, 2012

Although the draw was already made and delivered to her, Sandy was in charge of scheduling the numerous singles and doubles matches across the six-day, two-site tournament.

*I had it all laid out on my kitchen table at my house ... nobody told us that they had to play singles first and then doubles, so we had it all scheduled out the way we thought spectators would want to watch it, and then we found out that they had to play singles first. So we had to go back and do the whole thing over and try to figure out how we could get all the singles in before the doubles matches, and it was a real jigsaw puzzle.*⁵³

-- Sandy Lecklider, 2012

The K-Mart Invitational was played on one of the portable court surfaces that the Virginia Slims Circuit transported across the nation. For Sandy, the court proved to be her biggest challenge in organizing the tournament.

*The court was supposed to be shipped to us at certain time and it was late, in fact, it was lost. It was coming on a train. It was rolls of carpeting, it weight 2400 pounds and I thought it was coming from Oklahoma ... I know it was lost and we were trying to trace it, and of course this was before computers. We finally got it and I rallied all the Junior League husbands and we went and rolled it out ... We just did everything by ourselves.*⁵⁴

-- Sandy Lecklider, 2012

The players began arriving into town several days before the tournament started. All of them were staying in the homes of Junior League members, with the exception of

Billie Jean and Rosie, who decided to stay at the Kingsley Inn. Peaches Bartkowicz, of course, live in nearby Hamtramck, so for her this was almost a hometown tournament. As Kristy Pigeon and Kerry Melville appeared at the local K-Mart store to promote the upcoming tournament, Sandy met Billie Jean at the Detroit airport.

*I picked her up at the airport. She got off the plane with fifteen racquets in her hand, and handed me all the racquets while she got her luggage. I walked behind her with the racquets in my hand and everybody looked at me, and she walked through the airport telling everybody that I had the best backhand in Michigan ... she had a great sense of humor.*⁵⁵

-- Sandy Lecklider, 2012

The tournament started on Tuesday, March 16 at the Bloomfield Tennis House with rather routine matches, with the exception of Billie Jean's encounter with Karen Krantzcke. After losing the first set 6-4, Billie Jean hit her stride and won the next two sets, 6-4 6-3. For Billie Jean, who liked to play tournament tennis as often as possible, the two week break caused her game to lose a little of its sharpness.

*The first round matches were held at Bloomfield Tennis House and the Junior League girls called the lines, and they had never called lines before! Ted Jax gave them a little training and said if you're not really firm and decisive when you call it, they'll question you. You got to be really firm when you call it. And we had a few little problems there, and a player would question a call and try to intimidate the lines people.*⁵⁶

-- Sandy Lecklider, 2012

Later that night, the players and tournament personnel gathered at the Square Lake Racquet Club for a champagne reception. The event received a good amount of coverage in the local newspapers, and Francoise Durr caused a bit of a sensation when she arrived

The following day, on Wednesday, March 17, four more singles matches were scheduled to be played at the Bloomfield Tennis House, with Françoise opening the program at 1:00 pm against Mary Ann Curtis. During the morning, when most of the players were on the courts holding an instructional clinic for local women, Cindy Skalsky, a young reporter from the *Detroit Free Press*, arrived at the club for a pre-arranged interview with Peaches Bartkowicz. “I’ve been tired this week,” Peaches said. “This tour has been going on for ten weeks and you’ve got to keep a certain mental attitude or you just don’t play well. Especially in a tour like this, with all the top girls. I’ve had times when I lost confidence in my ability. When that happens, I just have to get away from tennis for a few days. Then I can come back more eager.”⁵⁷

During their conversation, a young man – who had been at the champagne reception at Square Lake Racquet Club the night before – sat down at the table. He and Peaches talked about what happened at the party; the young man revealed that one of the players had not come back to her hostess’ home until early in the morning. “Hmmm,” Peaches said with mock shock, “I wonder if she had a good time.” Turning back to the reporter, Peaches revealed that she had recently taken up crocheting, because “there’s nothing to do except sit around and wait for your match ... I can only stand to read for an hour or so.” Cindy asked Peaches if any of the older players help the younger ones with their games. “Tennis is an individual sport,” Peaches replied, but the expression on her face clearly implied “Are you kidding?”⁵⁸

Esme Emanuel approached the table and asked Peaches if she was ready to warm up. As the two players walked to the courts, Cindy followed them. “Peaches,” Cindy said, “The person I spoke with said that you’d give me a little lesson, hit the ball around or something, nothing complicated.” Peaches was flabbergasted. “Whoever told you that must be crazy. I said I’d do an interview, not a lesson,” she said. Cindy was not ready to concede, and pleaded that it would take “just five minutes. Back and forth across the net, for the photographer.” Peaches could not be swayed. “No way,” she insisted, “I did all that promotional stuff last week. I’ve gotta play a match in a couple hours. I can’t fool around. Sorry.”⁵⁹

Through the window, Cindy longingly watched Peaches and Esme practice. “She and Esme hit hard, even strokes across to each other,” Cindy wrote later in her article, “Each time the ball hit the racquet, I could feel that thwong in my arm ... I’ll probably never play tennis with Peaches Bartkowicz ... you can’t help feeling a pang of disappointment.”⁶⁰

All four matches on Wednesday went to three sets, giving the spectators a full afternoon of the best in women’s tennis. Mary Ann Curtis and Francoise Durr opened the program, and in a two-and-one-half hour match, Mary Ann served and volleyed her way to a 7-5 6-7 6-3 win over the fourth seed and her best singles win on the tour so far. Peaches Bartkowicz won a close opening set from second-seeded Rosie Casals but could not maintain the pressure, losing the next two sets at 6-3 and 6-4. Unseeded Judy Dalton got a scare from Esme Emanuel before regrouping and coasting to a 2-6 6-2 6-0 win. Valerie Ziegenfuss also notched one of her best wins of the tour, outlasting Kerry Melville 6-4 4-6 6-2.

On Thursday, the matches were moved to the gymnasium at Oakland University, and it was another good day for Mary Ann. She advanced to the semifinals with a 6-4 7-6 win over Wendy Gilchrist, 6-4 7-6, and then teamed with Valerie for an impressive three-set win over the tough doubles team of Kerry Melville and Karen Krantzcke. In a surprisingly close match, Ann Jones needed two tiebreaks to get past Tory Fretz, and Michigan native Peaches Bartkowicz delighted the crowd when she and Judy Dalton won against Esme Emanuel and Ceci Martinez.

*When we got to Oakland, we pulled some of the guys in (for lines judges) because we felt like they wouldn’t be so intimidated.*⁶¹

-- *Sandy Lecklider, 2012*

Friday afternoon’s matches were uneventful; Billie Jean beat Valerie comfortably, and then Rosie had an even easier time against Judy. In the semi-finals on Saturday afternoon, Billie Jean needed three sets to get past Ann Jones, and Rosie had a scare

when Mary Ann pushed her to a second-set tiebreak. No one, however, would have predicted what happened in the evening session on Saturday night.

Only two doubles matches were scheduled for Saturday evening. Although no singles were played, the presence of Billie Jean in the first match and Peaches in the second match ensured another sold-out crowd. Mary Ann Curtis and Valerie Ziegenfuss started strongly against Billie Jean and Rosie, taking the first set 7-5. Just as they did in the doubles final of Oklahoma City in early February, Billie Jean and Rosie took control and won the second set, this time by the score of 6-4. However, unlike the final in Oklahoma City, when Billie Jean and Rosie took the third set 7-5, Mary Ann and Valerie reversed the momentum and closed out the match by taking the final set 6-3. It was the biggest doubles upset of the entire 1971 Virginia Slims Circuit.

Billie Jean and Rosie's previous loss as a doubles team was to Kristy Pigeon and Lesley Hunt in the semifinals of the Pacific Coast Open in Berkeley, California in early October 1970. After that, they won eight consecutive doubles titles and twenty-four consecutive matches, beginning at the Virginia Slims Invitational of Richmond, Virginia in November, 1970 and continuing through the 1971 women's tour events in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Oklahoma City, Chattanooga, Pompano Beach, Winchester and their opening match in Birmingham. Jack Berry of the *Detroit News* observed that Billie Jean "couldn't do much right. She even pulled a Spiro Agnew, hitting Casals in the eye with a shot." Afterwards, Mary Ann told Berry that the victory "was just great. We had them on the hook in Oklahoma City in the finals, but we let them off. You've got to fight them for every point."⁶²

Mary Ann was ready to fly home on Wednesday night, when she found out she was playing the fourth seeded Francoise Durr in the first match that day. She then thought she might leave for St. Louis on Sunday morning, anticipating that she and Valerie had no chance to win against Billie Jean and Rosie on Saturday evening. "It's the easiest thing in the world, though, to call up and cancel an airline reservation," she laughed.⁶³

Everybody was disappointed because they wanted to watch Billie Jean play in the doubles (final).⁶⁴

-- Sandy Lecklider, 2012

The next doubles match on Saturday evening produced another surprising result, perhaps even more unexpected than the upset of Billie Jean and Rosie. Judy Dalton and Peaches Bartkowicz were a pick-up doubles team, having played together only once before in Chattanooga (where they had a fine win over Mary Ann and Valerie). Peaches was primarily a singles player; her doubles results were not outstanding because she preferred to play from the baseline and avoided going forward to the net for volleys and overheads. Still, with her unorthodox doubles style, she had several significant doubles wins in her career. In the decisive match of the 1969 Federation Cup in Athens, Greece, Peaches and Nancy Richey fired bullets from the baseline and defeated Judy and Margaret Court. A few months later, Peaches and Julie Heldman upset Billie Jean and Rosie at Wimbledon. In the 1970 Wightman Cup, and another decisive match, Peaches was a last minute substitute for an injured Nancy. While Billie Jean took charge of the net and Peaches stayed on the baseline and lobbed and hit passing shots, the Americans scored a dramatic three-set win over Virginia Wade and Winnie Shaw. Having played with and against Peaches in doubles, the serve-and-volleying Judy Dalton insisted that Peaches abandon her instincts.

I told her, look, you have to get up to the net.⁶⁵

-- Judy Dalton, 2012

Against the second seeded team of Francoise Durr and Ann Jones, Peaches and Judy won the first set 6-1. Like Billie Jean in the previous match, Francoise had a bad night, often hitting her shots into the net. The match might have turned around in the second set, when Peaches and Judy were leading 5-3 30-15. Francoise hit what most observers thought was a winning shot, but an “out” call by the linesman gave Peaches

and Judy 40-15 and two match points. It was over one point later, with Peaches and Judy wrapping up an unlikely 6-1 6-3 victory.

Another sold-out crowd jammed the seats at Oakland University to watch the singles and doubles final on Sunday afternoon. Billie Jean opened with a 3-0 lead, only to see Rosie win six games in a row to take the set 6-3. Along the way, Billie Jean double-faulted five times, causing her to shout “You’re getting so old you can’t get your arm up!” Despite her service problems, Billie Jean raced through the second set 6-1 and reached 5-0 in the third before Rosie stage a comeback and won three consecutive games. Serving at 3-5, Rosie reached 40-15 but fell victim to one of Billie Jean’s tactics. A player is allowed to stand anywhere she wants to receive serve, and Billie Jean changed her position in order to influence Rosie’s serve. The ploy worked, and Rosie hit two consecutive doubles faults to let Billie Jean even the game at deuce. “That was crucial,” Billie Jean said later. “I was trying to move around, anticipating her shot, and I think Rosie saw it and it may have thrown her off. So much of tennis is mental.” It was over two points later; Billie Jean won the match 3-6 6-1 6-3 and the \$2,000 first prize. ⁶⁶

In the doubles final, local favorite Peaches Bartkowicz and Judy Dalton appeared to be on their way to the title when they won the first set from Mary Ann Curtis and Valerie Ziegenfuss. The momentum quickly shifted in the second set, however, as Mary Ann and Valerie displayed the teamwork they had developed from playing together for the past three years. After winning the second set 6-2, Mary Ann and Valerie closed out the match with a final set score of 6-3. It was the first time on the 1971 Virginia Slims Circuit that a doubles team other than Billie Jean and Rosie won a doubles title. For their efforts, Mary Ann and Valerie each received \$250.

We packed the house. We had 1700 seats and I don’t think there was a seat left at Oakland ... We made \$30,000 on the deal. The money that we made went to community projects. The Junior League had many community projects. We had a Bargain Box with used clothes, we had programs for the disabled, we had a drug rehabilitation house ... ⁶⁷

-- Sandy Lecklider, 2012

The success of the first K-Mart Invitational resulted in a return engagement the following year. The 1972 tournament was once again organized by the Junior League of Birmingham, sponsored by K-Mart, and played at Oakland University. In 1973, the tournament was renamed the Virginia Slims of Detroit and relocated to Cobo Arena. It was an annual stop on the women's tour until its final year in 1983, when it offered a total of \$150,000 in prize money for singles and doubles. The tournament never would have happened, however, if Ted Jax had not mentioned the idea to a group of women tennis players at the Bloomfield Tennis House in the fall of 1970.

The next stop on the 1971 Virginia Slims circuit was played at Tennis Incorporated, a club located inside the 34th Street Armory in New York City. The club's founder, Freddie Botur, came to the United States in 1948 and taught tennis at numerous clubs in the New York area. In 1963, Botur realized his dream of opening his own tennis club, which he did at the Armory with a \$5,000 investment. In 1967, he staged a men's professional event at his club that featured Rod Laver and Pancho Gonzalez. Four years later, Gladys convinced Botur to hold a Virginia Slims Invitational at the Armory, telling him that the event was bound to be profitable. Virginia Slims contributed \$5,000 for the prize money, and Botur invested an additional \$10,000 to make his tournament one of the richest events on the 1971 winter-spring Virginia Slims Circuit.⁶⁸

One week before the tournament started, Virginia Slims assistant brand manager Bill Cutler – who lived in New York City – appeared at a gathering of 300 members of National Organization of Women (NOW) at a meeting hall.

I went to the National Organization of Women meeting in New York ... we were asked to go there, I remember Steve Korsen and I talked about it, and so I was selected to go their meeting at 7:00 pm on the west side of Manhattan ... they asked me to come there, and I stood up and I started getting "boos" and all kinds of stuff from this crowd ... it was more anger at the theme line we had, which was "You've Come a Long Way, Baby," and they were upset with that line ... they were booing me and wouldn't let me speak ... it wasn't anti-smoking, they didn't

like the word “baby” ... but that word, I happened to like it, and so did others, because it put the spin on it and made it stand out and people commented on it – if you didn’t have it, the line wouldn’t be so special ... so they wouldn’t let me speak at first, they were screaming and yelling at me and wouldn’t let me talk, and we finally got the president of the organization (to quiet the crowd) and I said, “I came here at your request, and what I want to say is I’m not asking you to do anything for Virginia Slims, except here is why I’m here – these women tennis players have decided to be professional athletes, get paid for their work on a scale that was more up to them and how successful they were, and all I’m asking your group is to know that they are coming to New York and I think they would appreciate your support ... by going to the tournament, by buying tickets and doing those kinds of things ... if you appreciate what they’re doing, you should support them ... I wasn’t trying to sell cigarettes, I wasn’t trying to do anything for Virginia Slims, I was just telling them to support these women who were trying to be professional and I thought that group would want to support them ... about half of them said, “Hey, okay, thank you for coming.” ⁶⁹

-- Bill Cutler, 2012

The Virginia Slims Invitational of New York included twenty women instead of the usual sixteen. Eight of the women played qualifying matches, with the four winners advancing to the main draw. Billie Jean, Rosie, Ann and Francoise were the four seeded players, and the tournament featured the return of Nancy Richey Gunter, who had not played since January due to a tonsillectomy.

On Monday, March 22, the tournament draw was determined at the 34th Street Armory. Top-seeded Billie Jean drew the winner of the qualifying match between Carole Graebner and Esme Emanuel. When it was announced that unseeded Nancy Richey Gunter was to play fourth-seeded Ann Jones, two of the younger players squealed in amusement, prompting a disapproving frown from Billie Jean. Ann and Nancy were not in attendance at the draw, and the two young women were debating who should break the bad news to Nancy. “You tell her,” giggled one of them. “Oh no, you tell her!” chortled

the other. Judy Dalton's pairing against the number two seed Rosie Casals provoked an annoyed response from the usually affable Australian. "It's perfectly ridiculous. What kind of a draw is it when Nancy plays Ann and I face Rosemary in the very first round?" complained Judy, which drew even more snickering from players. Pip Jones, the volunteer manager of the tour and husband of Ann, could only shake his head in disbelief.⁷⁰

The players then spoke with reporters about the tour's progress. "I've won about \$7,000," said Kerry Melville. "We've been treated wonderfully well wherever we've played, but I find it much more tiring than the old way. We play afternoon matches, then at night, too, and we have to go through the whole public relations bit as well." For Judy Dalton, the tour was keeping her away from her husband, "but he'll join me at Wimbledon. The tour is tiring, but rewarding. It's only the draw is always a problem, and the court surfaces vary so."⁷¹

Billie Jean told reporters that she wanted to be "the first woman to win \$100,000 in one year. It's possible, but I'd have to win just about everything. If I win, it helps me and it helps tennis." Billie Jean always felt that, in order to have the public accept women's tennis as a major sport, the tour needed to have a highly-paid star. The American public, she felt, respected sports whose athletes who earned record amounts of money. Already the winner of \$25,000 from the first three months of the tour, Billie Jean anticipated that "by May, I could be up to \$46,000."⁷²

After Tuesday afternoon's qualifying matches – in which Carole Graebner, Betty Ann Grubb Hansen, Ceci Martinez and Tory Fretz advanced to the main draw on Wednesday – Gladys held a meeting with the players to discuss the tour's plans, progress and problems. She informed the group that Virginia Slims had committed more sponsorship money for a series of tournaments in the summer and fall. Since the recently announced USLTA summer schedule did not provide sufficient prize money for the women, Virginia Slims tournaments on the same dates would be scheduled. Gladys wanted the players to commit to the Rothman's North of England Open, a \$15,000 event to be played one week after Wimbledon in Hoylake, England. In past years, the American players were expected to return home immediately after Wimbledon for the

USLTA summer tournaments. However, with the peace settlement reached earlier in the year, the women were now free to play in any tournament during a week in which the USLTA could not provide sufficient prize money. During Hoylake, the USLTA had scheduled a tentative women's tournament in Michigan with only \$7500 in prize money.

The hottest discussion at the meeting revolved around whether or not to invite certain players – including Margaret Court and Patti Hogan – to play in the upcoming summer and fall tournaments. Some of the players felt that including Margaret and Patti – as well as others who had refused earlier invitations – would affect the earning potential of the tour regulars. “It’s got to be open for the benefit of women’s tennis,” argued Valerie Ziegenfuss. “But we don’t want to hurt the girls who signed up originally and have done all the hard work to get the tour going.”⁷³

*Week after week we were on the road ... and every day that I was not traveling was much the same: promoting, practicing, playing, then talking some more to the press. I can remember starting magazine interviews after midnight because that was the only time left to get them in. And then I'd have to be up for some early-morning TV show.*⁷⁴

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

*In New York ... near Columbus Circle ... there's a little greasy spoon nearby, and I don't ever pass it when I'm out walking when I don't remember getting a bite of breakfast there because it was the only place open in the neighborhood at the early hour of the morning we were up for TV. It was five thirty, quarter to six – something like that – and we were going to appear on some show with a host named John Bartholomew Tucker. It was Rosie Casals, Ann Jones and her husband, Pip, and me, and it was all so depressing. The Dawn Patrol! And I was the one who wanted to quit, right there. The others had to encourage me. “Billie Jean, you're the born leader – you have to,” Ann said.*⁷⁵

-- Billie Jean King, 1982

With a full schedule of eight singles matches on Wednesday, March 24 – and all four seeds in action – tournament director and financier Freddie Botur was hopeful that most of the 5,000 seats would be filled. Unfortunately, only several hundred spectators were in attendance throughout the entire day. Those who came to the armory were treated to one of the best matches of the entire circuit, a two-and-one-half hour marathon between Ann Jones and Nancy Richey Gunter. Two months earlier, Nancy dropped off the tour due to a tonsillectomy; the Virginia Slims Invitational of New York marked her return to tennis.

In what Neil Amdur of the *New York Times* called “the strongest advertisement yet for the quality of the women’s professional tennis tour,” Nancy won a thrilling tiebreak in the first set. The second set was just as close; neither player gave an inch, and once again the set reached 6-6. Serving at 3-1 in the tiebreak, Nancy was just two points away from victory. Ann then won four consecutive points to win the set, twice with forehand passing shots as Nancy came forward to apply the pressure. With Nancy serving at 4-5 in the final set, Ann finally reached match point. A tense seventeen-shot rally was won by Ann, giving her a satisfying but tiring 6-7 7-6 6-4 win. After the match, Ann told Amdur that if the match had been played at Wimbledon, “it would have brought the place down.” Ann’s husband Pip said it was finest exhibition of ground strokes that he had ever witnessed.⁷⁶

Many observers questioned, however, why the match between Ann and Nancy was played at 2:00 pm, instead of being scheduled as the featured evening match. “I wanted it that way,” Botur complained, “but I was told that Jones was committed to do a promotion and was unavailable in the evening.” When asked by a reporter why an appearance at Gimbel’s Department Store – which Ann eventually missed due to the length of her match Nancy – was more important than the very product the players were promoting, Botur said, “I don’t know. But I’ll tell you something. In all these appearances, these girls are forgetting that I am the promoter of this tournament. When they go on radio or television, they say they are playing now at the armory, but there are many armories in New York. They forget that I am putting up half their bread. They only think of themselves.” Jack Smith, publicity manager for Philip Morris products,

walked past and overhead Botur's comments. "Keep your mouth shut, Freddie," he warned. "You're climbing out on a limb again, Freddie, and you're going to saw yourself off." The two continued to argue in public, one of many confrontations they had during the week.⁷⁷

Thursday's matches held true to form, with all four seeds advancing – some easier than others. Although Ceci Martinez won only game from Francoise Durr, she had to feel somewhat satisfied. On Tuesday, Ceci won her qualifying match against Patty Ann Reese, and on Wednesday she won her first main draw match on the tour when she eliminated Tory Fretz by the scores of 3-6 6-1 6-4. Ceci's prize money of \$600 for reaching the quarterfinals was the biggest payday of her career.

As she did the previous week in Birmingham, Peaches Bartkowicz won a close first set against Rosie Casals and then faded in the second and third. Ann Jones did not lose a game in her opening set with Kerry Melville. After a temporary let down in the second set, Ann closed out the third set with the loss of only one game. In the evening's final match, Billie Jean easily disposed of Julie Heldman, 6-2 6-1. Despite the presence of the tour's four best players, the crowds at the armory continued to be disappointingly small. It was not the most pleasant setting for a tennis tournament; many of the players complained about playing in the poorly-heated, stark armory in the middle of winter.

*We were playing in an absolutely miserable armory on the corner of 33rd Street and Park Avenue. Nothing was going right. The crowds were lousy because most people didn't even know where the tournament was, and even if they found the place they couldn't be sure what was going on inside the place because it looked like a jail or a fortress or something. The lighting was terrible ...*⁷⁸

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

*The players were bitching and moaning about everything.*⁷⁹

-- Freddie Botur, 2012

As expected, Billie Jean and Rosie won their semifinal matches on Friday – over Ann and Francoise, respectively – to set up the singles final for Saturday (the Virginia Slims Invitational of New York did not have a doubles tournament). The largest crowd of the week – 1300 spectators – was on hand to watch Billie Jean and Rosie play for the seventh time in ten tournaments. From the opening game, when she struggled to hold serve, it was obvious that Billie Jean was not at her best. In the second game of the match, Rosie held serve at love when Billie Jean failed to put a single service return in play. In the opening set, which had few rallies and more errors than winners, there were three consecutive service breaks – two of them at love and one of them at 15 – and Rosie managed to win the first set 6-4. Billie Jean was able to take a 3-1 lead in the second, but she continued to have problems with her returns, winning only two points in three of Rosie’s service games.⁸⁰

A unexciting 6-4 6-4 win for Rosie was worth \$5,000, and Billie Jean earned \$3000. “I played the important points the way they should be played,” Rosie said. “I guess it’s my turn now.” Billie Jean felt that the armory’s dim lighting and lighter weight balls could have affected her performance in the final. “I’ve lost three tournaments this year, and in all three tournaments they were using lighter balls,” she analyzed. “I don’t want to make any excuses, though, because Rosie served very well. I just wasn’t getting any balls back.” Neil Amdur noticed that Billie Jean was “unable to pursue overpowering tactics, consistency at the net and depth that traditionally accompanies her marvelous game. “I can’t explain it,” she told Amdur as she signed autographs for youngsters after the match. “I guess I just played like an old lady.”⁸¹ Although she did not tell anyone, Billie Jean knew the real reason for her poor performance.

I lost to Rosie Casals in the final and I felt terrible. I thought I was going to vomit the entire match. I couldn’t run at all. Rosie would hit a drop shot and all I could do was wave my hand feebly and say “Nice shot.”⁸²

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Amdur questioned if it was wise for the women's tour to attempt to establish itself in New York City, citing the numerous other tournaments, exhibitions and benefits that had recently saturated the metropolitan area. "Tennis people may have a lot of money," said one of the officials at the women's tournament, "but you can only go to the well so often."⁸³ For tournament director and financier Freddie Botur, the Virginia Slims Invitational of New York was a financial mistake; he vowed to never run a women's professional tournament again.⁸⁴

After attending the last three days of the Women's Pro Tourney in New York, I feel a few comments are in order. There can be no question that the level of play was outstanding. There were some obvious mismatches, but that is to be expected. The final was very good, with Rosie Casals at her very best. Her fine serve was overpowering and she deserved to win. Billie Jean was not quite on top of her game that night, but that seems to take something away from Rosie and she probably could have defeated anyone in the world that night. From the standpoint of play, the tournament was great success.

There were some negative aspects. The 34th Street Armory lighting was very bad. It was difficult to see, and if that was the case for the spectators, I can imagine how much worse it was for the players. I realize that the physical aspects of the Armory are beyond the control of the tournament personnel, except that temporary lighting may have helped. I also realize that there are not many places to play in New York City. There is, however, one area where an improvement can and must be made. That is in line calling. I have never seen such bad performances by tennis officials. Sometimes the decisions were absolutely unreal.

I would gladly put up with all of the negative aspects to see more Women's Pro tournaments in New York City. There were many positive features. The event itself was the main plus. The ticket prices were very fair and press coverage was good, if not outstanding, although the press location caused a real

problem in the beginning of the final when one reporter, phoning in his story, caused Rosie to lose concentration. This likely cost her a service game.

Come again to New York City. Congratulations to Rosie and success for the Women's Pro Tour.⁸⁵

Joseph C. Smith
Jersey City, New Jersey

*Gladys promised me that she would find other sponsors for the tournament, and she wasn't able to come up with any. But we parted on good terms.*⁸⁶

-- Freddie Botur, 2012

*It wasn't a very jolly week in New York, and after my last match I just took off and around 2 a. m. went over to the Vanderbilt Athletic Club in Grand Central Station and gave a clinic for some of the ball boys and ball girls – boom, just like that – for no better reason than a couple of very dear friends had asked me too ... I had a ball.*⁸⁷

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

By Sunday, most of the players on the tour had arrived in San Juan, Puerto Rico for the next stop on the Virginia Slims Circuit. Billie Jean flew home to Berkeley and made an appointment for a pregnancy test. When her pregnancy was confirmed, Billie Jean withdrew from the San Juan tournament, where she was the number one seed and scheduled to play on Wednesday.

I took the usual tests, and when they came out positive, there was absolutely no question what I wanted to do. We agreed on an abortion from the beginning, and there was very little thinking about the morality involved in our decision ... In California, it usually takes ten days to arrange for an abortion, but the doctor was

a friend of a friend and got things together in four or five. ⁸⁸
 -- Billie Jean King, 1974

While Billie Jean spent a week of waiting in California, the Caribe Hilton International started in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Most of the men's and women's matches scheduled for the opening day of Tuesday, March 30 were completed, with two exceptions. Peaches Bartkowicz, who had arrived in San Juan a few days early after her quarterfinal loss to Rosie Casals in New York, needed to have her first round match against Karen Krantzcke postponed due to severe sunburn. Nancy Richey's first round match against Maria Ayala of Chile did not make it onto the court when rain showers hit the island on Tuesday evening.

The rain continued for two more days, washing out Wednesday's and Thursday's schedule. With the tournament two days behind schedule, the organizers hoped to complete the tournament by the following Monday at the latest. During the rainy days, most of the players' activities were confined to their rooms or the bar. A handful of players, such as Kerry Melville and Karen Krantzcke, jogged on the beach. For Peaches Bartkowicz, the idle time did not bother her. "I don't really mind because I'll stay around here for an extra week," she told Fred Rehm of the *San Juan Star*. "I'm returning to college a week from Monday and am in no hurry to leave." ⁸⁹

The rain finally ended on Friday, April 2, and full day of matches were played on the three of the hotel's four courts (the fourth court had temporary bleachers for spectators). To get caught up on the schedule, many of the men and women played an additional doubles match later in the evening, if they had won their first round doubles match earlier in the day. Nancy Richey Gunter was scheduled to play two singles matches and one doubles match; after defeating Maria Ayala in the morning, she upset fourth-seeded Francoise Durr in the afternoon, by the surprising score of 6-0 6-3. Later that evening, Nancy and Betty Ann Grubb Hansen lost quickly to Julie Heldman and Peaches Bartkowicz, 6-1 6-2.

For Peaches, the 1971 Virginia Slims Circuit was not an enjoyable experience. She was not happy with all of the promotional duties, and she only won five singles

matches in her first nine tournaments. To make matters worse, she lost six three-set matches; twice to Rosie Casals, twice to Ann Jones, and once each to Nancy Richey Gunter and Billie Jean King. Her mood changed once she arrived in San Juan. Perhaps because she won the tournament in 1970 and was the defending champion, or perhaps because she was relaxed and looking forward to leaving the circuit and starting college classes in Michigan, Peaches' results in San Juan were reminiscent of her 1969 season, her best year on the tour. After a tough, three-set win over Karen Krantzcke in the second round, Peaches upset second-seeded Rosie Casals in quarterfinals, 6-2 6-4.

On Sunday, in the semifinals, Ann Jones defeated Mary Ann Curtis, and Nancy ended Peaches' run with a 6-2 6-2 decision. The doubles final was played on Sunday afternoon, with Ann and Francoise getting past Kerry Melville and Karen Krantzcke.

The men players – amateurs and registered players – played alongside the women in San Juan, and both singles finals, along with the men's doubles final, were scheduled for Monday, April 5. Stan Smith, a private in the United States Army, was in the doubles and singles final, and the tournament directors scheduled the men's doubles match for 11 am and the men's singles match for 4 pm. Smith was on a tight schedule; he needed to report back to Fort Benning in Georgia by Tuesday morning, and the last flight out of San Juan departed at 11:30 pm.⁹⁰

The men's doubles final, between Smith and Erik van Dillen and Onny Parun and Nikola Spear, was played under sunny skies on Monday morning. Rain showers in the late afternoon postponed the men's singles final, between Smith and Cliff Richey, until 6 pm. Smith literally played as if he had a plane to catch, using his powerful serve and range at the net to reach 6-3 5-3. Smith was only one game away from the title and the first prize of \$3000 when another rainstorm halted play. Looking at the possibility of having to default the match if it was postponed until the following day – and only receiving \$1800 as the runner-up – Smith hoped that the rain would end soon. One hour later, the rain ceased, and Smith quickly closed out the match and arrived at the San Juan airport with time to spare.⁹¹

After the men's final, Ann Jones and Nancy Richey Gunter took the court. Ann employed the same strategy that Billie Jean often used against Nancy – she hit high

spinning topspin forehands to Nancy's backhand, and then came forward to put away the volley. Ann's 6-4 6-4 win was worth \$1400, and Nancy earned \$1000 for getting to the final. Asked about Ann's strategy, Nancy told Charles Ludlow of the *San Juan Star*, "no, I do not think I have a vulnerable backhand. I just played poorly tonight as you could see by all the shots I hit into the net." ⁹²

Earlier in the day, while most of the women professionals had already arrived St. Petersburg, Florida, for the next stop on the Virginia Slims Circuit, Larry King drove Billie Jean to a hospital in Berkeley, California.

... I went to the hospital, was knocked out, had the abortion, spent two hours in a recovery room, and then Larry took me home. ⁹³

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

On Tuesday, April 6, the women players learned of some good news that came out of New York. The plans for the \$250,000 Pepsi Grand Prix of Tennis were announced, and for the first time, a portion of the prize money would be awarded to the women players. At a news conference, Andrall E. Pearson of PepsiCo and Bob Malaga, Executive Director of the USLTA, explained that the Pepsi Grand Prix would consist of 36 tournaments throughout the world, at which players received points, based on their performance in each tournament. At the end of the season, the top twenty men would divide \$150,000 and the top fifteen women would divide \$50,000. In addition, the top six point scorers among the men would be invited to play for the remaining \$50,000 at the Pepsi Masters tournament, to be held in Australia at the end of the year. Pearson disclosed that PepsiCo was contributing \$150,000 of the prize money, and that the USLTA and the ILTF were each contributing \$50,000. ⁹⁴

Of the 36 tournaments on the Pepsi Grand Prix schedule, fourteen were for men only, two were for women only, and twenty included both men and women. "We are delighted also to have a Grand Prix for women this year," said Pearson. "This seems appropriate since it was a woman, Mary Ewing Outerbridge, who introduced tennis to this country in 1874. Having the first women's Grand Prix is the most important

development in the history of women's competition. At last, the ladies are beginning to receive the recognition they deserve." ⁹⁵

Each of the tournaments on the Grand Prix schedule was placed in one of four categories: Group A, Group B, Group C or Group D. The greatest number of points was awarded at Group A tournaments. For instance, the winner of Group A tournament received 40 points and the runner-up received 30 points; the winner of a Group B tournament received 30 points and the runner-up received 20 points; the winner of a Group C tournament earned 20 points and the runner-up earned 12 points; and the winner of a Group D tournament earned 15 points and the runner-up earned nine points. At all of the tournaments, decreasing amounts of points were also awarded for players who reached the semi-finals, quarterfinals, and round of 16. ⁹⁶

Unfortunately, most of the women's tournaments in the 1971 Pepsi Grand Prix (Table 6.2) did not meet the minimum prize money standards that Gladys and the women professionals insisted upon earlier in the year.

Table 6.2 – Tournaments on the 1971 Pepsi Grand Prix that included Women

Start Date	Tournament and Grand Prix Group	Location	Women's Prize Money
May 10	London Hard Court Chps (C)	Hurlingham, England	\$12,360
May 17	British Hard Court Chps (B)	Bournemouth, England	\$12,000
May 17	German Open (B)	Hamburg, Germany	\$15,000
May 24	French Open (A)	Paris, France	\$20,000
Jun 14	London Grass Court Chps (D)	London, England,	\$4,200
Jun 21	Wimbledon (A)	London, England	\$37,500
Jul 5	Welsh Open (C)	Newport, Wales	\$6,250
Jul 5	Swedish Open (B)	Bastad, Sweden	\$4,000
Jul 5	Swiss Open (B)	Gstaad, Switzerland	\$7,500
Jul 12	North of England Open (C)	Hoylelake, England	\$11,125
Jul 19	* Tanglewood Championships (D)	Winston-Salem NC	\$5,000
Jul 26	* Northwood Women's Open (C)	Midland MI	\$7,500
Aug 2	Western Open (C)	Cincinnati OH	\$7,500
Aug 9	U.S. Clay Court Open (B)	Indianapolis IN	\$10,000
Aug 16	Pennsylvania Grass Court Chps (D)	Haverford PA	\$4,000
Aug 23	Eastern Grass Court Championships (C)	South Orange NJ	\$5,000
Sep 1	U.S. Open (A)	New York NY	\$39,000
Sep 13	U.S. Hard Court Open (C)	Sacramento CA	\$3,700
Sep 20	Pacific Southwest Open (B)	Los Angeles CA	\$10,000
Sep 27	Pacific Coast International (C)	Berkeley CA	\$5,000
Oct 23	Embassy Indoor Open (B)	London, England	\$12,500

*eventually canceled

Although Gladys was encouraged to see the women included in the 1971 Pepsi Grand Prix, she told Parton Keese of the *New York Times* that some problems still remained. "I am sure the girls will be delighted over this news," she said, "but we are just about to announce our summer schedule of tournaments, only two of which are included on the Grand Prix list. If PepsiCo will accept our tourneys and add them to the Grand Prix, I think it would be the solution and everybody could benefit."⁹⁷ The two tournaments that Gladys referred to were the English events at Hurlingham and Hoylelake. While not really part of the Virginia Slims Circuit, the women professionals agreed to support these tournaments because they offered acceptable amounts of prize money.

At the same time, Gladys was in the process of organizing seven tournaments for the summer and fall, with prize money totaling \$160,000. Virginia Slims was ready to increase its sponsorship, and the European Division of the Ford Motor Company was willing to sponsor a \$20,000 event in Italy. These latest tournaments would be in direct conflict with the USLTA/Grand Prix events planned for Midland, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Haverford, South Orange, Sacramento, and Los Angeles. Gladys was under the impression she could get USLTA approval for Virginia Slims tournaments during any week in which a USLTA sanctioned tournament did not offer sufficient prize money.

While the Pepsi Grand Prix news conference was being held in New York on Tuesday, the qualifying matches at the Virginia Slims Masters were being played at the St. Petersburg Tennis Center in Florida. The matches continued on Wednesday, April 5, with four players surviving the qualifying process. Wendy Gilchrist and Esme Emanuel earned their way into the main draw, but Ceci Martinez had another heartbreaking loss. She played a 17-year old Susan Vinton, a junior at Riverview High School in Sarasota. Ceci won the first set 6-0, lost the second, and – just as she did against Laurie Fleming in Pompano Beach in February – battled to 5-5 in the third set. Here, Ceci's nerves failed her, and her younger opponent won the final two games. Judy Alvarez, a Tampa teaching professional who was ranked as high as number six in the United States in 1963 before quitting the amateur circuit, qualified for the main draw with a 6-0 6-3 win over Margie Cooper.

That same day, on Wednesday, April 7, Billie Jean telephoned tournament director Don Kaiser to withdraw from the event. She did not disclose the real reason for her withdrawal, saying instead that she was suffering from the flu. Kaiser pleaded with her to reconsider. The tournament was completely sold out for all four days, Kaiser said, and most of the spectators had purchased their tickets in anticipation of watching her play.⁹⁸ For Billie Jean, the success of the tour came first, and she decided to take a 10:00 pm overnight flight from California that landed in Florida the following morning at 6:30 am.

Kaiser picked up Billie Jean at the airport on Thursday morning and took her to her hotel. She would not play until later in the day, which allowed her some time to rest.

The few older players, those who knew the real reason for her withdrawal from the previous week's tournament in San Juan, were surprised that she decided to come to St. Petersburg.

*I only told about two or three people, and although that was enough to get the word around to the other women on the tour, nobody ever said much. It was sort of a taboo subject, I guess, and I wasn't about to volunteer too much information myself.*⁹⁹

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

That afternoon, eight first-round matches were contested on the green clay courts of the St. Petersburg Tennis Center in Bartlett Park. Julie Heldman created one of the day's biggest sensations when she defeated fourth-seeded Ann Jones, 7-5 6-2. Ann led 5-3 in the first set, but was eventually worn down by Julie's patience, pinpoint lobs and piercing forehands. During one point, the players engaged in a sixty-two shot rally before Julie maneuvered Ann out of position and put the ball away. After that, according to Bob Chick of the St. Petersburg Evening-Standard, Ann's motivation waned and she did not put forth her best effort for the rest of the match. She was, Chick concluded, saving her energy for the following week's tournament in Las Vegas, where the first prize was \$9,000, the richest amount ever offered in women's tennis. Although Julie downplayed her victory, saying that Ann was tired from playing too much tennis, her ability to play tennis like a chess game was apparent to Chick. "Do you think I play exciting tennis?" she asked him. "I don't. Who wants to watch me lob the ball. I'm terribly unexciting."¹⁰⁰

In another significant upset, sixteen-year old Chris Evert was too patient for third-seeded Francoise Durr. Chris won the opening set, 6-0, and then held on to win a much closer second set at 7-5. It was the second consecutive time that Chris had upset the Frenchwoman, her first win coming on a clay court in Charlotte, North Carolina seven months earlier. Ann Jones watched the match and told Jack Ellison of the *St. Petersburg Times* that Chris "won't play us on hard surfaces but stays here and practices and then

picks the clay tourneys. A bit unfair – but naturally you can't take anything away from her.”¹⁰¹

Throughout the afternoon, the crowd began to grow in anticipation of Billie Jean's appearance. In the meantime, Rosie Casals defeated friend and occasional double partner Tory Fretz, 6-4 6-4, and Judy Dalton won against Kristy Pigeon 6-2 6-2. Karen Krantzcke ended the run of high school student Susan Vinton, who beat two more experienced players in the qualifying tournament. “I played well, but she hit some bullets. I felt she had an edge psychologically. I felt inferior because of her size,” Susan said after her 6-3 7-5 loss.¹⁰²

Judy Alvarez had a mild upset win over Betty Ann Hansen, who should have been much more match tough after playing on the tour since it started in January. The 6-1 6-1 score may have surprised some observers, but those who were acquainted with Judy knew about her proficiency on a clay court. By the time Billie Jean arrived at the St. Petersburg Tennis Center, nearly 1,000 spectators were waiting. Considering that it was her first match since losing in the finals of New York two weeks earlier – and her first match since her week off in California – Billie Jean was undoubtedly relieved that the match was not very strenuous, easily winning 6-2 6-1 against Wendy Gilchrist.

Billie Jean's next opponent, Karen Krantzcke, presented a tougher challenge in the quarterfinals on Friday. Before a sold-out crowd of 1,500 spectators, Billie Jean easily secured the first set, 6-2, before she suddenly lost her touch and began struggling with her game. “You idiot!” she exclaimed after making an unforced error. “Billie Jean, you goofed! Concentrate!” The second set reached 6-6 and was to be decided by a nine-point, sudden-death tiebreak. Tournament director Don Kaiser, hoping that the tournament's star attraction would not lose, sat at courtside and nervously said “Billie Jean has never lost a tiebreaker.” The tiebreak reached 4-4, match point for Billie Jean and set point for Karen. “On the sudden death point,” wrote Jack Ellison of the St. Petersburg Times, “the three-time Wimbledon queen showed her greatness with a winning shot at the net she modestly described as a ‘half-volley.’ It was more a sensational, off-balance, sliding, half-volley backhand pickup of the one-hop shot just

over the net. It brought a standing ovation from the crowd and color back to chairman Kaiser's face." ¹⁰³

On a side court, in front of a quiet audience that had limited seating, Rosie Casals and Judy Dalton played the most aggressive match of the tournament. Judy was timing her powerful forehand perfectly, and took the first set 7-5. Although her renowned mobility was hampered by the clay surface, Rosie's variety prevailed enough for her to win the next two sets, 6-4 6-4. Julie Heldman repeated her 1969 Italian Open final win over Kerry Melville with a steady 6-1 3-6 6-4 result. Chris Evert stopped the comeback of Judy Alvarez, although the 6-0 6-2 score did not reflect the difficulty of the match. With rallies that typically lasted fifteen shots or more – one point had an exchange of thirty forehands and backhands – Chris proved too steady. "I would have beaten anyone else," Judy said afterward. "She's just unbeatable on clay right now. She puts too much pace on the ball for me to be able to charge the net often enough. Hitting at her is like hitting against a practice wall." ¹⁰⁴

Saturday's semifinals were set, and it was a tournament promoter's dream. In addition to Rosie Casals playing against Julie Heldman, the feature match of the day had Billie Jean King facing Chris Evert for the very first time. "This one just had to be arranged by a Broadway agent," Ellison gushed in Saturday morning's paper. "It's show biz. Box office ... Break out the SRO signs. Put them in the aisles." In anticipation of an overflow crowd, tournament director Don Kaiser added an additional 600 seats, increasing the spectator capacity to 2100. ¹⁰⁵

Nearly every seat was taken to watch the semifinals. After Julie beat Rosie, 6-0 6-3, to gain her first final since the 1969 Italian Open, the stage was set for the encounter between Billie Jean and Chris. Billie Jean decided to rally from the baseline, and as the rallies grew longer, Chris took a 4-1 lead in the first set. Using her variety of topspin and underspin shots, Billie Jean worked her way into the match and leveled the set at 6-6. When Billie Jean won the tiebreak 5-2 to secure the first set, the players had battled for an entire hour. ¹⁰⁶

The second set followed a similar pattern, with Billie Jean and Chris engaged in marathon rallies that lasted twenty shots and longer. Towards the later stages of the set,

Billie Jean tired from the lengthy points and started to develop leg cramps. Chris won the set 6-3, and the players left the court for a ten minute break. From the tennis clubhouse, Billie Jean sent word that she was unable to continue and needed to forfeit the match. She also withdrew from her doubles semifinal match, in which she and Rosie were to play against Judy Dalton and Julie Heldman.¹⁰⁷

*When I was 16, I played one of the first women's tournaments in St. Petersburg ... I played Billie Jean in the semis. Everyone kept saying, "Oh, you can beat her, you can beat her. She's not that good on clay." And I won. We split sets and she defaulted. But I just remember how tough she was on clay. I thought she was about the best clay court player that I had ever played in my life.*¹⁰⁸
 -- Chris Evert, 1976

*(I) foolishly showed up in St. Petersburg ... I felt fine for the first couple of rounds, but in the second set of the semifinals I began to dehydrate and I had to default (to Chris Evert) ... It was the first time we'd ever played, and that one match, I think, made a tremendous difference in our later relationship on the court. It helped establish her as a new personality on the American tennis scene ...*¹⁰⁹
 -- Billie Jean King, 1974

On Easter Sunday, the stands were filled to capacity with spectators thirty minutes before the match began. "Well, I'd better get fitted for horns, as I'll be the villain for today," Julie said before the match. The players arrived on court to an extended ovation, and Julie joked with her fellow touring professionals who were seated at courtside. Many of them were hoping that Julie would beat the youngster. Before anyone knew it, Chris easily won the first five games as a murmur of amusement went through the crowd. Julie managed to hold serve in the sixth game, and then Chris closed out the first set 6-1 on her own serve. Julie tried to be aggressive and take her chances by going for winning shots, but against the consistent Floridian, it was a useless strategy.¹¹⁰

In the second set, Julie changed her tactics and decided to play Chris' game. The rallies became more extended, and Julie tried hitting deep and high lobs, often pinning Chris against the back fence. Once again, Chris was simply too patient. In the second game of the set, Julie lost her composure when one of her lobs hit squarely on the baseline but was called "out" by the linesperson. "Was it really out?" Julie asked. "There is a way to settle these things. If you admit you didn't see it, we can play it over." The point was not replayed, and moments later the same linesperson made another questionable call. The frustration of playing against such a consistent player in front of a partisan crowd was too much for Julie; she demanded that the erring linesperson be replaced.¹¹¹

Trailing 0-3 in the second set, Julie held serve for only the second time and then broke Chris to come within one game of leveling the set. It was as close as Julie would get. "Cool and confident, the 16-year old operated like a well-oiled machine," wrote Jack Gurney of the *Sarasota Journal*. "With her best weapon, a two-fisted crosscourt backhand, she unleashed one low groundstroke after another to the deep corners of the backcourt." Serving at 2-5, Julie looked resigned to losing. The match ended when a second serve from Julie landed weakly in the net.¹¹²

"I put it all together this week," Chris said after the match. "I play better against good competition. It's easier to concentrate. Julie beat me two years ago, 6-4 6-1, but I don't think that had anything to do with today. I really didn't change my game for her." During the post-match awards presentation, Chris was given a large Easter basket and a trophy; since she was an amateur, the \$2,000 first prize was retained by the St. Petersburg Tennis Foundation. It was the most successful edition of Master's tournament ever held, and the profitable gate benefitted the foundation's Junior Development program.¹¹³

The Caesar's Palace Women's World Pro Championships in Las Vegas was originally intended to be the culmination of the 1971 Virginia Slims Circuit. However, by the time the tournament was ready to be played in mid-April, the Virginia Slims Invitational of San Diego was added to the schedule for the following week, and Gladys organized seven more tournaments for August and September, thanks to additional funding from Virginia Slims and the Ford Motor Company. Still, the \$30,000 event in

Las Vegas was the richest women's-only tournament to date, and the winner of it received a record-breaking \$9,000 first prize.

Nancy Richey Gunter arrived in Las Vegas five days before the tournament began. By practicing with her father, she planned to acclimatize herself to the desert wind and altitude of 1,800 feet. The opportunity for such lucrative prize money prompted Nancy to skip the previous week's tournament in St. Petersburg, Florida in order to practice in Las Vegas. While Nancy was typically all business, the other players were enjoying the distractions of Las Vegas. Everyone was given a room at Caesar's Palace, in addition to spending money for gambling.¹¹⁴

Although Gladys planned to arrive in Las Vegas later in the week for another monthly meeting, she sent the players another update letter when the tournament started. She informed that group that Owen Williams, the tournament director of the South African Open, wanted to stage a \$13,600 sixteen-woman event in South Africa in October or November. Williams offered to pay the airfare for the players, and first prize would be \$4,000. "In my reply to Owen, I asked only one thing," Gladys wrote. "I am morally committed to do my best for you as a group but I would be sick with myself if I went along with apartheid. Therefore I asked for a visa for a black tour manager – either our Vice President or Executive Assistant at World Tennis or an excellent male tennis player who is married to one of the girls at our office. The person selected would assist Pip Jones in player arrangements and would be traveling in an official capacity for World Tennis." Gladys also indicated that she was very close to finalizing a \$20,000 tournament to be played in Italy during the last week of July.¹¹⁵

The tournament started on Monday, April 12 with a sixteen-woman qualifying tournament. The four women who survived two rounds of qualifying matches were awarded spots in the main draw – also a draw of sixteen. Surprisingly, Karen Krantzcke was required to play in the qualifying tournament, as was Kristy Pigeon, who protested vigorously about the indignation. Still, Karen and Kristy won both their qualifying matches, as did Ceci Martinez and Kris Kemmer, to guarantee that they would receive at least \$500 – the amount given to those who lost in the first round of the main draw.¹¹⁶

The main draw started on Wednesday, April 14 with four first-round matches. Billie Jean beat Kristien Kemmer, Nancy defeated Denise Carter Triolo, and Francoise Durr advanced past Kristy Pigeon. In the day's final match, Julie Heldman was leading Kerry Melville 6-3 3-2 when the match was suspended due to rain. "We resumed the next day with four of the most nervous games in the history of tennis," Julie remembered later. "That pattern continued throughout the day; the thought of \$9,000 first prize made everyone's racket get stuck at the elbow."¹¹⁷

Julie came through 6-3 6-3 against Kerry, and the inhibited play she was referring to was evident in Judy Dalton's first round match against Valerie Ziegenfuss – according to Julie, "a contest to find out who could lose the match first." At 3-3 in the final set, Judy decided to "have a go at it" and ran to the net on everything, hitting her serves and forehand volleys as hard as she could. Judy's gamble paid off; she won the third set 6-3 and a spot on the quarterfinals. Ann Jones also started tentatively against Karen Krantzcke, falling behind 1-4 in the opening set before taking control and winning 7-6 6-1. In the day's other matches, Rosie Casals exposed the forehand weakness of her friend and fellow San Franciscan Ceci Martinez, and Tory Fretz could not do much against the free-flowing net attack from Mary Ann Eisel Curtis.¹¹⁸

Friday's quarterfinal between old rivals Billie Jean and Nancy turned out to be the best match of the tournament. (First set, second set) Nancy led 3-2 in the third, had three points to go up 4-2 – on each point, Billie Jean hit a drop shot, Nancy slammed the ball to one of the corners – each time, Billie Jean guessed right and put the ball away for a winner. Judy Dalton had her best win of the entire tour when she upset Rosie Casals, 6-3 4-6 6-4. Many of the players who watched the match thought she would tire in the third set, as she did against Nancy in San Juan, or that she might get tentative when the match reached a crucial stage. In the end, it was Rosie who missed the easy shots on the most important points, giving Judy the victory a minimum payday of \$2,400 for reaching the semifinals. In the day's other matches, Ann easily defeated Mary Ann, who had lost all of her feel in the wind, and Julie continued her string of upsets by beating Francoise Durr. "I played Frankie at nightfall," Julie recalled, "and won because, when I was in trouble, I

hit topspin lobs with the wind behind me, and several nearly bounced over the fence. Sneaky.”¹¹⁹

Saturday’s semifinals were delayed forty-five minutes in the hope that the unusually high wind gusts would subside; they eventually slowed down to thirty miles-per-hour. “Leaden clouds obscured the jagged mountains to the west of Las Vegas,” reported *Newsweek*, “and a cruel desert wind sent gust after gust of gritty sand into the eyes of the players and spectators alike. Not surprisingly, the state of affairs soon drove most of the spectators back into the Caesar’s Palace tennis courts back into the inviting warmth of the casino.”¹²⁰ In front of nearly empty seats, Ann Jones had no problems with Judy Dalton, whose service toss was so affected by the wind that she often had to jump backwards to hit it. In the next match, Billie Jean led Julie Heldman 6-0 4-0 before Julie managed to win two games and salvage her pride. “I don’t think it is an overstatement,” Julie later wrote, “to say that Billie Jean is one of the all-time great wind players, and I got the full brunt of her talent.”¹²¹

Very few spectators were in attendance for the singles and doubles final on Sunday, another windy day. Perhaps due to the low attendance, Billie Jean was uncharacteristically indifferent, not once chastising herself to get motivated. She did, however, smash her wooden racquet into the concrete court out of frustration. Ann also seemed to be on edge – understandable, considering how much money was at stake – and screamed “Shut up!” after a three-year old child distracted her in the middle of her service motion.¹²² Ann played intelligent tennis in the wind, patiently keeping the ball in play to take the first set, 7-5. At 4-4 in the second set, Ann and Billie Jean became engaged in a lengthy game that went to deuce more than a dozen times. Ann picked the right time to attack, and her strategy finally won the game for her. Serving to stay in the match at 4-5, Billie Jean missed two easy backhand volleys to give Ann the victory.¹²³

During the awards presentation, Ann was given an oversize trophy, a check for \$9,000 and Billie Jean’s broken racquet as a souvenir. Gracious in defeat, Billie Jean told the youngsters who were watching, “I hope you make your career in this sport, because there’s lots of money in it.”¹²⁴ Back on court for the doubles, Billie Jean once again could not motivate herself, and she and Rosie were defeated by Ann and Françoise, 7-5

6-4. It was the first time on the 1971 tour that Ann and Francoise were able to defeat their more famous opponents. After the tournament, Ann and Pip returned home to England, electing to skip the final tour event in San Diego the following week. Ann did not know it at the time, but the Las Vegas tournament would be her final serious competition; within three weeks Ann learned of her pregnancy, prompting her retirement from competitive play.

The Virginia Slims Invitational of San Diego was the final stop on the 1971 Virginia Slims Circuit winter-spring schedule. The tournament was added relatively late, not getting finalized until early March. Thanks to the efforts of Ben Press, a teaching professional at the Kona Kai Club in LaJolla and president of the San Diego Tennis Professionals Association, the tournament was set for April 19-25. Matches would be played at Morley Field in Balboa Park, a busy municipal facility, which featured a new 2200-seat stadium. During the course of the tournament, the stadium would be named in honor of the late Maureen Connolly, a San Diego native who won the grand slam in 1953 at the age of sixteen before a horse-riding accident permanently damaged her leg, forcing her to retire prematurely.

Ben Press and nine other tennis professionals and businessmen in the San Diego area each loaned \$500 to the tournament; Virginia Slims provided \$7,500 to bring the total prize money to \$12,500. The San Diego Tennis Professionals Association also paid the \$480 sanction fee to the USLTA.¹²⁵ Net proceeds from the tournament were earmarked to benefit junior tennis programs in the area. Instead of housing the players at private homes, the players were given complimentary accommodations at the Point Loma Club Apartments for the week.

On Thursday, April 15, tournament director Bob Ray announced the procedure for the qualifying tournament. Over course of five days, fourteen hopeful local tennis players would compete in a confusing elimination process that included a double-elimination bracket. The four winners from the first stage of qualifying would then face four more local players, who were not required to play in the double elimination. Finally, the four players who survived the second stage of qualifying were then paired against four other non-local players for spots in the main draw. Ray told Dave Gallup of the *San*

Diego Union that the four non-local players include Patty Ann Reese of Florida, Wendy Gilchrist of Australia, Wendy Overton of Washington, D. C., and Laurie Tenney of Beverly Hills. Ray admitted to Gallup that he had no idea how these players were designated by Virginia Slims to play in the final stage of qualifying. Certainly, these players were selected by Gladys to play in what she termed “preliminary matches,” and it was a model that she would use frequently in future tournaments; a specified number of lower-ranked and unranked players would compete in qualifying matches, with the winners advancing to play in preliminary matches against players who had slightly higher rankings or better tournament results. In turn, the winners of the preliminary matches were then placed in the main draw with the top players.¹²⁶

Dennis Moss, the teaching professional at the Camino Country Club, was responsible for coordinating a series of instructional clinics with the women at various locations throughout the San Diego area on Monday and Tuesday. On Monday night, a cocktail party was held at the Point Loma Tennis Club, at which time the pairings for the main draw were selected. The number-one seed Billie Jean King would play her first-round match against one of the players who came through the qualifying and preliminary round process.

On the morning of Wednesday, April 21, six of the regular tour players – Judy Dalton, Karen Krantzcke, Kerry Melville, Kristy Pigeon, Valerie Ziegenfuss and Esme Emanuel – played in a pro-am mixed doubles round robin at the Mission Valley Tennis Club with male club players who each paid \$150 to enter. Later that afternoon, at Mission Valley, the preliminary matches were played. Kris Kemmer, Wendy Gilchrist and Patty Ann Resse survived challenges from local players who came advanced through the qualifying round-robin, and the final match between 16-year old Janet Newberry of LaJolla, California and Sue Boyle of San Diego determined who would play Billie Jean on Thursday night. Motivated by the thought of challenging the tour’s top star in her hometown, Janet overcame a gimpy leg and won in three sets.¹²⁷

Esme Emanuel and Wendy Gilchrist opened the main draw schedule on Thursday morning in the intimate, soon-to-be-named Maureen Connolly Stadium. For unknown

reasons, bright pink tennis balls were used for the daytime matches. Third-seeded Francoise Durr found herself in a battle with Tory Fretz, who handily won the first set 6-2. Francoise rebounded to win the second set 6-1, and then fought off two match points when Tory served to close it out at 5-4 in the third. With Francoise serving at 5-5, tournament referee Jack Campbell came onto the court to inspect the wires of the public address system located behind the umpire's perch. The distraction caused Francoise to double fault, and she demanded of the umpire, "Why don't you bawl him out?" The umpire, looking to the left and right, could not see anyone, and asked Francoise, "Bawl who out?" Francoise pointed to Campbell, squatting behind the umpire's chair, and said "Him!" Finally realizing what was happening, the umpire explained "I can't bawl him out, he's the chairman." Francoise was so upset by the situation that it destroyed her concentration; she lost her serve, and then Tory held serve to win 6-2 1-6 7-5.¹²⁸

After the incident, Campbell said that "Francoise has been one of the most cooperative girls in the group and I sure hated to have this happen. Although he admitted his timing was wrong, Campbell insisted that, as tournament chairman, he had a responsibility to attend to the problem."¹²⁹

Francoise's reaction was the result of a grueling, fourteen-city tour in which all the competitors had to do more than just play tennis matches. "They've also presented endless free clinics on all kinds of tennis courts and played endless pro-amateur mixed doubles round robins with male partners they could beat in singles using a hoe or a rake for a racquet," Gallup wrote. "They've attended endless receptions and cocktail parties where they were expected to smile sweetly and answer the same old questions – over and over again." Bill Cutler, assistant brand manager for Virginia Slims, told Gallup that Billie Jean gave more clinics and interviews and did more telephone work than any of the others. When Gallup mentioned to Billie Jean that she looked exhausted, she tersely replied, "I'm alright."¹³⁰

It was a constant succession of hotels and motels ... I ate out all the time, mostly junk food, and I think I must have averaged three hours' sleep a night the entire three and a half months. ¹³¹

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Because I was the number one player on our tour and because I was never at a loss for something to say, everyone wanted to talk to me. I worked endlessly to meet their demands. I gave interviews on the 6:00 am radio shows, even after playing late into the night ... I remember that I was always exhausted. I know my tennis suffered, but my personal success was not as important to me as the success of our tour ... I felt I had to play week in and week out to make the tour a success. ¹³²

-- Billie Jean King, 1988

The player who gave the most of herself, because she was so much in demand, was Billie Jean. She was winning practically every tournament and was on television shows or radio shows or being interviewed by the press constantly. I don't know how she even played a match, because she couldn't walk ten feet without being stopped by the press and being surrounded by a hundred fans. ¹³³

-- Gladys Heldman, 1979

Since the new stadium at Morley Field did not have lights, evening matches were played on a side court, where temporary bleachers were installed. It was the only solution, since the tournament organizers wanted to stage feature matches at night, when the greatest number of spectators would be able to watch.

The single biggest hassle with running the tournament was the fact that there were no lights in the stadium. We had to have the evening matches played on a side court, where we had portable bleachers installed. ¹³⁴

-- Bob Ray, 2012

On Thursday evening, Billie Jean played her first-round match against Janet Newberry, a local player who was one of the best junior players in the nation. After a one-sided first set, Janet pushed Billie Jean and won five games from her in the second set. Other evening matches included Rosie's straight set win over Judy Dalton, and a win by Kristy Pigeon over Ceci Martinez.

The next day, Julie Heldman scored her third win – in three weeks – over Kerry Melville, this time turning the match around after losing the first set 6-1. Kerry seemed demoralized after Julie won the second set 6-4, after which she failed to win another game. Dave Gallup of the *San Diego Union* reported that Billie Jean, in her match against Esme Emanuel, “made a big thing about the integrity of the shocking pink balls in use, squeezing them, bouncing them and protesting against them, but eventually hitting them frequently and consistently enough to win decisively.”¹³⁵ Valerie Ziegenfuss took advantage of Francoise Durr's first-round upset and the opening it created in the draw. She easily defeated Francoise's conqueror, Tory Fretz, delighting herself and the hometown crowd by reaching the semifinals of a Virginia Slims singles tournament for the first time.

Valerie almost reached the final, taking the first set 6-0 in the semifinals against Rosie on Saturday afternoon. The second set went to 5-5, and at that point in the match Rosie's experience in pressure situations came through. Rosie won two games to take the set, and then maintained her momentum to finish the match with a 6-3 third set. In the other semifinal, Billie Jean defeated Julie Heldman comfortably, 6-3 6-4, but the match was not without controversy; Julie became upset about a line call she received, and she asked the umpire to remove the linesman who made the call. The linesman happened to be Bob Ray, the tournament director and one of the financial contributors to the tournament's prize money.¹³⁶

In Sunday's final, Billie Jean and Rosie battled to 3-3 in the first set. At game point for a 4-3 lead, Billie Jean's first serve was called out by a linesman. After successfully placing a second serve, Billie Jean won the game but she was still, according to Dave Gallup of the *San Diego Union*, “stomping, raving, yelling mad.” As she approached the chair umpire while changing sides, Billie Jean demanded the removal of

the service linesman. “Umpire Allen Shargel complied,” Gallup noted. “Fortunately, it represented no loss of income to the linesman who, like all the other officials, was working for free.”¹³⁷

Rosie then won four of the next five games, taking the first set at 7-5 and building a 4-0 lead in the second; at this point in the match, Billie Jean walked to the side of the court and asked an unusual request of her doubles partner.

... Rosie was beating Billie in the final. I saw the match. In the middle of a game, Billie got mad, slammed her racket down, and said “I hate this racket!” I think one of them was using wood and the other metal. Billie walked over to Rosie’s chair, picked up one of Rosie’s spare rackets, and asked Rosie, “Can I use one of yours?” ... That was a superb act of gamesmanship, worthy of Bill Tilden.¹³⁸
 -- Julie Heldman, 2011

After borrowing Rosie’s metal Wilson T-2000 racquet, Billie Jean reversed the momentum of the match. The more winning shots she hit, the more errors Rosie made. Although her second set lead was chipped away by Billie Jean, Rosie played well enough to win one more game and serve for the match at 5-4. “Perhaps the crucial game of the match was that tenth game,” wrote Gallup, “a long one in which Billie Jean hit a great passing backhand crosscourt and an overhead put-away to augment some costly Casals errors for a win and a 5-5 tie.” Billie Jean then held serve and broke Rosie once more to win the set 7-5 and even the match.¹³⁹

Rosie regained her composure to break Billie Jean’s serve in the opening game of the third set, but then it was her turn to encounter officiating problems. After she hit an apparent service ace, chair umpire Allen Shargel thought he heard an “out” call and asked the service linesman, “Did I hear something?” The linesman confirmed that he did indeed call the serve out. Shargel initially called for a replay of the point, but then decided that the call would stand. Disgusted at the decision, Rosie launched a tennis ball out of the stadium. When she dropped her service game, Rosie hit another tennis ball out

of the enclosure. "It became obvious thereafter," Gallup wrote, "that Rosemary had lost interest as Billie Jean rolled onward and upward to a 6-1 match clincher."¹⁴⁰

Billie Jean won \$2,500 for the singles title, and an additional \$250 for winning the doubles tournament with Rosie. For Rosie, who had come so close to victory, her consolation was the singles runner-up check of \$1,800 and the \$250 she earned in the doubles. During the awards presentation, Billie Jean was also given a large trophy for being the Virginia Slims Circuit champion. It was the end of the inaugural women's professional tour in the United States, and despite the tournaments that suffered financial losses or had modest attendance, Billie Jean was happy with the results. "For six years I've wanted us to go on our own," she told Martin Kasindorf of *Newsweek* the previous week in Las Vegas. "I thought we could make it, and I think we have."¹⁴¹

The day after the finals, former U.S. Davis Cup player Butch Buchholz spoke at a luncheon meeting of the Sportscasters-Sportswriters Association at the Kona Kai Club in La Jolla. Buchholz felt that tennis needed a commissioner who could bring order and discipline to the game. Jerry Magee of *the San Diego Union* mentioned that, during her singles final match with Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals hit tennis balls out of the stadium on two occasions. "Players have to realize," Buchholz said, "that when they misbehave they are not representing the game in its best light and that they should be fined, that every time they step on the court they are representing the sport."¹⁴²

Dave Gallup of the *San Diego Union* was also unimpressed with the players' behavior during the week, especially Billie Jean's. "I had tried to excuse Francoise Durr's irritability in a first-round match on the grounds that it had been a long tour ... The words were no sooner punched out of the mill than Billie Jean got to stomping, making fists, railing at the umpire, clawing at herself after every miss and, of course, firing linesmen." Gallup reported that Billie Jean had two linesmen removed in the course of three days. "The 'queen' didn't enhance her image," Gallup wrote, "when she reneged at the last minute on a TV interview. When informed that she would appear on a show with 79-year-old Mary K. Browne, a former U. S. and Wimbledon doubles champion, Billie Jean was quoted as exclaiming she didn't want to 'get up at that hour to go on television with a has-been.'"¹⁴³

In late April, shortly after the conclusion of the winter-spring Virginia Slims Circuit, Margaret Court arrived in the United States to meet with her attorney, Lawrence Krieger. After a ten-day stay in New York, she planned to travel to Los Angeles for some coaching from teaching professional Jerry Teeguarden. On her way from Australia to New York, Margaret won five titles in two large South African tournaments. She defeated Patti Hogan in the final of the Durban Open and won the doubles with Evonne Goolagong. At the South African Open in Johannesburg – considered one of the six most important tournaments in the world – Margaret defeated Evonne to win the singles, teamed with her to win the doubles, and then partnered with another Australian, Fred Stolle, to win the mixed doubles. Despite the presence of top male players Stolle and Ken Rosewall, and the publicity surrounding Evonne’s first visit to South Africa, Margaret was clearly the star of the tournament.

On April 26, Margaret and her husband Barry met with Krieger to discuss a number of business and legal matters. Margaret showed Krieger a letter she had received from Stan Malless, the USLTA Sanction and Schedule Chairman. Malless had asked Margaret to commit to two USLTA sanctioned tournaments in August – the Western Open in Cincinnati and the U. S. Clay Court Open in Indianapolis, which was run by Malless. A USLTA Player Acceptance Agreement for each tournament was enclosed with the letter. Krieger advised Margaret that she could make much more money by playing in exhibition matches instead of competing in the Cincinnati and Indianapolis tournaments, both of which offered modest amounts of prize money for the women.¹⁴⁴

The following week, USLTA Executive Director Bob Malaga had lunch with the Courts and Krieger at the Yale Club of New York City in midtown Manhattan. Margaret told Malaga if there were no other opportunities during the weeks of the Western Open and the Pennsylvania Grass Court Championships at the Merion Cricket Club in Haverford, Pennsylvania, she would “probably play.” Malless’ tournament in Indianapolis was no longer in consideration, because Margaret had already committed to play in the Canadian Open in Toronto during the same week. Malaga then asked Margaret to sign a USLTA Player Acceptance Agreement, committing her to the tournaments in Cincinnati and Haverford, which she refused to do. Malaga then asked

Margaret if the matter could be further discussed at Wimbledon in late June, and Margaret agreed.¹⁴⁵

During her time in New York, Margaret spoke with Charles Friedman of the *New York Times*. Discussing her rivalry with Billie Jean King, Margaret told Friedman that “over the years, I feel I have a definite edge in matches won, although if you’d ask me who had given me the most trouble on the court, I’d say it was Maria Bueno.” Margaret admitted that the United States was “the place to make money in tennis, but money’s not everything to me. I’ve been playing for a long time, and I wouldn’t keep at it just for money. I happen to love the game, enjoy being the champion and playing before 10,000 people. Once that feeling goes away, then I’ll be quitting.” When she was told about Billie Jean’s recently stated goal of becoming the first female athlete to earn \$100,000 in one year, Margaret felt that \$75,000 would be a more realistic target. Earning \$100,000 in one year was possible, Margaret conceded, but “you’d have to work like a bear, be in the best of condition and stay lucky.” Then, after contemplating the possibility of Billie Jean earning so much money in one year, Margaret took it as a personal challenge. “She’ll have to win it from me,” she told Friedman.¹⁴⁶

Notes

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- ¹⁴⁴ Lawrence Krieger, Letter to the Editor, *World Tennis*, October 1971, 2.
- ¹⁴⁵ Lawrence Krieger, Letter to the Editor, *World Tennis*, October 1971, 2.
- ¹⁴⁶ Margaret Court, quoted in Charles Friedman, "\$100,000 Duel in Women's Tennis," *New York Times* (New York, New York), May 2, 1971.

CHAPTER 7: THE SOLE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE AMERICAN NATION

While the Virginia Slims Circuit toured the United States in early 1971, Gladys organized seven more tournaments for the summer – all of them in conflict with traditional USLTA events.¹ She was under the impression that she would be permitted to schedule events for any week in which a USLTA tournament did not meet the women professionals' minimum prize money standards. All the tournaments (Table 7.1) offered prize money of \$20,000, and to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the tour's conception, a \$40,000 tournament was planned for Houston.

Table 7.1 – Women's Prize Money Tournaments, Summer 1971

Week of:	Virginia Slims Summer Circuit	USLTA Major Summer Circuit (women's prize money listed)
Jul 12	West of England Championships Hoylake, England - \$10,000	Northwood Open Midland MI - \$7500
Jul 19		Tanglewood Classic Winston-Salem NC – \$5000
Jul 26	Ford Capri Open Venice, Italy – \$20,000	Chicago Open Chicago IL – \$5000
Aug 2	Virginia Slims International Houston TX – \$40,000	Western Championships Cincinnati OH – \$7500
Aug 9	Virginia Slims National Clay Courts Chicago IL – \$20,000	U. S. National Clay Court Chps. Indianapolis IN – \$10,000
Aug 16	Virginia Slims Invitational Location TBA – \$20,000	Pennsylvania Grass Court Chps. Haverford PA – \$2600
Aug 23	Virginia Slims National Grass Court Newport RI – \$20,000	Eastern Grass Court Chps. South Orange NJ – \$5000
Aug 30		U. S. Open Championships New York NY – \$39,000
Sep 13	Virginia Slims Invitational Louisville KY – \$20,000	U. S. National Hard Court Chps Sacramento CA – \$2700
Sep 20	Virginia Slims Invitational Pensacola FL – \$20,000	Pacific Southwest Open Los Angeles CA – \$10,000
Sep 27	Virginia Slims Phoenix Thunderbird Phoenix AZ – \$20,000	Pacific Coast Open Berkeley CA – \$5000

Upon seeing the schedule, Bob Colwell asked Gladys to avoid conflicting with the U. S. National Clay Court Championships in Indianapolis. Colwell wanted Gladys to relegate some of the Virginia Slims Circuit players to the lower prize-money USLTA tournaments in Michigan, North Carolina, and Chicago. Gladys firmly refused both requests, explaining her reasoning in an April 12, 1971 letter to USLTA vice president Walter Elcock.

Dear Walter:

... The point of my reply was that we did set up minimum prize money standards when the girls formed their group, that the girls went back into the USLTA under the one condition that they would never have to play for under minimum prize money standards (this was both in a telegram addressed to Bob Colwell and in my letter of acceptance to him during the USLTA meeting) and that therefore it would be contrary to the agreement between the USLTA and the Women's Pro Tour if they were to be forced to play in a 64-woman draw with total prize money of only \$10,000. To ask me or to ask the girls to give up the one principle that made them form a group is like asking them to dissolve. It is also a violation of our agreement. I don't see why, if I was able to arrange fourteen tournaments with minimum prize money standards, that the USLTA cannot arrange one but instead insists that the girls play in the \$10,000 64-draw National Clay Courts.

As you saw in my letter to Bob Colwell, we do operate as a group and can therefore promise a tournament director all our players. In Bob's letter to me, he would have us break up the group so that each girl has freedom of choice and so that we cannot promise a tournament all our players. If the girls agree with Bob Colwell, there is no point in having a Women's Pro Tour since we would never know whether we could guarantee the girls and they could then go back to the old system of playing in USLTA tournaments for under minimum prize money standards. This, of course, will be a decision to be reached by the girls themselves. They may prefer to play in a \$5,000 USLTA tournament at Charlotte

rather than in a \$40,000 Women's Pro Tour event in Houston. In my letter to Bob, I invited him or you to talk to the girls at Las Vegas and to offer your viewpoint. If you can convince them, I would be happy to drop out and the USLTA, through you or Bob or Stan Malless, can once again work out the women's circuit. ²

Kindest regards.

Sincerely,

Gladys M. Heldman

Since Gladys was unwilling to send some of her players to compete in the low prize-money USLTA events, and since she was unwilling to clear the Virginia Slims Circuit schedule during the week of the U. S. National Clay Court Championships in Indianapolis, the Western Tennis Association – led by Stan Malless – objected to Gladys' sanction applications for the Virginia Slims tournaments in Houston and Chicago, which were in conflict with the Western Championships in Cincinnati and the U. S. National Clay Court Championships. Bob Colwell explained the situation to Gladys in a letter on April 29, 1971.

Dear Gladys:

First of all, we appreciate your changing the format for the women's tournaments that you mention will be scheduled when the women come back from Europe. I hope this means that there will be no longer a placing of your special group in something like twelve out of sixteen places, having the others play off for the four remaining spots, as this is not an acceptable format for the results to qualify for national ranking ...

As far as the women's tournaments you mention, I cannot say they will be sanctioned. In spite of our efforts to work with you up to this date on a fourteen-week experimental program of two tournaments per week on the basis that your tournaments would be sanctioned through the local associations and there would

be cooperation between the two tournaments that were running concurrently, we cannot get some local associations to go along with this idea. We have told you ever since we started talking about getting your tournaments sanctioned (this was in my letter to you from Clearwater and in my letter written after our Cleveland meeting) that we could only do this with the cooperation and approval of the local section association.

Because of the reaction of the sections to our experiment and to the problems that they have encountered these past few months, we cannot get sanctions for your tournaments that would run at the same time as the National Clay Court in Indianapolis and the Western Tennis Championships in Cincinnati. The dates of these traditional tournaments have been known to you all year, and yet you have insisted on scheduling against these dates. The Western Tennis Association, in their Executive Committee meeting last week, voted not to approve of recommending sanctions on conflicting dates for these two tournaments, and therefore the USLTA cannot sanction your two conflicting dates. The other details of the schedule you mentioned in your letter will be discussed with you by an officer of the USLTA right away ... ³

Sincerely yours,

R. B. Colwell

Gladys felt that Colwell had broken his promise, which permitted her to schedule Virginia Slims Circuit tournaments during the weeks when the USLTA could not provide tournaments with sufficient prize money. On May 5, 1971, Gladys expressed her displeasure with the USLTA decision to denying sanctions for two of her tournaments, as well as its insistence that she adhere to a traditional tournament format:

Dear Bob:

The most important statement I made in my letter of April 27 was the agreement you and I reached with regard to the girls in the Women's Pro Tour coming back in the USLTA. We agreed to every condition you laid down, which included sanction fees of \$480 per week, opening up the summer tournaments to all qualified players, etc. Our group had only one condition, and this was the reason that the girls had originally organized. It was that they would never be required to play for less than minimum prize money standards. It was the sole reason for the formation of the group. I wrote this to you in our letter of agreement and I sent it to you in my telegram when you were at the USLTA Annual Meeting. But now you say that the girls must play for under minimum prize money standards!

The minimum prize money standards were specifically stated both in World Tennis Magazine when the group was first formed and in my correspondences with you. They were as follows: \$7,500 in prize money for a tournament that included eight of the world's best players, \$10,000 for 16 of the world's best and \$18,000 for 32 of the world's best. Most of the tournaments we have run have been well over the minimum prize money standards and none have been below. However, you now state that the girls must play in the Western Championships and the National Clay Courts for prize money well under these standards, although in a previous letter to me you said that we could conflict with the Western Championships. No male American independent pro would dream of playing for the money you insist that the girls play for ...

Our summer tournaments are being broken down into qualifying rounds, preliminary rounds, Championship Flights and Feed-In Consolation. You say this is not an acceptable format because of the placing of our "special group in something like 12 out of 16 places." This is simply not true. The 12 best players go into the Championship Flight, but these 12 spots are not reserved for our girls. If Margaret Court or Virginia Wade or any other top player competes in our tournaments, she automatically would go into the top 12. I have not yet heard

one girl in the qualifying, preliminary or Championship Flight level objecting to this format. Incidentally, this format of Preliminary and Championship Flights has been used in many sanctioned tournaments, viz., River Oaks.

... The girls who come from Europe and the top American players cannot pay their own travel to all the tournaments and then play for prize money of only \$10,000. It is not only unfair of you to insist that they do so but it is a violation of the original agreement between you and me. This year the USLTA has sanctioned two prize money men's tournaments in the same section, even though one of the tournament directors objected strenuously, but when it comes to the women you have another set of rules...⁴

Sincerely yours,
Gladys M. Heldman

Gladys' assertion that the Virginia Slims Circuit "agreed to every condition that you laid down" was not entirely true. Each of the tournaments required approval at the sectional level before the sanction application was forwarded to the national office. The Virginia Slims Invitational of San Diego – held during the same week as the 72nd Annual Ojai Valley Tennis Tournament in Ojai, California – did not apply for sanction approval with the Southern California Tennis Association. On May 3, 1971, SCTA president Joseph Bixler filed an official protest with USLTA Disciplinary Committee Chairman Forrest Hainline. "When I became aware of the San Diego tournament," Bixler wrote, "I called Stan Malless, Chairman of the Schedule and Sanction Committee, and he informed me that he had not issued a sanction for this event. I next called President Robert B. Colwell and he informed me that Mrs. Heldman had agreed to obtain the approval of the Sectional Association and then apply to the USLTA for a sanction for each of the Virginia Slims tournaments. This, she quite obviously, has not done ... Either Mrs. Heldman's group should abide by the rules and regulations of the USLTA or they should withdraw from our Association and go their own way."⁵ Bixler may not have been pleased to learn that USLTA officials had just begun a series of negotiations with

representatives of Philip Morris, hoping to reach a compromise that would let Virginia Slims Circuit tournaments be staged throughout the United States during the summer.

In the meantime, the traditional clay-court spring tournaments were underway in Europe and England. Gail Chanfreau elected to compete in the two long-standing events on the French Riviera, in Nice and Monte Carlo, instead of traveling to South Africa. Her decision paid off; although she lost to Great Britain's Jill Cooper in the quarterfinals of Nice, she defeated Betty Stove in the finals of Monte Carlo. Afterwards, she reached the finals of two Italian tournaments, losing to Germany's Helga Hoesl in Palermo, and then falling to Virginia Wade in the final of Cantania.

Virginia used the Cantania tournament as preparation for the Italian Open in Rome. Originally, the organizers of the 1971 Italian Open decided to exclude women for the first time since the tournament began in 1930. At the last minute, they realized such a move would be a mistake, and they secured the participation of several women players who were free for that particular week.⁶ Although only a total of \$5,900 in prize money was offered for the sixteen-player women's singles draw and eight-team women's doubles draw, and there were no Pepsi Grand Prix bonus points offered, the tournament attracted several accomplished clay-court players, including Helga Masthoff and Helga Hoesl of West Germany, Gail Chanfreau of France, and Lesley Bowrey, an Australian who won the French Championships in 1963 and 1965 and the Italian title in 1967 and 1968. Virginia Wade overcame the memories of past clay-court failures to win the title with impressive straight-set performances over Hoesl and Masthoff in the semifinals and finals. Her winner's check of \$1000, compared to Rod Laver's first prize of \$10,000, was the most imbalanced distribution of prize money ever offered at a major championship.

Concurrent with the European clay-court season were a series of hard court tournaments in England (the British called their clay-court surfaces "hard courts") sponsored by Bio-Strath health supplement and Rothmans tobacco company. British favorite Christine Truman Janes won the Bio-Strath Cumberland tournament, and Lindsey Beaven, a promising English girl, won the Bio-Strath event at Sheffield. Evonne Goolagong made her 1971 British debut at the Rothmans Hard Court Tournament at

Sutton, coming to England after losing to Margaret Court in the finals of Durban and Johannesburg, South Africa. Evonne defeated Joyce Williams in three sets to win Sutton, and then won the Rothmans Surrey Hard Court Championships the following week over Jill Cooper. The prize money alone was not enough to attract a player of Evonne's stature; she surely received a significant appearance fee from Rothmans, negotiated by her manager Vic Edwards.

None of the players from the Virginia Slims Circuit competed in these lower-prize money tournaments, and neither did Margaret Court. All of them waited to appear at the Bio-Strath London Hard Court Open, held at the Hurlingham Club in London. It promised to be a very special event. It was the initial women's tournament on the 1971 Pepsi Grand Prix, for which the players would receive points towards a year-end prize money bonus pool. In addition, for the first time in a British or European tournament, the women would be competing for more prize money than the men. The total purse for the women was \$10,000, while the men who entered Hurlingham were offered only \$2,360. Most of the top male players – who were contract professionals with Lamar Hunt's World Championship Tennis – were competing for \$50,000 at the Aryamehr Cup in Teheran, Iran, during the same week as Hurlingham.

The tournament got off to a controversial start when the qualifying list was announced. There were several outstanding British players on the list – including Jill Cooper, who beat Gail Chanfreau to win the title in Nice, Janice Wainwright, and Christine Truman's sister, Nell Truman – who should have been put directly into the main draw. There were also several Virginia Slims Circuit players in the main draw – Esme Emanuel, Patty Ann Reese, and Ceci Martinez – who should have been asked to qualify. “Although the situation was unavoidable,” wrote British journalist Linda Timms, “because of the earlier agreement that the whole Women's Pro Tour should participate, it was unfortunate that there should be the sense of unfairness that undoubtedly existed.”⁷ Gladys denied that she made any such deal with the tournament organizers, insisting that “the Women's Pro Tour has always recommended that the best entries (amateurs, independents or whatever) be placed in the draw and that the next best be placed in the qualifying.”⁸ Eventually, all was worked out: Jill Cooper was placed

directly into the main draw when number-four seed Ann Jones withdrew due to her pregnancy, Nell Truman won her two qualifying matches, and Janice Wainwright got into the main draw by way of being a “lucky loser” – someone who in the qualifying tournament and then gets selected to fill the spot of someone who has withdrawn from the main draw at the last minute.

Despite the withdrawal of Ann Jones and the absences of Nancy Richey Gunter and Peaches Bartkowicz (who was taking classes at Wayne State University in Michigan), the Hurlingham tournament had the strongest women’s field since Wimbledon the previous summer. Margaret Court was the top seed, followed by Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals, Evonne Goolagong, Virginia Wade, Francoise Durr and Julie Heldman. The draw also included Patti Hogan and Sharon Walsh – the two Americans who chose not to join the Virginia Slims Circuit – and Gail Chanfreau, an outspoken critic of unequal prize money who deferred joining the Virginia Slims Circuit in order to travel with her tennis professional husband. It was the first time all year that the Virginia Slims Circuit professionals and the independent professionals would be playing in the same tournament.

Some of the Virginia Slims Circuit players were angered when they arrived at Hurlingham and discovered the singles draw included thirty-two players. For a prize money total of \$10,000, they were under the impression the draw would be limited to sixteen players – one of the requirements they established when they formed the tour – so that more money could be divided among a fewer number of players.⁹ For a draw of thirty-two players, their minimum prize money standard was \$18,000. Despite their displeasure, the Virginia Slims Circuit players participated, even though first-round and second-round losers in the singles draw received less than one hundred dollars apiece.

There were no surprises in the Tuesday’s first round matches, but Nell Truman created the biggest sensation of the entire week when she defeated Billie Jean in the second round on Wednesday. Billie Jean lost the first set on a disputed line call, and then “as the second set progressed,” wrote Rex Bellamy of the *Times*, “her resistance did not visibly stiffen and her reputation as a competitor suffered. She looked tired – physically

and mentally.”¹⁰ British tennis writer Linda Timms concurred, observing that Billie Jean “rushed through the match as though she were in a hurry to get off the court.”¹¹

In another surprise on Wednesday, Judy Dalton registered her first win over Evonne Goolagong in three attempts, overcoming a 5-2 deficit in the third set and winning five consecutive games for the match. “I proved a point,” Judy said. “Everybody said the old girl had had it. But I lasted the distance.”¹² Julie Heldman beat Kerry Melville for the fourth time in as many tournaments, after the Australian led 6-3 4-2. Virginia Wade, full of confidence after her victory at the Italian Open, could not finish off Patti Hogan when she held two match points at 6-2 6-5. Patti produced her best tennis to win the second set, “but Miss Wade reasserted her authority in the third set,” Bellamy reported, “though she understandably muffed a shot when it was laconically announced over the public address system that someone’s car was on fire.”¹³

In each of Thursday’s quarterfinal singles matches, a Virginia Slims Circuit player was paired against an independent professional. Francoise Durr was tested by Nell Truman, who had beaten Billie Jean in the previous round, and Judy Dalton could only garner five games from Gail Chanfreau. Julie Heldman won the first set against Margaret Court before losing the next two, just as Rosie Casals had done against Virginia Wade. During the course of her victory, Virginia fell heavily on the clay court and injured her wrist. On the advice of a doctor – ironically, Michael von Stratzen, who was also the promoter of the tournament – she decided to withdraw from the tournament.¹⁴

Later that evening, Margaret Court was interviewed by Bryan Cutress, a tennis reporter for the British news service Exchange Telegraph. Margaret told Cutress that “few of the group members even speak to me now. This is both stupid and childish. There is much bad feeling creeping into the game and the group is largely responsible for it. I have been told that I am not helping women’s tennis by staying outside the group, but quite frankly there is no way they can persuade me to join it. I don’t want any part of it.” Referring to some early round matches at Hurlingham, when several Virginia Slims Circuit players cheered for Tory Fretz and Judy Dalton in their matches against Evonne Goolagong, Margaret said “I certainly do not want to play the same players week after week or join in a cheer group supporting one player against another as often happens

now. I am perfectly happy as an independent player and I see no reason why I should change my views. Why some of them cold shoulder me, I have no idea.”¹⁵ Rita Bentley, one of England’s best players in the 1960s, concurred with Margaret. “I have never been in such an unpleasant dressing room,” she said. “It spoiled the tournament.”¹⁶

Friday’s program of semi-final matches featured only one women’s singles contest, since Françoise Durr has already advance to the final after Virginia Wade withdrew. Margaret Court allowed Gail Chanfreau, and accomplished clay court player, only two games during a 6-1 6-1 demolition. A second rate men’s field, relegated to the back courts of the Hurlingham Club all week, temporarily took center stage. Jaime Fillol of Chile defeated Andrew Pattison of South Africa, 8-6 6-3, and Welshman Gerald Battrick thrilled British observers with a 6-3 8-9 8-6 win over Fillol’s countryman and doubles partner, Patrice Cornejo.

Margaret’s interview with Bryan Cutress, in which she criticized the behavior of the Virginia Slims Circuit players towards her, appeared in print on Friday. John Oakley of the *London Evening News* asked Julie Heldman how she felt about Margaret’s comments. “The girls first got together in order to get more recognition and more prize money for women’s tennis as a whole,” Julie said. “We are sorry that Margaret does not want to join us. She has been asked. We do not hold any grudges against her at all, and it is silly to say that we are not speaking to her. Margaret in an outstanding and naturally we would like her in the group. We are, in fact, asking every good player in the world to join us but we are insisting that we are playing for prize money and not guaranteed appearance money.”¹⁷

Julie then saw Bryan Cutress on the grounds of the Hurlingham Club and confronted him about the interview. “I understand it was you who wrote the story,” she said. “Well, I want to tell you ... I don’t hold any grudges, but obviously I’m going to cheer for the Old Fruit (Judy Dalton) against most other players. And, of course, we in the group must stick together. We fly the world together, sometimes get up at the crack of dawn to do a TV or radio show and often have to dash off somewhere to teach useless or useful players how to play.”¹⁸

The stands were only half full of spectators for the final day of matches on Saturday, resulting in what one reporter called “little atmosphere.” In the women’s singles final, Margaret led 6-0 2-0 before Francoise won a game. “About time, too!” Francoise exclaimed when she won it. For the next six games, the Frenchwoman tested her opponent by varying the height, pace and length of her shots, but the test never became a threat. Margaret won easily, 6-0 6-3 and collected a first prize of \$2,000. Afterward, Jaime Fillol won the men’s singles title – and a paycheck of \$360 – for defeating Gerald Battrick, 7-5 6-3.¹⁹

Margaret was happy with her performance and wanted to put the controversies of the week behind her. “There was some feeling at the beginning of the tournament but it’s alright now,” she said. John Oakley of the *London Evening News* did not blame Margaret for refusing to join the Virginia Slims Circuit. “It is quite clear to me,” he wrote. “Mrs. Court is just too successful and can command much bigger guarantees than most of the group members. Sponsors are prepared to pay her good appearance money, and this indirectly can affect the prize money. The Women’s Lib prefer to play for prize money only to give everyone what they consider is a ‘fairer crack of the whip.’ But who can blame Mrs. Court for cashing in on her outstanding ability?”²⁰

After Hurlingham, the Virginia Slims Circuit players were free to compete wherever they wished for the next seven weeks; they were not committed to play as a group until the Rothman’s North of England Open in Hoylake, two weeks after Wimbledon. Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals, Kerry Melville and Karen Krantzcke decided to play in the German Open in Hamburg, at which more Pepsi Grand Prix points were at stake. Billie Jean defeated four accomplished clay-court players – Marie Neumannova of Czechoslovakia in the second round, followed by three Germans: Heidi Orth, Helga Hoesl and Helga Masthoff – to win the \$3,000 first prize.²¹

At the same time, a strong field was playing at the Rothman’s British Hard Court Championships in Bournemouth, which also offered Pepsi Grand Prix bonus points. As was the case at Hurlingham, the later stages of the tournament pitted Virginia Slims Circuit players against independent professionals. In the semifinals, Francoise Durr won twice the number of games against Margaret Court as she had done in Hurlingham; this

time, she gathered six games in her losing effort. Mary Ann Curtis started strongly against Evonne Goolagong, winning the first set 7-5 before fading and winning only five games in the second and third sets. Margaret won \$1,920 and twenty Pepsi Grand Prix bonus points for defeating Evonne in the final, 7-5 6-1, and Francoise and Mary Ann gained some revenge on their singles vanquishers by beating Margaret and Evonne in the doubles final, 6-3 5-7 6-4. Francoise and Mary Ann split \$528 for winning Great Britain's most important clay-court tournament, and Margaret and Evonne divided \$336 for losing in the final.²²

While the German Open and British Hard Court Championships were being contested, Gladys informed Joe Whittington of the *Houston Post* that the status of the upcoming \$40,000 Virginia Slims International, to be played in Houston in August, was still unresolved. "We surely want USLTA sanctioning. And I think there's a 99 per cent chance of getting it," she said. "But we started on this four weeks ago, and we still haven't gotten an answer. We were supposed to get the word two weeks ago, but since then it's been a day-by-day thing. I've made three trips to New York checking on it, and can't get either a yes or a no."²³ Gladys could not get an answer because she was not directly involved in the negotiations. USLTA officials, wary of dealing with Gladys, decided to communicate directly with Joe Cullman and the Virginia Slims management team.

As the negotiations continued, Marvin Richmond of Kansas City, Missouri – a USLTA delegate in the Missouri Valley Tennis Association who was closely involved with the Glenwood Manor Invitational tennis tournament – complained about the special treatment that the Virginia Slims Circuit was likely to receive. "Why should Houston, with its \$40,000 in prize monies for the females be permitted to pay a total sanction fee of \$480.00 when the Glenwood Manor with males and females participating (or with males only), but with only \$13,750 of prize money, pays the USLTA a sanction fee of \$825.00?"²⁴ In response, USLTA second vice president Slew Hester explained to Richmond how the association needed to be very cautious in its dealings with Gladys.

Dear Marvin:

This will acknowledge your letter of May 18 to Bob Colwell concerning our difficulties with Gladys, et al.

I feel that the USLTA Executive Committee and officers are in a very bad position concerning the Women's Lib tour. We know that Gladys is going to be uncooperative to the USLTA and to tennis in general.

I do feel, however, that the USLTA from a standpoint of public image is going to collect a great deal of bad press if we attempt to shut down these tournaments. Gladys has raised the women's prize money far above the capacity of either the USLTA or its tournament chairmen. If we keep the girls from the opportunity of playing for these large prizes, we in the USLTA are going to end up as the villains.

I feel that both Colwell and Malaga are working through Cullman to obtain a compromise that will clear up the sanctions and schedule mess. I also feel that there are enough dissensions that Gladys will find it difficult to hold her present group together, much less increase it in size.

I see where Mrs. Court and Goolagong have refused to join the tour. They evidently will play in our regular sanctioned tournaments. This should give us enough name players to weather what I think is a temporary situation.

I agree wholeheartedly with your letter and feel that the Lamar and Gladys groups are exactly as you state. I do feel, however, that they will disintegrate of their own accord. With kindest personal regards, I remain yours very truly,²⁵

W. E. Hester, Jr.

Richmond was not so confident that Lamar Hunt and Gladys Heldman would fade away. "I believe that if we pursue our present modus operandi vis-à-vis Lamar, Gladys, et al.," he responded to Hester, "they will not disintegrate of their own accord, but on the contrary, will flourish, expand and destroy the USLTA as it now exists."²⁶ J. Howard "Bumpy" Frazer, tournament director of the 84th Annual Western Tennis Championships

in Cincinnati, agreed with Richmond in his belief that the USLTA was giving Gladys too much power and control. Frazer was particularly upset because Gladys decided to schedule the \$40,000 Virginia Slims International of Houston during the same week as his tournament, which offered a total of \$7500 for the women players.

Dear Marvin:

I am deeply concerned over the turn which women's has taken. I am enclosing a letter I wrote to Bob Colwell last week. I regret to say it has had no effect whatever.

Bob has apparently given Gladys Heldman a carte blanche to do whatever she wants with her touring group. She does not go through any normal procedures to obtain sanctions for her tournaments. She does not apply for sanctions through the Section and then through the USLTA.

I understand she never applied to the Section for a tournament in San Diego, California, during the week of April 19. If she ever applied for a section for the Caesar's Palace tournament it never came to Stan Malless who is, after all, the chairman of the USLTA Sanction and Schedule Committee.

The USLTA Standing Orders specify how to obtain a sanction, and specifically states that a sanction must be obtained prior to a tournament. People like yourself who have worked long and hard for the USLTA must follow those rules. I do not see why Gladys Heldman or anyone else should be permitted to ignore them.

I sincerely feel that Bob Colwell is making a mistake in letting Gladys ignore USLTA Standing Orders. I would also doubt that he has the right to do so. Even the President of the United States does not have the power to circumvent the Constitution.

At the meeting of the Western Tennis Association last weekend, several well meaning but misguided people felt that the sanctioning of women's tournaments should simply be turned over to Gladys Heldman. However, after considerable discussion, the Western Tennis Association voted unanimously that,

if asked, it would not grant a sanction to a Heldman tournament on a date which conflicted with a USLTA major circuit tournament. It also voted unanimously to authorize and instruct the president of the Western to inform Bob Colwell that the Western believes the USLTA Standing Orders on sanctions must be followed.

I feel that to ignore the years of work so many devoted USLTA members have put in, and simply turn everything over to this aggressive woman would be a horrible mistake. She has never cooperated with the USLTA. From the way I read her magazine, she doesn't even respect the USLTA. She is difficult to deal with now, and will become impossible if we allow her to continue under USLTA auspices.

As you may know, Stan Malless has led a courageous fight to oppose giving Mrs. Heldman this carte blanche. He feels that her group is a contract pro organization, and her girls should simply be declared contract pros. I agree with him. I do not feel the Heldman group should be permitted to hold their tournaments under the banner of the USLTA.

Marvin, if you agree with some or all of my thinking, I believe a letter or phone call to Bob Colwell would be very helpful. I like Bob and respect him very much. He knows far more about tennis than I, and if his final decision is to grant Mrs. Heldman her wishes, then I will yield to his judgment. However, I feel he may have been ill-advised and he may not have heard from prominent USLTA executives like yourself ... ²⁷

Sincerely yours,
J. Howard Frazer

Perhaps frustrated with her exclusion from the negotiations between the USLTA and Virginia Slims, Gladys told Joe Whittington of the *Houston Post* that she was imposing a May 21 deadline for a decision. "I would have to say that Virginia Slims will drop their offers to these tournaments if we don't get sanctioning," she declared. "We would be 100 per cent thrilled if the USLTA would sanction us, but we want no more

delays. I feel that Jack Kramer and Stanley Malless are trying to block our sanctioning ... if we don't get the word by 6 pm Friday, it's a contract pro event, even if they call later.”²⁸ Robert Kamrath, a past president of the Houston Tennis Association and a member of the USLTA Senior Committee, sent a photocopy of Whittington's article to Stan Malless in Indianapolis, with the attached note: “Stan – here we go again!”²⁹ Kamrath was referring to the previous year's Virginia Slims tournament in Houston, when Gladys signed the nine women to professional contracts and circumvented the jurisdiction of the USLTA.

When the French Open started on Monday, May 24, tournament officials were furious. Of the thirty-two WCT contract professionals, only sixteen entered the tournament. Three of the WCT professionals – Tom Okker, Nikki Pilic, and Ismail El Shafei – withdrew at the last minute. Three players entered by the German Tennis Federation – Ingo Buding, Helga Masthoff, and Helga Hoesl – also failed to appear; tournament officials were especially angered when they read that the two German women were actually playing in the Berlin Championships during the first week of the French Open. In addition, Judy Dalton withdrew after her entry was accepted, in order to play two grass court tournaments in England.³⁰ All seven players would face repercussions by the time the tournament concluded.

In the women's singles tournament, it was a foregone conclusion that Margaret Court would win her fifth French Open women's singles title and be halfway to a second consecutive Grand Slam. Billie Jean King decided to skip the tournament in order to prepare for Wimbledon, and none of the other players in the draw had much of a chance of beating Margaret. Number-two seed Virginia Wade, never very comfortable on clay, was still hampered by the wrist injury she sustained at Hurlingham and retired from her opening match against Linda Tuero after losing the first set. Evonne Goolagong, the third seed, had only one career victory over Margaret, which was on a grass court. The fourth seed, clay court expert Helga Masthoff of Germany, gave Margaret problems in the past, but she was among the tournament's last-minute withdrawals. Francoise Durr, seeded fifth, lost convincingly to Margaret twice in the previous two weeks, and sixth-seed Nancy Richey Gunter was playing sporadically since her marriage – the French

Open would be her first tournament since the Caesar's Palace event in Las Vegas five weeks earlier. Of all the seeded players, number seven Julie Heldman had the best chance of giving Margaret a close match; in the Hurlingham quarterfinals, Julie won the opening set before Margaret took control.

Margaret most likely was not overly concerned when she and Gail Chanfreau walked to a back court on Sunday, May 30 for their third-round match. In the semifinals of Hurlingham two weeks earlier, on a clay court, Margaret gave Gail one of her worst defeats in recent years, losing only two games in the process. This time, a total of three people – and one French poodle – were in the stands when Margaret and Gail started their match.³¹

Gail refused to be intimidated by Margaret, convinced that she could beat her despite the one-sided match in Hurlingham. She hit a steady stream of low, short balls that made Margaret bend and stretch; when Margaret came forward to the net, Gail passed her with powerful forehands and accurate backhands. Soon the first set belonged to Gail, and since the court's scoreboard was in full view of the public restaurant, news spread quickly throughout the grounds that the two-time defending champion was in trouble.³²

By the time Gail was serving at 4-2 in the second set, a huge crowd had gathered. The long rallies were taking a toll on Gail; as the set wore on, she began to look pale. The crowd cheered when she reached 5-2, and then fell silent when Margaret held serve without losing a point in the following game. Serving for the match at 5-3, would Gail be able to handle her fatigue and nerves, or would Margaret be able to stage a comeback? Gail kept her emotions under control, and finally arrived at match point. After she lost the point with a forehand that clipped the net tape, Gail stood at match point one more time. When she gambled and hit a perfect drop shot that caught Margaret flat-footed, the crowd erupted in an enormous roar. For Margaret, the dream of another Grand Slam was over. It was the first time in nearly two years that someone had beaten her at a major championship.³³

“Everyone kept telling me it was a shame I had to play Margaret, that I had a terrible draw,” said Gail after the match. “So I decided I had to concentrate on every

point and give everything I got, even if I died in the second set. If I'd lost the second, I'd have been gone in the third. At 5-3, I decided that if I didn't get to the net and finish the rallies, I was going to die on the court, because I was exhausted.”³⁴ Gail was definitely a fighter; in the finals of the 1969 Western Championships in Cincinnati, she battled Lesley Turner Bowrey for three hours in sweltering heat, eventually collapsing on the court with the match tied at 10-10 in the third set.

Margaret felt that a cold she recently contracted affected her play. “It's hard when you feel lousy,” she said. “You don't know what you're doing. My legs were out of position. If I'm not moving well, I'm nothing. I couldn't play my game because I was not getting any length. Everything was half-court. I couldn't get in because I couldn't get any depth. But you can't take it away from Gail. She played well.”³⁵

In the other half of the draw, Evonne Goolagong was easily working her way to the final, not losing more than five games to any of her first five opponents. Along the way, in the quarterfinals, she “crushed Francoise Durr ... with a perfect display of clay court tennis,” Richard Evans reported in *World Tennis*. “Frankie was wearing a ‘Ce n'est pas possible’ expression long before the end.”³⁶ From 3-3 in the first set, Evonne won nine straight games to win 6-3 6-0. Moving effortlessly and playing aggressively from the baseline, Evonne took her opponent's best shots and returned them for outright winners. “Her brilliance was such that,” noted Rex Bellamy of the *Times*, “time and again there were startled gasps from the sweltering crowd.”³⁷ Down 0-4 in the second set, Francoise made a last-ditch attempt to change the match by deliberately hitting soft, high shots. The strategy was useless – Evonne handled the change of pace with ease.

It came to me that I could do anything on this clay. Drop shots worked. So did lobs. I was delighted to find that I could come to the net if I prepared my way, zooming up if she gave me a short ball to work with. I served and volleyed now and then, just to catch her off guard. I was driving my groundstrokes to the corners and running happily in chasing hers down. I was learning that I could win points on clay at the net against a sharpshooter like Frankie if I stayed alert

... *Nobody had beaten Frankie like that in her own playground. "You are a magician today, Evonne," she said. "I can do nothing."* ³⁸
 -- *Evonne Goolagong, 1974*

Francoise may have been the more experienced clay court player, but Evonne seemed to be playing on instinct. "She's got something you can't teach anybody," Vic Edwards told reporters after the match. "You've either got it or you haven't." ³⁹ Edwards told Evonne it was the best match she had ever played, and he was confident that she would win the tournament. In her next match, a semifinal against Marijke Schaar of the Netherlands, Evonne seemed less assured – probably because her opponent was ambidextrous and hit forehands from both sides. Evonne eventually solved the puzzle, winning 6-4 6-1, to advance to the final of her first French Open.

For Julie Heldman, the French Open was a memorable tournament. Although she was defeated by Marijke Schaar in the third round, she met Vincent Hanna, a thirty-two year old journalist from Belfast. Hanna came from a distinguished family – his father was a prominent attorney and a member of the Parliament of Northern Ireland – and his education included degrees from Trinity College in Dublin, Queen's University of Belfast, Harvard University, and the London School of Economics. In the mid-1960s he briefly worked for his father's law practice, specializing in industrial injuries and civil rights cases, before becoming an industrial relations correspondent for *The Sunday Times* in London. ⁴⁰

Hanna arrived in Paris with the intention of meeting and interviewing Julie. He was intrigued by the inflammatory statements that Margaret Court made during the tournament in Hurlingham – calling the Virginia Slims Circuit players "stupid and childish" for resenting her refusal to join their group – and he was under the impression that Julie was the tour's spokesperson, based on her comments to the press that were meant to defuse the situation. Hanna's background and intelligence made an impression on Julie, and a romance soon developed.

*Many people disliked him because he was brilliant, arrogant, and fearless. His ability to think and the amount of knowledge he had amassed were way beyond my own.*⁴¹

-- Julie Heldman, 2011

Thanks to Julie, Hanna gained access – over the next few weeks – to Billie Jean King, Ann Jones, Rosie Casals and other top players for an article to be published in *The Sunday Times*. It would serve several purposes. Hanna planned to present a brief history of the Virginia Slims Circuit and the challenges of playing on it. He also wanted to examine the feminist attitudes of the women on the Virginia Slims Circuit, and juxtapose those attitudes against the conservative ideas of Margaret Court.

Gail Chanfreau could not capitalize on the opening she created in the draw by removing Margaret Court; she was outlasted by Helen Gourlay in three sets in the quarterfinals. Helen had come from behind to beat Christina Sandberg of Sweden in the second round, and then she saved four match points during her next match with Kazuko Sawamatsu of Japan. After beating Gail, Helen was in the semifinals against Nancy Richey Gunter, one of the world's best clay court players, who won the French Open in 1968. Nancy started strongly, winning eleven of the first thirteen points and taking a 2-0 lead. Helen then won seven successive games, making the match look one-sided in the process. She disrupted Nancy's rhythm by hitting high looping shots to the backhand corner, deceptive drop shots, and a series of outright winners – usually crosscourt forehands or down-the-line backhands, often leaving her opponent standing still. Coming forward to the net to win points with her volleys and overheads, Helen won comfortably, 6-2 6-3 to become the first unseeded finalist at the French tournament since Ginette Bucaille in 1954.⁴²

Vic Edwards, Evonne's longtime coach and manager, had mixed emotions about the championship match. "I don't think I'll watch the final," he said. His ambivalence was due to the fact that Helen Gourlay did eighteen months of secretarial work for him before she embarked upon her international tennis career.⁴³ The two Australians played evenly in the first set, and Helen had four points to level the first set at 4-4. She could not

win any of them, and Evonne closed out the first set at 6-3. In the second set, in what would become one of her trademark characteristics, Evonne's game temporarily deteriorated and Helen raced to a 5-2 lead, holding a set point in that eighth game. Faced with a crisis, Evonne became interested in the match again, and reeled off five straight games to claim her first major championship.⁴⁴

After the match, Evonne told reporters she was not too concerned when she fell behind in the second set. "I was determined not to play three sets," she said, "and I find that when I'm down I can bring out my best tennis. I think, 'Well, here it goes. I might as well try something.'" ⁴⁵ Helen admitted that it was difficult to execute the proper strategy. "I felt that I could stay and slowball her out," she observed, "but I think I was kind of anxious to keep attacking. She's the faster mover I've played. So many shots that should have been winners just came back." ⁴⁶ For Evonne, winning the French Open on her first attempt was a remarkable achievement; not since 1956, when Althea Gibson won the title, had the feat been accomplished by a man or a woman. While Evonne won \$2,700 for her efforts, men's singles champion Jan Kodes of Czechoslovakia was awarded \$10,000.

That triumph seemed enough to make 1971 worthwhile. But Mr. Edwards ... was seized by a premonition, and he phoned his wife and said, "Eva, get on a plane. I think you ought to be at Wimbledon." ⁴⁷

-- Evonne Goolagong, 1974

During the second week of the French Open, a compromise was finalized between the USLTA and the Virginia Slims Circuit. The summer schedule was rearranged so that the \$20,000 Virginia Slim Clay Court Championships in Chicago was not in conflict with the U. S. National Clay Court Championships in Indianapolis; the Chicago tournament was moved to the following week, during the same week as the Pennsylvania Grass Court Championships in Haverford, Pennsylvania, which provided the women with only \$2,600 in prize money. The proposed \$20,000 Virginia Slims Invitational in Pensacola, Florida, which conflicted with the Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open in Los Angeles, was canceled.⁴⁸

In addition, Virginia Slims agreed to give \$5,000 to the U. S. National Clay Court Championships and \$5000 to the Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open, which each originally offered \$10,000 for the women. However, in order to receive the money from Virginia Slims, each of these tournaments were required to add \$3,000 of their own, thereby offering a total of \$18,000 for the women at each of these tournaments, which was the women's minimum prize money standard for a 32-player draw. If the tournaments in Indianapolis and Los Angeles made a profit, the money was to be paid back to Virginia Slims.⁴⁹

USLTA President Bob Colwell and USLTA Executive Director Bob Malaga agreed to approve the sanction request for the \$40,000 Virginia Slims International of Houston, but the size of the draw was to be limited. Gladys wanted this event to feature a 96-player draw that included qualifying, preliminary, and championship flights. The Houston tournament was scheduled for the same week as the \$7,500 Western Tennis Championships in Cincinnati, a designated Pepsi Grand Prix event. Since Colwell and Malaga felt a 96-player event in Houston would harm the quality of the draw in Cincinnati, they insisted that the Houston tournament be limited to thirty-two players. Gladys was opposed to this request but "had to agree or see the whole compromise go down the drain." She was successful, however, in requesting that an unlimited number of Texas players could compete in a qualifying tournament in Houston. Similar to the restrictions imposed on the Houston tournament, Gladys agreed to limit the \$20,000 tournament in Louisville to thirty-two players, since it was in conflict with the \$3,700 U. S. National Hard Court Championships in Sacramento, California.⁵⁰

Finally, Colwell and Malaga did not want a tournament to conflict with the Pacific Coast International in Berkeley, California in late September. This event offered only \$5,000 to the women, and Gladys had arranged for a \$20,000 tournament in Phoenix the same week. The Virginia Slims management team was successful in rejecting this request, and they were also able to keep the \$20,000 Virginia Slims Grass Court Championships in Newport, Rhode Island during the same week as the \$9,000 Eastern Grass Court Championships in South Orange, New Jersey, both played during the week immediately preceding the U. S. Open. In sending a copy of the confidential agreement

to Stan Malless, Colwell added a handwritten note. “Since we are all fed up with this,” he scribble, “I hope this means peace for the balance of 1971.”⁵¹

The compromise between Virginia Slims and the USLTA came as a surprise to Margaret Court, Helen Gourlay, and Kerry Harris. At the beginning of the French Open, they were under the impression that the Virginia Slims Circuit summer tournaments would not materialize and/or the tournaments not be sanctioned by the USLTA. As a result, the three Australians signed USLTA Player Acceptance Agreements to participate in the USLTA tournaments in Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Haverford and South Orange. In the coming weeks, all of them would find themselves negotiating with the USLTA to be released from their commitments in order to play in the more lucrative Virginia Slims Circuit tournaments.

Since the French Open was a two-week tournament, most of the players who lost during the first week early had enough time to enter one of the British grass court tournaments the following week. Kerry Melville, Kristy Pigeon, Wendy Gilchrist and Isabel Fernandez lost early in singles play at the French Open and were able to get into the Chichester tournament (although the latter two players defaulted out of the French Open mixed doubles in order to travel to England); Christina Sandberg, Brenda Kirk, Kris Kemmer, Rita Bentley, Laura Roussow, Nell Truman, Esme Emanuel, Ceci Martinez and Tory Fretz made it to Manchester in time, and Becky Vest, Janice Wainwright and Kakuko Sawamatsu played in the Bio-Strath tournament in Cardiff, Wales.

Judy Dalton was the number-one seed at Surbiton and seeded second behind Kerry Melville at Chichester. At Surbiton, she defeated four British players – Penny Moor, Janice Wainwright, Shirley Brasher and Joyce Williams – to win her first singles title in two years. Judy also won the women’s doubles with Patti Hogan, defeating two more British players, Christine Truman Janes and her sister Nell Truman 6-1 6-2 in the final. The following week, Judy won the Chichester tournament by beating Kristy Pigeon in the semifinals and then the young Californian, Janet Newberry, in the championship match. For Judy, it was a good two weeks that would soon turn into a nightmare.

The following week, there were two significant grass court tournaments in England. Kerry Melville and Stan Smith won the singles titles at the Kent Championships in Beckenham, while another combined event – sponsored by tobacco company John Player – was held in Nottingham, England. Judy was the number-one seed in the women’s singles, and Jaime Fillol – the Chilean who won the title at Hurlingham, where the men received second billing to the women – was the top-seeded male player. The main attraction at Nottingham, however, was a separate round-robin exhibition in which Margaret Court, Evonne Goolagong, Virginia Wade and Francoise Durr were invited to compete for \$6,500 in prize money.

Shortly before the tournament in Nottingham was scheduled to begin, the organizers received word that Judy Dalton was immediately suspended because she withdrew from the French Open and then entered the grass court tournaments at Surbiton and Chichester. During the previous two weeks, the ILTF had asked Judy to explain her actions. In her written response, Judy indicated that Pip Jones submitted her entry for the French Open on April 27, and she then sent a cable to the French Tennis Federation on May 7, requesting her removal from the draw. However, Judy explained, it took three days for the cable to reach the proper authorities in Paris, one day after the entries had closed.⁵²

The ILTF was not persuaded; Judy was suspended, along with eight other players. Helga Masthoff of Germany, the number-four seed in Paris, did not show up for her first-round match. Two other Germans, Helga Hoesl and Ingo Buding, along with WCT players Tom Okker, Ismael El Shafei and Nikki Pilic were suspended for improperly withdrawing from the tournament. In addition, Wendy Gilchrist and Isabel Fernandez – both of whom defaulted from the French Open mixed doubles in order to play in Chichester – would be required to apologize to the French Tennis Federation before being allowed to compete in ILTF events.

“I have given my reasons and I don’t know what more they want,” Judy told Nick Jordan of the *London Evening Standard*. “The French officials knew all along I would not be playing. I have never dropped out of a tournament without first letting the organizers know. Other players do not even have the courtesy to give their reasons for

not turning up. I think I am being treated very unfairly.”⁵³ Judy told Frank Rostron, tennis writer for the *Daily Express*, that she hired two attorneys to challenge the suspension. “Mrs. Dalton has no defense,” said Basil Reay of the ILTF. “The rule clearly states she cannot enter one tournament, withdraw and then play elsewhere without prior permission of the originally entered tournament, in this case the French Championships ... Judy Dalton’s proof that she sent notification in good time is pointless because she played in two tournaments, Surbiton and Chichester, in the relevant periods and her suspension is automatic ...”⁵⁴

On Friday, June 11, the ILTF cleared the four male players, since they apparently withdrew from the French Open due to health reasons and did not compete in any other events during the tournament’s two-week time period. Wendy Gilchrist and Isabel Fernandez were also cleared after apologizing to the French Tennis Federation. The German Tennis Association assured the ILTF that appropriate actions would be taken against Helga Masthoff and Helga Hoesl, but Basil Reay was not convinced. Skeptical that the German association would penalize two of its most prominent female players, Reay asked for a further report. As for Judy Dalton, her retention of two attorneys was productive, and after submitting her apology to the French Tennis Federation, her suspension was lifted and she was permitted to enter the following week’s Rothmans South of England Championships at Eastbourne, where she was placed at the number-two seeded position behind Francoise Durr.⁵⁵

In the week before Wimbledon, there were two important grass-court events – each including men and women – that all players wanted to enter as a final chance to get ready for the most prestigious tournament of the year. The Rothmans London Grass Court Championships at Queen’s Club had a field of 48 women playing for \$11,500, and the Rothmans South of England Championships at Eastbourne included 28 women competing for \$11,150. The prize money amounts at both of these tournaments was below the women players’ minimum prize money standards, but the need for a final tune-up and practice time on grass far outweighed the modest prize money. As a result, every player from the Virginia Slims Circuit – with the exception of Nancy Richey Gunter and Peaches Bartkowicz – and most of the other top players competed in these two

tournaments. There was one notable exception; Evonne Goolagong decided to practice during the week instead of play in a tournament, most likely a preparation enforced by her manager and coach, Vic Edwards.⁵⁶

In southern England, the week preceding Wimbledon was plagued by rain. As a result, the tournament at Eastbourne had to be abandoned after Judy Dalton and Francoise Durr reached the women's singles final and Georges Goven, Nikki Pilic, Pierre Barthes and Geoff Masters earned their places in the men's singles semifinals. Each player received an equal share of prize money that was available for the round they reached. The tournament at Queen's Club fared much better; the club had ten indoor courts, with a slick wood flooring that provided a playing surface similar to grass courts. All of Tuesday's first round matches at Queen's Club were played indoors, and on Wednesday only eight matches were completed on the outdoor grass courts. Persistent rain forced the matches to be played on the indoor wood courts on Thursday and Friday, and the skies cleared in time for the final round matches on Saturday.⁵⁷

The early round matches at Queen's Club progressed without any surprises, although Wendy Gilchrist upset the number-five seed Mary Ann Curtis, 4-6 8-6 6-1. In a third round match that was played outdoors, Julie Heldman won the first set from Virginia Wade and led 4-1 in the second. In a match marred by questionable line calls and noise from jets departing Heathrow Airport, Virginia came back from the second set deficit to win 7-5. Virginia won the deciding set 6-3, and as she approached the net to shake hands, Julie said to her, "Call me a cheat again and I'll kill you." Afterwards, Julie told reporters, "That's right, at one stage of the match I was accused of taking points and I'm sorry to say it upset my concentration." Virginia was bemused by the drama, saying, "I certainly didn't call her a cheat. There was really no need for all this because she was playing so well."⁵⁸

The top four seeds in the women's singles – Margaret Court, Billie Jean King, Virginia Wade and Rosie Casals – comfortably advanced to the semifinals. The semifinal pairings were intriguing: the first matches in over a year between the two Virginia Slims Circuit stars, Billie Jean and Rosie, against the independent professionals, Margaret and Virginia, who had no interest in joining the women's professional group.

Billie Jean and Virginia played an entertaining, hard-hitting match on the indoor courts; Billie Jean won the first set and held her nerves together better than her opponent in winning the second set in a tiebreak for a 6-3 9-8 decision. In the other semifinal, Margaret had an easier time with Rosie, winning 6-4 6-3.⁵⁹

The last time they played, Margaret narrowly beat Billie Jean, 14-12 11-9 in the finals of Wimbledon the previous year. The final at Queen's Club – played outdoors on grass – was nearly as entertaining, with Margaret winning 6-3 3-6 6-3 in her final tune-up for Wimbledon. “The standard of play was always high,” John Oakely observed, writing for the British magazine *Tennis World*, “off the court, the women's dressing room was not the friendliest place in the ancient Queen's building. I can't speak from personal experience, of course, but you could say the women's language was most Lib.”⁶⁰

The match play and practice preceding Wimbledon was far more important to most players than the modest prize money offered at Queen's Club (although Pepsi Grand Prix bonus points were at stake). Singles winners Stan Smith and Margaret Court won \$960 and \$624, respectively. Billie Jean King earned \$355 for reaching the final, in addition to \$144 for winning the doubles title with Rosie Casals. The women's doubles finalists, Mary Ann Curtis and Valerie Ziegenfuss, were each awarded \$77 – hardly enough to cover their expenses for the week.⁶¹

While the top-ranked players were competing in Great Britain and Europe during the spring of 1971, Chris Evert was building an impressive winning streak in the United States that would remain unbroken until September. After losing to Denise Carter in the first round of the WLOD Invitation in February, Chris won the Virginia Slims Masters in April with wins over Francoise Durr, Billie Jean King and Julie Heldman. In mid-April, she returned to the Olde Providence Racquet Club in Charlotte – the site of her remarkable win over Margaret Court eight months earlier – to win the North Carolina Bank Invitation, beating national collegiate champion Laura DuPont in the final. Chris then won the Tulsa Invitation in mid-May, registering another win over another highly-ranked American woman. In the championship match, against top-seeded Mary Ann Curtis – listed at number four in the U. S. national rankings – Chris won the first ten games of the match to lead 6-0 4-0. Mary Ann managed to win three consecutive games

and almost level the second set, but Chris held on and took the next two games for the title.⁶²

Two more titles were then added to her collection, at the Southeastern Invitation in Columbus, Georgia and the Southern Championships in Birmingham, Alabama, beating her younger sister Jeanne in both finals. All of the tournaments that Chris won during this period were played on clay, her favorite surface since it required opponents to remain on the baseline and get involved in extended rallies. For the consistent sixteen-year old, the transition to grass courts would come in early August, when she was the odds-on favorite to win the USLTA National Girl's 18 Singles title at the Philadelphia Cricket Club.⁶³

As Chris Evert was winning every tournament she entered, another player with a two-handed backhand traveled to England in the hopes of restoring some motivation and confidence in her declining game. Peaches Bartkowicz had not played competitively since April, when she left the Virginia Slims Circuit to attend classes at Wayne State University in Michigan. Two months later, she entered the Wimbledon championships, and decided to arrive in England several days before the tournament started in order to get some much-needed practice time. She asked a friend of hers, Beverly Gross, to accompany her on the trip. Beverly agreed to go with her, with the understanding that she did not want to watch Peaches practice all day long – she wanted to enjoy herself. Peaches met up with Beverly in New York City, and the two of them continued on to London.

We arrived about two weeks before Wimbledon. Peaches knew I liked to party and I just told her that she should just go about her practice and I would do what I wanted to do. You could see that Peaches wasn't a party girl. But you could also see that she wanted to be one. It was like the minute our plane landed a new personality came out. She suddenly became more outgoing. That night we hit the discos and met a couple of guys from New Zealand ... We hit it off and began to party, and it seemed it lasted until a couple hours before her first match. I don't think she practiced once in the entire two weeks. She'd talk about practicing, but

she didn't. I'd say to her, "Peaches, your match is in two days. I think you should do something." And she'd say, "Oh, the hell with it." She was discovering a whole new world. When she thought about tennis, she'd say that she was going to be "destroyed" when she got on the court. You could see that she was rebelling. She'd start to say, "I hate tennis! I hate it! I don't like it anymore. I hate the people! I'm young. I want to enjoy myself. Tennis is a hard life." ⁶⁴

-- Beverly Gross, 1979

Wimbledon opened with men's singles matches on Monday, June 21; the women did not start their first round matches until Tuesday. Peaches was drawn to play against Kristien Kemmer, a Southern Californian listed at number 12 in 1970 USLTA national junior rankings. Despite her lack of a national ranking in women's singles, Kristien was a dangerous opponent whose game improved vastly by playing in New Zealand and Australia and several tournaments on the Virginia Slims Circuit.

Enjoying the night life in London, Peaches did not get to sleep until 6:00 am on the day of her match with Kristien. After only two hours of sleep, she and Beverly took a taxi cab to Wimbledon. During the ride, Peaches realized the error of her ways. "Oh, I'm going to be so embarrassed," she told Beverly. "I'm going to lose to her." To make matters worse, Peaches forgot her tennis shoes at the hotel, and she needed to borrow a pair from another player when she got to the club. ⁶⁵

She was freaking out in the locker room that she was going to lose ... I listened for awhile and then went to my seat in the stands. ⁶⁶

-- Beverly Gross, 1979

The match was scheduled to be played on Court Three, and Peaches and Kristien had to wait for the conclusion of a men's singles match between Bob Lutz and Frank Froehling that lasted until 12-10 in the fifth set. Once their match finally got underway,

Kristien used her wide-swinging left-handed serve in the ad court to get Peaches out of position, enabling her to blast forehand winners at will.

This was my first tennis match. I'd never seen one before in my life. Even so, I knew she was playing badly. Kris would hit the ball and Peaches wouldn't even try for it. I felt embarrassed for her. I was sitting next to a couple of her fans. They'd come especially to watch her play. They'd seen her beat Goolagong on Centre Court the year before. They couldn't understand what was wrong. Finally, I leaned over and told them, "She's not feeling well." ⁶⁷
 --Beverly Gross, 1979

Kristien won a close first set at 7-5; after that, Peaches tired and did not win a game in the second set. "Miss Kemmer has had a lot of tennis lately," wrote Rex Bellamy in *The Times*. "Miss Bartkowicz has not. It showed." ⁶⁸

I had been warned to stay away from Peaches after she lost a match. She had the reputation of having a terrible temper. When I saw her, the first thing she said to me was, 'Let's eat.' I tried to talk to her about it, but she cut me short and said, "I don't want to talk about it. It's over and that's it." She expressed no regret whatsoever at what she had done. I could sense a sigh of relief coming from her now that it was over. ⁶⁹
 -- Beverly Gross, 1979

Peaches' trip to Wimbledon was not a complete disaster. Two days later, she and Julie Heldman won their first-round doubles match against the British pair of Marilyn Greenwood and Elizabeth James, 6-3 6-2. The following day, on Friday, June 25, they lost, 8-6 4-6 6-3, to Nancy Richey Gunter and Kerry Melville on Court Ten. Peaches probably did not know it at the time, but it was to be her final match at Wimbledon – and at any other major tennis championship.

There were only a handful of surprising results during the first week of the tournament. On Tuesday, three of the top four leaders in the Pepsi Grand Prix – clay court experts Jan Kodes, Ilie Nastase, and Zeljko Franulovic – were defeated by players who were better adapted to grass court play. Kodes, the recent French Open champion, was taken out by Tom Okker of the Netherlands, and French Open finalist Franulovic was beaten the Clark Graebner of the United States. Nastase completed his match against Australian Ray Keldie, suspended from the previous day due to darkness at 7-7 in the fifth set, and was then scheduled to play his second round match against Georges Goven of France a few hours later. “The fact that Nastase needed only four more games to snuff out Keldie’s bold bid for victory did not diminish the absurdity of asking a player to go straight back on court for another tough match in a major championship,” observed Richard Evans in his report for *World Tennis*. “It is a question of mental readjustment rather than physical strain ... Nastase fell into one of his dark, desperate moods and Goven, seizing his chance, went to work with quick, neat efficiency ... It was over in less than two hours after Nastase had beaten Keldie.” Fifth-seeded Arthur Ashe lost in four sets to fellow WCT professional Marty Riessen. Since they had practiced together in the weeks before Wimbledon, Riessen was aware that Ashe was experiencing problems with his serve. The rest of Ashe’s games was soon affected, and Riessen advanced by the score of 6-1 9-8 8-9 6-4.⁷⁰

In the women’s draw, Kerry Melville dispatched fourth-seeded Rosie Casals, 7-5 6-4. Rosie started well, racing to a 3-0 lead in the first set, but became tentative when she began to commit unforced errors and double faults. For the third time, Judy Dalton dashed the Wimbledon dreams of her doubles partner, Virginia Wade. The match was played in nearly gale force winds on Centre Court, and both players had difficulty holding serve. After Judy won the first set in a tiebreak, she closed out the second set comfortably for a 9-8 6-3 victory.⁷¹

After the match, Judy dispelled the rumors that the Virginia Slims Circuit players and the independent professionals were at odds with each other. “Look, it’s silly to suggest it,” she told Australian sportswriter Mike Bingham. “It’s something that has been cooked up. It’s crazy. Margaret gave me a hit-up before my match with Virginia.

Would I have asked her for a hit if there had been any animosity between us? And would I be partnering Virginia in the doubles if there was any trouble between us?"

Although Julie Heldman had an exceptional international career, she had never played a singles match on Centre Court. On a sunny Thursday afternoon, Julie finally made her singles debut on the world's most famous tennis court, in a third-round match against Evonne Goolagong, the third seed. By wisely exploiting Evonne's forehand, Julie led 3-1 and held game point for 4-1. She hit what appeared to be a perfectly executed drop shot, but Evonne sprinted effortlessly across the court and flicked the ball out of Julie's reach. It was the turning point of the match. Evonne won five consecutive games to take the first set at 6-3, and she won the second set by the same score. Mary Hardwick, writing a tournament summary for *World Tennis*, was impressed with Evonne's performance. "Despite her forehand weakness as well as a tentative second serve," Hardwick observed, "she looked every bit the champion of the future."⁷²

USLTA Executive Director Bob Malaga arrived at Wimbledon during the tournament's first week and was surprised to discover that Margaret Court had expressed an interest in the playing in the \$40,000 Virginia Slims International in Houston in August. One month earlier, at the French Open, Malaga convinced Margaret, Kerry Harris, and Helen Gourlay to play in several USLTA sanctioned tournaments in August. At the time, Malaga informed the players that Gladys' proposed Virginia Slims Circuit tournaments – three of them before the U. S. Open, and two of them afterward – would not receive sanction approvals from the USLTA. As a result, any players who participated in them would automatically be considered contract professionals – and no longer eligible for international team competitions or national rankings. Only a few days later, the USLTA approved the sanction requests for the Virginia Slims Circuit summer tournaments, leaving the three players torn between honoring their commitments to the USLTA or competing for the larger prize money on the Virginia Slims Circuit.⁷³

When Kerry Harris heard the news that the Virginia Slims Circuit tournaments received sanction approvals, she indicated that she intended to play all of them, despite her previous agreement to play in the USLTA tournaments. Helen Gourlay planned to send a telegram to USLTA President Bob Colwell, asking him for permission to be

released from her commitment. The possibility of winning the first prize of \$10,000 in Houston – compared to the \$1,500 winner’s check in Cincinnati – was enough to make Margaret forget the comments she made at Hurlingham, vowing to never play on the Virginia Slims Circuit. She also wanted to play in the \$20,000 Virginia Slims Invitational in Chicago, two weeks later, where the winner earned \$4,100 – compared to the \$1,000 first prize that was offered to the winner of the Pennsylvania Grass Court Championships in Haverford, Pennsylvania, held during the same week. In between the Houston and Chicago tournaments, Margaret still planned to compete in the Rothmans Canadian Open in Toronto, during a week when there was no Virginia Slims Circuit tournament scheduled. After hearing reports of Margaret’s intentions, Bob Malaga placed an urgent late-night telephone call on Friday, June 25 to Larry Krieger, Margaret’s attorney in the United States. He had heard the news about Margaret’s intentions, and hoped that Krieger would have a definitive answer. Krieger told Malaga he was not sure of Margaret’s latest plans, and suggested that he speak with her directly.⁷⁴

On June 27, the middle Sunday of Wimbledon when no matches are played, Vincent Hanna’s article appeared in the *Sunday Times*. Hanna examined the socio-political ramifications of a women’s professional tennis tour, a topic that had never been examined by other writers. “The only thing a woman is allowed to sell in public is her body,” Julie is quoted in the article. “If you are a chorus girl, model, or prostitute, that’s okay, that’s feminine. Use your athletic skill to make a living and suddenly you’re hard or masculine.” Hanna titillated readers when he suggested that “the reaction of male players ... (is) probably the product of wet afternoons or overtired tennis writers, that financial liberation will inevitably lead to the sexual liberation of women. Perhaps that would explain one of the less pleasant sniggers that the group is really a bunch of lesbians doing their own thing around the circuit.” Tour manager Pip Jones refuted the rumor, insisting that the close relationships that developed were the result of the women needing to room together for security purposes. Hanna also could not resist finding a political angle in the plight of the women’s tour. “Some of the militancy is quaintly capitalistic in structure,” he observed. “Billie Jean King even feels that women’s lib can best be helped by her being the first woman to win \$100,000 playing tennis.”⁷⁵

Hanna examined the rivalry between Billie Jean and Margaret Court, polar opposites in their views of women's roles. He recycled earlier quotes from Margaret, in which she maintained that women were not equal to men and therefore did not deserve equal prize money, that she could make more money by playing independently and not joining the Virginia Slims Circuit, and her enthusiasm for playing in South Africa, where "there are special enclosures for the blacks. They were always packed when I played." According to Hanna, nothing could surpass the drama of a Wimbledon final between Billie Jean and Margaret. "I am fighting for a movement this year," Billie Jean said. "Before I came to England, I would have liked to have Margaret on the tour. But her attitude toward the girls has made me angry. The Centre Court isn't big enough for both of us."⁷⁶

Quarterfinal matches began on Monday, June 28, and Evonne Goolagong and Nancy Richey Gunter started the day's Centre Court schedule. Both players were tense at the outset, which was not helped by the swirling wind. Nancy unwisely attempted to serve and volley against her opponent – not her natural style – and she missed too many volleys. Even though she led 3-1 in the first set, Nancy neglected to exploit Evonne's suspect forehand and second serve. As was the case in her match against Julie Heldman, a winning shot on a crucial point turned the match around for Evonne. With Nancy in unfamiliar territory at the net, Evonne hit a spectacular winning lob, and after that she began to relax and coasted to a 6-3 6-2 victory.⁷⁷

While Evonne and Nancy were playing on Centre Court, two unseeded Australians – Judy Dalton and Kerry Melville – met on Court One. Using the wind to her advantage, Judy played a continuous attacking game and won 6-3 in the third set. In contrast, the next match on Court One, between Billie Jean King and Francoise Durr, was surprisingly a baseline affair. As her volleys and overheads deserted her, Billie Jean decided to stay in the backcourt and trade groundstroke with her opponent. Content to slice the ball down the middle of the court, Billie Jean lost the first set by allowing Francoise to make all the placements. It was not until the end of the match did Billie Jean dominate at the net, winning the match 2-6 6-2 6-2. In the remaining women's

quarterfinal, Margaret Court easily advanced to the semifinals past Scotland's Winnie Shaw, 6-2 6-1.⁷⁸

The biggest sensation of the day – and perhaps the tournament – was the defeat of Australian Rod Laver by Tom Gorman, a 25-year old economics graduate from Seattle, Washington. Gorman spoke to Dennis Ralston, his Davis Cup captain, before the match and decided to concentrate on winning the first one or two points of each of his service games. “I guess this is fundamental to any match,” Gorman said after the 9-7 8-6 6-3 upset, “but Dennis told me it's particularly important against Laver. If you go down love-30, you can see his confidence going way up. And you have to keep the ball low ... if you keep the ball low to his feet, the onus is on him to make the shot. I set out to do this as much as possible.”⁷⁹ Gorman had beaten Laver two weeks earlier at a tournament at Queen's Club, so the Wimbledon result was not a surprise to those who followed the game closely.

No women's matches were scheduled for Tuesday, June 29, and the Centre Court spectators were treated to one of the best men's singles matches ever played at Wimbledon. Since Cliff Richey and Ken Rosewall did not possess overpowering serves, and since the Centre Court grass was playing slower than usual, knowledgeable spectators knew the match would feature long rallies. Richey had the match within his grasp when he led 8-6 7-5 4-2, but he played cautiously at the point and Rosewall won four straight games. “I knew if only I could win a set, I would get better. I couldn't get worse,” Rosewall said later.⁸⁰ Serving for the match at 7-6 in the fourth set, Richey once again failed to apply pressure. With the crowd urging him, Rosewall broke Richey's serve to level at 7-7, held and broke again to take the fourth set 9-7.

A huge crowd gathered outside of the Centre Court and watched the electronic scoreboard, and their reactions – applause and sighs – were delayed by a few seconds as the results were updated. Richey made one more attempt at victory in the fifth set, but an exhausted Rosewall refused to surrender. In three of his service games, Rosewall fell behind 15-40 before extricating himself. Serving at 4-5, Richey fought off four match points, the last with a resounding overhead. “The crowd was warming to him by this time,” Richard Evans wrote for *World Tennis*, “for Richey had not only played great

tennis but his behavior, too, had been beyond reproach – even when foot-fault calls had grated on his normally volatile temper.”⁸¹ Rosewall held his service game to lead 6-5, and broke Richey a final time to conclude the match 6-8 5-7 6-4 9-7 7-5. When it was over, Richey wearily hoisted his legs over the net to congratulate Rosewall, and the players exited Centre Court to an extended standing ovation. “It was a great match. I always felt it would be,” Richey said later.⁸²

Later that evening, word came from the United States that the USLTA was prepared to take action against Margaret Court if she participated in the Virginia Slims International in Houston.⁸³ According to Bob Colwell, Margaret had signed a USLTA Player Acceptance Agreement during the French Open, agreeing to play in the Western Tennis Championships in Cincinnati and the Pennsylvania Grass Court Championships at the Merion Cricket Club in Haverford, Pennsylvania. When the USLTA approved the sanction requests for the Virginia Slims Circuit tournaments in Houston and Chicago, both of which offered substantially more money than the events in Cincinnati and Haverford, Margaret changed her mind and wanted to play in the more lucrative tournaments.

Since Margaret was an Australian, the USLTA could not suspend her. The U. S. national association could, however, lodge a complaint with the Lawn Tennis Association of Australia. In addition, any player who broke a USLTA Player Acceptance Agreement could be barred from playing in other USLTA tournaments, including the U. S. Open. Margaret hoped to speak to Bob Malaga after her semifinal match the following day.

Margaret and Judy Dalton played the first match on Centre Court on Wednesday, and when Judy won the first set 6-4, it appeared that she might repeat her 1968 Wimbledon victory. She confidently attacked from the opening point, and Margaret later admitted that her opponent’s robust aggression took time to get used to. “It’s a long time since I played anyone who hits the ball as hard as Judy. It took awhile to get my timing,” Margaret said. Early in the second set, Judy fell while chasing one of Margaret’s angled volleys. She fell heavily, hurting her thigh and dislocating a finger. Margaret surged ahead 5-0 in the second set, even though each of those games went to deuce. At the end

of the set, Judy's movement was hampered too much; Margaret won the final set in only fifteen minutes without losing a game.⁸⁴

The next match on Centre Court was a very special occasion – the highly anticipated meeting between Evonne Goolagong and Billie Jean King. “Australia's bright new star held the expectant fans in the palm of her hand with her shy smile, youth, grace, perfection of movement and freedom of shot,” observed Mary Hardwick of *World Tennis*. “Much was expected of her but most thought that Billie would rise to the occasion.”⁸⁵

*It was supposed to be the match of the championships – the new kid on the block against the old pro – and I wanted to be ready. I'd skipped part of the European season to rest up for Wimbledon and I'd gotten through the early rounds in pretty good shape.*⁸⁶

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Billie Jean served first, and after reaching 40-30 she missed three routine shots to get broken. In the next game, on Evonne's service, she hit a forehand long and then a forehand into the net. Billie Jean looked at her racquet with concern; she was using the same Wilson wood model that she had smashed during her match against Ann Jones in Las Vegas and had disgustingly tossed aside while playing Rosie Casals in San Diego. Two points later, after she sent a backhand over the baseline to fall behind 0-2, Billie Jean ran to the side of the court to change racquets.⁸⁷

Billie Jean won three consecutive games to take a 3-2, but she still seemed unsettled with her racquet. As she walked toward the umpire's chair for the change of ends, Billie Jean tapped the racquet strings into her hand, testing the tension. “Billie Jean is not too happy with her racquets,” said Jack Kramer, who was doing the BBC television commentary with Dan Maskell and Ann Jones. “She's changed them once and is apparently going to make up her mind which one she is going to use.” For a finely-tuned world-class player, concentration on the match can be ruined by a lack of confidence in equipment – a dangerous distraction.⁸⁸

The sixth game of the first set presented an opportunity for Billie Jean to establish some dominance. After Evonne missed a backhand passing shot to fall behind 15-30, she hit an ordinary lob that Billie should have easily put away for a winner and two break points. Instead, the overhead landed in the net, and on the next point Billie Jean missed on a simple backhand return. After the game went to deuce for a second time, Billie Jean once more ran to the side of the court to get another racquet. Two points later, Evonne held serve to tie the score at 3-3 and put an end to Billie Jean's momentum.⁸⁹

Evonne won the next two games to go ahead 5-3. After Billie Jean held serve in the ninth game, Ann Jones told the BBC audience that the American "is not attacking the ball as confidently as she has in years past, particularly on her first volley. It used to be so well-angled and so well-placed across the court, it was virtually impossible for her opponent to get it, but Evonne is running very, very well and covering all these volleys and making Billie Jean play a third and fourth shot, Billie's missing them." Serving at 5-4, Evonne hit an angled forehand winner, an overhead and a drop shot to close out the set.⁹⁰

In the fourth game of the second set, Billie Jean had a chance to take a 3-1 lead when she held break point. From the ad court, she hit a backhand approach shot down the line, hoping to exploit Evonne's weaker forehand. She mistimed the shot badly, and it sailed yards wide. Three points later, after two more groundstroke errors from Billie Jean and an overhead putaway from Evonne, the set was tied at 2-2. When she lost the game, as she had been doing the entire match, Billie Jean glanced at her racquet in disgust.⁹¹

The turning point of the second set – and probably the match – came in the next game. Billie Jean started well enough, with an overhead winner, but then hit a volley past the sideline and a double fault. Evonne earned two break points with a winning backhand service return, and Billie Jean obliged by missing wide on another backhand approach shot down the line. Some observers, such as Mary Hardwick of *World Tennis* and Roy McKelvie of *Tennis World*, felt that Billie Jean should have been more relentless in her attack of Evonne's forehand, but Jack Kramer disagreed. "Billie Jean is finding it difficult to play her normal game against Evonne," Kramer said in the BBC broadcast

booth. “I think that she normally would like to be serving more balls into the backhand, and yet that’s the strength of the young Australian, and so she’s making lots of errors just trying to keep the ball to the weaker stroke. So perhaps she ought to go back and play her normal game and see if Evonne can beat her off the backhand.”⁹²

*She had a superb backhand – she could hit either a topspin or a slice with equal effectiveness, which is very rare. And she covered court beautifully; a very fluid player. But Evonne did have her weaknesses. Her forehand was a little dicey and she had no second serve at all.*⁹³

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Serving at 3-2, Evonne won the first point of the game when Billie Jean attempted another backhand approach shot down the line. The next four points were also decided on unforced errors; Billie Jean missed a backhand passing shot and a forehand return of serve, Evonne netted a half-volley, and Billie Jean hit wide on a backhand volley. For Evonne, leading 4-2 in the second set, the finish line was in sight.⁹⁴

The next three games were won at love by the server. Billie Jean won the seventh game when Evonne committed four consecutive errors, and Evonne went ahead 5-3 after hitting two winners watching Billie Jean miss two more shots. Billie Jean wanted to put the pressure on her lesser-experienced opponent and force her serve for the match; perhaps then, Evonne would suddenly realize the enormity of the situation and get tentative. Billie Jean held serve in the ninth game, hitting a signature backhand volley winner and drawing three more errors from Evonne. As the players changed sides, Billie Jean had a look of determination in her face; she knew if she won the next game, she could turn the match around.⁹⁵

Although Evonne was serving, Billie Jean was determined to get to the net on every point. On the first point, Billie Jean put away a high forehand volley. On the next point, her drop volley was hit wide. Evonne then received a lucky net-cord winner to lead 30-15, and Billie Jean evened the score with a forehand service return winner. Evonne arrived at her first match point with an acutely angled backhand volley, but the

score went to deuce after she missed a half-volley. On her second match point, Evonne served to Billie Jean's forehand and then cautiously guided a backhand slice down the middle of the court. Billie Jean hit a sliced forehand approach shot to the backhand corner – just as Jack Kramer suggested she should do – and prepared for the return. Evonne took her backswing and unleashed her famous shot, a beautiful dipping crosscourt topspin backhand that left her opponent stranded. As Evonne ran to the net to shake hands with Billie Jean, she may not have realized that her championship match with Margaret would be the first all-Australian women's singles final in Wimbledon history.⁹⁶

After the match, Evonne told reporters that she was in a “bit of a daze. But I felt I had nothing to lose, so I went for everything. It's not until I get on court that I know whether I am going to do anything. But I can surprise myself. I feel more confident in my game and I don't feel so nervous. I found that each time the games were close, it helped me to push my game harder.” Billie Jean, although very disappointed, was gracious in defeat. “I thought I'd prepared for this Wimbledon better than in the last two years,” she said. “But I've been getting worse and worse on grass. Evonne took advantage of my mistakes. She has all the qualities of a champion, and with her pop music she's always fun in the dressing room.”⁹⁷

*We played even the entire match. Evonne was alternately brilliant and pedestrian, and although I played well enough technically against her, I was just mentally blah the whole time. I kept waiting for something to inspire me. I felt that if I ever got going I could break the match wide open. But I never did, and I lost, 6-4 6-4. Mentally, I guess, I was in neutral the whole afternoon, and after the match I was just totally depressed.*⁹⁸

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

The next day, Thursday, July 1, the men's singles semifinals were played – a match between two Americans, followed by a match between two Australians. On the same day that Stan Smith defeated Tom Gorman 6-3 8-6 6-2, and John Newcombe beat

Ken Rosewall 6-1 6-1 6-3, USLTA president Bob Colwell announced that the members of the United States Wightman Cup team would include Julie Heldman, Peaches Bartkowicz, Kristy Pigeon, Mary Ann Curtis, Valerie Ziegenfuss, and Chris Evert.⁹⁹ Six months earlier, when the USLTA reinstated the American women, Colwell said “it would be a great honor for the USLTA to have Billie Jean King play for us.”¹⁰⁰ In the subsequent months, Billie Jean, Rosie Casals and Nancy Richey Gunter informed the Wightman Cup selection committee that they would not be available; all of them planned to play in the Virginia Slims Invitational in Chicago, which was scheduled during the same week as the Wightman Cup competition in Cleveland.

The women’s singles final was scheduled for Friday, July 2 at 2:00 pm. Before Margaret Court and Evonne Goolagong make their entrance on Centre Court, a Royal Military Academy band played “Waltzing Matilda” to salute Wimbledon’s first all-Australian women’s singles final. Tournament referee Mike Gibson escorted Margaret and Evonne onto the court, with each player carrying a bouquet of roses. The players stood at the umpire’s chair and smiled for the swarm of photographers who surrounded them.

*Couturier Teddy Tinling made Goolagong a special dress for the final, white with a scalloped hem and lilac lining and adornments; his staff worked through the night to get it ready, and sent it to Wimbledon with a “good luck” message sewn in, and a silver horseshoe.*¹⁰¹

-- Bud Collins, 2008

Although it was well past midnight the following day in Evonne’s tiny hometown of Barellan, Australia, most of the residents were awake to watch the match, which was being broadcast via satellite.

A few practice serves and we were ready to go. I felt very good, like running for the rest of the day. My backhands were shooting along nicely in the warmup – with either topspin or slice. The umpire said Mrs. Court would serve first, and we

*were off. There were none of the lavish introductions you get in the United States, telling who we were and what we'd done. At Wimbledon, it's taken for granted that everybody knows.*¹⁰²

-- Evonne Goolagong, 1974

Margaret won the first two points of the match by confidently serving and volleying. At 30-love, she inexplicably stayed back on her serve and pushed a backhand approach past the baseline. Even though she eventually reached 40-15, Margaret was suddenly gripped by nerves and she was reluctant to attack. Evonne seized the opportunity; she came forward to control the net, breaking Margaret's serve to win the opening game.¹⁰³

Evonne won the next two games by playing confidently and coming forward to the net whenever she could. Whenever Margaret attempted to go on the offensive, she either missed her approach shots or made a volley error. Jack Kramer told the BBC audience that "Evonne, in some ways, has got Margaret thinking a little differently than I've ever seen her on court before, meaning Margaret's not playing her normal game. She said in the buildup that she couldn't serve and come in, the court was too slow, but apparently if she doesn't become more aggressive, why Miss Goolagong's steadier backhand is going to keep the ball deep and she'll get into the net first."¹⁰⁴

Evonne continued her surprising run, reaching 4-0 with another easy service game. On the first point of the fifth game, Margaret stayed back on her serve and then tentatively pushed another forehand approach shot past the baseline. Kramer's partner in the BBC broadcast booth, Dan Maskell, observed that "Margaret Court is undoubtedly nervous, every sign of it, she's uncertain as to the shot to play, she's a little bit slow about the court, she's taking her racquet back a bit late for ordinary shots and her opponent of course is playing extraordinarily well, so she really is in trouble at the moment." Margaret suddenly decided to serve and volley on every point, and although she fell behind 15-40 she leveled the score at deuce by being more aggressive. She then reached game point with another serve and volley play. With a chance to get on the scoreboard, Margaret reverted to her cautious approach; she hit a heavy serve to Evonne's backhand

but remained on the baseline. Evonne sliced her return crosscourt, and Margaret responded with another powerful shot to the backhand corner. Evonne hit a defense lob with her back to the court, and Margaret moved in for the kill. She let Evonne's short lob bounce, and she hit another deep shot to the backhand corner and came forward for the volley. Evonne then flicked a remarkable topspin backhand passing shot that Maskell called "a backhand pass under pressure worthy of Ken Rosewall." A return of serve error by Evonne, followed by a missed volley, finally gave Margaret her first game.¹⁰⁵

*For the first time, as we changed ends at 4-1 for me, the applause belonged to Margaret. It gushed loudly over her, and I hope it made her feel better. They were for me all the way, but nobody wanted to see Margaret Court embarrassed. Defeated, but not destroyed.*¹⁰⁶
 -- Evonne Goolagong

Although she was hesitant to come forward on her own serve, Margaret attacked the net on Evonne's soft second serves and earned a break to make the score 2-4. Margaret then won the next game, despite staying back on her serve for all five points. She tried to work her way into the net with deep approach shots, hoping for an easy volley or a passing shot error. When she worked her way into the net at 30-love, Dan Maskell noticed that "even though Margaret won that rally, it was after an indecisive volley."¹⁰⁷

The eighth game of the first set – with Evonne serving at 4-3 – was the critical juncture of the match. Margaret won two points by coming forward on Evonne's serve, but on another she simply pushed the ball back to the middle of the court. Evonne took advantage of Margaret's mistake, moving forward with a sliced approach shot and easily hitting a winning backhand drop volley. On the fourth point of the game, Evonne missed on a backhand – giving Margaret two break points and a chance to level the set.¹⁰⁸

Evonne erased the first break point by coming forward on her first serve – Margaret was reluctant to do the entire match – and hitting a backhand volley down the line, followed by an overhead and winning crosscourt forehand volley. At 30-40, the best

point of the match was played. Evonne's first serve raised the line chalk, and Margaret's return landed short. Evonne hit an approach shot crosscourt and came to the net, but she left her sideline open for a passing shot. Margaret aimed her passing shot down the line, and Evonne stretched for an angled forehand crosscourt volley. Margaret raced along the baseline and hit a forehand down the line that would have been a winning shot against most other players, but Evonne was able to reach it and poke it back over the net. Then, Margaret had to run forward before the ball bounced a second time. Evonne came forward as well, and bunted Margaret's shot over her left shoulder for a lob that landed just inside the baseline. Margaret ran back and tried to put up her own lob, but it landed a yard wide of Evonne's sideline.¹⁰⁹

Evonne survived the two break points by playing aggressively, and it paid off. She won the next two points by serving and volleying, giving her a 5-3 lead. Margaret held serve in the ninth game, and Evonne won the tenth game and the set 6-4 by fending off three more break points. On one of the break points, which would have leveled the set at 5-5, Evonne's passing shot hit the net tape and flew over Margaret's extended racquet. Margaret could only look skyward at Evonne's luck as Dan Maskell said "Well, that was a little fortunate to the younger girl." Ted Tinling probably smiled, knowing that his "good luck" charm, sewn into Evonne's new dress, may have come in handy.¹¹⁰

Margaret held serve in the opening game of the second set, and then, incredibly, Evonne won the next six games to win the match 6-4 6-1. The second set was actually very close, with Margaret holding game points in three of the final six games. In fact, of the twelve games that Evonne won in the match, Margaret held one or more game points in six of them. The difference, however, was that Evonne was willing to continually come forward and attack, whereas Margaret became discouraged and nervous when she missed easy shots. "I thought I had a chance in the first set if I got to 4-all," Margaret said after the match. "I was very tentative. I didn't get any depth to get in and do anything ... I never really got into it. She played very well."¹¹¹

*I knew there was something wrong with me in that final. I had no coordination – my arms and legs seemed to be going the wrong way. I even made a couple of air shots, swinging and missing the ball completely.*¹¹²

-- Margaret Court, 1975

After being presented with the ladies' singles trophy by Princess Alexandra, Evonne told reporters that she was "still in a bit of a daze. It hasn't really hit me yet. I was glad to get through to the final, never mind win it. But I thought, well, I've won the semi, I might as well try it for the final. I enjoy it. The atmosphere really makes you want to play."¹¹³ She was the youngest Wimbledon singles champion since Karen Susman won in 1962, and the score was the most decisive result – on paper, at least – since Althea Gibson defeated Darlene Hard in 1957. Evonne received \$4320 for her singles victory, half of what was awarded to the men's singles champion. She also earned forty Pepsi Grand Prix bonus points, which put her barely ahead of Margaret in the standings.

*For a couple of hours after I won all I felt was numb. Too many reporters, cameras, autograph hunters, and people wanting to shake my hand. One thing I wanted to do was watch my friend and mixed doubles partner, Kim Warwick, play his semifinal match in the men's consolation tournament. We walked out to one of the outside courts where he was playing, and – like a bolt of lightning – it hit me: I was Wimbledon champion.*¹¹⁴

-- Evonne Goolagong, 1974

The following day, John Newcombe defeated Stan Smith in five sets, 6-3 5-7 2-6 6-4 6-4, to win the men's singles title. Rosie Casals and Billie Jean King – who, after her loss to Evonne in the singles semifinals, went back to using her metal Wilson T-2000 racquet – won their fourth Wimbledon women's doubles title as team, easily beating Margaret and Evonne, 6-3 6-2. Billie Jean added another Wimbledon title to her collection, partnering with Owen Davidson to win against Margaret and Marty Riessen,

3-6 6-2 15-13. With her three runner-up finishes, Margaret had the dubious honor of joining four other individuals who lost in the finals of the singles, doubles and mixed doubles at Wimbledon during the same year: Dorothea Douglass Chambers in 1919, Howard Kinsey in 1926, Geoff Brown in 1946, and Doris Hart in 1948.

*... I was sitting with Bob Howe and Barry and having a glass of beer. It was Foster's, one of my favorite Australian brands. "This beer tastes dreadful!" I complained. Bob and Barry protested that it tasted all right to them. "I've heard of people going off things when they're pregnant," I said jokingly. "I wonder if I'm pregnant?" They didn't take the remark seriously. But the more I thought about it, the more likely it seemed that I might be. Barry and I have never taken any precautions since I don't believe in birth control. I decided to consult Dr. Beauchamp, whose specialty was muscles and bones, not gynecology. He also laughed when I told him my suspicions. But to put my mind at ease he sent me along to a Harley Street clinic for a urine test.*¹¹⁵

-- Margaret Court, 1975

After winning the women's doubles title, Billie Jean announced that her partnership with Rosie Casals was temporarily coming to an end. The dissolution of the world's best women's doubles team – they had won the Wimbledon women's doubles title four times and only lost twice in their previous 37 matches – puzzled everyone. “We’re tired of winning,” Billie Jean told Alan Little of *Tennis World*, the British tennis magazine. “We’ll be together at Wimbledon next year. We want to equal and then beat the record of Louise Brough and Margaret Osborne DuPont.”¹¹⁶

... Rosie was distraught several years ago when I told her I thought the time had come for us to split. But we had been together too long ... playing constantly – and we were growing stale together. The reason why I thought we should call it a

*day on the court was because we'd both do better with new tennis partners, and our friendship wouldn't deteriorate any more, along with our doubles game.*¹¹⁷
 -- Billie Jean King, 1982

While the 1971 Wimbledon was drawing to close, the ILTF management committee – including ILTF President Allan Hayman, ILTF Secretary Basil Reay and Derek Hardwick, chairman of the ILTF Grand Prix action committee – held three days of confidential discussions with WCT owner Lamar Hunt, WCT Executive Director Mike Davies and WCT European Director John McDonald. In 1970, WCT pulled its players out of the Italian Open and French Open over financial disagreements, and it threatened to do the same at Wimbledon that year. In November, an agreement was reached between the two organizations. During the first four months of 1971, the initial five tournaments on twenty-city, one million dollar WCT circuit were not financially successful. “The ILTF, for its part,” wrote John Barrett in *The Financial Times*, “still smugly believed that the professionals-only events would fail and was comforted by the knowledge that its own Open championships would include the star names.”¹¹⁸

All of that changed in May, when the sixth stop on the WCT tour, the Italian Open, was a resounding success. The appearance of all the top male players resulted in record crowds and enormous profits. The following week, another profitable event was staged in Teheran, Iran. By the end of the month, more than half of the WCT players were not interested or too tired to play in the ILTF-sanctioned French Open, resulting in poor spectator attendance and financial disaster for the French Tennis Federation. Suddenly, the ILTF realized that WCT was succeeding, and the two groups met at Wimbledon to discuss plans for co-existence in 1972.

The ILTF management committee wanted WCT to only run eight tournaments in 1972. Hunt and Davies came to the meeting with their own options, which included running their own twenty-five tournaments 1972, or running twenty-two tournaments and guaranteeing the appearance of all WCT players at the three major championships, or combining the WCT tour with the ILTF Grand Prix. In the latter option, there would be eleven tournaments for WCT players only, eleven tournaments staged by the ILTF for

players not under contract to WCT, and eleven tournaments in which all WCT and ILTF players would compete together. In addition, everyone would play in the French Open, Wimbledon, and U. S. Open, allowing each player to compete in twenty-five tournaments.¹¹⁹

Much of the week was spent discussing the WCT proposal for a combined circuit. However, neither party could agree on several points, including the choice of balls and scoring system. Hunt also wanted \$25,000 in appearance fees from the eleven jointly-run tournaments and \$50,000 from the three major championships. In addition, he asked for television rights at the three major championships.¹²⁰

On Saturday, July 3 – shortly before the start of the men’s singles final at 2:00 pm – the ILTF Management Committee and WCT representatives issued a joint statement from the All-England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, indicating that no agreement was reached on how the two groups would co-exist in the following year. The ILTF committee indicated that it would recommend at the ILTF annual meeting – to be held the following week in Stresa, Italy – that all tournaments the following year be changed from “open-to-all” to “open,” in effect, barring contract players from competing in them. Furthermore, the committee planned to propose that the WCT circuit be barred from staging tournaments at clubs that were affiliated with their national associations.¹²¹

At the news conference, Derek Hardwick told reporters that the breakdown in negotiations occurred when “we could not agree with Lamar Hunt on basic principles concerning the national associations and our tournaments. The greatest difficulty had concerned tournaments other than the Big Three – Wimbledon, and the French and United States championships. We are always prepared for a separate agreement for the Big Three in 1972. The talks can be reopened.” Hunt said it was “not true say our interests in lawn tennis is purely financial gain, although it is not possible to run WCT at a loss. We have offered to let our players compete in the Big Three at cost, that is, just to recover our expenses.”¹²² Herman David, chairman of the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, was in favor of the decision to bar the contract professionals. He told John Barrett of the *The Financial Times* that he “deplores the fact that there should be two governing bodies in tennis. Wimbledon stands firmly behind the ILTF.”¹²³

Four days later, at its annual meeting in Stresa, Italy, the ILTF accepted the recommendations of the management committee and voted to ban contract professionals from all tournaments run by ILTF-affiliated national associations. In addition, no club that was under the authority of its national association would be permitted to host a contract professional event. Effective January 1, 1972, Wimbledon champion John Newcombe, Rod Laver and the thirty other players under contract to WCT would not be allowed to play in the Australian Open, the French Open, Wimbledon, the U.S. Open or numerous other ILTF-sanctioned tournaments worldwide. The WCT tour would be banished, confined to staging its own tournaments at commercial sites and not welcome at any of the world's renowned tennis facilities.¹²⁴

Immediately after Wimbledon, the world's best women went their separate ways for a number of dual-gender tournaments throughout Europe and Great Britain. Francoise Durr and Kristy Pigeon went to the Swiss Open, Helga Masthoff and Linda Tuero went to the Swedish Open, Judy Dalton and Virginia Wade competed in the Welsh Open, and Margaret Court and Evonne Goolagong appeared at the Irish Open. Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals and Julie Heldman opted to take a week off from tournament play.

At the Irish Open in Dublin, Margaret regained some confidence – and a small measure of consolation for losing at Wimbledon – by beating Evonne in the final, but the win did not come easily. Margaret's effort was made difficult whenever she served from the north end of the court; the brilliant sunshine made it difficult to hit serves and overheads. When she was told that she hit fifteen double faults during the course of the match, Margaret shook her head and said, “that must be some kind of record.”¹²⁵

Some of the 4,000 fans who had crammed into Fitzwilliam Club on Saturday to watch the women's singles final and the men's singles final were surprised to learn about the prize money disparity. Margaret and Evonne, two of the biggest attractions in tennis, shared \$1800 in the women's singles final (Margaret earned \$1200 and Evonne was given \$600). The men's singles finalists – Andrew Pattison and Clark Graebner – split \$3600, with the winner Pattison receiving \$2400. Pat Heneghan, whose responsibilities included securing players for the tournament, told Bryan Cutress of *Tennis World* that

“the title of the main event is the All-Comers Singles. One thousand pounds goes to the winner of that and if the girls want to play in it I suppose it can be arranged. If they don’t think they are up to beating the men, we run an event especially for them. But they can’t enter both events of course.”¹²⁶

During her week in Dublin, Margaret told reporters that she planned to play in the \$40,000 Virginia Slims International in Houston instead of the \$7,500 Western Tennis Championships in Cincinnati. “There has been some confusion,” Margaret explained. “I am supposed to have entered the Cincinnati tournament instead, but I do not admit to that. In any event, the American circuit has been re-jigged so I feel free now to go to Houston.” Margaret said that she had sent a letter to USLTA officials, and she believed “they will now accept my explanation and will not persevere with their threat to suspend me.”¹²⁷

Even though Bob Colwell was not happy with Margaret’s change of mind, he decided to release her from her commitment to play in Cincinnati. “I am hereby advising you,” he wrote in a July 22, 1971 letter to Gladys, “that rather than have Mrs. Court caught in between World Tennis and USLTA differences of opinions, we are going to let her play in your tournament if she chooses. We do not like this decision, and are not pleased that we are put in a position of doing this to protect her. It is most unfortunate to have it public knowledge that World Tennis is encouraging players to enter your tournaments when they have already entered other USLTA sanctioned tournaments, because this does not help my original stand that USLTA could work cooperatively with you. You must be aware that the USLTA will not tolerate players withdrawing from tournaments that they have entered.”¹²⁸

Relieved to be released from her commitment to play in Cincinnati, Margaret disclosed that she Billie Jean invited her to play doubles in Houston, the Virginia Slims Clay Court Championships in Chicago, and the U. S. Open. “I don’t know why they have split up,” she said, referring to the doubles team of Billie Jean and Rosie, “but since my doubles partner Evonne Goolagong is not going to the United States, I have telephoned Billie Jean to say that I will play with her on the circuit, which includes the

U. S. Open at Forest Hills.”¹²⁹ Margaret still planned, however, to play doubles with Evonne at the Canadian Open in Toronto.

A compromise was also reached with Kerry Harris, who originally agreed to play in the four USLTA events leading up to the U. S. Open. She was released from her USLTA Player Agreement to play in the Pennsylvania Grass Court Championships in Haverford, Pennsylvania and the Eastern Grass Court Championships in South Orange, New Jersey. This would enable Kerry to play in the Virginia Slims Clay Court Championships in Chicago, as well as the Virginia Slims Grass Court Championships in Newport, Rhode Island. Helen Gourlay decided to play, as originally planned, in all four USLTA events that preceded the U. S. Open. Although the USLTA tournaments did not offer as much prize money at the Virginia Slims Circuit tournaments, they were Pepsi Grand Prix events that offered bonus points. After her runner-up finish at the French Open, Helen was in third place in the standings; she hoped to collect more points throughout the summer and increase her year-end bonus money.

Gladys was angered when she discovered that USLTA officials intended to reprimand Margaret. “They deliberately misled all the top players by encouraging them to play in the small tournaments which have such little purses,” she told reporters. “They misled Margaret Court. They told her there wasn’t going to be a tournament in Houston, and they told her there wasn’t going to be any USLTA sanction. The USLTA is trying to get the top players to go to Cincinnati where they can only seat 250. We’ve got room for 10,000 in our Houston tournament. That’s just not good for tennis.”¹³⁰

The tournament director of the Western Tennis Championships in Cincinnati, J. Howard “Bumpy” Frazer, took exception to Gladys’ comments. “She’s making wild charges, absolutely ridiculous,” he told Jay Swartz of the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. “Most of that information is inaccurate. The USLTA never discouraged anyone from playing in Mrs. Heldman’s tournaments. And the one in Houston wasn’t sanctioned for many months because of the conflict of dates with our own tournament here. Naturally, the USLTA suggested that the Houston tournament be changed to another date – and there were many, many other dates available.”¹³¹

Frazer also told Swartz that Gladys was minimizing the spectator capacity and prize money in Cincinnati. “Let’s get the figures right, too,” he said. “We seat 2500 at this year’s Westerns, not 250. And the purse for women is \$7500, not \$5,000. Of course there’s more money available in Houston. Mrs. Heldman’s purse is paid for – in part, at least – by a cigarette company. The money is an outright gift from the company, whereas our purse at the Western is not put up in any way or part by commercial enterprises.”¹³²

Gladys continued her latest complaint against the USLTA in her next *World Tennis* editorial, entitled “A Thesis for Men’s Lib.” Framed within a parable of man’s dominance over woman, Gladys listed all the injustices – some actual, some perceived – that the Virginia Slims Circuit and the women players were subjected to by the USLTA since the beginning of open tennis. Gladys recalled how the male USLTA officials suspended the women for playing in the first Virginia Slims tournament in Houston, how she started a successful women’s tour in 1971, and how the USLTA deceived some of the women to play in their lower prize money tournaments instead of the more lucrative events on the Virginia Slims Circuit summer schedule.

Members of Men’s Lib know quite well that man need not keep any promise to woman, that it is only proper that he should occasionally mislead her (for her own good) and that it is better for woman to play for \$2700 than \$20,000. Man is now so sick of woman because of her foolish rebellion and her endless complaints about broken promises that he just might kick her out of the tennis game altogether. After all, she should be at home taking care of man, his meals and his laundry, not gadding about on the international circuit.¹³³

Despite the mutual dislike between Gladys and USLTA officials, Margaret’s path to Houston was finally cleared and she was able to concentrate on her next tournament, the Rothman’s North of England Open in Hoylake. Earlier in the year, Gladys committed most of the Virginia Slims Circuit players to appear in this event. With the addition of Margaret, Evonne, and Virginia Wade, it was one of the best fields of the year. Similar to the Bio-Strath London Hard Court Championships that was staged at the Hurlingham

Club in May, the women were playing for \$10,000 – twice as much prize money as the men’s purse. It was also a Pepsi Grand Prix event, with bonus points at stake.

Patti Hogan scored the biggest surprise of the tournament by defeating the top-seeded Evonne Goolagong in the quarterfinals. Patti, who agreed to play in the first Virginia Slims tournament in Houston in 1970 before changing her mind and withdrawing, was a talented player prone to temperamental outbursts during her matches. After splitting sets with Kristy Pigeon in the semifinals of the Kent Championships in Beckenham in June, Patti questioned a line call early in the third set and started to argue with the spectators. After the umpire repeatedly asked Patti to continue playing, she shouted at him, “Throw me off if you want to!” Later in the set, after another disputed line call, Patti threw her racquet across the entire length of the court, narrowly missing a ball girl. When she lost the match, she was booed off the court as tears streamed down her face.¹³⁴

At Hoylake, Patti controlled her emotions, used the wind to her advantage and won the first set without the loss of a game. Evonne rebounded to win the second set, and Patti took the third set for a satisfying 6-0 4-6 6-2 upset. “She has great talent,” wrote Harrison Edwards in *Tennis World*, “and it is a great pity that she wastes it so with those outbursts that are putting up the backs of so many players and officials alike.”¹³⁵

On Friday, July 16, Patti’s run at Hoylake was ended in the semifinals by Rosie Casals. The fact that it was Margaret’s birthday made no difference in her match against Billie Jean. After winning only two games in the first set, Margaret led 5-4 in the second set and held set points but could not close it out. Billie Jean’s 6-2 7-5 victory was her first win against Margaret since the 1968 Australian Open. Later that evening, during a dinner party, Margaret received a telephone call from her sister in Australia with the news that their mother had passed away.

During a celebration in Hoylake marking my 29th birthday, a phone call had come through from Albury from my sister June. My mother, who'd had several bouts of pneumonia and was in failing health, had died at age 68. It came as a great shock to me, even though I'd been half-expecting it.¹³⁶

-- Margaret Court, 1975

The following day, Billie Jean defeated Rosie in the women's singles final at Hoylake. It was an error-filled match, with Billie Jean winning the first set, 6-3, and Rosie taking a 3-2 lead in the second before losing her concentration on a foot-fault call. Billie Jean earned \$2125 for her 6-3 6-3 singles win, compared to \$1200 that was awarded to the men's singles champion, Andrew Pattison of South Africa.

Billie Jean and Rosie also shared \$480 for winning the women's doubles title by default over Margaret and Evonne Goolagong; after learning of her mother's death, Margaret withdrew from the tournament and made plans to return to Australia. Before she left England, Margaret received the results of the urine test she took in London confirming her pregnancy.

Billie Jean followed up her victory at Holyake with another title at the Head International Championships in Kitzbuhel, Austria. The tournament – sponsored by Head, a ski and tennis equipment company – did not offer the women a significant amount of prize money, but Billie Jean endorsed Head clothing and appeared as part of her endorsement agreement. The clay-court event was nearly won by Laura Rossouw, who upset third-seeded Helga Masthoff in the first round and Rosie in the semifinals. In the singles final, the South African was only two games away from the title before Billie Jean prevailed, 6-2 4-6 7-5.

The final European tournament for the Virginia Slims Circuit players during the summer of 1971 was the Ford Capri Open in Italy. It was the first – and richest – women's only tournament held outside of the United States. Thanks to her friendship with Joe Cullman, Gladys arranged to have this event held at Venice's Lido Club, adjacent to the Excelsior Hotel. Cullman was on the board of directors for the Ford Motor Company, and he convinced Ford Europe president Paul Loren to sponsor the

tournament. “Back in the fifties when Ann Jones was struggling through a semi-final on a back court at Il Foro Italico in front of six British reporters and one bored umpire,” British tennis writer Richard Evans reported, “someone remarked, ‘They’ll have a man on the moon before an Italian pays money to see women play tennis.’ At the same moment that Col. David Scott and Lt. Col. James Irwin stepped on the moon, several hundred Italian men were paying \$2.50 each to see an early round at the Lido Club in Venice.”¹³⁷

Most of the Virginia Slims Circuit stars were in attendance, with the exception of Nancy Richey Gunter, who went home to Texas after Wimbledon, and Peaches Bartkowicz, who failed to show up. There were also a number of European clay-court experts entered in the tournament, including Italians Lucia Bassi and Lea Pericol, Fiorella Bonicelli of Peru, Gail Chanfreau of France, and the tall West German, Helga Masthoff.

In the quarterfinals on a hot and humid Friday evening, Evans and Pip Jones watched Julie Heldman use her big forehand take a 5-4 lead against Helga. At that stage of the match, Julie ran out of energy. “The old body said ‘Thank you very much, that’s it for today.’ After that I steadily went downhill,” Julie said after Helga won 7-6 6-2. Doubles partners Francoise Durr and Gail Chanfreau became engaged in a lengthy struggle, with each player winning a set 6-4. In the third set, Francoise served at 5-3 but could not finish the task, despite holding a match point. Francoise held another match point in the next game, but she misjudged a backhand and the score was soon leveled at 5-5. Gail then broke again to lead 6-5 and serve for the match; on her first match point, she blasted a forehand passing shot down the and Francoise hit a volley into the net.¹³⁸

Gail’s exhausting effort left her with little energy for her semifinal against Rosie on Saturday. After Rosie won the first set 6-0 and led 4-2 in the second, Gail attempted to make a challenge when she evened the score at 4-4. Rosie, however, was not to be denied and hit a steady stream of topspin forehands to finish the match, 6-0 6-4. In the other semifinal, Billie Jean led Helga 6-2 4-2. It appeared to be a repeat of the German Open final earlier in the year, when Billie Jean won in straight sets. This time, however, Helga began to anticipate Billie Jean’s drop shots and pushed them back out of her opponent’s reach. Although Helga took the second set 6-4, Billie Jean seemed to get

back on track after she led 4-1 in the final set. Helga's arching groundstrokes lulled Billie Jean into errors on the slow clay court; she broke serve twice to level at 4-4. They each won two games to arrive at 6-6, and by this time Billie Jean's forehand was deteriorating. On the last point of the tiebreak, a weary backhand error from Billie Jean gave Helga the improbable victory, 2-6 6-4 7-6.¹³⁹

Helga followed the same pattern in Sunday's final. Rosie won the first set 6-3 and led 3-1 in the second, only to see Helga engage her in a series of lengthy rallies. By the time Helga took the second set, 6-4, it was 8:00 pm. Rosie and Billie Jean were scheduled to take the last day's flight out of Venice to London at 8:40 pm, and then make a connection to Houston the following day. When the first two games of the third set took fifteen minutes to complete, it was obvious that they would not make their flight if the match continued. At 2-2, the light began to fade quickly, and the tournament referee came onto the court. After the chair umpire announced that the match was finished and the title would be shared, a chorus of boos and whistles came from the spectators. Rosie walked across the court to speak with Billie Jean, who was horrified at what just transpired; in what was supposed to be a major women's tournament, with the winner receiving \$4,400 and the runnerup receiving \$2,800, not finishing the match presented a bad image for women's tennis. Gianni Filliponi, the public relations officer for Ford Europe, took the tournament referee, Rosie and Helga into a conference room to discuss the situation. Rosie and Helga agreed to finish the match the following morning.¹⁴⁰

On Monday at 8:00 am, Rosie and Helga came back to the courts in front of a surprisingly large number of spectators. Helga hardly made any mistakes and lost only one game in completing the third set, 6-3. Rosie and Billie Jean, along with Judy Dalton, took a late morning flight to London, and from there they had a connection to Houston. They were on a very tight schedule; within 48 hours, they would be playing their opening round matches in the \$40,000 Virginia Slims International.

While the European summer tournaments were drawing to a close, Gladys invited Lamar Hunt and his assistant Mike Davies to her home in Houston for an interview. They discussed the recent decision by the ILTF to ban the WCT contract professionals from the world's major championships beginning in January, 1972. During their

conversation, Davies suggested to Gladys that ‘we can form an alliance between our two groups, WCT and the Women’s Pro Tour.’¹⁴¹ Gladys was concerned that such a partnership would result in the women also getting banned from Wimbledon, the U. S. Open and the Federation Cup. “You have so many girls signed up from so many countries,” Davies argued, “that you could have your own Federation Cup under the auspices of Virginia Slims.” Gladys then revealed an idea that she had been developing for awhile. “Some thought has been given,” she said, “to forming a Women’s International Tennis Federation that would affiliate with the ILTF ... a Women’s Pro Tour which would have gigantic prize money.” Davies was curious why Gladys would want to form her own federation. “Because the USLTA constantly blocks the setting up of any of our tournaments,” she told him.¹⁴² Although Davies and Hunt did not inquire about any further details, Gladys’ idea for her own women’s tennis federation was already set.

At the same time, Charles Carder of the *Houston Chronicle* interviewed Slew Hester, the second vice-president of the USLTA, about the ILTF decision and reported an intriguing angle to it. Hester told Carder that the USLTA was only one year into a three-year contract with WCT and insisted that “we’ll honor our contract with Lamar.”¹⁴³ Gladys mused that the agreement between the USLTA and WCT held several interesting ramifications, including the possibility of Miller High Life (a Philip Morris brand) withdrawing its sponsorship of CBS Television’s broadcast of the U. S. Open, which could spell financial disaster for the tournament. Thanks to her close relationship with Philip Morris CEO Joe Cullman, Gladys knew that the U. S. Open television broadcast contract included a clause that specified the world’s best players must compete.

Gladys also envisioned her own political future if the USLTA aligned with WCT and broke away from the ILTF. She and the women’s tour “could possibly affiliate directly with the ILTF as the sole representative of the American nation.”¹⁴⁴ Such a partnership would give Gladys unparalleled clout in the United States, making her politically more powerful than Lamar Hunt and the USLTA officials whom she despised so much. Her comment to Hunt about forming a women’s international tennis federation

was more than just a musing; she had already devised the details and planned to present them to the ILTF the following month.

Notes

- ¹ The 1971 Virginia Slims Summer Circuit tournaments are listed in *World Tennis*, June 1971, 46. The USLTA Major Summer Circuit tournaments are listed in *Tennis USA*, April 1971, 4.
- ² Gladys Heldman, letter to Walter Elcock, April 12, 1971.
- ³ Robert Colwell, letter to Gladys Heldman, April 29, 1971.
- ⁴ Gladys Heldman, letter to Robert Colwell, May 5, 1971.
- ⁵ Joseph O. Bixler, letter to Forrest A. Hainline, Jr., May 3, 1971.
- ⁶ David Gray, "The Italian Championships," *World Tennis*, July 1971, 34.
- ⁷ Linda Timms, "Hurlingham," *World Tennis*, July 1971, 48.
- ⁸ Gladys Heldman, footnote in Linda Timms, "Hurlingham," *World Tennis*, July 1971, 48.
- ⁹ Bryan Cutress, "Hurlingham," *Tennis World*, July 1971, 59.
- ¹⁰ Rex Bellamy, "Mrs. King at Last Falls to Miss Truman," *Times* (London, England), May 13, 1971.
- ¹¹ Linda Timms, "Hurlingham," *World Tennis*, July 1971, 48.
- ¹² Judy Tegart Dalton, quoted in Rex Bellamy, "Mrs. King at Last Falls to Miss Truman," *Times* (London, England), May 13, 1971.
- ¹³ Rex Bellamy, "Mrs. King at Last Falls to Miss Truman," *Times* (London, England), May 13, 1971.
- ¹⁴ Linda Timms, "Hurlingham," *World Tennis*, July 1971, 48.
- ¹⁵ Margaret Court, quoted in Bryan Cutress, "Hurlingham," *Tennis World*, July 1971, 59.
- ¹⁶ Rita Bentley, quoted in Bryan Cutress, "Hurlingham," *Tennis World*, July 1971, 59.
- ¹⁷ Julie Heldman, quoted in "Around the World," *World Tennis*, July 1971, 84.
- ¹⁸ Julie Heldman, quoted in Bryan Cutress, "Hurlingham," *Tennis World*, July 1971, 59.
- ¹⁹ Bryan Cutress, "Hurlingham," *Tennis World*, July 1971, 59.
- ²⁰ "Around the World," *World Tennis*, July 1971, 84.
- ²¹ John Dolan, *Women's Tennis, 1968-1984 – The Ultimate Guide* (London: Remous Ltd., 2011), 91.
- ²² John Dolan, *Women's Tennis, 1968-1984 – The Ultimate Guide* (London: Remous Ltd., 2011), 91.
- ²³ Gladys Heldman, quoted in Joe Whittington, "USLTA Fiddles While Gladys Burns," *Houston Post* (Houston, Texas), May 21, 1971.
- ²⁴ Marvin Richmond, petition to USLTA Management Committee, May 26, 1971.
- ²⁵ Slew Hester, letter to Marvin Richmond, May 24, 1971.
- ²⁶ Marvin Richmond, letter to Slew Hester, May 26, 1971.
- ²⁷ J. Howard Frazer, letter to Marvin Richmond, April 27, 1971.
- ²⁸ Gladys Heldman, quoted in Joe Whittington, "USLTA Fiddles While Gladys Burns," *Houston Post* (Houston, Texas), May 21, 1971.
- ²⁹ Robert Kamrath, letter to Stan Malless, May 1971.
- ³⁰ "Around the World," *World Tennis*, August 1971, 93.
- ³¹ Richard Evans, "French Championships," *World Tennis*, August 1971, 54.

- ³² Richard Evans, "French Championships," *World Tennis*, August 1971, 54.
- ³³ Richard Evans, "French Championships," *World Tennis*, August 1971, 54.
- ³⁴ Gail Chanfreau, quoted in Rex Bellamy, "Mrs. Court is Well Beaten," *Time* (London, England), May 31, 1971.
- ³⁵ Margaret Court, quoted in Rex Bellamy, "Mrs. Court is Well Beaten," *Time* (London, England), May 31, 1971.
- ³⁶ Richard Evans, "French Championships," *World Tennis*, August 1971, 54.
- ³⁷ Rex Bellamy, "Dazzling Display by Miss Goolagong," *The Times* (London, England), June 3, 1971.
- ³⁸ Evonne Goolagong and Bud Collins, *Evonne! On the Move* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1975), 137.
- ³⁹ Vic Edwards, quoted in Rex Bellamy, "Dazzling Display by Miss Goolagong," *The Times* (London, England), June 3, 1971.
- ⁴⁰ "Vincent Hanna," >>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vincent_Hanna<< Retrieved on November 18, 2012.
- ⁴¹ Julie Heldman, email correspondence to the author, November 8, 2011.
- ⁴² Rex Bellamy, "Australian Girls in Unusual Final," *The Times* (London, England), June 3, 1971.
- ⁴³ Rex Bellamy, "Australian Girls in Unusual Final," *The Times* (London, England), June 3, 1971.
- ⁴⁴ Richard Evans, "French Championships," *World Tennis*, August 1971, 54.
- ⁴⁵ Evonne Goolagong, quoted in "Miss Goolagong Too Fast," *Times* (London, England), June 7, 1971.
- ⁴⁶ Helen Gourlay, quoted in "Miss Goolagong Too Fast," *Times* (London, England), June 7, 1971.
- ⁴⁷ Evonne Goolagong and Bud Collins, *Evonne! On the Move* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1975), 137.
- ⁴⁸ Robert Colwell, letter to Steve Korsen, June 8, 1971.
- ⁴⁹ Robert Colwell, letter to Steve Korsen, June 8, 1971.
- ⁵⁰ "Around the World," *World Tennis*, July 1971, 90.
- ⁵¹ Robert Colwell, letter to Steve Korsen (copy sent to Stan Malless), June 8, 1971.
- ⁵² "Graebner, Smith, McManus Advance in Kent Tennis Meet," *New York Times* (New York, New York), June 10, 1971.
- ⁵³ Judy Tegart Dalton, quoted in Nick Jordan "Scapegoat Claim," *London Evening Standard* (London, England), June 10, 1971.
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CHAPTER 8: THE QUEEN OF TENNIS

Margaret Court's participation in the \$40,000 Virginia Slims International in Houston changed on Monday, August 2 when she publicly announced her pregnancy and temporary retirement from competition. Margaret and her husband, Barry, arrived in New York to participate in a three-day tennis festival that included an instructional clinic, fashion show and question-and-answers session. "I hope to return to competitive tennis after my baby is born, but perhaps on a more restricted schedule," Margaret told reporters at the news conference. "Ultimately, I plan to continue in some phase of tennis as long as I have something to contribute. The game has done so much for me, I'd like to put something back into it. I'd like to teach and help youngsters."¹ After a few days in New York, Margaret planned to make promotional appearances at the Virginia Slims International in Houston as well as another tournament she withdrew from, the Rothman's Canadian Open in Toronto.

The next day, Billie Jean, Rosie and Judy Dalton arrived in Houston after a long flight from Venice, via London. The tournament in Houston had already begun with the qualifying and preliminary rounds – the feed-in tournament format that Gladys had devised – and by Tuesday, the four players who qualified for the sixteen-player championship flight were determined. It was one of the highlights of the 1971 Virginia Slims Circuit, played at the new Hofheinz Pavilion on the campus of the University of Houston and offering a first prize of \$10,000.

Gladys mounted a \$40,000 tournament at the Hofheinz Pavilion in Houston during the summer. By that point we were focused on getting me over \$100,000 in prize money for the year, so I would be the first woman athlete to achieve that. I knew I had to win the Houston tournament or I wasn't going to make it. It was

some pressure for me personally, but more than anything it was about the message we wanted to send. ²

-- *Billie Jean King, 2012*

On Tuesday evening, Billie Jean – even though she had flown into town only a few hours earlier – played an exhibition against Jim Rombeau, the top-ranked male player in Houston and a member of the University of Houston men’s team. ³ Instead of a traditional best-of-three set match, it was scheduled to be an eight-game pro set, with the winner receiving \$500, courtesy of *World Tennis*. Rombeau won a qualifying tournament among several men players to determine who would play against Billie Jean. Rombeau grew up in Southern California and was acquainted with Billie Jean during their childhood days.

We hadn’t seen each other in years. And as we were walking down the ramp to play, the first thing she said to me was ‘Oh, hi Jim, I haven’t seen you since you were my ball boy.’ ⁴

-- *Jim Rombeau, 1973*

Billie Jean held her serve in the opening game, but then fell behind when Rombeau held his serve and broke in the third game. Each player had trouble holding serve – there were six more service breaks, and Rombeau ultimately served eighteen double-faults – until the score reached 8-8. In the nine-point tiebreak, Rombeau prevailed 5-1 to win the contest. ⁵ The next day, undoubtedly tired from publicizing the tour all year long, Billie Jean told tour manager Pip Jones not to schedule any more promotional activities for her for the rest of the summer. ⁶

Accompanying Julie Heldman to Houston was her new boyfriend, Vincent Hanna. They had become very close since meeting at the French Open in May, and Julie divided her time between the United States and London, where she was renting an apartment. In the summer of 1971, Hanna traveled with Julie throughout the United States and wrote

articles for the *London Times* and *World Tennis* about the Wightman Cup matches and the U. S. Open.

*I guess you could say that Vincent was my Svengali. Many people disliked him because he was brilliant, arrogant, and fearless. His ability to think and the amount of knowledge he had amassed were way beyond my own. He pissed a lot of people off. He was Northern Irish. When we staying at my parents' house in the summer of 1971, Pip Jones – Ann's husband – made some prejudiced, dismissive remark about the breakout of armed conflict in Northern Ireland. Vincent was furious, and made yet another enemy. Pip was a lovely man, but not very sophisticated politically.*⁷
 -- Julie Heldman, 2011

Wednesday's and Thursday's first round matches in the Houston tournament provided no surprising results. Billie Jean reversed her loss at Hurlingham to Nell Truman, defeating the British player 6-3 6-3. Judy Dalton won easily against Peaches Bartkowicz, who had not played since Wimbledon. Peaches had also gained fifteen pounds during the course of the year, and against Judy she appeared to be out of practice and out of condition. In Nancy Richey Gunter's win over Valerie Ziegenfuss, Margaret Court volunteered as one of the linespersons. When asked after the match if she enjoyed calling lines, Margaret said that "Nancy foot-faulted four times – but I was afraid to call them!"⁸

In Friday's quarterfinal matches, Nancy won by default after Julie Heldman withdrew due to illness, and Kerry Melville looked eager and sharp after a month-long rest in upsetting Rosie Casals, 7-6 6-4. Billie Jean defeated Mary Ann Eisel, who had reverted to her maiden name after the dissolution of a two-year marriage to British Davis Cup player Peter Curtis.

Certainly it was very hard for both of us to be playing different tournaments at the same time. When the Virginia Slims Circuit started, Mary Ann began to play even

*more tournaments away from me and it certainly was problem communicating from week to week. I don't consider this to be a healthy way to have a marriage. I think marriage should be where the two people are together as much as possible.*⁹

-- Peter Curtis, 1972

After the singles match with Billie Jean and Mary Ann the contestants for the next match, Judy Dalton and Francoise Durr, were nowhere to be found. To entertain the crowd, Billie Jean and Mary Ann went back on the court to hit. Fifteen minutes later, Judy and Francoise arrived at Hofheinz Pavilion; they had gone to dinner together and lost track of the time. Even though they played an exciting three-set match, won by Judy, they were each fined \$150 for arriving late.¹⁰

Billie Jean continued her recent dominance of Nancy in Saturday's semifinals, and Kerry got revenge for her Wimbledon loss to Judy. In the finals the next day, Billie Jean and Kerry split the first two sets, both by the score of 6-4. Billie Jean raced through the third set, 6-1, and she shrieked in delight after she won the final point. After receiving the winner's check of \$10,000, Billie Jean went back on the court with Rosie for the women's doubles final against Judy and Francoise. During the course of the three-set match, Judy was thoroughly exhausted; as soon as the last point was played, she burst into tears and rushed off the court without waiting for her money. Billie Jean, however, was buoyant after winning the singles and doubles titles. Pip Jones took advantage of Billie Jean's joyful mood and convinced her to participate in a pro-am mixed doubles tournament, clinic and interview two weeks later in Chicago.¹¹

That first tour was a success, although a mighty shaky one, and I didn't come to feel we'd reached the turning point until the beginning of the summer-fall tour in August. We played in Houston again, this time at the Hofheinz Pavilion. During the winter the crowds had never been super and even here we didn't sell out. I don't know for sure what it was, but for the first time I got a really strong feeling that the fans and the players both were very enthusiastic about what was going

*on. Maybe it was the money – we played for \$40,000, the biggest purse so far – or maybe it was just the fact that we were in the city where the whole thing had begun, but whatever it was, I think our whole collective frame of mind changed that week. Things always seem better after that week.*¹²

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

The following week, the Virginia Slims players had two tournaments to choose from – the U. S. National Clay Court Championships at the Woodstock Country Club in Indianapolis, or the Rothman's Canadian Open in Toronto. Neither was an official Virginia Slims Circuit event (even though Virginia Slims contributed \$5,000 to the women's prize money in Indianapolis), so the Virginia Slims players were free to play wherever they wished. Francoise opted for Toronto, because she was told that Indianapolis was hot and humid in the summer.¹³ Billie Jean – perhaps reluctantly – decided to play in Indianapolis. The tournament was directed by Stan Malless, who had a contentious relationship with Gladys and some of the Virginia Slims Circuit players. Despite the icy feelings, Billie Jean needed to play in the U. S. National Clay Court Championships because it was a Pepsi Grand Prix event; in order to collect the year-end bonus money, she needed to compete in a minimum of nine Pepsi Grand Prix events. Billie Jean's tournament schedule was planned so that she participated in nearly every Virginia Slims Circuit event as well as nine of the Pepsi Grand Prix events.

It did not take long for Billie Jean and Malless to get into a debate via the local newspaper. Bob Williams of the *Indianapolis Star* asked Billie Jean why she declined to play on the U. S. Wightman Cup team, which was scheduled to play against Great Britain in Cleveland the following week. "I will not play Wightman Cup for the USLTA," Billie Jean told Williams. "I would love to play Wightman Cup for my country. But I feel the USLTA has been detrimental to the sport and I just don't want to be a part of it anymore. First of all, the USLTA kept tournaments closed for years. I played Wightman Cup for three years and deserved to be the number one player on the team but they said I was only number two. Also, they made me stay in this country for years, making me play for \$196

a week when I could have made \$1,500 a week in Europe. They tried to keep the sport amateur but still wanted to pay me big sums under the table.”¹⁴

Informed about Billie Jean’s comments, Malless told Williams that “some of these players forget what the USLTA did for them when they were just coming up. You can’t blame them for wanting to make big money now but they had a lot of help from the USLTA to get where they are today.” Malless felt that Gladys and some of the Virginia Slims players were guilty of actions and remarks that were embarrassing, and he said that some of them might be declared contract professionals again if they continued to refuse to work with the USLTA. “They stayed in England and sabotaged all of our tournaments in July,” Malless complained, referring to the cancellation of several events on the USLTA summer schedule because none of the top American women were available.¹⁵

Despite the angry words and chilly atmosphere, the U. S. National Clay Court Championships was one of Billie Jean’s highlights of the year. She had not played in the event since she lost to Rosie Casals in the semifinals in 1967. This time, Billie Jean won all five of her singles matches in straight sets, only being tested by defending champion Linda Tuero in the finals. Billie Jean defeated Linda 6-4 7-5 to claim the first prize of \$5,000, and then added another \$500 when she and Judy Dalton won the women’s doubles final over Linda and Julie Heldman.

The following week, 180 miles to the north in the upscale community of Lake Bluff, Illinois, the \$20,000 Virginia Slims Clay Court Championships were held at the exclusive Bath and Tennis Club. Helen Shockley, executive secretary of the Chicago District Tennis Association convinced the club to contribute half of the prize money, resulting in the richest women’s tournament ever held in the Chicago area.¹⁶ The tournament had a very strong field, including Billie Jean, Rosie, Nancy Richey Gunter, Judy Dalton, and Francoise Durr, who won the Canadian Open the previous week with a surprising win over Evonne Goolagong.

Early in the week, Virginia Slims assistant brand manager Bill Cutler and Francoise Durr announced their engagement. The news came as a surprise to Kristien Kemmer, who had also been dating Cutler and was unaware of his relationship with Francoise.

...there was a man associated with tennis who traveled a great deal with the Slims tour on business, and he was double-dealing. He was whispering sweet nothings to both – well, let's just call them Blonde and Brunette. Blonde was really beautiful, and most of us – Blonde included – thought this guy was really in love with her. Most of us – Blonde included – didn't even know he had anything going with Brunette. We were playing in Lake Bluff, Illinois, one week, and there was a tournament party one night, with all sorts of guests, because some of these local women were going to play doubles with us the next morning in a pro-am. Blonde and I didn't go to the party, but we were only a few hundred yards away, practicing – and, luckily, out of earshot. Suddenly, Brunette and Mr. Wonderful stand up and the combo strikes up a ta-da, and they take the microphone and announce their engagement. Well, when I heard about it the next morning, I was absolutely flabbergasted. The same older ladies were there, ready for the pro-am to start, and they were fluttering around Brunette, cooing over her ring, and here comes Blonde, sauntering happily along. As you might expect, I was the elder statesman dispatched to go out and intercept Blonde; and I did, and I told her what had happened, and it was about as hard as anything I ever did. She was so hurt, and so angry, and of course there's nothing right you can say in that sort of situation, so I just summoned up my best win-this-one-for-the-Gipper voice and said, "Okay, Blonde, now you go out there and play like crazy in this pro-am!" That was probably the only time any player anywhere ever got a pep talk for a pro-am. And just for the record, Brunette later broke up with the two-timer ...¹⁷

-- Billie Jean King, 1982

As the luck of the draw would have it, Francoise and Kristien played each other in the first round on Wednesday. Kristien's mind may not have been on tennis as she lost to Francoise, 6-4 6-2. Betty Ann Hansen scored a one-sided 6-1 6-1 upset over Kerry Melville, who might have been tired from her run to the finals of Houston the week before. Billie Jean played her first round match against Australian Kerry Harris, and after her 6-1 6-2 victory she expressed her displeasure at having the tournament held at a

private club. “My favorite setup is an arena. It’s more centrally located,” she told Steve Nidetz of the *Lake Forest Review*. “But I’m a public parks girl. I believe the future of tennis lies in the public arenas. Tennis originated in the clubs. But now it’s getting bigger and bigger ... Helen Shockley does a helluva lot with kids in public parks. It’s just too bad this tournament had to be held at private club not too accessible to the general public.”¹⁸

In the quarterfinals, Rosie was challenged by Linda Tuero, the 1970 U. S. National Clay Court champion who had wins on the surface over Nancy Richey Gunter and Gail Chanfreau. Linda started slowly, but once she settled into the match she made Rosie work for every point in the 7-5 7-5 decision. Nancy and Francoise won their matches in straight sets to reach the semifinals, as did Billie Jean, who had a more difficult time with Lesley Hunt. On several occasions she bounced her racquet off the court, and at another time hit a ball over the fence in disgust. “I heard the murmurs,” Billie Jean said after the match. “I was ‘unladylike.’ I was ‘setting a bad example for juniors.’ Well, the best example I can set is to try gusting it out on every shot. To me, that’s more important than if I drop my racquet or happen to holler ‘shoot!’”¹⁹ During the first set tiebreak, the chair umpire became confused and Billie Jean needed to give him scoring instructions, further adding to her frustration. “I’m willing to put up a percentage of my winnings to pay professional umpires,” she later told Bill Jauss, a well-known *Chicago Tribune* sportswriter who was writing an article for *Tennis* magazine. “The USLTA doesn’t want this. It threatens the hold they’ve had. And a lot of men and women pros won’t cough up the money. They want big purses but aren’t willing to help pay for big-league conditions. Why, we haven’t earned big-league status yet.”²⁰

The remark attributed to Billie Jean about the umpire not knowing the tiebreaker rules was out of line. For a second or two, Art Leighton, one of the best umpires in the United States, probably thought he was using the nine-point instead of the twelve-point tiebreaker. A slip like this is easily understandable when you realize that he had been sitting under a hot sun in over 90 degree heat with BJK being very difficult throughout the match ... If BJK thinks that umpires and linesmen

should be paid, why doesn't she and the other pros pay them? We did. The head umpire was given a substantial check. ²¹

-- *Helen Shockley, 1971*

Spectators at the Bath and Tennis Club were treated to two exciting semifinal matches on Saturday. Francoise defeated Rosie 7-6 6-4, and Billie Jean narrowly escaped an upset bid by Nancy. Billie Jean and Nancy battled to 6-6 in the first set on the outdoor clay court before rain halted play. The match was moved to the club's indoor hard court, and 2,000 spectators watched Billie Jean win the first set tiebreak before winning the second set with an equally close score. Sunday's final, between Francoise and Billie Jean, would be the first time they played on clay since the WLOD International in Florida in February, when Francoise won in straight sets.

Sunday's program started at 10:30 am with a third-place playoff match between Nancy and Rosie. Each player had already earned \$1,500 for losing in the semifinals, and the winner of the third place match gained an additional \$300. Nancy won in a lengthy, three-set match which lasted until 1:00 pm – the scheduled start time of the championship match between Billie Jean and Francoise. The clay court, however, needed to be watered and swept, and by the time the court was ready to play, the 2,500 spectators had started staccato clapping to express their frustration. To further add to the delay of the final match, club president Sam McTier made a short speech, thanking the hundreds of volunteers for making the event a success. ²²

By the time the match started, Billie Jean's patience had worn thin. To make matters worse, she was tired from her grueling match with Nancy the previous day. Francoise won the first set 6-4 by a single service break. Billie Jean held serve to open the second set, and then Francoise reached game point on her serve to level the score at 1-1. Francoise placed a shot to Billie Jean's corner, but the linesman was unable to make a call because his line of sight was blocked. According to Ralph Leo of the *Chicago Tribune*, the linesman indicated as such to the chair umpire, Patty Ingersoll, who then asked the linesman at the opposite end of the court for a ruling. When no call could be made, Ingersoll determined that the point needed to be played over again. Bill Jauss,

however, reported that Francoise's shot was initially ruled as "in," then changed to "out" before the umpire decided to replay the point, which was "the final straw" for Billie Jean.
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Patty Ingersoll, the umpire on this match, is one of the best and knows the rules backward and forward. ²⁴
-- Helen Shockley, 1971

Francoise won the replayed point to level the set at 1-1, and she won the next two games to lead 3-1. Billie Jean held serve in the fifth game, after which Francoise reeled off three games in a row to complete the match, 6-4 6-2. The crowd gave the players a standing ovation, and Francoise was given first place winner's prize of \$4,100. "This week I was lucky in love and lucky in tennis. I am very happy," Francoise told the spectators, who applauded for her victory as well as her engagement. ²⁵

Billie Jean was less than pleased after her loss. "I'm upset about this place," she told Jauss. "The constant, unnecessary aggravation toward the competitors and fans is the worst I've seen." She mentioned Friday's fashion show and a brief exhibition match, featuring actress Elke Sommers, which delayed the day's matches. In addition, Billie Jean said, the tournament changed the start times of several matches without informing the public. "I'll play my doubles under duress," she said. "I came here to play before the public. I'll play doubles only because people paid to see us play." Francoise and Judy Dalton defeated Billie Jean and Rosie 6-4 7-6, a match in which Jauss suggested that the losers did not put forth their best effort. ²⁶

Not all of the Virginia Slims Circuit players participated in the tournament in Chicago. Julie Heldman, Valerie Ziegenfuss, Kristy Pigeon, and Mary Ann Eisel were in Cleveland, preparing to play in the Wightman Cup matches against Great Britain. Also in Cleveland was Chris Evert, at age sixteen the youngest player to ever appear in Wightman Cup competition. Chris had not lost a match since losing to Denise Carter Triolo at the WLOD International in Florida in February, and the week before arriving in Cleveland she won the U. S. National Girls Championships, her first title on a grass court.

The site for Wightman Cup matches alternated between the United States and Great Britain each year. Before he became the Executive Director of the USLTA, Bob Malaga raised the funds to build the Harold T. Clark Stadium in suburban Cleveland Heights, Ohio. The stadium, with a clay surface and bleacher seating for 6,300 spectators, was the site for the 1963 and 1965 Wightman Cup matches. The stadium's surface was changed to concrete and was the site for Wightman Cup matches in 1967 and 1969, as well as the 1969 Davis Cup match between the United States and Romania. After years of complaint from the British Wightman Cup team about playing on the concrete surface, the USLTA decided to accommodate them by installing a portable Uni-Royal court – a move that would result in much controversy as the week unfolded.

Both teams practiced at the venue for five days before the event started on Saturday, August 21. Pip Jones, tour manager for the Virginia Slims Circuit, was in town because his wife, Ann, was the captain of the British team. Pip told Bill Nichols of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* that the British players were under the impression that the portable court was going to be Uni-Turf, a carpet material. Instead, the British players were surprised and disheartened to learn they would be playing on the unfamiliar, rubbery Uni-Royal surface.²⁷

In the best-of-seven match Wightman Cup format, each team named singles players for the first, second, and third positions, as well as two doubles combinations. On the first day's matches, each team's number-one singles players played each other, as did the number-two singles players. On the second day, matches included the number-three singles and number-one doubles. Finally, on the third day, the number-one player from each team competed against the opposing number-two player, followed by the number-two double match.

U. S. team captain Carole Graebner selected Julie Heldman for the number-one singles position, and Mary Ann Eisel and Valerie Ziegenfuss for the number-one doubles. Carole had not yet decided who to put into the number-two and number-two singles position; whoever played in the second spot would be required to play two matches, with one of them against Great Britain's top player, Virginia Wade. In addition, a coin toss would determine if Saturday's matches opened with the number-one or number-two

singles. “We have two new members of the team,” Carole told reporters, referring to Chris and Kristy. “If I choose them to play, I think it is quite obvious it would be best if they didn’t play the first match.”²⁸ She said the opening match was a “hard thing” for a young player to handle.

The next day, Carole’s decision was made: Chris would play in the number-two singles position, and Kristy would play at number three singles and at number two doubles with Julie. At the draw ceremony, it was determined that the number-two singles match would open the matches on Saturday – Chris Evert against the Wightman Cup veteran Winnie Shaw, the top-ranked woman from Scotland. “She can either be a young, inexperienced player absolutely awed by everything,” said Carole about Chris, “or a young, mature player and not let anything bother her. I think she’ll be the second.”²⁹ Carole was also confident about her decision to put Chris in the number-two singles position. “On a slower surface she can get to anything on the court,” she told reporters. “She’s small but mighty.”³⁰ Carole also felt the U. S. team had an advantage because none of the British players had seen Chris play before, and “they don’t know what to expect.” Ann Jones, however, watched Chris play at the Virginia Slims Masters Invitational in St. Petersburg in April – when she defeated Francoise Durr, Billie Jean King and Julie Heldman – and did not seem worried. “Winnie is an all-around player while Chris is a baseline player,” Ann said, perhaps underestimating the unerring groundstroke accuracy of Winnie’s opponent.³¹

More than 5,800 came to Harold T. Clark Stadium to watch the opening day’s matches. At 1:30 pm, Winnie Shaw served the opening game against Chris Evert and promptly committed two double-faults. Extremely nervous and unhappy with the slow court surface, the Scotswoman had no weapons to bother her younger opponent. Chris, on the other hand, covered the court with ease, drove the ball deep to the baseline, and made hardly any errors. After nineteen minutes, the set was over, and Chris had not lost a game. “I could tell from her expression that she was never settled,” Chris said afterward. “I had been told that her forehand was the weakest shot, but mainly I concentrated on Carole’s advice, to play each point separately and forget the previous one.”³² The second set was closer, as each player held serve to 4-4. Chris then scored

her first break of the set, then easily won her service game to win 6-0 6-4 and give the United States a 1-0 lead. "It seemed a ridiculous gamble for the Americans to name this little thing as one of their top two singles players," British journalist Lance Tingay wrote in *Tennis World* magazine. "Never did a gamble pay off better."³³

The number-one singles match followed, pitting Virginia Wade against Julie Heldman. A rainstorm the previous night created problems with the court; water had seeped into the seams, splitting them open in certain spots and making them uneven and crooked. In addition, air bubbles began to develop beneath the surface, caused by the day's heat and humidity. The court had become dangerous to play on, especially when a player needed to make a sudden turn of movement

Virginia opened the match strongly, even though the slow surface did not favor her game. Julie, initially tentative and unable to produce her chess-like tactics, kept the match close and broke Virginia's serve to lead 5-4 in the first set. Serving for the first set, Julie made a quick change in direction; her feet stuck to the rubbery surface and she felt something snap in her left knee. Unable to cover the court as she had been doing, Julie lost three consecutive games and the set, 7-5. Carole massaged Julie's knees on the changeovers, and Virginia opened up leads of 4-1 and 5-2 in the second set. Julie made a final push to get back into the match, calling on all her reserves and hitting high, deep forehands to Virginia's backhand corner. At 5-5, Julie had spent all her energy, and Virginia won the final two games to level the team score at 1-1.³⁴

Throughout the week, Vincent Hanna had put Julie and Kristy Pigeon through some physical conditioning drills; there were some who felt that his training concepts were unconventional. Virginia Slims Circuit tour manager Pip Jones, who had an unpleasant encounter with Hanna two weeks earlier in Houston, was convinced that Julie's boyfriend did more harm than good.

*Vincent had opinions on everything, from English soccer to how tennis players should train. Pip was convinced that Vincent's training ideas were directly responsible for my torn cartilage which I incurred at the Wightman Cup in Cleveland in 1971. I doubt it. The court was a mess and dangerous.*³⁵

-- Julie Heldman, 2011

*Julie's boyfriend, Vincent Hanna, was a piece of work! I remember that he tried to train us at the Wightman Cup in Cleveland ... He had Julie and I doing wind sprints the day before my singles match. I was so sore the next day I could hardly walk.*³⁶

-- Kristy Pigeon, 2012

On Sunday afternoon, with the temperature hovering around ninety degrees, Joyce Williams and Kristy Pigeon played the number-three singles match. The opening game went to deuce six times before Joyce finally broke Kristy's serve. Kristy made several casual errors at 5-5, giving Joyce the crucial break. One game later, the set belonged to Great Britain, 7-5. In the second set, Kristy pulled a muscle in her right thigh and began limping slightly; the injury did not prevent her, however, from winning the second set 6-3 in only twenty-five minutes, thanks to her looping topspins forehands and wide sliced serves. The third set was a race to the net for both players, and Joyce scored repeatedly with crisply angled volleys that left Kristy stranded. They remained on serve until the tenth game of the set, with Kristy serving at 4-5. Kristy fell behind love-30, brought the game to deuce, but finally double-faulted on Joyce's second match point.³⁷

Great Britain's 2-1 lead did not last long, as Mary Ann Eisel and Valerie Ziegenfuss, the best doubles team in the United States behind Billie Jean King and Rosie Casals, evened the team score with an easy win over the British sister team of Nell Truman and Christine Truman Janes. Mary Ann and Valerie raced through the first set in only nineteen minutes with aggressive serves and sharp volleys. The second set was closer, but Mary Ann produced a number of outstanding serves to finish the match, 6-1 6-4.³⁸

Later that night, team captain Carole Graebner announced that Julie and Kristy needed to withdraw from Monday's matches due to leg injuries; Julie was scheduled to play singles against Winnie Shaw, and then team with Kristy in the number-two doubles against Virginia Wade and Joyce Williams. British team captain Ann Jones agreed that

Valerie Ziegenfuss could be inserted as a substitute, but the doubles presented a problem. Wightman Cup rules limited all players to only one doubles match; with Julie and Kristy injured, and Valerie and Mary Ann having played doubles already, the only available player for the number-two doubles was Chris Evert. Discussions were held until midnight, and they resumed the following morning; no one could arrive at a solution. Peaches Bartkowicz was originally named to the U. S. Wightman Cup team, and since she lived in nearby Detroit, Carole attempted to locate her. Peaches, however, had returned to London after losing in the second round of the Canadian Open in Toronto. Apparently, she found a boyfriend in England during Wimbledon, and she was no longer interested in playing tennis. Finally, it was agreed that Carole, the non-playing captain, could play in the number-two singles with Chris.³⁹

The line-up change clearly favored the British team. With the score tied at 2-2, the British were certain to win the number-two doubles match, since Chris had limited doubles experience and Carole competed rarely after getting married and having two children. If the U. S. team wanted to retain the Wightman Cup, Valerie and Chris needed to win against much more experience opponents in the pressure of international team competition.

Monday's weather was in sharp contrast to the heat of Sunday. A cold front had moved in overnight, dropping the temperatures to sixty-five degrees and blowing a twenty-two mile-per-hour wind across Lake Erie. Playing her Wightman Cup singles debut in front of a capacity crowd of 6,093, Valerie started nervously against Winnie and quickly fell behind; she knew the match was critical for a U. S. team victory. Serving at 1-4, Valerie relaxed after hitting an ace to win the game; she then reeled off four more games to take the set, 6-4, as Winnie made an increasing number of errors. The Englishwoman won the second set 6-4, but she faded as Valerie confidently closed out the match, 6-3 in the final set. "I just thought here is my big chance, so I took advantage of it," Valerie said after the match. "I watched the ball, concentrated and play steadily. It was great, just great. I feel like I'm part of it now."⁴⁰

With the United States leading 3-2, Virginia Wade was aware that a victory against Chris would almost guarantee a British team victory, since she and Joyce

Williams were heavily favored to win the final doubles match. The pressure must have been too much for Virginia to handle; Chris took a commanding 4-0 lead before Virginia managed to hold her serve. Virginia had no weapons for her young opponent; she was passed or lobbed whenever she rushed the net, and she was outsteaded whenever she remained on the baseline. "I was playing really well," Chris later admitted. "Then again, she was playing really nervous. She had everything to lose and nothing to gain."⁴¹

Adding to Virginia's anxiety were two separate disruptions during the first set, totaling twenty minutes, when the rubber court surface came apart and needed to be repaired by officials. "These Wightman Cup matches are tough enough without all this nonsense," Virginia complained after the match.⁴² Chris coolly waited for the court to get repaired, and then went back to business. She closed out the first set, 6-1, and then finished off the second set by the same score, clinching the victory for the U. S. team.

Carole was jubilant after the match. "I was sitting in awe of my little sixteen year-old," she said. "I never saw Chris play until we starting practicing for the tie."⁴³ Carole told reporters that her decision to put Chris at the number-two singles position was based on the recommendation of Wightman Cup team selection committee chairperson Donna Fales, who had watched Chris defeat Francoise Durr, Billie Jean King and Julie Heldman at the Virginia Slims Masters Invitational in Florida in April. Chris admitted that she "played very well against Virginia. She had everything to gain but I had nothing to lose since all the pressure was on her."⁴⁴

Shortly afterward, Carole and Chris took the court for their doubles match against Virginia and Joyce. The tie had already been decided, but many of the fans remained to watch the young sensation. As the players were introduced over the public address system, the crowd roared its approval when the announcer said, "Representing the United States, from Fort Lauderdale, Florida – do you really want to know what her name is?" Even though the British team won the meaningless match 10-8 4-6 6-1, the entire experience was a thrill for Chris, telling Bill Nichols of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* that winning the deciding match against Virginia "was the greatest thing that ever happened to me." Chris was also given the Emmett P. Dowling Award, determined by the sportswriters who covered the event, for being the tie's most outstanding player. Urged

on by her teammates to make an acceptance speech over the public address system, Chris simply said “Thank you, press.”⁴⁵

Chris’s mother, Colette, was thrilled for her daughter. “I didn’t think she’d win,” she said about the match with Virginia. “I was just hoping she’d play as good as she did the other day.” Colette was also trying to be realistic about Chris’ prospects in her next two tournaments, the Eastern Grass Court Championships in New Jersey and the U. S. Open in New York. “She’s got to play on grass,” Colette said. “I think now we’re going downhill.”⁴⁶ Nothing could have been further from the truth.

While the Wightman Cup matches were concluding in Cleveland, Gladys flew to London to attend an ILTF Emergency Committee meeting. Also traveling to the meeting were USLTA Vice President Walter Elcock and John Granville, who had recently become the Virginia Slims brand manager. On Tuesday, August 24, Gladys spoke before the committee, explaining how she organized the Virginia Slims Circuit and was constantly involved in controversies with the USLTA. She said that even though Virginia Slims Circuit tournaments offered much more prize money than the traditional tournaments in the United States, the USLTA often refused to sanction them. As a result, Gladys contended, many players would not commit to play in Virginia Slims Circuit events because they were fearful of getting suspended. She asked the ILTF committee to require the USLTA to provide sanction approvals for Virginia Slims Circuit tournaments on a timely basis. If the USLTA was not willing to do this, Gladys proposed that she form an independent women’s association that worked directly with the ILTF and would be free of USLTA control.

The ILTF Emergency Committee told Gladys that it had no authority to rule on which tournaments the USLTA decided to sanction. Her proposal to form an autonomous women’s association that partnered with the ILTF was rejected, that it was “out of the question.”⁴⁷ Gladys was told she had two choices: keep the Virginia Slims Circuit affiliated with the USLTA, or become a contract professional group in the same vein as WCT.⁴⁸ Her plan to ally the women’s tour with the ILTF was not successful; if anything, it only further strained her relationship with the USLTA. Shortly afterward,

Elcock told the USLTA Executive Committee that he “made no attempt to predict what Mrs. Heldman now intended to do.”⁴⁹

One week before the 1971 U. S. Open, there were two significant tournaments for women tennis players: the traditional Eastern Grass Court Championships in Orange, New Jersey, and the inaugural Virginia Slims Grass Court Championships, played at the historical Newport Casino in Newport, Rhode Island. The tournament promoter in Newport was James Van Alen, the man who invented the sudden-death, nine-point tiebreak.

All of the top seeds in the Newport tournament, with the exception of number-eight Wendy Overton, reached the quarterfinals without any problems. Fourth-seeded Kerry Melville had a tough first set with Judy Dalton, losing the first set in a tiebreak before rebounding, 6-1 6-1. Rosie had a close match with Mary Ann Eisel, another excellent grass court player. Once again, a tiebreak decided the first set, certainly bringing a smile to Van Alen’s face. In the semifinals, Francoise Durr easily dispatched Rosie Casals, 6-3 6-3, and Kerry Melville defeated Billie Jean King almost as easily. For the second time in three weeks, Kerry would play for a Virginia Slims title. For Francoise, she hoped to win her third title in as many weeks.

In the championship match, Kerry won the first set, 6-3. She held match point at 5-4 in the second set but could not close it out; Francoise came back to take the set in a tiebreak. In the third set, Kerry held two more match points at 5-4, and another two at

6-5. Each time, Francoise refused to surrender. The third set resulted in another tiebreak, and Kerry forged ahead to 4-2 – three more match points. Francoise won the next two points, and suddenly it was simultaneous match point for both players. The entire match – and the \$4,400 winner’s check, compared to \$2,800 for the loser – hinged on one point. Francoise hit her usual soft serve, and Kerry decided to come into the net on her return. Francoise attempted to hit a backhand passing shot down the line, but Kerry anticipated the direction and punched a forehand volley crosscourt into the open court.⁵⁰ As Kerry draped herself on the net with relief, the spectators gave both players a standing ovation for their efforts in the two-hour twenty-minute match. It was the first

time a women's professional singles title was decided on one point, and James Van Alen was thrilled.

While the Virginia Slims Grass Court Championships was being played in Newport, the entire British Wightman Cup team - Virginia Wade, Winnie Shaw, Joyce Williams and Nell Truman – were competing in the Eastern Grass Court Championships in Orange, New Jersey. Also competing in the tournament was Chris Evert, who almost single-handedly defeated the British team the previous week. It was almost certain that Virginia and Winnie wanted another chance at playing Chris, this time on the fast grass courts of the South Orange Lawn Tennis Club.

The tournament committee debated about giving Chris a seeded position in the draw.⁵¹ The first three seeds were Virginia Wade, Patti Hogan and Lesley Bowrey. Although Chris was given the fourth and final seed, she almost did not make it out of the first round. Betty Stove, a tall Dutch player, won the first set in a tiebreak, before Chris settled in and took the second set, 6-4. The third set reached 5-5, and Chris responded to the pressure by coolly winning the next two games.⁵²

Chris had an easier time in her quarterfinal match against Lita Liem of Indonesia. Waiting for her in the semifinals was Winnie Shaw, whom Chris had easily beaten in the Wightman Cup. In her previous match, Winnie had split sets with Virginia Wade. As the third set started, Virginia slipped on the slick grass court and sprained her ankle. She retired from the match, and the injury necessitated her withdrawal from the following week's U. S. Open.⁵³

Just as she did at the Wightman Cup, Chris started her match against Winnie in devastating fashion, winning the first set 6-1. The Englishwoman gathered her nerves for the second set and won it in a tiebreak. Chris once again showed her exceptional match temperament, taking the third set 6-4 to earn a spot in the final.

Chris had her easiest match of the tournament in the final against Helen Gourlay, the Australian who reached the championship round of the French Open earlier in the year. Like many of Chris's previous opponents, Helen seemed to be at a loss. Whenever she approached the net, she was passed cleanly. When she stayed on the baseline, Chris' deep groundstrokes forced her into errors. Helen did not hold serve once in the first set;

after she lost it 6-4, her came totally collapsed. Chris raced through the second set, winning it in only twenty minutes without the loss of a game.⁵⁴ Although she was unable to accept the \$1,500 winner's check due to her amateur status, by the time Chris left the South Orange Lawn Tennis Club for the U. S. Open, her reputation as the world's next tennis star was confirmed.

The 1971 U. S. Open started on Wednesday, September 1, and each competitor faced the typical challenges of preparing for the tournament. The players were not permitted to practice on the grass courts of the West Side Tennis Club before the tournament started, in order to prevent wear and tear on the grass. As a result, their only options were to practice on the club's clay courts or two hard courts, or travel to the Rockaway Hunting Club in Lawrence, New York, to get a limited amount of grass court practice.

When Chris Evert arrived at the West Side Tennis Club on the opening day of the tournament, she was somewhat intimidated by the venue. She did not have her players' pass and was denied entrance through the players' gate.

*My mom and I stayed in Larchmont, New York, with my aunt and uncle, and we drove to Forest Hills every day. The first day we didn't have a clue. We went in the wrong gate, and I had to ask where the locker room was. It was totally overwhelming even to look at the Stadium Court.*⁵⁵

-- Chris Evert, 1996

Chris was surprised to discover that her first-round match, against 34-year old German professional Edda Buding, would be played on the Stadium Court on Thursday afternoon. Tournament Referee Victor Seixas originally scheduled the match for the less-intimidating Grandstand Court, but Tournament Chairman Billy Talbert anticipated the spectator demand for the 16-year old heroine of the Wightman Cup and changed the court assignment. "If we put her anyplace but in the Stadium," Talbert reasoned, "people would have knocked down the fences."⁵⁶ Two other famous champions – Helen Wills in the 1920s and Maureen Connolly in the 1950s – first played at Forest Hills when they

were 16-years old, but they did not play their debut matches at in the Stadium. “Playing in the stadium is an honor many players never achieve in a lifetime,” wrote Neil Amdur of the *New York Times*. “Making a debut there is similar to opening as the star of a Broadway musical. It is a tribute reserved for so few players that aficionados could not recall the last time it happened at Forest Hills.”⁵⁷

On the tournament’s opening day, protesters carried picket signs outside the main entrance, criticizing South African racial policies and the West Side Tennis Club’s discriminatory membership policies. Jan Kodes of Czechoslovakia, the 1970 and 1971 French Open champion who should have been seeded, eliminated Wimbledon champion John Newcombe, 2-6 7-6 7-6 6-3. It was the first time since 1930 that the top-seeded men’s singles player was defeated in the first round. “I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again,” Newcombe complained after the match, “I don’t like the nine-point tiebreaker.” With only 8,661 spectators on the West Side Tennis Club grounds, it was the worst opening day attendance since the first U. S. Open three years earlier.⁵⁸

The following day, Billie Jean played the opening match in the Stadium against Jeanne Arth, a Minnesota schoolteacher who partnered with Darlene Hard to win the women’s doubles titles at Forest Hills in 1958 and 1959, and at Wimbledon in 1959. In only thirty minutes, Billie Jean won 6-0 6-1. “I played percentage tennis,” Billie Jean said after the match. “I decided to take no chances.” After Tom Gorman was forced to retire in the third set of his match with Ion Tiriac due to an injured ankle, the stadium began to fill with spectators anticipating the debut of Chris Evert. If Chris was nervous about the occasion, she did her best to hide it.

Barry Lorge of *Tennis* magazine observed that as Chris and Edda Buding “strode onto the court, they looked calm enough, like Little Sister and Big Sister on their way to a fashion show. Chris was a cute bundle of lace and ribbons, while Edda was the continental sophisticate. Her stylish outfit included sunglasses and a hat shaped vaguely like that of a railroad engineer.” Buding, primarily a clay court player, had some success early in the match by hitting drop shots. As the match progressed, however, Chris became more comfortable moving on the soft grass and countered Buding’s soft

placements with drop shots of her own. After only forty-two minutes, Chris won her Forest Hills debut 6-1 6-0 to prolonged applause from the audience.⁵⁹

*I won my first-round match 6-1 6-0 and I remember thinking, "This is easy – the grass isn't so bad,"*⁶⁰

-- Chris Evert, 1996

After the match, in a lengthy news conference in a small room in the basement of the clubhouse, news reporters were curious to learn more about Florida teenager. "When I found out that I was playing my first match in the stadium, I was petrified," she said. "You get used to all the people very quickly, and then it's fun." Asked how far she thought she could go in the tournament, Chris admitted that "I don't have the confidence to go all the way. Experience-wise, this is my first year here, and playing on grass is still new to me. If it was on clay, I would have a better chance ... I knew that this summer must eventually catch up with me. It could happen with Mary Ann Eisel on this fast surface, but I have to get what experience I can while it still lasts."⁶¹

Chris told reporters she "might have wondered a few years ago, but now I know I'll be a pro when I'm eighteen. Until then, I'm not worried about the women's lib side of raising the prize money. But in a couple of years I'll be interested in that money." She also gave a glimpse of her intensely competitive nature, saying "I'm not really scared of losing. It's that winning gives me such a lift, it's like no other feeling. It drives you on." Chris also disclosed how the other players were treating her. "I guess the older girls resent me, but it's not my fault I win all the time ... I mean," she smiled, "you know what I mean."⁶²

*One thing I vividly remember about that Open is that no one talked to me in the locker room, especially Rosie Casals. I can say this now because Rosie and I became friends, but Rosie was so mean to me! She snubbed me and so did a lot of the other players, except three Americans: Linda Tuero, Val Ziegenfuss and Wendy Overton.*⁶³

-- *Chris Evert, 1996*

Two days later, on Saturday, Billie Jean lost only three games against Helen Gourlay in the opening noon match on the Grandstand Court. Afterward, she told Mark Asher of the *Washington Post* that she was particularly unhappy about the prize money distribution at the tournament; first place money in the women's singles event was \$5,000 plus \$2,500 for expenses, while the top prize in the men's singles was \$15,000 plus \$5,000 for expenses. Billie Jean told Asher that Virginia Slims offered to contribute enough money to make the women's first prize equal to the men's, but the tournament committee rejected the offer because "they were all men." Asked by Asher to say, in one word, what she thought of the ILTF and its decision to ban all the WCT professionals in 1972, Billie Jean said, "I can't even say the word. I'd be embarrassed ... All I know is I'm on the side of Lamar Hunt. He's going to make it. He has the organization and the money to do it." Billie Jean was also excited about plans by Virginia Slims to sponsor a women's tournament with \$100,000 in prize money in late 1972. "The general public is definitely more aware of women's tennis," she said. "It was up to each girl to do her part, or we wouldn't make it." ⁶⁴

After her interview with Asher, Billie Jean and many other players walked to the stadium to watch the most anticipated meeting of the day – Chris Evert against Mary Ann Eisel, the fourth-ranked American player. Of the 10,233 spectators who were on the grounds of the West Side Tennis Club, most of them were gathering in the stadium to watch the match.

A CBS television crew was present in the stadium, preparing for a live two-hour broadcast starting at 4:00 pm. CBS planned to show the second-round match between Great Britain's Stanley Matthews and Pancho Gonzalez, still considered America's biggest tennis attraction. Although the match between Chris and Mary Ann started well before 4:00 pm, it was recorded in its entirety by the television crew. Bud Collins and Ann Jones were seated in the broadcast booth in the southeast corner of the stadium, ready for their play-by-play match commentary.

The two Wightman Cup teammates certainly recalled their previous encounter in May. Chris won easily, 6-0 6-3, but that was on a slow, clay court, and Mary Ann was much more dangerous on a fast surface like grass. “The crowded stadium was hushed and expectant as the girls made their entrance,” wrote Mary Hardwick, a longtime contributor to *World Tennis* magazine “Mary Ann, as always, looked attractive and poised. Chrissie looked just as attractive, just as poised, but even younger than her sixteen years.” Mary Ann started the match strongly; she varied the spins and placements on her serve to keep Chris from getting into a rhythm, she rallied patiently from the baseline and waited for short balls to approach the net for winning volleys, and she avoided Chris’ dangerous two-handed backhand. “I have never seen Mary Ann more aggressive,” Hardwick noted, “or consistent off the ground.” They played evenly until 4-4, when Mary Ann broke through by coming forward to the net off the return of serve. Serving for the first set at 5-4, Mary Ann fell behind 30-40 but hit two aces to reach set point. Chris calmly hit a backhand winner to level at deuce, and then held two points to level at 5-5. Mary Ann held off the challenge with a flat, unreturnable serve down the middle on Chris’ first advantage point, and then with a crisp backhand volley on the second. She then closed out the set, 6-4, on her third set point. “It was women’s tennis at its best,” Hardwick noted, “and the crowd loved it.”⁶⁵

For the first set, and most of the second, Mary Ann was the slightly better player. Serving for the match at 5-4, Mary Ann suddenly felt the pressure. On the first point of the game, she hit a confident first serve and rushed the net, only to see Chris smack a crosscourt forehand past her. Shaken, Mary Ann then committed her sixth double-fault. “Those last four points seem eternal when you’re serving for the match,” Ann Jones said. “It’s the most difficult position to be in.” At love-30, she missed her first serve, and then pushed her second serve so weakly that Chris needed to lunge forward to return it; Mary Ann then nervously steered a forehand yards wide of the court. Finally, Mary Ann attempted to serve-and-volley once more, but she was forced into an error when Chris drilled the service return to her feet. Mary Ann was quickly broken at love, and the set was level at 5-5. “I know women’s tennis doesn’t normally rely on serve,” noted Ann, “but it’s very unusual on a grass court to get as many as six service break games in a

row, very unusual ... Mary Ann Eisel usually serves very well indeed and wins her service games a vast majority of the time. She is really out there having trouble.”⁶⁶

Annoyed that she played tentatively and failed to finish the match, Mary Ann was much more aggressive in the next game, at 5-5. She came forward to the net repeatedly, winning four out of five points with angled volleys and a confident overhead; it was the seventh consecutive service break of the set. On the changeover, leading 6-5, Mary Ann contemplated serving for the match one more time.

Serving at 6-5, Mary Ann quickly reached 30-love when Chris made two uncharacteristic backhand service return errors. On the game's third point, Chris hit a short return that Mary Ann guided down the line for a winner, giving her three match points. “When she reached 40-love,” wrote Neil Amdur of the *New York Times*, “little girls in pigtails around Portal No. 7 began crying, their dreams for this year shattered.” Mary Ann served to Chris' backhand for the fourth straight time and advanced to the net; this time, however, Chris belted a winner down the line and the crowd erupted. On her next chance to finish the match, Mary Ann rushed the net behind a second serve to Chris' forehand. Once again, Chris hit an outright winner off the return, this time an acutely angled crosscourt that Mary Ann could not reach. Perhaps feeling panicked, at 40-30 Mary Ann double-faulted. The crowd cheered, enraptured with the unfolding drama. “Now it was deuce,” Amdur recalled, “and the silence in the stadium was unbelievable.”⁶⁷

On three more occasions, Mary Ann had an opportunity to finish the match. On her fourth match point, Mary Ann served wide to Chris' backhand but could not handle the low return at her feet. On the fifth match point, she changed her tactics and did not rush the net, hoping to win the point by playing steadily. After a short rally, Mary Ann tentatively pushed a sliced backhand beyond the baseline. On her sixth chance to win the match, she went for an ace down the middle, missing only by a few inches. She then hit a kicking topspin serve to Chris' backhand, forcing her opponent to reach high and wide to make the return. Chris put up a weak lob that landed short, and Mary Ann moved in for the easy putaway. She hit her forehand crosscourt, but not forcefully enough – Chris got to the ball, and since she was out of position, she gambled and went for another winning

passing shot. Mary Ann was ready at the net and needed only to hit a simple forehand volley into the open court. Incredibly, she anxiously pushed the volley two feet wide of the sideline. The crowd roared, Mary Ann hung her head, and Chris could not believe her opponent's miscalculation. On the sixth deuce point, with Chris coolly fixing a gaze on her distressed opponent, Bud Collins said, "Chrissie Evert, standing there as though she's looking at the blackboard at St. Thomas Aquinas High School in Fort Lauderdale." When Chris forced Mary Ann into another volley error, Collins declared, "This is certainly the game of the tournament thus far – six times to deuce, six match points, three break points." ⁶⁸ With Chris holding her third game point, Mary Ann served to the backhand, came forward and hit a volley down the line. Chris moved to her right and picked her target. "Miss Evert broke service," Amdur wrote, "with a deep forehand crosscourt passing shot that shattered the silence." ⁶⁹ As the raucous crowd gave Chris a standing ovation, Mary Ann must have felt the weight of the stadium on her shoulders.

Mary Ann had one more chance to mercifully close out the match; the set went into a nine-point sudden death tiebreak. However, her confidence was evaporating quickly and the situation had turned into a nightmare. The crowd cheered for every point that Chris won, even if it was the result of an error from her opponent. After Mary Ann lost the first point of the tiebreak by hitting a forehand into the net, the crowd roared and Ann Jones said, "I wonder whose side the crowd are on ... so many cheers going up." ⁷⁰ After the second point, after Mary Ann hit another shot into the net, there were more cheers from the spectators. Chris lost the third point of the tiebreak by making an error on a service return, and Mary Ann relinquished the fourth point when she served, came to the net and missed a half-volley. Receiving serve at 1-3, Mary Ann hit a backhand crosscourt approach shot and came forward. Once again, the crowd erupted as Chris hit a pinpoint accurate passing shot down the line. Chris reached set point at 4-1 in the tiebreak, and a forehand error by Mary Ann concluded it. ⁷¹

CBS began its live broadcast at 4:00 pm, airing the match in progress at the start of the third set. Viewers who tuned in just missed the sensational conclusion of the second set, when Chris fought off six match points and secured the tiebreak. Bud Collins welcomed the television audience, saying "We're going to go right down to the court

because the crowd is going crazy for little Chrissie Evert of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, who has a break point in the first game of the third set against Mary Ann Eisel ... let's go down to the court.”⁷² Chris' debut on national television began with her toweling off on the changeover after breaking Mary Ann's serve to lead 1-0 in the third set, while Collins summarized what she had done so far in the match. As Mary Ann's game continued to collapse, Chris held serve for 2-0. In the set's third game, Mary Ann once again built a 40-love lead, but lost all three game points with a double-fault, a volley hit over the baseline, and a half-volley error caused by a low backhand return from Chris. “I can't understand why Mary Ann keeps serving it wide to her backhand,” Ann Jones said. “She's lost so many points doing that.” Collins could only say, “It's like a death wish.”⁷³ Chris won the game with a backhand pass down the line, and held serve to lead 4-0 when she aced Mary Ann in the deuce court. Mary Ann finally held serve in the set's fifth game – something she had not done since the middle of the second set – but by then it was too late. Chris held serve for a 5-1 lead, and then broke Mary Ann one more time, finishing the match with a final backhand winner on the line. As the players left the court, the crowd gave Chris a prolonged standing ovation.

*Mary Ann Eisel couldn't talk. She was really dazed, shell-shocked.*⁷⁴

-- Bud Collins, 1998

*I remember I got up from my seat and walked away, thinking, “This one has got that fight!” I went over and told everyone I had just seen the next great champion. “We have finally found our next generation superstar!”*⁷⁵

-- Billie Jean King, 2011

In 1971, I was a 14-year old girl watching my friends working as ball kids at the U. S. Open. I figured I would be a ball kid the following year. Then I watched Chris Evert, only two years older than I, play Mary Ann Eisel on Stadium Court. Chris was down 4-6, 5-6, love-40. She fought off those match points and three more of them, eventually winning the final set 6-1 ... for me it was the day against

*Eisel when Evert invented the idea of being great without being grown up. After that day, I no longer wanted to be a ball kid at the U. S. Open. I wanted to play there.*⁷⁶

-- Mary Carillo, 1993

In her post-match news conference, Chris was asked what she was thinking when Mary Ann was serving at 6-5 40-love in the second set. "I was trying to decide how I should walk off the court," she admitted. "Would I smile at the crowd or would I look dignified and serious? But each time she served, I seemed to see the ball bigger and bigger. I decided to hit for certain spots on her side to make winners and they just went in each time ... I figured I might as well lose hitting out."⁷⁷ Analyzing how Mary Ann could have possibly let six match points slip away, Chris felt "when she had me 40-love in match game, it wasn't a time for her to try and play steady. She should have gone all out and tried to knock the cover off the ball, like she had done earlier. Instead she played cautiously, and I was really loose at that point."⁷⁸

*... I felt no nerves. The ball looked bigger than normal, so I just hit out. That's a sign of youth.*⁷⁹

-- Chris Evert, 1996

While Chris was speaking with reporters in the clubhouse, Pancho Gonzalez had begun his match with Stanley Matthews in the stadium. At 6:00 pm, when the two-hour CBS live broadcast went off the air, the television crew began disassembling the cameras while the men were engaged in a third set. Gonzalez was furious at the commotion and told the crew workers that they were distracting him. It was a poignant moment; the American public had found its next tennis star, and she had already left the court.

*The Chrissie Craze had begun, and every kid in America wanted to hit the backhand with two fists – boys and girls, that was the way to do it.*⁸⁰

-- Bud Collins, 1998

The following day's upsets of Julie Heldman and Cliff Richey were overshadowed by the anticipation of Chris' next match, to be played against fifth-seeded Francoise Durr on Monday, September 5. Francoise came into the U. S. Open with a great deal of confidence; she beat Evonne Goolagong to win the Canadian Open in Toronto, she won the Virginia Slims Clay Court Championships in Chicago with her third win of the year over Billie Jean, and she narrowly lost to Kerry Melville in the finals of the Virginia Slims Grass Court Championships in Newport when the match went down to the final point of a sudden-death third set tiebreak. Francoise was not overly confident, however, because she remembered that Chris had easily beaten her in their two previous matches. "Forget you are playing a sixteen-year old kid," Julie told Francoise before the match. "Remember, she has played more tennis than we have."⁸¹

A heavy downpour during the opening Stadium Court match, between Stan Smith and Ton Leonard, delayed play for more than an hour. By the time Chris and Francoise walked into the stadium, the grass was still soft and spongy. With no matches played on the rain-soaked field courts – only the Stadium Court and Grandstand Court had tarpaulin covers that were rolled out during rainstorms – most of the Labor Day crowd of 10,308 assembled in the stadium to see if Chris could continue her remarkable run.

The opening game, with Francoise serving, lasted twelve minutes. Unlike Chris's previous match, when Mary Ann Eisel attacked the net at every opportunity, this was a battle between two baseline experts. In many of the rallies the ball crossed the net more than a dozen times, and the game went to deuce six times. Chris held three break points before Francoise finally won the game on her fourth advantage, and once again the crowd was enthralled. Determined and confident, Francoise attacked Chris' serve in the next game and did not lose a point. Chris broke back in the third game, and then Francoise raced to a 5-1 lead by targeting her opponent's forehand. Two games later, bending low to handle the skidding bounces on the damp grass, Francoise took the first set, 6-2.⁸²

While Chris and Francoise were battling, there was one other match in progress – Marty Riessen against Jan Leschly on the Grandstand Court, located adjacent to the stadium. The few spectators at the Grandstand were not interested in watching the men;

they were standing on the bleachers to get a better view of Chris and Francoise. “Amazing,” Riessen later said. “Even the people who were watching our match were following that one. I’ve never seen anything like it.”⁸³ Many fellow players were seated in the stadium, watching with great interest. “Such was ... the tremendous impact of this 16-year old girl on the international scene that Pancho Gonzalez, Cliff Richey and Bobby Riggs sat mesmerized and intrigued,” Mary Hardwick wrote in *World Tennis*, “wondering if the teenager would have the ability and strength of nerve to survive this crucial test after losing the first set.”⁸⁴ Certainly, some of Francoise’s fellow tour players were hoping that the fairy tale would come to a swift conclusion.

In the opening game of the second set, Chris raised the level of her game and began to attack. She immediately broke Francoise and then held serve for the first time in the match for a 2-0 lead. She ran Francoise from corner to corner, brought her forward with delicate drop shots and pushed her back with teasing lobs. Chris’ drop shots were especially effective. “Nine perfect ones!” marveled former champion Sarah Palfey Danzig. “I haven’t seen anything like it in years.”⁸⁵ Suddenly, as the day grew muggy, Francoise began to tire and Chris claimed the second set, 6-2.

The third set followed a pattern similar to the second. Chris continued to play aggressively – often moving well inside the court to pound her two-handed backhand – as she broke Francoise in the opening game and held for 2-0. Francoise held serve in the third game, and “then came the most crucial game of the match,” wrote Hardwick. “With Chrissie serving, Frankie had a point to level at 2-all, but the tenacious Chris hung on, the rallies became longer and more furious, and both girls bludgeoned each other from the baseline.”⁸⁶ Chris held on for 3-1, and then protected her two-game lead to close out the third set, 6-3. After the last point, the entire stadium rose once again to give Chris a standing ovation.

*Frankie was in tears during the whole third set, and the crowd was really pulling for me.*⁸⁷

-- Chris Evert, 1996

A tearful Françoise did not speak to the media after the match, only saying “the crowd was against me.”⁸⁸ Chris told a room full of reporters how she turned the match around. “After losing the first set, I started playing loose,” she explained. “I felt I must have had too much confidence in the first set, because I had beaten Françoise twice before.” Chris also admitted the partisan crowd embarrassed her. “I’m happy to have the people rooting for me, but I was a little ashamed when they cheered Frankie’s errors and faults ... it upset me,” she said.⁸⁹

Earlier in the tournament, USLTA President Bob Colwell sent a letter to the Virginia Slims management at Philip Morris (incorrectly addressed to Steve Korsen, who was no longer the Virginia Slims Brand Manager). The letter listed numerous conditions that were to be met if sanction approvals were to be granted for tournaments on the 1972 Virginia Slims Circuit.⁹⁰ Colwell subsequently invited Korsen’s successor, John Granville, to meet with him and Bob Malaga on Tuesday, September 7.

Granville brought Philip Morris vice president James Bowling and Philip Morris attorney Alexander Holtzman with him to the meeting. Colwell and Bob Malaga expressed their desire to work with Virginia Slims in the future; however, several of the temporary concessions that were made in 1971 for the women’s tour would not be renewed for 1972. All tournaments on the 1972 Virginia Slims circuit would be required to pay the standard USLTA sanction fee of 6% of total prize money, instead of the \$480 sanction fee per women’s tournament that was allowed in 1971. The USLTA officials insisted that Gladys’ practice of holding qualifying and preliminary rounds on the circuit was not compliant with USLTA tournament regulations and needed to cease. “There was a one-way discussion about the make-up of draws,” Granville recalled later. “I say one-way because we didn’t understand the nature of the discussion, nor were our comments requested.” Colwell and Malaga also wanted the Virginia Slims circuit to refrain from scheduling tournaments that were in conflict with USLTA events during the summer, and they wanted the women to abandon their demands for minimum prize money standards at USLTA tournaments.⁹¹

Finally, Colwell requested to exclude Gladys from all future negotiations between the USLTA and the Virginia Slims Circuit. According to Granville, “they suggested that it was very difficult and may be impossible to work with Mrs. Heldman.” The meeting ended without any agreements from the Philip Morris executives. “We were not invited for our comments, and we didn’t make them,” Granville said afterward. “We just left ... it was not a friendly meeting ... we had been virtually summoned there ...”⁹²

Upon learning that the USLTA no longer wanted to have any association with Gladys, Joe Cullman threatened to withdraw his company’s sponsorship of the U. S. Open telecasts. Cullman spoke with reporters at the West Side Tennis Club to express “our concern – mine and Philip Morris’ – with what’s happening in the world of tennis.” Although Cullman was no longer the U. S. Open Chairman, his company indirectly financed the tournament, paying \$250,000 per year to CBS Television. In turn, CBS Television paid \$100,000 to the USLTA for broadcast rights. Although television commercials for tobacco products were no longer allowed, commercials for several other Philip Morris products – including Miller High-Life beer, Personna razors, and Burma-Shave shaving cream – were featured prominently in U. S. Open telecasts. As a result, Cullman still had an immense amount of influence on the USLTA.⁹³

In speaking with the reporters, Cullman predicted that the friction between the ILTF and WCT would ultimately harm the USLTA and benefit the Virginia Slims Circuit. He explained that, if the ILTF stood firm in its decision to ban WCT players from its tournaments the following year, corporate sponsorships would disappear from most of the world’s tournaments. Cullman then distributed a letter addressed to Frank Smith, Vice President and Director of Sales for CBS, which read in part:

We have been the major sponsors of these telecasts, as you know, since 1969. Our decision to sponsor them and, I am sure, your network’s decision to buy the television rights, were based on the understanding that the United States Lawn Tennis Association, the tournament organizer, would promote open tennis competition at Forest Hills and make that tournament the major tennis event in the United States for the top international players, both amateur and professional.

This understanding guided our decision and reflected my personal dedication to the encouragement of open tennis competition between the world's top players which would make the sport more appealing from the standpoint of the players, spectators and television viewers.

The present U. S. Open tournament at Forest Hills, I regret to say, does not represent the quality of competition that was contemplated in our decision to sponsor the telecasts. Absent from this tournament are many of the top contract professionals in men's tennis who in the past several years made this event one of the major sporting events available for telecasting. This, of course, is a disappointment to us since we have worked with you for so long to bring the world's top tennis players before the public through the medium of network television.

Our sponsorship agreement with you was made on the understanding that you had entered into a legally binding agreement with the United States Lawn Tennis Association which required that organization to use its best efforts to have the world's outstanding contract professionals, independent professionals, registered and amateur players appear at the U. S. Open at Forest Hills. As you know, the United States Lawn Tennis Association and the International Lawn Tennis Federation have barred the World's (sic) Championship Tennis professionals, the top 32 men contract professionals in the world, from its tournaments next year. This action probably contributed to the decision of many of these players not to appear at Forest Hills this year. Since the USLTA must have been aware that this result might follow from their action, we believe that the USLTA has violated its agreement with you to use its best efforts to attract these players to the U. S. Open this year ...

... because of the reduced value of the sponsorship rights under our contract with you, we demand a renegotiation of the price (for this year's telecasts) ...

We have recently been informed by the USLTA that the women professional players now participating in tournaments to which this company has contributed prize money for promotional considerations will be barred from competing in tournaments sanctioned by the USLTA unless they agree to abide by certain conditions laid down by the USLTA which we believe to be unacceptable. If the USLTA bars these women players and the ILTF ban on the World's Championships Tennis players is in effect after January 1, 1972, as announced, then the world's top male and female players will be finished.

Accordingly, we wish to notify you further that, in the event the USLTA should bar the Virginia Slims Girls as well as uphold the ILTF ban of the World's Championship Tennis men players, we shall consider our commitment to CBS to sponsor future telecasts of the U. S. Open Tennis Championships as terminated.⁹⁴

Cullman told reporters that he had "been trying to understand the USLTA for many years now and have found it impossible to do so. Our decisions have not been taken lightly. I hope that our actions will encourage all parties to re-appraise the situation and reach agreements that will foster what was a great idea – open tennis in the U. S. for both men and women." He also indicated that, if Philip Morris terminated its contract with CBS, the \$250,000 per year would be added to the Virginia Slims Circuit.⁹⁵

CBS Vice President Frank Smith, most likely unaware of the complicated maneuverings between Gladys and the USLTA, was sympathetic to Cullman's position. "We join him in his disappointment in the absence of top players this year and next," said Smith, who also indicated that he did not immediately know the legal ramifications of Cullman's letter. "You can't have a top Open without the top names. It would be like the U. S. Open golf tournament without Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus. We have made a substantial investment in tennis as has Mr. Cullman."⁹⁶ USLTA President Bob Colwell had no immediate comment, indicating that he planned to study the contracts.

The following day, Wednesday, September 8, Colwell responded to Cullman's letter by distributing a written statement to reporters in the press area at the U. S. Open.

I regret that Mr. Cullman has decided to withdraw his support from the U. S. Open Tennis Championships' television sponsorship, and all other connections with the event. In order to clarify some of the remarks that were made regarding the women tennis players being suspended, we have no intention of suspending anyone or any group of players as long as they abide by the established rules of the ILTF and the USLTA. The restrictive conditions of play, supposedly imposed upon the women, that are being referred to, are the same rules that govern all tournament play of the USLTA, men as well as women. The modified rules for some women's events in 1971 were merely experimental and will not be used in 1972.⁹⁷

Later in the week, on NBC's Today Show, Colwell repeated that he regretted Cullman's decision, but that the USLTA would "go out and get another sponsor. Maybe it's best if they withdrew sponsorship, since some people have criticized us for having a cigarette company as a sponsor." Those who watched the television program thought Colwell's comments were hypocritical; the Philip Morris sponsorship was acceptable as long as the USLTA was the recipient, otherwise the partnership with a tobacco company was unethical. Regarding the search for another sponsor, it was pointed out by one tennis observer that "the USLTA has decided to get sponsors several times and has always come up with zero." Referring to Colwell's earlier concerns about the depleted USLTA treasury, the observer suggested that "maybe it will take going bankrupt to wake them up."⁹⁸

Nearly 9,000 spectators came to the West Side Tennis Club on Wednesday, September 8 to watch Tom Okker defeat Roger Taylor in the opening match on the Stadium Court. Afterwards, Chris Evert and Lesley Hunt took the court for their quarterfinal match. Lesley, an athletic 21-year old Australian who had recently joined the Virginia Slims Circuit, was somewhat lucky to advance so far in the tournament. She

was in the same section of the draw as number-three seed Virginia Wade, who withdrew before the tournament started with an ankle injury. For Chris, a quarterfinal meeting with Virginia on the fast grass court would have been more challenging, but she did beat the British star on a slow synthetic surface during the Wightman Cup three weeks earlier.

Many of the women players were studying Chris' game during the U. S. Open, and they determined that the way to play her was to keep the ball down the middle, giving her no angles or targets for her passing shots. Lesley also hoped to prevent Chris from getting into a rhythm by hitting an assortment of spins; heavy topspin on the forehand and heavy underspin on the backhand. She planned to rally with Chris from the back of the court, which was not her usual game, coming forward to the net only when she had Chris out of position.⁹⁹

As the match began to unfold, Lesley's strategy worked and she forged ahead 3-0 and 4-1 in the first set. For the first time in the tournament, Chris looked edgy and hesitant. "She isn't seeded," Chris said about her opponent before the match, "so people finally expect me to win."¹⁰⁰ Although she committed numerous errors on the forehand and seemed slow in covering the court, Chris continued to pound her groundstrokes and leveled the set at 4-4. Lesley held serve to lead 5-4, and in the next game held two set points. On the first one, she missed an easy overhead. On the second set point, as Chris hit another forehand into the net, many of Lesley's fellow tour players were hoping that Chris' run was finally coming to an end.¹⁰¹

*... the women kind of stuck together and cheered my opponent, or whoever I played ... they viewed me as a threat ... it was like, this sixteen-year old girl, who is she, she hasn't put any work into the women's tour, she goes to school and then she comes on the tour and plays the tournaments and reaps the benefits and gets all the publicity ...*¹⁰²

-- Chris Evert, 1995

Chris reacted to losing the second set just as she did against Francoise Durr; she hit with more confidence, utilized her drop shot and lob, and ran out the second set 6-2.

Chris and Lesley played evenly until 3-3 in the third set, when Chris broke at love and then lost only three more points in the next two games to finish the match. On the final point, with Lesley serving, Chris hit a winning service return and the crowd erupted. After the match, another one of Chris' opponents left the court in tears. "I can beat Chris Evert," Lesley sobbed, "but not 12,000 people."¹⁰³

In her post-match news conference, Chris explained that she "didn't start out quickly enough. It seems I must have a few games under my belt before I start playing well. I thought the turning point came in the middle of the second set when Lesley started making some bad shots." Looking ahead to her semifinal meeting with Billie Jean King, who won her quarterfinal match against Laura DuPont, Chris tried to be realistic. "I don't think I can win next time," she admitted. "Billie Jean looks awfully tough. I'll try to keep her in back of the court. But I think this may be the end. I never expected to go this far ... It should be a very loose match for me."¹⁰⁴

Billie Jean told reporters that she also intended to be very relaxed in her match against Chris. "I've been there," she said. "If I can't handle the pressure now, I'll never be able to handle it. I think I know what I have to do to win." When asked what game plan she intended to use against Chris, she said, "Ah-ha, it's a secret – other than to win the last point." Billie Jean then analyzed how Chris' success in the tournament would affect her life. "She's riding the crest of a wave. I hope she enjoys it because her life will change abruptly. Her life already has changed. She has no privacy anymore. She belongs to the public ... I don't think she really realizes what's happened to her yet, because it's something that's happened over night. I realize it because I've been through it. It's something else."¹⁰⁵ Well aware that she was going to be the villain in the match with Chris, Billie Jean insisted that the crowd would not bother her. "I like people to yell, to get involved," she insisted. "Then I know they're watching and a part of what's going on. I've been booed before ... and I loved it. In Germany this year, the crowd hated me because I got mad and asked to have a linesman removed. I thought they were going to throw bottles at me, and I never played better in my life." She expressed her annoyance at other players who were hoping that Chris would lose in her previous matches. "Chris has really helped women's tennis," she said. "If any of the other girls

feel jealous about the attention she's received, they should stop and think beyond their own little worlds ... Every time they show her on TV, that helps tennis. I love it." ¹⁰⁶

I heard later on, when the girls were complaining about me, Billie told them, "She's good for the game! She's going to put money in our pockets, so quit complaining!" ¹⁰⁷

-- Chris Evert, 2011

As the tournament progressed, when fewer matches were scheduled, the remaining competitors were allowed to practice on the grass courts. At one of Billie Jean's practice sessions, 1939 Wimbledon champion and current national senior champion Bobby Riggs challenged her to a winner-take-all prize-money match, to be staged at a later date. While Billie Jean knew about Riggs' accomplishments, they had never met before.

At Forest Hills that year I remember I was practicing on the Clubhouse court one day when he suddenly came out of nowhere, jumped over the little fence by the court, and kept saying to me, "You've got to play. How can you not want to play?" ... I turned him down, cold. At that time my mind was only concerned with getting the Virginia Slims circuit on the road, nothing else. We were trying to prove that women could make it on their own and I didn't want to get anything started that might distract from that goal ... Our circuit was struggling then, and if Bobby had won, just enough people might have believed his spiel to send our whole tour down the drain. It was that touchy ... He kept saying what a great hype our match would be for the women's tour, but I told him if we couldn't make it on our own then we didn't deserve to make it at all. I more or less told him we didn't want him. ¹⁰⁸

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

The women's semifinals were played on Friday, September 10. U. S. Vice President Spiro Agnew flew in from Washington, D. C. in time to see the first women's

match, when Rosie Casals defeated Kerry Melville in straight sets. As their match was nearing its end, Billie Jean went through her customary pre-match preparation of taking a warm shower before she took the court.

... I was beginning to wonder if Chris wasn't destined to win this tournament the same way Evonne apparently had been to win Wimbledon. I have to say, the pressure got to me. I felt it was one of those few matches in my career where literally everything was on the line – my personal standing and the future of the Virginia Slims tour ... I knew that if Chris beat me it might knock our circuit right out of the ballpark. How could we claim we had the best talent and that our circuit was the future of women's tennis if our best player – me – was going around getting knocked off left and right by a couple of teenagers? It was almost too much for me. After I warmed up on a field court I went back to the dressing room and took a shower – and right there with the warm water streaming down on me I guess my nerves just took over and I started to cry. I stood there and bawled my head off. It was bad. For a few minutes I really panicked. I wanted to run, to do anything at all except walk on that court and play that match. But finally I said, "My God, you've got to get hold of yourself, Billie Jean. It can't end here, not now." ¹⁰⁹

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

As Billie Jean and Chris walked across the West Side Tennis Club to the stadium, Billie Jean was thrilled with the number of well-wishers who lined the path.

We made the long walk from the clubhouse to the stadium. Billie Jean tried to chat with me. I was surprised because in the juniors you never talked with your opponent. I didn't know if it was gamesmanship, but I do remember that she said that I was riding the crest of a wave and I should enjoy it ... I was sixteen and dumb. Riding the crest of a wave? I memorized it, and went back home and asked. And somebody explained it to me. ¹¹⁰

-- Chris Evert, 2011

When Billie Jean and Chris walked onto the court, 13,647 fans greeted them – the largest crowd ever to see a weekday match at Forest Hills Stadium since its construction in 1923. In the opening game, Chris immediately got into trouble on her serve and fell behind love-40. To the delight of the audience, Chris extricated herself and won the first game. To get herself motivated, Billie Jean kept shaking her fist and pounding her thigh. “Billie Jean is trying to get herself boiling,” Bud Collins said, as he and Ann Jones were once again in the television broadcast booth.¹¹¹

*She was calm and poised. I, on the other hand, was as psyched up as I'd ever been in my life. I talked to myself and slapped my thighs just like in the good old days – except this time there wasn't anything bubbly or effervescent about me at all. I was taut, but I was tough as nails too. It was a grim, professional afternoon. I knew exactly what I wanted to do and how to do it.*¹¹²

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Billie Jean's strategy was to keep Chris off-balance by using a variety of spins and pace. She abandoned her natural serve-and-volley tactics, preferring instead to remain on the baseline and wait for the right time to attack.

*All I remember about the match is that she chopped and spun every ball, which is awful on grass. I remember thinking that she didn't look like a pro out there, but it was effective because her strategy was to break up my rhythm. I felt I was in over my head against a very confident woman with a lot more experience. It was a good strategy, but it wasn't a very pretty match.*¹¹³

-- Chris Evert, 1996

They played evenly until 3-3 in the first set, when Billie Jean broke serve and began to pull away. She was careful to make sure that Chris did not reverse the momentum; she knew if Chris got a foothold in the match, every fan in the stadium

would be cheering for her. “Billie Jean does not want the crowd to get into it,” Collins told the television audience.¹¹⁴ Serving at 4-3, Billie Jean sensed her opening.

*In the Evert match, we were three-all in the first set, game score thirty-all, and we were in the middle of a long rally. Chris, as you know, has a two-handed backhand. I remember thinking that because of it, she doesn't have as much reach, so I was determined to get one wide to her backhand. I set it up by hitting deep to the corner of her forehand, then on the return far to her backhand. She was a half a step slow getting to it and missed the shot. I thought that was the match. That point turned it around for me.*¹¹⁵

-- Billie Jean King, 1972

*Chris was finished. I didn't let up at all in the second set and it was over quickly, 6-3. It was really strange, but when the match turned in my favor, so did the crowd. I was proud of myself that day, and I think that for one of the few times in my career I was really able to communicate to an audience what it feels like to play great tennis under the most difficult circumstances imaginable.*¹¹⁶

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

A relieved Billie Jean and gracious Chris came off the court, walking to the marquee through a swarm of photographers. They proceeded through the marquee to a tent that was specifically installed to accommodate the post-match news conference. While Billie Jean and Chris waited in the tent for the news conference to start, Howard Cosell offered some advice about what to expect from the army of reporters. “You know what the first question is going to be?” he asked Chris. “When did you start to hate Billie Jean?” Chris was horrified at Cosell’s comment. “I don’t hate her!” she protested. “Don’t worry, Chris,” Billie Jean said. “He’s the only guy who’d ask a question like that.”¹¹⁷

Once the news conference started, Billie Jean explained that her strategy was to stay in the back of the court until Chris hit a short ball; she only wanted to come into the

net when she knew she could put Chris on the defensive. Otherwise, it would have been unwise to come forward to the net on less-than-perfect approach shots. “Chris passes you too well,” she said. A reporter asked Chris if the match was the most challenging she ever played. “I don’t know,” she said, and then turning to Billie Jean, “Was it? I guess so.”

Billie Jean told the mass of reporters that Chris “she doesn’t have privacy anymore. Chris Evert doesn’t belong to Chris Evert any longer, she belongs to the public ... it’s very tough when people are always following you, taking pictures, asking questions. Your mind, your thoughts, your feelings are constantly being interrupted. Everyone loves a winner and the attention is great, but it’s difficult sometimes because your life is not really your own, except for maybe a couple of hours a day when you’re asleep in bed.”¹¹⁸

Chris insisted that all the attention “really didn’t bother me ... I didn’t think there was much pressure. It’s annoying when you go home and people keep phoning so that you can’t eat dinner or have a few minutes to yourself. But at the tournament, it’s expected. It’s the price you pay.”

A reporter asked Chris if she could be satisfied going back to school, and just being another student at St. Thomas Aquinas High School in Fort Lauderdale. “In a way I’m looking forward to going back to school,” she said. “I know I won’t get much attention at home when I go back to studying. But I’ve got responsibilities other than tennis, and school is one of them. It’s been a really great summer. I’ve played well and had a lot of fun, and I hate to see it end. But summer vacations do end. It’s a fact.”¹¹⁹

After the news conference, it took another hour for Chris to make it back to the locker room; numerous television crews wanted to interview her, and everyone wanted her autograph. Quietly observing the commotion was Tracy Woodcock, the eight-year old daughter of Warren Woodcock, the teaching professional at the West Side Tennis Club.

Squirming slowly through the crowd, obliging autograph-seekers and well-wishers in numbers usually reserved for a winner, Chris did not notice her

shadow: the little girl in red, white and blue, clutching a silk scarf of the same colors, who was following on her heels, lips curled in nervous anticipation of a chance to catch her heroine's attention. Finally the shadow reached out and gently tugged at Chris' sweater. "I want you to have this," Tracy whispered, quickly stuffing the scarf into Chris' hand. "Please take it." Tracy's heart was wrapped up in that gift, and Chris accepted it as tenderly as it was given. "It's beautiful," she said. "You're very thoughtful ... what's your name?" They talked for a few moments, and Chris said "thank you" again before vanishing into the dressing room. For about three pulse beats, Tracy was transfixed. Then she burst into tears, turned, and raced down a walkway toward the Stadium. She didn't want the world to see her crying, so she found a solitary corner and buried her head in her hands. "I wanted her to win so much," Tracy sobbed, trembling as she tried to choke back the tears. "I thought she was going to win ... I thought she could ... I love her, and I didn't want her to lose." When you are an 8 ½-year-old girl, 16 is a very advanced age, and Chris Evert is the kind of girl you'd like to grow up to be. ¹²⁰

Frank Podesta, who promoted events at Madison Square Garden, marveled at the impact Chris had on the tournament. "There were 13,647 in the stands," he said on Friday evening. "I think she personally drew 8,500 of them. It's impossible to estimate what she has meant to this tournament – in money, \$100,000 at least, probably more." ¹²¹

What did I learn from that experience? I learned that ignorance is bliss. I didn't know what the heck was going on around me until later when I read that people were climbing the fences to try and see the match. Everyone made such a big deal of it. Newsweek called with I got home, and my dad was so good about it. He just said "no" to everybody! He was great. How many fathers today would do that? ¹²²

-- Chris Evert, 1996

Some of the reporters at the U. S Open dubbed Chris with the nickname “Little Miss Sunshine.” The day after she was eliminated from the tournament, the West Side Tennis Club was inundated with three days of rain. On Saturday, September 11, Rosie Casals and Judy Dalton were leading Francoise Durr and Gail Chanfreau in the women’s doubles final, when play was stopped at 3-1 in the first set. Other matches, including the men’s singles semifinals and women’s singles final, were postponed for two more days due to the continual rain. It would not be until Tuesday, September 14 when the weather cleared and matches resumed.

During the lull in matches, USLTA Executive Director Bob Malaga found himself sitting down with Gladys and going over her plans for the 1972 Virginia Slims circuit. This must have been a bitter pill for Malaga, since the USLTA had asked the Virginia Slims management team a few days earlier to avoid working with Gladys. The following year’s circuit would once again open in San Francisco and return to the cities of Long Beach, Milwaukee, Birmingham, San Juan, and St. Petersburg. Although several of the tournaments held in 1971 – in Chattanooga, New York, and Winchester – decided not to renew because they were financial failures, Gladys arranged for replacement tournaments to be held in Fort Lauderdale, Jacksonville, Indianapolis, Tucson and Dallas.

Of the twelve tournaments on the 1972 winter-spring circuit, seven were Virginia Slims Invitationals that offered between \$14,000 and \$20,000 in prize money. For these events, Virginia Slims provided half of the prize money, and each tournament provided the other half. The other tournaments, not sponsored by Virginia Slims, were once again sponsored by British Motor Cars in San Francisco, the Independent Press-Telegram newspaper in Long Beach, the Tennis Club in Fort Lauderdale, K-Mart in Birmingham, Michigan, and Marlboro at the Caribe Hilton Championships in San Juan. The highlight of the 1972 winter-spring circuit was the Maureen Connolly Brinker International in Dallas, which was partially funded by the Maureen Connolly Brinker Foundation and planned to offer prize money of \$50,000.

Although the Virginia Slims National Indoor Championships was not returning to the Winchester Lawn Tennis Center in Winchester, Massachusetts – the tournament organizers were no longer interested after getting caught in the middle of the skirmish

between Gladys and the USLTA earlier in the year – the Old Colony Tennis Club in Hingham, Massachusetts was willing to host the event, since Virginia Slims was providing most of the prize money. The total prize money offered for the 1972 winter-spring circuit (Table 8.1) was \$244,000.

Table 8.1 – 1972 Virginia Slims Circuit Schedule

Dates	City	Sponsor	Prize Money
Jan 12-15	San Francisco CA	British Motor Cars	\$15,000
Jan 19-23	Long Beach CA	Long Beach Press-Independent	\$15,000
Jan 26-30	Hingham MA	Virginia Slims	\$18,000
Feb 1-6	Fort Lauderdale FL	Tennis Club of Fort Lauderdale	\$25,000
Feb 7-13	Free Week		
Feb 15-19	Oklahoma City OK	Virginia Slims	\$20,000
Mar 2-5	Birmingham MI	K-Mart	\$15,000
Mar 6-12	Dallas TX	Maureen Connolly Brinker Tennis Foundation	\$50,000
Mar 13-19	Free Week		
Mar 20-26	Richmond VA	Virginia Slims	\$18,000
Mar 27-Apr 2	San Juan PR	Marlboro	\$18,000
Apr 3-9	Jacksonville FL	Virginia Slims	\$14,000
Apr 11-16	St. Petersburg FL	Virginia Slims	\$18,000
Apr 17-24	Tucson AZ	Virginia Slims	\$18,000

According to Malaga, Gladys agreed that each tournament would pay the USLTA a fee equal to 6% of its prize money in order to receive a USLTA sanction approval; the flat fee of \$480 per tournament on the Virginia Slims Circuit was a temporary compromise that only applied to events on the 1971 tour. As a result, the USLTA planned on receiving nearly \$15,000 in sanction fees from the 1972 Virginia Slims Circuit – money that the financially strapped association desperately needed.

When the skies finally cleared on Tuesday, September 14, Stan Smith and Tom Okker played the first men's singles semifinal match on the Stadium Court. After Smith beat Okker, 7-6 6-3 3-6 2-6 6-3, Jan Kodes staged another incredible upset when he rallied from two sets down to beat Arthur Ashe, 7-6 3-6 4-6 6-3 6-4. During these two lengthy matches, the mixed doubles tournament was completed on the Grandstand Court.

In one of the semifinals, Billie Jean and Owen Davidson defeated Judy Dalton and Frew McMillan, 6-3 2-6 6-2. In the other semifinal, Betty Stove and Bob Maud advanced to the final by default over the top-seeded team of Rosie Casals and Ilie Nastase. The unpredictable Rumanian was eliminated early from the men's singles and men's doubles, and he did not want to stay in New York during the three-day rain delay to wait to play mixed doubles.

After winning their semifinal match, Billie Jean and Owen had a short rest and then defeated Betty Stove and Bob Maud, 6-3 7-5, for their second mixed doubles title at Forest Hills. The final match played on the Stadium Court that day was the women's doubles final, with Judy and Rosie completing their rain-delayed match against Francoise and Gail, winning 6-3 6-3. The singles championships were set for Wednesday; Stan Smith was scheduled to play Jan Kodes at 12:30 pm, followed by the women's singles final between Billie Jean and Rosie.

During Tuesday's action at the U. S. Open, the Virginia Slims Invitational in Louisville, Kentucky began on the clay courts of the Louisville Tennis Center. Four of the seeded players – Billie Jean, Rosie, Francoise and Judy – were still in New York, so the featured matches on the opening day in Louisville included fourth-seeded Kerry Melville defeating Ceci Martinez, sixth-seeded Helen Gourlay winning against Edda Buding, and Mona Schallau upsetting Lesley Hunt, who was the seventh seed. The number of spectators in Louisville on Tuesday was one of the most disappointing attendance figures on the entire 1971 Virginia Slims Circuit; less than one hundred people came out to watch the matches.

On Wednesday morning, Judy and Francoise took a flight from New York to Louisville. Only five hours after landing, each of them played a first-round match. In front of another sparse crowd – less than one hundred spectators again – Francoise, the number two seed, had no problems with Farel Footman, easily winning 6-0 6-0. Judy was not as fortunate, falling to Beck Vest in a second set tiebreak. “The transition from grass to clay is very difficult,” Judy told Gary Schultze of the *Louisville Courier and Journal*. “But that wasn't my entire problem. I just haven't played much lately, with the

rain and all in New York. If I could have gotten in here Monday with the other girls, I at least would have had a day of practice.”¹²³

While a full schedule of first-round matches were being played in Louisville on Wednesday afternoon, the U. S. Open was finally wrapping up with the men’s singles and women’s singles finals, with 12,879 spectators in attendance. After Stan Smith won his first major championship by defeating Jan Kodes of Czechoslovakia in a fourth-set tiebreak Billie Jean and Rosie took the court to play the women’s singles championship. They each held serve for the first four games, until Billie Jean broke in the fifth game and held easily to lead 4-2. She broke Rosie’s serve for the second time, and prepared to serve for the first set at 5-2. With Billie Jean serving with new balls, Rosie hit four spectacular service returns to earn her first break of the match, and then she held serve to narrow the gap to 5-4. Serving for the set a second time, Billie Jean made no mistakes and secured it, 6-4.¹²⁴

Rosie raised the level of her game in the second set and led 4-2. This time it was Rosie’s turn to serve with new balls, and she could not take advantage of it, allowing Billie Jean to break back. Capitalizing on Rosie’s backhand and volley errors, Billie Jean held to level at 4-4, and four games later the players were in a sudden-death tiebreak. Rosie won the first point of the tiebreak, after which Billie Jean won six of the next seven points, finishing the match with an easy overhead smash.¹²⁵

*... I beat Rosie Casals in straight sets for the title – the second United States championship of my career. It was a super tournament, one of my best ever. I felt just terrific afterwards. I felt I had accomplished a lot.*¹²⁶

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

At the on-court presentation ceremony, Billie Jean was given a winner’s check for \$5,000 and the keys to a new Ford Torino, valued at \$6,700 and given courtesy of Virginia Slims. Rosie drew laughter from the audience when she suggested that Larry King should come to her aid the following year by making sure that Billie Jean joined

Margaret Court and Ann Jones in motherhood. She also joked that for making such a suggestion, she wasn't likely to get a ride home in Billie Jean's new car.¹²⁷

Speaking with reporters after the match, Billie Jean talked about her success against Rosie over the years. "I've always said that my success over her was more technical than psychological, as most people think," she said. "She hasn't worked enough on her weaknesses, and they show up in tough matches." Billie Jean also talked about how important it was for her to win in New York, where she had disappointing results in the past. "I just didn't want to lose in New York again," she said. "People here have been super nice to me over the years, and I always found a way to mess it up. It was maddening, because I always wanted to play well here and never did, not even the year I won. That ran through my mind when I was down 2-4 in the second set. 'Old Lady,' I said to myself, 'if you do this again, I'll kill you.'"¹²⁸ With the win at Forest Hills, Billie Jean became the first woman to win the national singles titles on grass, clay and indoors since Pauline Betz accomplished the feat in 1946,

Billie Jean also gave reporters an insight into the mind of a champion. "I was so psyched up today you wouldn't believe it," she admitted. "I had to go and take a shower before the match ... God, it's so emotional. The whole place is packed, and I say to myself, 'You love it. This is what you wait for.' Then you walk onto the court and wonder what you're doing there, and you want to turn and get away. You love it and you are scared to death at the same time, but that's what it's all about. That's the occasion. It's fantastic."¹²⁹ Shortly after the match, Billie Jean and her husband Larry, Rosie, and Ann and Pip Jones were on a flight from New York to Louisville. The Virginia Slims Invitational at the Louisville Tennis Center had already completed two days of matches, and Billie Jean and Rosie would need to play two matches on Thursday in order to get caught up with the schedule.

On Thursday, September 16, play began at noon at the Louisville Tennis Center. Billie Jean opened the day's program against Great Britain's Sally Holdsworth in front of only four hundred spectators. After her 6-0 6-1 victory, Billie Jean told reporters, "I'm so upset about the crowd." Pip Jones was sitting nearby and lost his patience when he heard Billie Jean's complaint. "If you're upset, how do you think the people promoting the

tournament feel?” Billie Jean clarified her statement. “It’s like a conductor walking out on the stage to conduct a symphony and finding there are only ten people in the audience,” she explained. “It tends to seem more like a rehearsal then.”¹³⁰

Four hours later, Billie Jean was back on court for her second match against Wendy Overton. By this time, the temperature had dropped considerably, and only one hundred spectators remained. Rosie Casals played her second match against Pam Teeguarden on a side court; in addition to the chair umpire, five linespersons and three ball boys, there were only two spectators.

The next day, the four top seeds – Billie Jean, Francoise Durr, Rosie, and Kerry Melville won their quarterfinal matchers and advanced to Saturday’s semifinals. Rosie had the toughest challenge, getting pushed by Helen Gourlay to a third-set tiebreak that went to the 4-4 sudden death, simultaneous match point. ‘I’ve been playing bad the last three or four weeks – I just think I’m getting tired of tennis,” Rosie said. “We’re all playing without much break. We need the top players on the tour, the promoters demand it. A few of us must play every tournament.”¹³¹ Billie Jean, who scored an easier 6-2 6-3 win over Lita Liem, agreed. If Ann Jones had not gotten pregnant, and if Margaret Court, Virginia Wade and Evonne Goolagong had joined the tour, “I wouldn’t have played as much. I can’t do this again next year ... I’m really tired, it’s all I can do to concentrate. I really haven’t rested since the week after London. I’ve played ten straight weeks without any rest. I didn’t get any sleep the last two nights. I’m taking naps, just trying to catch up.”¹³²

Despite the noon start time of Saturday’s semifinals, the temperature was still cool and only one thousand spectators were present. Rosie defeated Francoise 7-5 6-2 and later said the brisk north wind affected her shots. “It was pretty strong,” Rosie said about the wind. “My lobs hung and she put them away at the net. There wasn’t much I could do ... It was only on one side, you knew which way it was going. It wasn’t a changing wind.”¹³³ Still tired from her hectic pace, Billie Jean slipped out the back door of the clubhouse without speaking to reporters after her straight set win against Kerry Melville.

The largest crowd of the tournament – 1,600 spectators – came to the Louisville Tennis Center to watch the final between Billie Jean and Rosie. After racing through the first set 6-1, Billie Jean fell behind 1-4 in the second. She won the next three games to level the score at 4-4, but then hit consecutive double faults as Rosie broke to go ahead 5-4. One game later, the match was even and would be decided by a third set.

Billie Jean regained control in the third set and took a 3-1 lead. In the fifth game, Billie Jean angrily disputed a line call. “God, what a day! Why don’t you get up and look at it?” Billie Jean demanded, telling the linesman to see if there was a ball mark on the clay court.¹³⁴ The linesman obliged, but refused to change his call. After Billie Jean’s outburst, several spectators began supporting Rosie more vocally. After Billie Jean finished the set, 6-3, Rose said the questionable line call incident was the critical point of the match. “I guess it may have upset me more than it did Billie Jean,” she said. “One or two people kept shouting ‘c’mon Rosemary,’ and I know how distracting that must have been to Billie Jean. I don’t want to win that way. I want to do it with one hundred percent effort rather than trying to rattle my opponent.”¹³⁵

Billie Jean was thrilled after her victory in Louisville and realizing that her goal of \$100,000 in one year could be reached in the upcoming weeks. “I had \$79,600 before Open,” she said, “then I picked up \$7,500 there plus \$4,000 for the car I won and then sold ... and then \$4,400 more here today. Wow! I’m almost there.”¹³⁶ Ironically, Billie Jean stood an excellent chance of reaching her \$100,000 goal the following week, at the Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open in Los Angeles. This was the tournament, directed by Jack Kramer, that motivated Gladys and many of the top women players to stage their own event in Houston to protest the unfair prize money distribution. For the 1971 Pepsi Pacific Southwest Open, Virginia Slims contributed \$5,000 to the women’s divisions as part of an agreement reached with the USLTA earlier in the year. Still, for Billie Jean, she was not especially thrilled to be playing in Kramer’s tournament. “If it weren’t for Virginia Slims,” she told Lynn Lilliston of the *Los Angeles Times*, “I wouldn’t even be here.” Billie Jean actually needed to play in the tournament, which was part of the Pepsi Grand Prix, if she wanted to qualify for the year-end bonus money.

Once again, Billie Jean and Rosie advanced to the final of a singles tournament. In front of a capacity crowd at the Los Angeles Tennis Club, they battled to 6-6 in the first set and started a tiebreak.

The match started routinely enough. We played to 6-6 in the first set. Nothing unusual about that, except one particular lineswoman on a baseline had given both of us about six or seven lousy calls, and it was beginning to get to both of us, especially me. ¹³⁷

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Rosie served the second point of the tiebreak, Billie Jean returned it, and after a long rally Rosie hit a deep shot to the baseline. Billie Jean made no effort to play out the point; instead she looked at the Betty Chamie, the lineswoman who was stationed at the baseline, and saw no signal from her. Pressed for a decision from the chair umpire, Chamie placed with her palms down, indicating she thought the ball was good. As the umpire announced, "2-0, Miss Casals leads," Billie Jean, according to USLTA and Southern California official Pat Yeomans, "threw up her arms in disgust, walked to the umpires stand and said, 'She's got to go.'" ¹³⁸

Then I very calmly went to the umpire and said, "Please remove that lineswoman." He wouldn't make a decision. Rosie walked up and I asked her how she felt. She shrugged her shoulders – she's much more casual about those things than I am – and said, "Fine with me, Old Lady. That woman's out to lunch." I told the umpire, "You have the power to remove her and I have the right to request her removal." The umpire said, "That will embarrass her." I then asked for the tournament referee, who just happened to be Jack Kramer... ¹³⁹

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Tournament referee Jack Kramer was in the broadcast booth, doing commentary for a local CBS television station, so John Coman – who was serving as referee in Kramer's absence – entered the court to discuss the situation. Yeomans reported that

Billie Jean “shrugged, gestured and argued with Mr. Coman.” Billie Jean told Coman that she was prepared to quit the match unless the lineswoman was removed. As their discussion continued for several minutes, Rosie – who initially stayed out of the argument – approached Coman to protest the line calls and the delay of the match.¹⁴⁰

*By now the crowd was getting edgy because they didn't have a clue as to what was going on. After a long discussion, both Coman and the umpire finally agreed to remove the lineswoman.*¹⁴¹

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Coman left the court and asked Vic Braden, a teaching professional at the Los Angeles Tennis Club, to deliver a note to Kramer in the broadcast booth. Unfazed by the commotion, Kramer told the television audience, “If the girls want to walk out, let them go.”¹⁴² Billie Jean took her racquet out of its cover and went back to the baseline to continue playing, while the fans applauded their approval. As Billie Jean was about to serve, Rosie called out that the lineswoman was still present. .

*(It was) a misunderstanding. What I pointed out ... was that I had the power to make the decision myself. But I left the court to send a message to Jack. He said not to remove the lineswoman. Rosemary might have concluded, by my not relieving the lady of her duties right away and asking that they continue playing, that I had changed my mind. It would have been easy to misinterpret my actions that way. I don't think Rosemary tried to misinterpret me – that wasn't her intention at all.*¹⁴³

-- John Coman, 1971

Part of the problem was that Billie Jean was the only person in the place who thought the ball was out. In fact, the videotape play-back showed that it was well within the line. So at last when Billie Jean saw she couldn't get any sympathy, she went to the line and prepared to serve again. But then just at that moment,

*something came over her – and just like that she decided to quit. Not only that, but as she stormed off the court she beckoned Rosie, and damn if she didn't obediently follow Billie Jean. If she had stayed her ground, she would have won the \$4,000 first prize, but she trotted after her leader ...*¹⁴⁴
 -- Jack Kramer, 1979

A few minutes later, Coman came back onto the court to announce that the match was a “double default” and that the men’s singles final between Pancho Gonzalez and Jimmy Connors would begin in twenty minutes.¹⁴⁵

Billie Jean and Rosie were scheduled to play in the women’s doubles final against Judy Dalton and Francoise Durr later that evening, after the men’s singles final. In the meantime, Billie Jean was taken by helicopter to the Pomona fairgrounds to appear on a television show. She returned to the Los Angeles Tennis Club just as Pancho Gonzalez was finishing his 2-6 6-3 6-3 win over Jimmy Connors. When Billie Jean and Rosie walked back onto the court to play the women’s doubles final, the crowd greeted them with a mixture of enthusiastic cheers and vigorous boos.¹⁴⁶

Finished with his television commentary after the men’s singles match, Jack Kramer spoke with Dwight Chapin of the *Los Angeles Times* about what Billie Jean and Rosie had done. “I am going to recommend that they get the stiffest penalty possible from the International Lawn Tennis Federation, and that includes a suspension of their prize money,” Kramer told Chapin. “They’ll get nothing if I can help it. You have to have somebody sit in judgment at these matches. The minute the players start doing it, the sport is finished. They acted hastily and I don’t think they know what they’ve done. I watched about four games of their match and I saw the girls object to about twenty calls. They ought to grow up. They’re professionals, and they ought to abide by the rules.”¹⁴⁷

After Billie Jean and Rosie defeated Judy and Francoise 2-6 7-5 7-6, Chapin was interested in obtaining their version of the events. “I’m very mad at Kramer,” Billie Jean said. “He should have been there but he had toddled on.” Earlier, Kramer told Chapin that the referee in his absence, John Coman, was very knowledgeable about tennis rules.

“By the rules,” Billie Jean countered, “I’m allowed to ask for a new linesman. This was about her seventh or eighth bad call and it came at a very crucial point in the match. Coman said he would remove her and then Rosie came to me and said he had changed his mind.”¹⁴⁸

Chapin informed Billie Jean that Kramer regarded the walkout as detrimental to Joe Cullman and Virginia Slims. “What has Kramer done for Joe Cullman himself this tournament?,” Billie Jean asked. “Virginia Slims put \$8,000 into it and I don’t see any signs advertising the product.” Kramer had earlier told Chapin that the lineswoman could have been removed “without embarrassing her – they could have just gone ahead and played a couple more points and then looked around and she wouldn’t have been there.” Billie Jean was annoyed when she heard Kramer’s solution. “What a quote that is,” she said. “It’s just typical of what’s wrong with tennis. It’s so unprofessional ... much too loose. The players are professionals now but it’s the same old problem with voluntary officials. There should be higher standards. We need professional officials.” Billie Jean and Rosie were not outwardly upset that their prize money from the singles tournament was being withheld. “Just as long as it doesn’t go to the men,” Rosie said.¹⁴⁹

Billie Jean and Rosie left Los Angeles only \$250 richer – the amount each of them received for winning the women’s doubles. Their prize money from the singles tournament was temporarily withheld, and if Kramer had his way, they would not receive it at all. Still, Billie Jean headed into the next tournament on the circuit – the Virginia Slims Thunderbird Classic in Phoenix – with \$96,725 in prize money accumulated throughout the year. If she won the women’s singles title in Phoenix – and the \$4,000 first prize – she would realize her goal of becoming the first female athlete to win \$100,000 in one year.

On Monday, September 27, Kramer told Jeff Prugh of the *Los Angeles Times* that the tournament committee decided to withhold Billie Jean’s and Rosie’s prize money until a ruling was decided by the USLTA. He also wanted the USLTA to suspend them. “How long they should be suspended will be up to the USLTA Disciplinary Committee,” he said. “You can’t walk off just because you can’t have your own way ... It’s amazing they’d walk off over a small incident such as this. It wasn’t a tremendously important

point ... That ball in question was terribly, terribly close. It was right on the edge of the baseline, or just over the edge. To me, that's not incompetent judgment."¹⁵⁰

Reached at the *World Tennis* offices in Houston on Monday, Gladys told reporters that she received a telephone call from Billie Jean the previous night. She said that Billie Jean "admitted they had not done the right thing."¹⁵¹ Gladys also disclosed that Billie Jean and Rosie requested to get fined for their actions, and Pip Jones determined that the amount of the fine would be \$1,000 apiece. The money would be placed in the tour's "slush fund," which was established to help lower-ranked players with their tournament travel expenses.¹⁵² Gladys also determined that the players would receive prize money from the Pacific Southwest tournament equal to "the amount they would have received as losing semifinalists only."¹⁵³ Regarding Kramer's recommendation that Billie Jean and Rosie get suspended by the USLTA and have all their prize money withheld, Gladys said that he "had no right to issue a penalty. Jack simply doesn't like women's tennis. There's no love lost between them and Jack Kramer."¹⁵⁴

Kramer felt that Gladys' comments were "ridiculous. Pip Jones is an employee of Philip Morris, sponsors of the women's tour, and he doesn't have the authority to decide who will be fined ... (Billie Jean and Rosie) will be disciplined by the United States Lawn Tennis Association and by nobody else."¹⁵⁵ Regarding Gladys' assertion that he disliked women's tennis, Kramer "vehemently disagreed. I've watched the conduct of all the girl players this year, and the only two who carry it to this extreme are the two who are involved here. Other girls get bad calls, but they don't carry things this far and ask to have somebody thrown off the court."¹⁵⁶

Rosie was also amused by Gladys' claim that she and Billie requested to be fined. "That's a good one," she said. "I'd be the first person not to fine myself, believe me! I personally did not make that statement. All I know is the Virginia Slims tour will be fining us for walking off the court. How much the fine will be, I can't say."¹⁵⁷ Rosie also mentioned that she and Billie Jean were considering legal action in an effort to get their singles prize money from the Pacific Southwest tournament.

As the Virginia Slims Thunderbird Classic got underway, Billie Jean was asked where she thought she might be placed in the upcoming world rankings. Since there were

no official world rankings, numerous tennis journalists compiled their own lists. The rankings – which often differed from each other – were subjective; tennis fans, however, looked forward to seeing and debating them. “Tennis rankings are archaic,” she was quoted in the October 4, 1971 issue of *Sports Illustrated*. “Whoever wins Wimbledon is ranked number one. Well, Wimbledon doesn't mean that much anymore. The only two things that should count are a player's won-loss record and her prize money. Still, Evonne won it, so she'll be number one and I'll be number two, even though I've won fifteen tournaments to her six. And even though I've won \$95,000 this year.” Billie Jean also felt her prize money should have been higher. At the U. S. Open, where the women's singles winner was awarded a total of \$7,500 compared to the men's singles first prize of \$20,000, Billie said that “nine out of every ten people came there to see the women. So why didn't the women get nine-tenths of the prize money?”¹⁵⁸

The Virginia Slims Thunderbird Classic was held at the Phoenix Tennis Center, a public facility in downtown Phoenix that had twenty hard courts in addition to the stadium court. The sponsors, in addition to Virginia Slims, were the Phoenix Thunderbirds, a well-known civic organization that started the tournament as an amateur event in the late 1950s. For the first time in the tournament's history, prize money was offered; the thirty-two women who were entered in the singles and doubles draws vied for a total of \$20,000. Billie Jean and Rosie each contributed \$250 to be used as prize money for a consolation tournament; the sixteen women who lost their first-round matches were given \$400 apiece, and the consolation tournament gave them a chance to earn a little more. “We've had our share this year,” said Rosie. “It's tough to lose in the first round, but getting a second shot at the money can really give a player a lift.”¹⁵⁹ Actually, the contribution was Gladys' idea. She told reporters earlier in the week that Billie Jean and Rosie were each to be fined \$1,000 by the Virginia Slims circuit for walking out of the final at the Pacific Southwest tournament. The \$250 that Billie Jean and Rosie each contributed to the consolation tournament was a partial payment of the fine.

The championship flight of the Phoenix tournament proceeded without any major surprises. Billie Jean and Rosie easily won their first three matches to arrive in

Saturday's semifinals. The other semifinalist included Kerry Melville, who repeated her U. S. Open win over Judy Dalton, and Nancy Richey Gunter, who had one of her best wins of the year when she eliminated Francoise Durr in a baseline duel, 4-6 6-2 6-2.

Matches began at noon on Sunday; Rosie gained the final after disposing of Nancy, 6-3 6-2, and Billie Jean had a more difficult time with Kerry, eventually winning 6-4 7-5. For the twelfth time of the year, Billie Jean and Rosie would play each other in the final of a tournament. Billie Jean needed to win the first prize of \$4,000 in order to break the \$100,000 mark; after the tournament in Phoenix, she was scheduled to play in three more tournaments, and she was certain to eventually reach her goal. However, Billie Jean's next three tournaments were played overseas and sponsored by other companies; she unquestionably wanted to achieve the historic milestone in the United States, in a tournament sponsored by Virginia Slims.

In front of an overflow crowd at the Phoenix Tennis Center on Sunday, it appeared at first that Billie Jean might have to wait to reach her goal. After she broke Rosie's serve in the opening game, Billie Jean held serve to take a 2-0 lead. Rosie then held serve, broke Billie Jean and held serve again to lead 3-2. It was one of their best matches of the year. "Both were all over the court captivating a full house with near unbelievable returns," reported Mike Garrett of the *Arizona Republic*. The set stayed on serve for the next four games, until Billie Jean served at 4-5. "Billie Jean then made two great shots combined with one that hopped over the net to break Rosie's serve and perhaps her heart, too. Because, after that, the shots stopped falling in," Garrett wrote. "Rosie didn't seem to know what Billie Jean would hit next."¹⁶⁰ After winning three consecutive games to take the first set, Billie Jean quickly pulled away, only losing one more game to finish the match, 7-5 6-1. After the final point, the spectators gave the players a prolonged standing ovation.

"I'm thrilled," Billie Jean told the crowd during the check presentation, making her the first female athlete to earn \$100,000 in one year. "I think I played the best game I've ever played today, and I feel very lucky, because my husband and my parents were here to share this with me"¹⁶¹ ... The linesmen and officials were really great. It was a fantastic tournament – I'll never forget it. I played one of the best matches of my life

today. I'm glad to see a full house. It makes all the girls on the tour real happy.”¹⁶² Billie Jean also jokingly thanked Rosie for making several errors late in the first set. “I keep thinking after fifteen tries, something's got to give, but nothing has given yet,” Rosie said, referring to their fifteenth overall meeting of the year.¹⁶³ Rosie also joked that she hoped that Billie Jean might need another knee surgery soon. Champagne bottles were then opened, and Billie Jean and Rosie doused each other to celebrate the remarkable accomplishment.

After the singles final, Kerry Melville earned \$1,800 for defeating Nancy Richey Gunter, 6-2 3-6 7-6 in a lengthy and entertaining third-place playoff match. For Nancy, who was given \$1,500, her final tournament of the circuit concluded a disappointing year. Billie Jean and Rosie were then back on the court, winning the doubles final over Judy Dalton and Francoise Durr, and sharing \$750 for their efforts. The final of the consolation tournament was played on an outside court, at the same time when Billie Jean and Rosie played the singles final in the stadium.¹⁶⁴ Although there were very few spectators, Mona Schallau probably had no complaints; she won \$250 for defeating Nancy Ornstein. Later that evening, Billie Jean and Larry, along with Billie Jean's parents, flew to New York for a news conference that was arranged to be held the following day at the Philip Morris headquarters.

The second-floor conference room at the Philip Morris headquarters was decorated with photographs of Billie Jean's victories throughout the year. Numerous congratulatory telegrams from fans, friends, celebrities, and politicians were also on display. “Long Beach boasts many great athletes over the years,” wired U. S. Congressman Craig Hosmer, who graduated from Long Beach Polytechnic High School thirty years before Billie Jean did, “but you must rank atop the list. We are all immensely proud of what you have achieved off the court and on. Congratulations on this milestone in your career and may it continue to blossom.” Lucille Ball wired “You've come a long way, Billie. Congratulations to you and Virginia Slims for making it possible.”

A telephone and speaker were set up on a credenza, and Billie Jean waited for a telephone call to be placed to U. S. President Richard Nixon. After several failed attempts, long-distance telephone operators made a successful connection to the White

House. “I just wanted to congratulate you on your great successes this year,” Nixon said, “and I’m glad to see a fellow Californian who gets over \$100,000.” Billie Jean thanked the president and said she was glad to be the first woman to earn that amount in one year, and they exchanged some small talk before ending the call.¹⁶⁵

After the telephone call, Billie Jean and Virginia Slims brand manager John Granville stood at a podium in front of a crowded room of reporters and photographers. Granville listed Billie Jean’s accomplishments at each tournament she played during the year – how she did in each singles tournament, each doubles tournament, and how much money she won along the way. Granville quickly glossed over the Pacific Southwest tournament by saying “And then you went to California,” before talking in detail about the milestone achievement in Phoenix. Billie Jean was pleasantly surprised when Granville told her, “Do you realize that you are ahead of every male American tennis player? Well, you are, apparently. You are \$25,000 ahead of Clark Graebner and \$33,000 or \$34,000 ahead of Arthur Ashe.” Billie Jean smiled and said, “They won’t like that.” Granville then Billie Jean that only male player in the world – Rod Laver – had won more money than she did. “Well, that’s alright,” Billie Jean laughed, “he’s pretty good!” Granville then presented Billie Jean with a “specially made” gold-colored crown, comprised of painted tennis balls, and placed it on her head, saying, “To the queen of tennis.” It was a classic photo opportunity, but the crown fell off and Granville had to hold it on Billie Jean’s head. Billie Jean was clearly uncomfortable with the stunt, and asked “Okay, can I take it off now?” after a few seconds.¹⁶⁶

Alone at the podium, Billie Jean thanked her parents, Larry, Joe Cullman and Gladys. She recalled how the seeds for a women’s tour had started only twelve months earlier in Houston, where “we were bad little girls.” She also acknowledged the other players for making the Virginia Slims Circuit a success. “I think the other girls have got to be given a lot of credit, they’ve done a lot of promotional work this year ... even the last two weeks, I want you to know, the players were rooting for me for the first time, just to make this \$100,000, so I appreciated that, except they played very hard when I played against them ... I thought Rosie was going to kill herself yesterday trying to beat me.”¹⁶⁷

Anticipating that the world's tennis journalists would inevitably place her behind Evonne Goolagong in the upcoming world rankings, Billie Jean told the reporters that the results on the Virginia Slims Circuit – not at Wimbledon or Forest Hills – would soon determine the world's champion. “I think we're going to find that the future in tennis is going to be who wins the most money and who wins the most tournaments,” she said, “and that's the way I think it should have been through the years.”¹⁶⁸

One of the reporters asked Billie Jean if she thought women were on the verge of receiving a fairer amount of prize money, in comparison to what male athletes were earning. “I think we're basically about where the men were in 1968. I believe Rod Laver won over \$100,000 in 1968 and he had a great year, and I think the prize money (for the men) was relatively the same as it is at this moment for the women, in 1971, so I think we're getting there in tennis ... I don't know about other sports for women. I think golf is way behind ... there really aren't that many opportunities for women to go into professional sports.”¹⁶⁹

Not present at the news conference were any representatives of the USLTA. After Billie Jean and Rosie walked off during their match at the Pacific Southwest Open, the tournament committee filed a complaint with the USLTA Disciplinary Committee. Forrest Hainline, chairperson of the committee, would spend the next few weeks communicating with an attorney, retained by Billie Jean and Rosie, in the hopes of scheduling a disciplinary hearing in his hometown of Detroit, Michigan in early November.

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- ¹⁵⁶ Jack Kramer, quoted in Jeff Prugh, "Kramer Swings Into Action on Walkout, Urges Suspension," *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles, California), September 28, 1971.
- ¹⁵⁷ Rosie Casals, quoted in "King, Casals Walkout Gets Kramer Hot Under Collar," *Press-Courier* (Oxnard, California), September 28, 1971.
- ¹⁵⁸ Billie Jean King, quoted in "Queen King," *Sports Illustrated*, October 4, 1971, 17.
- ¹⁵⁹ Rosie Casals, quoted in Mike Garrett, "King, Casals Stay on Unbeaten Path," *Arizona Republic*, October 1, 1971.
- ¹⁶⁰ Mike Garrett, "Billie Jean Wins, Clears \$100G Mark," *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix, Arizona), October 4, 1971.
- ¹⁶¹ Billie Jean King, quoted in "Billie Jean Tops \$100,000 – New Plateau For Women," *Press-Telegram* (Long Beach, California) October 4, 1971.
- ¹⁶² Billie Jean King, quoted in Mike Garrett, "Billie Jean Wins, Clears \$100G Mark," *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix, Arizona), October 4, 1971.
- ¹⁶³ Rosie Casals, quoted in Mike Garrett, "Billie Jean Wins, Clears \$100G Mark," *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix, Arizona), October 4, 1971.
- ¹⁶⁴ "Rosie, Billie Jean will go at it again," *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix, Arizona), October 3, 1971.
- ¹⁶⁵ "Mrs. King Receives Call From Nixon," *Stars and Stripes* (Washington, D. C.), October 6, 1971.
- ¹⁶⁶ Associated Press video footage, October 4, 1971.
- ¹⁶⁷ Associated Press video footage, October 4, 1971.
- ¹⁶⁸ Associated Press video footage, October 4, 1971.

¹⁶⁹ Associated Press video footage, October 4, 1971.

CHAPTER 9: YOU DIG OUR GRAVES

None of the Virginia Slims Circuit players, with the exception of Francoise Durr and Julie Heldman, played on the five-tournament Dewar Cup Circuit that toured through Great Britain in October and November of 1971, probably because the prize money was extremely low and only the top stars were given appearance fees. Although Billie Jean King was mentally and physically spent after reaching her prize money goal of \$100,000, she did travel to London in late October to compete in the Embassy British Indoor Open at Wembley Arena. While not part of the Dewar Cup Circuit, this tournament was played between the second and third Dewar Cup events. For the women, the Embassy British Indoor Open was the final event on the Pepsi Grand Prix, and Billie Jean needed to participate in order to meet the minimum requirement of nine Grand Prix tournaments. Regardless of her results at Wembley, Billie Jean had already secured the top position in the Pepsi Grand Prix standings and the first place bonus money of \$10,000. Perhaps equally important as the money, Billie Jean wanted another opportunity to play against the Evonne Goolagong, who was also competing in the tournament.

The top four seeds – Evonne, Billie Jean, Rosie, and Francoise – all advanced to the semifinals, although Evonne barely beat Winnie Shaw in the quarterfinals and Rosie also needed three sets to get past Virginia Wade. In the semifinals, Billie Jean lost only three games to Rosie, and Francoise defeated a listless Evonne. The women’s singles matches were played mostly in the afternoons, “when Wembley was at its most morgue-like,” reported British tennis journalist Linda Timms. “The saddest victim of this policy,” wrote Timms, “was the Wimbledon champion Evonne Goolagong, a player of delicately balanced moods who thrives on a sense of occasion.” After her loss to Francoise on Friday, Evonne admitted that the sparse audience and quiet atmosphere made her feel as if the match was just a practice session.¹

On Saturday afternoon, nearly 5,000 spectators were present to watch Billie Jean and Francoise play in the women's singles final. Billie Jean won the first set 6-1 in only twenty-two minutes; she took a 2-0 lead in the second set before Francoise started to work her way into the match. Although Billie Jean's lead was narrowed to 3-2, she doggedly stayed in front and served for the match at 5-4. She held three match points at 40-love, but Francoise brought the game back to deuce. Billie Jean had one more match point on her serve, but Francoise refused to surrender. "Even before I had my four match points, I thought the title was slipping away," Billie Jean said later.²

Francoise broke Billie Jean to level at 5-5, and she then won two more games to claim the second set. By the time she reached 5-3 in the third set, Francoise held serve four times and broke Billie Jean once to establish her lead. Serving for the championship, she finally reached match point at 40-30. Francoise maneuvered Billie Jean out of position and came forward to put away an easy volley. The volley, however, ended up in the net, and Francoise folded – her concentration shattered. Billie Jean won the next two points to get back on serve, and then she held to even the set at 5-5. In the next game, Francoise's serve deteriorated rapidly, and she double-faulted to give Billie Jean the game. Given a second chance to serve for the title, Billie Jean made the most of her opportunity. The 6-1 5-7 7-5 victory was worth \$2,500 to Billie Jean, in addition to the \$10,000 she won for finishing the year at the top position in the Pepsi Grand Prix standings.³

After the match, Billie Jean told reporters how difficult it was to play against the deceptive Francoise. "People do not realize how fast Francoise runs," Billie Jean said. "She covers a tremendous amount of court, and being unorthodox you cannot tell where her passing shots are going. She was getting my volleys back and she was hitting so close to the lines it was unbelievable."⁴ Billie Jean was also asked if she knew when the USLTA planned to hold the disciplinary hearing for Rosie and herself. "No, I spoke to my husband Larry on the telephone two nights ago and he said he understood it to be early in November," she said. "But we don't know the actual date. I don't really know the score, and until I do, I don't want to discuss the subject." Asked if she would attend

the hearing, Billie Jean said “I’ll do whatever my attorney advises. He knows the facts of the case and I shall take his advice.”⁵

Billie Jean returned home to Berkeley on Tuesday, November 2, and for the first time all year, she had an extended break. She would not play another tournament until early December in New Zealand, so the time at home gave her a rare opportunity to spend time with Larry and plan for their two upcoming tournaments – the British Motor Cars Invitational in San Francisco, and the Independent Press-Telegram Championships in Long Beach. Her stay in Berkeley also gave her a chance to get caught up on the numerous requests that came with being the most famous female athlete in the world. One of those requests was from *Ms*, a new feminist magazine that was making its debut in January 1972. The publication’s editors wanted Billie Jean’s endorsement of the repeal of all anti-abortion laws in the United States.

*The petition had come in the mail ... and Larry gave it to me. “You’ll probably want to sign this,” he said, “it’s about legalized abortion.” Good stuff. Fine. So I signed it. I was almost sure the petition said that we signees were only in favor of legalized abortion, not that we’d had abortions ourselves.*⁶

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Since Billie Jean and Larry were accustomed to constantly traveling for their careers, they soon became restless in Berkeley. One afternoon, they called Gladys to say they were flying to Houston for a weekend visit; Larry also hoped to play some tennis. Packing only a few clothing items, two toothbrushes and a razor, Billie Jean and Larry barely made their flight and arrived at Timberwilde Drive at 11:45 pm. Gladys was waiting for them, working on an article for *World Tennis* as the doorbell rang.⁷

After initial greetings and some small talk, Billie Jean asked Gladys about the upcoming *World Tennis* world rankings. “Evonne is number one, you are number two, Margaret Court is number three, and Rosie is four,” Gladys informed a somewhat disappointed Billie Jean. They talked about establishing different criteria for world rankings, a review of the 1971 Virginia Slims Circuit, and the changes that were in store

for the 1972 tour. Gladys then asked Billie Jean about the upcoming USLTA Disciplinary Committee hearing in Detroit. “We’re not going. All they would do is bawl us out and suspend us anyway,” Billie Jean said. As she did during her interview with Lamar Hunt in July, and during her proposal to the ILTF in August, Gladys broached her idea for forming a separate women’s association. “If you and Rosie are suspended, the rest of the girls will automatically be suspended when they play against you,” she said. “How about forming our own International Women’s Association?” The idea was not received seriously, since Larry joked, “Remember the Civil Rights Act. You will have to let in the men.”⁸

Gladys told Billie Jean and Larry that there would no longer be a Virginia Slims Circuit tournament in Milwaukee; instead, Donald Dell planned to promote an event in Washington, D. C. They talked about the new tournaments on the 1972 circuit, how much longer Billie Jean intended to play competitively, the double-default incident at the Pacific Southwest Open, and establishing a rule that required all players to be in a city by a certain day of the week. Apparently, on the 1971 tour, some players purposely arrived at the last minute in order to avoid doing instructional clinics. “I told the gals who use Wilson (tennis racquets) not to play with the racquets of male chauvinists like Stan Smith or Jack Kramer,” Billie Jean said. “Nancy Gunter was playing with a Kramer (Pro Staff). I said, ‘Nancy, baby, Wilson makes a Cliff Richey racquet. Why don’t you use Cliff’s?’” By time they finished talking, it was 1:30 am. Larry suggested they play some tennis; Gladys agreed, loaned him a racquet and turned the lights on. As Gladys and Larry batted the ball back and forth, Billie Jean called the score, encouraged her husband, and then eventually became immersed in the latest issue of *World Tennis*.⁹

When Billie Jean and Rosie walked off the court during the women’s singles final of the Pepsi Southwest Pacific Open in Los Angeles, the tournament committee withheld the first place and second place prize money, totaling \$6,500. On September 28, 1971, Joseph C. Bixler, Chairman of the tournament’s Management Committee, filed a complaint with Forrest Hainline, the chairman of the USLTA Disciplinary Committee requesting “to determine, or have determined, the appropriate fines and/or suspensions of said Mrs. King and Miss Casals and thereafter to instruct the aforesaid Management

Committee as to the disposition of said withheld prize money or the balance thereof, if any.”¹⁰

At the end of November, Billie Jean told a reporter in San Francisco that she and Rosie expected to get punished for walking off the court in Los Angeles. “Let’s say, we won’t be surprised if they suspend us,” Billie Jean said. “The USLTA will be the big loser – not us, nor the game. The women’s tour won’t be playing under USLTA sponsorship in 1972 if we get suspended. All the girls who plan to play on the tour said they will back us all the way.”¹¹

Whether or not she and Rosie got suspended by the USLTA, Billie Jean was looking forward to the British Motor Cars Invitation in San Francisco. The opening tournament on the 1972 tour, once again promoted by Larry and his business partner Dennis van der Meer, had a field of sixty-four players – compared to only sixteen players who participated in the inaugural tournament in early 1971. “You can see by the number of girls interested in playing in this kickoff tourney that interest is there for a professional circuit. Those of us who pioneered the tour are extremely pleased, and the future looks promising. With more and more of the top players in the world turning toward the pro tour, the younger players will have somewhere to go.”¹²

One of the new features for the second year of the Virginia Slims Circuit was the addition of Teddy Tinling as the tour’s dress designer. The news was announced in the December 1971 issue of *World Tennis* in a half-page advertisement that read “Teddy Tinling is honoured to have been named DESIGNER to the VIRGINIA SLIMS tennis circuit ... and hopes to be present in person at a number of the VIRGINIA SLIMS tournaments, commencing SAN FRANCISCO 12th January, 1972.”¹³

*In those days only a few top players had contracts with clothing manufacturers, and not everyone had the money to dress in a crisp outfit every day. Joe Cullman, appalled by the way some of the women looked, hired designer Ted Tinling, who supplied us with all the clothes we needed for several years.*¹⁴

-- Billie Jean King, 1988

*Before Virginia Slims and my mother came along, I gather he survived by catering to a few very rich English women who loved having tennis dresses made by the man who dressed the stars. My mother loved his designs and his outrageous personality, and loved having him at parties and around the players. She sold the idea to Joe Cullman that Tinling should be the designer for Virginia Slims tennis stars. I'd wager that was the first stable job he ever had.*¹⁵
 -- Julie Heldman, 2011

Despite their friendship, Julie Heldman had no intention of wearing any dresses that Tinling designed for the Virginia Slims Circuit. Most of the dresses incorporated the Virginia Slims cigarette pack colors of gold, brown, and maroon, as well as the “Ginny Girl” logo and the slogan “You’ve Come a Long Way, Baby.” As John Hennessey reported in the November 27, 1971 edition of the *Times*, Julie refused to transform herself into a “billboard to advertising cigarettes.”¹⁶

Three days later, the *Times* published an article written by Prudence Glynn that included sketch drawings of several Tinling creations for the Virginia Slims Circuit, under the headline that the dresses were those that “America’s Julie Heldman had refused to wear.” Julie took issue with some of Glynn’s observations, and within a few days, she sent a letter to the *Times* that was printed in the Saturday, December 4, 1971 issue:

Prudence Glynn’s article of November 30 on Teddy Tinling and the new dresses he has designed for the World Tennis women’s pro tour raises some serious issues of general importance which were ignored by the author. It also stated that I have refused to wear the new outfits, but did not explain why. May I now do so?

The new Tinling dresses are very pretty, and confirm my high opinion of Mr. Tinling’s ability. I have worn his clothes since 1965. But I will not wear these outfits because they are designed to advertise cigarettes, the venture is a commercial one. Mr. Tinling has received a large sum from Virginia Slims (a

United States cigarette company) to make them, and each girl who wears the dresses will be paid a fee. In some cases this will amount to over £1,000 a year.

I do not smoke nor do I approve of the habit. To wear these outfits would, in my personal view, turn a tennis player into a walking health hazard. It is part of our tour policy to give free coaching during tournaments to local children. I do not believe that we would be doing any child a favour by turning up in tennis clothes, however chic, which bear insignia connected with a cigarette company. After all, Miss Glynn frankly admits that she, as the result of Virginia Slims sales talk, was “almost tempted to take up smoking.” There must be a lot of kids in America less than able than Miss Glynn to resist temptation.

Virginia Slims has laid out a great deal of money for our tour. I am grateful for this but argue that there are dangers for any sport in having too direct a commercial link between players and sponsor. If any player wishes to promote the sponsor’s product, she is quite free to do so, and that is the basis of the deal with Virginia Slims and some of the girls on our tour. I happen to dissent as an individual. I think I’ve got a good reason, and regret that Miss Glynn neither sought to examine the implications of my dissent, nor even speak to me about it.

It is just not true that all of the group are delighted with their dresses, as Miss Glynn could have discovered by speaking to them. All think them attractive, but several have expressed serious qualms to me about the ethical implications of wearing them. This is before they are subjected to inevitable pressure from church and school organizations in the USA.

Perhaps I am being narrow minded about this. Maybe always to look stylish is more important than always to hold to a principle. But I don’t think so. And I do not believe that Miss Glynn would either if she had reflected a little upon the social implications of Mr. Tinling’s elegant billboards and not confined her thinking to “fashion philosophy.”¹⁷

Yours, etc,

Julie Heldman

Boy did my letter cause a problem. Ted Tinling hated me after that. My mother was very upset, although she never confronted me about it. It was just a problem simmering below the surface ... My letter to the editor was mostly written by Vincent Hanna, my boyfriend at the time ... Several uses of words and phrases in my letter are British, not American. That's because he was responsible for the letter's structure and final edit...¹⁸

-- Julie Heldman, 2011

Pip Jones, manager of the Virginia Slims Circuit, read Julie's letter. Perhaps aware that Hanna – with whom he had a disagreement earlier in the year – wrote the letter, Pip submitted his own letter to the *Times*:

Julie Heldman is fully entitled to her own opinions, extreme though they often are, but she has no right to involve other members of the World Tennis Pro Group in them ...

It is quite untrue for her to say "each girl who wears Teddy Tinling's dresses will be paid a fee." Although it is customary for stars to be paid for endorsing products, in fact only seven of our players (and the group numbers over 50) will receive any payment and of these only one will get anything like the sum she quotes (over £1,000 a year). And if the impression has been given that there is any sort of pressure on the girls to wear Virginia Slims dresses let me correct it; there is no compulsion on anyone and they will wear them simply and solely because they want to do so.

I am in constant touch with all the members of this group and I have yet to discover a single other one who shares Julie's ethical views. Surely if her convictions are genuine she should follow them to their logical conclusion and refuse to play in tournaments sponsored by cigarette companies. So far she has

been very willing to accept the prize money for playing in these events, including the recent Wills Embassy Championships at Wembley.

All very odd and illogical! ¹⁹

Yours truly,

P. F. Jones

P. S. – If she really is afraid of “tempting kids,” as she puts it, she might examine her own conduct during the excellent Dewar Circuit when she paraded a large whisky bottle on the court and drank regularly from it during the matches. The fact that it contained something less potent was known only to a few of us who shared in the fun; by her own argument the children in the audience were being encouraged to become alcoholics!

While Julie and Pip were writing their letters for the *Times*, another tournament sponsored by Philip Morris was getting underway in New Zealand. The \$7,500 Benson & Hedges Women’s Open in Christchurch was the first women’s-only tournament held in New Zealand, and it featured many of the Virginia Slims Circuit stars: Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals, Françoise Durr, Kerry Melville, Judy Dalton and others. The following week, the \$7,500 Auckland Championships were held, and it was the participation of Australian players in this tournament – those who were committed to the Virginia Slims Circuit – that created yet another controversy.

Earlier in the year, Gladys was in contact with Barry Ryder, the promotions chairman of the Auckland Lawn Tennis Association. Ryder wanted to stage a women’s-only event in Christchurch, New Zealand, one week before the Auckland Championships. The dates of the 1971-1972 Australian Circuit were checked, and the week of November 29 was vacant. Benson & Hedges provided \$7,500 for the tournament in Christchurch, and the same amount would be offered to the women in Auckland (which also featured draws in men’s singles, men’s doubles, and mixed doubles). Billie Jean, Rosie, and

Francoise committed to travel to New Zealand and play in both tournaments, and tickets were sold in anticipation of their appearances.

After the tournaments in Christchurch and Auckland had sold thousands of dollars worth of tickets, based on the publicity that the top Virginia Slims Circuit players were competing, the Lawn Tennis Association of Australia (LTAA) decided to change the dates of the Queensland Championships, placing it in direct conflict with the Auckland Championships.

Gladys updated the seven Australian players on the Virginia Slims Circuit – Kerry Harris, Helen Gourlay, Kerry Melville, Karen Krantzcke, Judy Dalton, Wendy Gilchrist, and Lesley Hunt – about future problems with the ILTF and the LTAA, and she assured them that the other players in the women's professional group would stand behind them:

Dear Aussie Girls:

Some of you will be playing the two New Zealand tournaments next month and all of you will be on the Virginia Slims Prize Money Circuit starting in early January. This again is a conflict with the Australian LTA, but we feel the Australian LTA is totally wrong in forcing players to stay at home to play for prize money of \$400 when they can go overseas and play for \$18,000 to \$20,000.

If any (or all) of you are suspended by the Australian LTA for playing in New Zealand or in the U. S. you have the total backing of our group, which means that everyone in the group will also have to be suspended because they will play with you.

Mr. Allan Heyman, President of the ILTF, does know about our two tournaments in New Zealand and about our tournament schedule in the U. S. starting in early January. He has never asked me not to conflict with the ridiculously small prize money tournaments in Australia. We will be facing additional fights with the USLTA because we do intend to schedule against their tournaments when they do not meet minimum prize money standards.

It looks like we will have a Virginia Slims Grand Prix. More about this later.²⁰

Luv,

Gladys Heldman

In the middle of November, the LTAA notified the six Australian women who wanted to play in New Zealand – Judy Dalton, Kerry Melville, Lesley Hunt, Karen Krantzcke, Kerry Harris and Helen Gourlay – that they would be permitted to play in Christchurch if they requested permission. Traditionally, Australian players who were under jurisdiction of the LTAA were not allowed to play in tournaments outside the country during the traditional Australian tournament season. The LTAA was willing to allow the women to play in Christchurch, but they would not be allowed to play in Auckland; if they did, they would be considered “not in good standing” and potentially suspended. According to the LTAA, the Australian women could either play in Queensland or not play at all during that particular week.²¹

Gladys anticipated problems with the situation and sent a letter of encouragement to Judy, Kerry and Lesley:

Dear Goils:

The New Zealand LTA is getting very nervous with the threat to the Australian players if they participate in the New Zealand tournaments. I have told Barry Ryder in Auckland, who is arranging both tournaments, not to worry and that everyone will be there. If you get suspended, 45 other players will immediately be suspended as well since they will be playing with you.

One for all and all for one, as we Musketeers always say ...²²

Luv,

Gladys M. Heldman

On November 28, Judy received a telegram from Barry Ryder, which reinforced Gladys' position on the matter:

Spoken Heldman who instructs you not apply LTAA for permission to play New Zealand STOP She has already contracted you play two tournaments in New Zealand STOP Australian permission not required STOP Please advise Melville and Hunt ²³

The entire amount of prize money offered for the women in Queensland was only \$300, compared to \$7,500 offered to the women in Auckland. To make matters worse, the Australian women discovered that Evonne Goolagong was scheduled to compete in Queensland and would receive an appearance fee, which was negotiated by her coach Vic Edwards. "I am definitely not going to play in Queensland," Judy Dalton told the *Sydney Morning Herald*. "I have been made an offer to play there - \$200 plus air fares and accommodations. But this is too ridiculous when you consider Evonne Goolagong is getting \$1,500 appearance money for the tournament." ²⁴ Judy made it clear the Australian women intended to play both tournaments in New Zealand, and were prepared to face the consequences. She told Peter Stone of *The Age* that she understood the LTAA's preference for keeping the women in the country for the Australian circuit, but she said the women also had an obligation to Gladys. "We have a verbal agreement with her that we will not compete in any tournaments that compete with one of hers," Judy said. "She agreed with the New Zealand association that we would play in the open there, and we will honor that. The whole thing is one great mess. I don't know what will happen." ²⁵

Karen Krantzcke, who planned to play in Christchurch and Auckland, was concerned about the threat of suspension. "There just isn't enough women's prize money on the Australian Circuit to make it worthwhile," she told John Thirsk of the *Sunday Telegraph*. "The women's professional group in the United States have their own sponsors for the circuit. The LTAA have been good to me but it's a case of survival. I hope the ban is not put on, but if it is I guess we'll all have to cross that bridge when it

happens.”²⁶ Eventually, Karen decided to stay in the good graces of the LTAA and play in Queensland instead of Auckland, as did Helen Gourlay and Kerry Harris. The three remaining players – Judy Dalton, Kerry Melville, and Lesley Hunt – were steadfast; they had no intention of withdrawing from Auckland.

LTAA President Wayne Reid then contacted the New Zealand Lawn Tennis Association, and threatened to have the entire country suspended by the ILTF if the Judy, Kerry and Lesley were permitted to play in Auckland. Reid flew to Paris, hoping to convince the ILTF to suspend the New Zealand LTA from the Davis Cup and Federation Cup if it allowed the Australian women to play in Auckland. ILTF Secretary Basil Reay did not want to get involved in the squabble, commenting that “Australia and New Zealand are in such close touch that the whole affair is absolutely ridiculous.”

Suddenly, the New Zealand LTA found itself in a predicament; should it allow the three Australian women to play in Auckland and draw the wrath of the LTAA, or should it deny the entries of the Australians which meant, according to Lesley Hunt, “the whole lot of us, Billie Jean King and the rest, would pull out.” Judy was not concerned with the possibility of getting suspended by the LTAA. “It’s all happened before,” she said. “Kerry Melville and I were suspended for four months at one stage of the year, then for another two – or was it three? – months another time. So we can’t play in the next Australian Championships. So what? We won’t die of starvation, that’s for sure. I wouldn’t like to be disrespectful but it sometimes seems to me some of the LTAA don’t even know what a tennis match is.”²⁷

By the end of November, however, Judy began to have second thoughts about challenging the LTAA and ILTF yet again. When Gladys learned that Judy was wavering, she upbraided the Australian in an angry letter:

Dear Judy:

After seeing some stories in the newspapers with regard to your signing up with the Australian LTA and becoming one of five Independent Pros who will be affiliated with the ILTF, I didn’t know where you stood with the group.

Therefore I sent you a cable to find out what your plans were. A few hours after I

sent the cable I received your letter of November 16, and this made me totally confused.

You knew last year and again this year that you would not be in good standing if you played our tournaments. Now why on earth are you worrying me about it now? Do you honestly want to play Queensland where the prize money is \$300 rather than keep your commitment to Auckland, New Zealand, where the prize money is \$7500? Why are you questioning the attitude of the New Zealand LTA when, in fact, Barry Ryder of the New Zealand LTA says he is worried because you may suddenly not show.

I thought we had clarified everything about New Zealand and our American Tour. I haven't got a clue as to what you want to find out now. Do you want me to tell the Australian LTA to keep you in good standing? That simply is not possible. Do you want me for the umpteenth time to assure you that the girls are going to stick together?

You have New Zealand and me totally up in the air because we don't know what you are doing or why you are worrying. Since I am already spending five to eight hours a day on the Women's Pro Tour, free, I cannot really appreciate your joining various groups when you have prior commitments. I have the winter circuit up in prize money to \$292,000, and the average tournament purse is now \$18,000, rather than \$10,000, but you are still "worrying." About what?

I am sorry to get so rough, but the hours and hours that I spend each week truly get me down when you suddenly "change your mind."²⁸

Sincerely,
Gladys M. Heldman

Two days before the Benson & Hedges Women's Open in Christchurch started, the three Australian women still had not requested permission from the LTAA to participate. The Christchurch event was not in conflict with any Australian tournaments,

but since it was being held during the time period when Australian players were restricted from playing outside the country, the women still need to receive clearance. On Tuesday, November 30, the New Zealand Tennis Association informed the tournament organizers that Judy, Kerry and Lesley had only twenty-four hours remaining to receive permission from the LTAA in order to play in Christchurch. If they played without permission, the LTAA would consider them “not in good standing” and at risk of getting suspended. After learning what was transpiring in New Zealand, Gladys instructed the Australian women to ignore the LTAA demands. She knew the LTAA would not grant the women permission to play in Auckland the following week, so it made no difference whether or not they received permission to play in Christchurch.²⁹

The Christchurch tournament started on Thursday, December 2, and as expected, the LTAA notified the New Zealand Lawn Tennis Association that Judy Dalton, Kerry Melville and Lesley Hunt were officially “not in good standing.” David Massam, the secretary of the New Zealand association, telephoned Gladys with news of the LTAA decision. Perhaps not initially convinced that the LTAA would follow through with its threat, Gladys changed her mind and asked Massam to tell the women to send a cable to the LTAA seeking permission.³⁰

Lesley Hunt arrived at the Wilding Park courts in the afternoon and heard the news; the Australian women were “not in good standing” with the LTAA, and Gladys had urged them to seek permission from their national association – albeit after the fact. She refused to take the court for her first-round match against Robyn Legge until she spoke with Judy and Kerry. Lesley eventually started to play, becoming involved in a lengthy match “which gave Mrs. Dalton and Miss Melville plenty of time to discuss matters, something they were observed to do with a certain amount of heat.”³¹ At 3:30 pm, Judy sent a telegram to the LTAA, seeking permission to play in the New Zealand tournaments:

Melville, Hunt, Dalton request permission to compete Christchurch and Auckland. Please advise. Dalton³²

The Virginia Slims Circuit players may have been surprised when they arrived in Christchurch. Originally, the \$7,500 Benson & Hedges Women's Open was to be an eight-woman tournament; the tournament organizers decided make it a sixteen-woman field and include local players in first round matches against the established stars.³³ One year earlier, the Virginia Slims Circuit players determined that a sixteen-woman draw would require a minimum of \$10,000 in prize money. Probably due to the fact that the Christchurch event was sponsored by a Philip Morris brand, none of the players complained about the prize money or size of the draw.

On Friday, as rain washed out the entire day of play at the tournament, ILTF secretary Basil Reay contacted Judy for a clarification. Were the three Australian women who competed in Christchurch without LTAA permission considered contract professionals, or were they registered players still under the jurisdiction of their national association? It was the same dilemma that arose twelve months earlier, when Judy and Kerry skipped the 1970-1971 Australian Circuit in order to play in the inaugural Virginia Slims Circuit in the United States. This time, however, the situation was much more serious. Effective January 1, 1972, the ILTF voted to ban contract professionals from all sanctioned tournaments. This decision was primarily a response to the appearance fees that Lamar Hunt demanded for his WCT male professionals; however, it would apply to any women who were classified as contract professionals. As a result, the three Australian women were at the mercy of the LTAA, and Judy responded that her status would need to be decided by Gladys and the ILTF.³⁴

Reay told reporters that he would support the LTAA decision, once he received confirmation that the Australian association properly notified the officials in New Zealand. Concerned that the New Zealand Lawn Tennis Association would continue let Judy, Kerry and Lesley play in Christchurch – and not withdraw them – after being notified of their suspension by the LTAA, Reay indicated that an ILTF emergency might be necessary to resolve the matter. He said the New Zealand Lawn Tennis Association's inability to deny the players' entry into the tournament was grounds for "more than censure," but he declined to discuss what actions the ILTF would take. "The ILTF wants to act as peacemaker, and see that the Australian and New Zealand associations reach a

happy solution,” Reay said. “But the ILTF will not be intimidated – our directive deliberately ignored. Inasmuch as some of the girls have played means that there has already been an infringement of ILTF regulations by the players and the New Zealand Lawn Tennis Association.”³⁵

Against this backdrop, the Benson & Hedges Women’s Open unfolded at Wilding Park. The top eight players, paired against women from New Zealand, won all of their matches in straight sets. The only surprising result in Saturday’s quarterfinals was Kerry Melville’s 6-1 6-1 victory over Judy Dalton, which took only twenty-seven minutes to complete. Considering her recent communications with Gladys, the ILTF and the LTAA, Judy obviously was unable to concentrate on playing tennis.

In Sunday’s singles final, Francoise Durr notched her fourth win over Billie Jean in only thirty-eight minutes. After winning the first set 6-3, Francoise did not lose a game in the second set. After playing so many tournaments throughout the year, Billie Jean’s knees began to bother her again and she could not offer any resistance against Francoise. She did, however, win the doubles title with Rosie in a 6-3 9-8 decision over Francoise and Judy.

The following day, two tournaments opened play: the Queensland Championships in Australia, and the Auckland Championships in New Zealand. Among the prominent Australian women players, Evonne Goolagong, Helen Gourlay, and Kerry Harris were present in Queensland, and Judy Dalton, Kerry Melville and Lesley Hunt remained in New Zealand. Given last-minute permission to play in Christchurch, the three women who decided to play in Auckland were once again sent telegrams, notifying them that they were “not in good standing.” Copies of the telegram were sent to the New Zealand Lawn Tennis Association and the ILTF. Brian Tobin, vice president of the LTAA, told Peter Stone of *The Age* that the association would let the ILTF sort out the matter. In the meantime, the players would not be permitted to enter any upcoming Australian tournaments, including the Australian Open and the New South Wales Open.³⁶

Kerry and Judy actually would have preferred to remain under jurisdiction of the LTAA, since all contract professionals were to be restricted from entering ILTF tournaments in 1972. They would rather be disciplined by their national association for a

period of time than face a permanent ban as contract professionals. “We are still under the control of the LTAA,” Kerry told Peter Stone. “We understand the ban and accept it.” Judy’s explanation was more complicated, saying “We are not contract professionals – more independent professionals. We are under the jurisdiction of the LTAA, but not all the time.”³⁷

In Auckland, once again there was a sixteen-woman draw, and the top eight players were paired against local players from New Zealand. Most of the first-round matches were one-sided, with two exceptions. Billie Jean King, hampered by an increasing amount of pain in her knees, struggled in a 6-4 6-2 win over local player Patricia Hern, and Kristien Kemmer needed three sets to get past New Zealand national champion Marilyn Pryde.

Billie Jean defeated Kristien in straight sets in Thursday’s quarterfinals, and Kerry Melville and Rosie Casals had closer matches against Judy Dalton and Lesley Hunt, respectively. In the remaining quarterfinal match, Valerie Ziegenfuss was leading Francoise Durr 5-4 in the first set when the Frenchwoman hit a shot that Sue Burcher, the chair umpire, called as “out.” Francoise complained about the call, but Burcher refused to change her call – even though Valerie agreed that call was incorrect. Francoise asked to have Ces Ward, the tournament referee, come onto the court. After Ward ultimately supported Burcher’s decision, Francoise clapped her hands and sarcastically said, “Thank you.” Francoise then stopped trying for the rest of the match, and as she walked off the court she told reporters, “Don’t ask me to say anything or I’ll say many rude things.”³⁸ She then rushed to a telephone and made airline reservations to leave New Zealand on Saturday evening, after the conclusion of the tournament.

In the semifinals on Friday, Billie Jean won the first set against Kerry, but as her knees began to bother her, she lost the second set 7-5 and was forced to retire. Billie Jean and Rosie were able to win their semifinals doubles match against Kerry and Lesley Hunt, and were scheduled to play against Francoise and Judy Dalton in the final on the following day. Billie Jean, however, insisted on playing the women’s doubles final on Sunday, in order to give her knees a day of rest. Francoise, who had already made flight plans for Saturday evening, told Billie Jean she would not change her airline reservation.

After several angry exchanges, Billie Jean eventually capitulated. During the final, which Billie Jean and Rosie won 7-6 4-6 7-5, the atmosphere was “a bit frigid,” according to one observer.³⁹

Billie Jean, Rosie, Francoise and Valerie had no interest in competing in any of upcoming Australian tournaments, primarily because of the low prize money offered to the women. The Australian Open offered only a total of \$6,750 for the women, with the singles winner earning only \$1,200. At the New South Wales Open the following week, the women’s singles winner received only \$500. Billie Jean was eager to return home and give her knees some rest before the start of the 1972 Virginia Slims Circuit. Judy, Kerry and Lesley certainly wanted to play in their own country’s national championship, but they were “not in good standing” and barred from the tournament. “I’m very disappointed I can’t play,” Kerry told Peter Stone of *The Age*, “but that’s the way it is.”⁴⁰

Billie Jean and Rosie returned home to the United States, and on December 15 – through Henry Holmes, a Los Angeles attorney – they filed a joint lawsuit the Los Angeles Superior Court against the Southern California Tennis Association. In the suit, Billie Jean and Rosie contended that the Pacific Southwest Open breached an oral agreement by failing to provide “trained and competent referees” for the tournament. Each player sought \$50,000 in general damages, plus \$4,000 – the amount that each would have been given for winning the match. The lawsuit also listed one of the tournament’s sponsors, Pepsico Inc., as a defendant – but not Virginia Slims or Philip Morris, which contributed \$5,000 to the women’s event.⁴¹

Two days later, the USLTA Disciplinary Committee met in Los Angeles for its disciplinary hearing, at which neither Billie Jean nor Rosie attended. The committee decided that both players were considered runners-up, and each was entitled to runner-up prize money of \$2,500. The players were required to pay a fine of \$2,500 and dismiss their lawsuit. The committee gave Billie Jean and Rosie a deadline of January 26, 1972 to comply with the decision; otherwise, they would be suspended from the USLTA and not permitted to play in any sanctioned tournaments worldwide.⁴² “I hope they comply,” committee chairman Forrest Hainline said. “I don’t want to suspend anyone, but I certainly will if it becomes necessary.”⁴³ Shortly after the committee’s decision, Billie

Jean and Rosie dropped the lawsuit and agreed to pay the fines. “We withdrew the lawsuit because it was detrimental to the entire circuit,” Billie Jean said. “I really don’t care anymore. It’s something in the past and that’s the way it goes. I just want to play tennis.”⁴⁴

Throughout the fall of 1971, Gladys finalized details for the upcoming winter-spring Virginia Slims Circuit. The organizers in Milwaukee, Wisconsin decided not to hold a tournament after all, and Gladys replaced that event with an \$18,000 Virginia Slims Invitational in Washington, D. C., promoted by Donald Dell.⁴⁵ The Maureen Connolly Brinker International in Dallas, originally hoping to offer \$50,000 in prize money, was unable to secure a corporate sponsor and reduced its prize money to \$33,000. Finally, one more new tournament, a \$20,000 Virginia Slims Invitational, was scheduled for Indianapolis in early May.

During the U. S. Open in New York, Bob Colwell and other USLTA officials met with the Virginia Slims management team and informed them of the requirements for getting sanction approvals for tournaments on the 1972 Virginia Slims Circuit, which included sanction fees amounting to 6% of each tournament’s prize money. Gladys was perturbed that the USLTA officials did not invite her to the meeting, and she became angrier when Colwell and other officials told the Virginia Slims managers that they had no interest in communicating with her anymore, especially after her appearance at the ILTF Emergency Committee meeting in which proposed to form an independent women’s federation.

Even though the tournament directors were responsible for paying the sanction fees, Gladys was fixated on how the USLTA put the income to use. “What do they do with the money?” she asked Vincent Hanna, Julie’s boyfriend. “Not promote young players, as you would think. It mostly goes towards financing the losses on the USLTA magazine.”⁴⁶ Although *Tennis USA* did not have the circulation of *World Tennis*, it undoubtedly bothered Gladys that the Virginia Slims Circuit was, in essence, funding another tennis publication. As a result, she insisted on maintaining the reduced sanction fee when she wrote a letter to the Virginia Slims Circuit tournament directors in the middle of December 1971:

Dear Tournament Directors:

We have just heard from two tournament directors on the Women's Pro Tour to the effect that they have received letters from the USLTA telling them that they must pay 6% of the total prize money as a sanction fee.

It must be pointed out that our only agreement with the USLTA was to pay \$480 for a sanction fee. This was agreed upon in February of 1971 with Bob Colwell and Bob Malaga and myself. No change has ever been made in this agreement. It still stands.

We have no idea why the USLTA has decided to abrogate our agreement, but we certainly have not consented to this increase. The British LTA actually donates money to new tournaments and would never consider levying a tax such as this one.⁴⁷

Kindest regards,

Sincerely,

Gladys M. Heldman

*Gladys was never anybody who wanted to answer to guidelines.*⁴⁸

-- Rosie Casals, 2008

Dear Gladys:

It has just come to my attention that you have written a number of tournament managers who, hopefully, will be running the women's tournaments for the first part of 1972. For some reason, you told these tournament managers that they did not have to pay the regular USLTA 6% of the prize money sanction fee for these tournaments.

In the first place, this is a matter between the USLTA and the tournament manager who wishes to apply for a sanction, and not the business of a third party.

I gladly admit, that the fact is, that early last year upon your insistence and upon my recommendation, the USLTA for the year 1971 reduced the regular 6% fee to a set fee of \$480.00 per tournament, in order to help women's prize money tournaments get under way. Last September, I told you and the U. S. representatives that in 1972 all of the rules of the USLTA had to be complied with before the 1972 women's prize money tournaments could be sanctioned by the USLTA and we further pointed out, very clearly, that this meant that the women's tournaments had to go back to paying the same percentage sanction fee as the men.

I had pretty much given up hope on being able to reconcile the differences between you, the U. S. sponsorship and the USLTA, when on the last day I was at Forest Hills for the U. S. Open, you stopped Walter Elcock in the Open Club and told him that the 6% sanction fee was no problem for 1972 and that you wanted to talk about a cooperative scheduling, that it would be best if I joined the conversation. I happened to be standing a short distance from you and Walter and he asked me to come over because you had, for the first time, said you would accept the USLTA rules and regulations, specifically mentioning the 6% sanction fee, if we could work out a schedule that would afford reasonable prize money for the women's tournaments. The three of us sat down right there and agreed on ways and means to solve our differences. You stated, at least five times, that you were personally willing to have all these tournaments pay the 6% sanction fee. Walter and I left that meeting stating that the parties had made proper concessions to come up with a good workable program that would assure a wonderful 1972 series of tournaments for the women. The prize money was to be the greatest ever and you were very enthusiastic about putting to work your great talents to see that 1972 would have a series of USLTA sanctioned tournaments for women that would be fantastic from the standpoint of prize money and opportunities for a large number of women players to participate in ...

I find it most incredible to hear that you are advising these tournament managers that you never agreed to comply with the USLTA 6% of the prize money sanctioning program. You know, Walter and I both said there was nothing to talk about unless you agreed to our regulations, and that we would not have had the conversation at Forest Hills, if you had not agreed to this. As we pointed out then, and will again, the USLTA cannot and will not sanction these tournaments unless they comply with USLTA rules, regulations and policies, like all the other tournaments we sanction. If at this point you change your mind, and because of breaking this agreement make it impossible for the USLTA to sanction this excellent schedule for the women, the whole blame for the women's schedule blow-up will be your fault and no one else's. I find it most difficult to believe you would want this blame to be squarely and fully upon your shoulders. You know, and the girls know, that the first time anyone of them plays in a non-sanctioned prize money tournament, the USLTA and the ILTF will have to, and they will, take action against each individual as in my proposed letter.

Gladys, I hope you won't permit all the work you have done for these deserving girls to go down the drain because you got some of them to play in an unsanctioned event.⁴⁹

Sincerely yours,
Robert B. Colwell

On Friday, December 17, 1971 – the same day he wrote his letter – Bob Colwell telephoned Gladys to discuss the matter. Gladys offered to tell the Virginia Slims Circuit tournament directors to pay the 6% sanction fees only if the USLTA contributed the money back to the Virginia Slims Circuit. Gladys' concept of professional tournaments included qualifying, preliminary and championship flights, and the players who lost in the first two stages were placed in consolation tournaments. She told Colwell that the USLTA sanction fees should be used as prize money for the consolation events, and she offered to name these events as "USLTA Consolation Flights." Colwell rejected the idea,

telling Gladys that the USLTA needed the sanction fees for operational expenses.⁵⁰ The conversation ended with neither side willing to compromise, and Gladys wrote a letter to Colwell on the following Monday:

Dear Bob:

It was a surprise to get your phone call on Friday and to find out that you felt our agreement on sanction fees had been altered from the original \$480 per tournament to a figure of 6% of the prize money.

Bob, when you and Bob Malaga and I met last January, we agreed to a tournament fee of \$480 to be paid each week to the USLTA. No other fee was ever approved. Our tournament directors have always been notified about this \$480 fee and have always paid it. This is the figure we also gave to all our 1972 tournament directors and it was mentioned as well in all our press releases and in every article on the subject in World Tennis. As a matter of fact, the USLTA has been accepting the \$480 sanction fees for 1972, and Mr. Dennis Burchell of Ft. Lauderdale has his sanction signed, sealed and delivered. Why the sudden change of mind?

It has been many, many months since anyone in the USLTA has contacted me. You and Bob Malaga frequently went directly to one of our sponsors, Virginia Slims, but neither of you ever before tried to set up a meeting with me personally.

I would be happy to meet with either or both of you if you so wish. It should be stressed, however, that your previous meetings last summer were only with Virginia Slims and never with me. Your 5-point proposal to Virginia Slims in late August, which asked for my resignation, the abolishment of minimum prize money standards, the abolishment of qualifying and preliminary events, the refusal to give a sanction to any tournament of ours that conflicted with a USLTA event and the demand for a 6% sanction fee was turned down by Virginia Slims. I was never asked by you for my opinion nor whether I would agree to any or all of the points.

The above is the only proposal ever submitted by the USLTA to alter the original agreement of last January 1971 and, to repeat, this was made to Virginia Slims and was turned down.

I would appreciate your sending a copy of your reply to all those involved, including the tournament directors, our sponsors (if you so wish), and Mr. Basil Reay of the ILTF. I specifically mentioned the latter since you stated on the phone that the ILTF would back you in any decision you made about the Women's Pro Tour.⁵¹

Sincerely,
Gladys M. Heldman

Colwell's reaction was an attempt to defuse the situation and try to develop a working partnership between Gladys and the USLTA. Since Gladys had asked that any response be sent to a wide distribution list, including the ILTF and the Virginia Slims Circuit tournament directors and sponsors, Colwell had his letter to Gladys printed in the next issue of *Tennis USA*:

Dear Gladys:

In my opinion, the best thing that could happen for women's tennis, would be that the most outstanding promoter of women's tennis events and the USLTA work together in a spirit of confidence and cooperation. If the USLTA rules, regulations, and policies are unfair or outmoded, we should get them changed, but regardless of the time and red tape it takes to make such changes, everyone, including you and I, has to abide by the now existing ones.

Your letter, that had the same circulation as this one is to have, has to be answered because of the confusion that it will cause tournament managers and players. I answer it by saying the USLTA's termination of the special temporary agreement for the \$480.00 women's sanction fee for 1971 was made clear in many ways; i.e. the tournament managers were told at the USLTA meeting in

New York in September; it was given in writing to Virginia Slims people and discussed with them in September; a press release was given to the papers during the Forest Hills tournament and a copy of this release was printed on Page 3 of the October issue of *Tennis USA*. As stated before, Mr. Elcock and I only agreed to discuss with you the 1972 women's schedule of tournaments because you said you would accept the 6% sanction fees (this was at Forest Hills during the Open). During the aforementioned discussion, you repeatedly said the 6% sanction fee was acceptable and in September and October while Bob Malaga discussed various tournament arrangements and dates with you, the two of you discussed sanction fees a number of times.

Contrary to your letter, there has been no sudden change of mind. When it was made crystal clear to you, in September, by Mr. Elcock and myself, it should not have been necessary for us to do anymore, because we should have been entitled to have you explain the agreed upon terms to the tournament managers, who depended upon you for correct information as the tournaments you were arranging for USLTA sanctions.

You stated that the USLTA has been accepting the \$480.00 sanction fees for 1972 and that Mr. Dennis Burchell, of Fort Lauderdale, "has had his sanction signed, sealed and delivered." It is my understanding that he sent in a request for sanction to the Florida Lawn Tennis Association, but it has never been forwarded to the USLTA. Our records also indicate that Bob Malaga sent a letter on October 20th to the President of the FLTA informing him of the 6% sanction fee particularly in reference to the women's tournaments to be played in Ft. Lauderdale, Jacksonville, and St. Petersburg. In a recent conversation with Howard Reese, president of the St. Petersburg tournament, he said that he fully understood about the 6% sanction fee and that the tournament intended to pay it. May I add that I have just heard from Mr. Burchell, on having the facts explained to him last week, has agreed to the 6% fee.

When you stated in your letter that the USLTA had not contacted you for months, and then stated that, during the same time period a couple of months ago, Bob Malaga and you had discussed, at Charlotte, N. C., various sanctions, particularly the sanction for Boston (Bob confirmed this), it seems to me you are proving your first statement to be in error. Mr. Elcock tried to reach you by phone a number of times before he went to the November ILTF meeting, but was unsuccessful.

You state you would be glad to meet with us, but that we had only met with Virginia Slims. We did make a statement to Virginia Slims that we thought maybe we could work through them with less friction than with you, as we were trying to avoid these continuous misunderstandings of the past. The other points made in your next to last paragraph misconstrue the facts to the point that I will not take the time to answer them. They are the most misleading.

For the sake of the girls, the USLTA would like to have you continue with your most efficient promotion of women's tournaments. We will work with you, as we have consistently attempted, *provided* you will follow the few official rules that are necessary for the good of the game. Please give this serious consideration, because you can do so much for tennis and the deserving women players. Let's quit letter writing and help the players play tennis.⁵²

Sincerely,

Robert B. Colwell

One week before the 1972 Virginia Slims Circuit opened in San Francisco, Gladys sent an update to the women professionals, explaining that Judy Dalton, Kerry Melville and Lesley Hunt were no longer in "good standing" with the LTAA, and what implications this could hold for the other players on the tour:

Dear Goils:

The three Australian players in our New Zealand tournament were declared “not in good standing by the Australian LTA last week. This means they will not be eligible to play Federation Cup but it does not necessarily mean that they will be suspended. However, if they are suspended, so will everyone who plays with them on the Tour, which means a total of over 55 girls. A suspension of these girls and all of the rest of you is a possibility but we don’t think it is very likely. We consider the Australian action totally arbitrary, and of course the Australians will continue to play with us. If everyone sticks together there won’t be any problem since we guarantee to continue to run tournaments with good prize money and to take care of everyone in the group. Still, you must be warned since it could endanger your status on European tournaments.

If there is a suspension, we have been invited to join up the WCT on at least three or four tournaments where the prize money would be \$20,000 minimum. We also have an offer to play a World Cup (along Federation Cup lines) by Larry King in Long Beach. We certainly hope this does not come to pass and we are reasonably sure that the ILTF would not like to see this happen either.

There is one further problem. Several additional players have applied to join the group, and this would give us more than 32 qualifiers. Some girls will occasionally be out because of injury or fatigue, but this still would mean that three or four girls would be “alternate qualifiers” if everyone shows, or six or eight girls would have to play two qualifying rounds in one day. I prefer the latter, although it does create a certain hardship.

Pip Jones or I will be in touch with you next week about who will have to be in Lodi, Calif., on January 5, ready to play on January 6, who will be in the Preliminaries (arrival time must be January 7 with play to begin on January 8) and who will be in the Championship Flight (arrival time January 10 with play to begin January 12). Players who consistently win will move up to the next flight, and vice versa.

New additions to the Tour are Andree Martin of Canada, Cynthia Sieler of Australia, Raquel Giscafne of Argentina and Madeleine Pegel of Sweden. Take care, play well and I will be looking forward to seeing you soon.⁵³

Luv,
Gladys M. Heldman

The opening event on the 1972 Virginia Slims Circuit was the British Motor Cars Invitation, played at the Civic Auditorium in downtown San Francisco. Qualifying and preliminary matches, featuring more than forty women, were played more than 180 miles away, on the indoor courts of the King's Castle Resort and Casino in Incline Village, Nevada. The final four survivors of the qualifying and preliminary phases were placed in the sixteen-player championship flight in San Francisco, which included the top three seeds of Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals and Francoise Durr. The fourth-seeded player was Virginia Wade, who was making her debut on the Virginia Slims Circuit. In the two weeks prior to arriving in San Francisco, Virginia won the Australian Open at the beginning of year with a straight-set final round win over Evonne Goolagong, and then she lost to Evonne in the final of the New South Wales Open.

The British Motor Cars Invitation also featured the debut of the tennis dresses that Ted Tinling designed for the Virginia Slims Circuit players. Four months earlier, dismayed with the clothing that some of the women were wearing on court, Joe Cullman hired Tinling to create fashionable outfits that often integrated the Virginia Slims cigarette package colors of gold and brown and the brand's "Ginny Girl" logo. These dresses, given to the players free of charge, helped to showcase the entertainment values of the tour.

The first showing of my Virginia Slims tennis wear took place at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco to coincide with the opening tournament of the 1972 Virginia Slims tour. At the time I was still working out of London, and the airline mistakenly shipped the collection of thirty-eight specially designed outfits to

*Atlanta instead of San Francisco. The shipment was lost for more than a week and retrieved only a few hours before my grand opening.*⁵⁴

-- Ted Tinling, 1979

On Tuesday, January 4, 1972 – two days before the qualifying tournament for the British Motor Cars Invitation started, and in the midst of the New South Wales Open in Sydney, Australia – the LTAA decided to return Judy Dalton, Kerry Melville, and Lesley Hunt to “good standing.” They were free to play anywhere they wanted, and the LTAA did not mind if they missed the upcoming South Australian Championships and Western Australia Championships in order to play on the Virginia Slims Circuit. “It is not a compromise with the girls – we have backed down completely,” said LTAA president Wayne Reid. “The penalty of depriving them from playing in the national titles is enough. The girls are entitled to earn a living from tennis, and at the moment, Australia cannot provide enough prize money.”⁵⁵ Reid also told Peter Stone of *The Age* that he would contact Gladys and coordinate the dates of the following year’s Australian Circuit tournaments with those of the Virginia Slims Circuit in order to avoid future conflicts.

On Friday, January 7, during the second day of the qualifying tournament at King’s Castle, Neil Amdur of the *New York Times* spoke with Bob Colwell and Bob Malaga. Referring to the tournament’s refusal to pay the USLTA sanction fee of 6% of total prize money offered, Colwell told Amdur that “we may have a head-to-head clash and the USLTA is not going to let them get by with a non-sanctioned tournament.” The British Motor Cars Invitation offered prize money of \$18,000 – an increase of \$3,000 from when it was first announced as a \$15,000 tournament in September – and the USLTA wanted the sanction fee of \$1,080 instead of \$480. “The \$480 figure was experimental last year,” Malaga said. “Six percent is the same figure we charge for all tournaments. Why should a women’s tournament pay less than the men’s? They wanted equality, and now they have it ... We will advise anybody who plays in a non-sanctioned event they are subject to disciplinary action if they participate.” Tournament promoter Larry King was nonplussed by the threats. “This is a power play by the USLTA to see if they have any muscle,” he told Amdur. “As far as Billie Jean is concerned, she hasn’t

been affiliated with the USLTA in five years. She never even got any formal notice of her last suspension ... there's no trouble for us. The USLTA needs the girls more than the girls need them."⁵⁶

USLTA officials most likely noticed Neil Amdur's article in the *New York Times* on Saturday, January 8, entitled "USLTA Faults Women's Lob on Fees." Perhaps annoyed at Larry's comment that "the USLTA needs the girls more than the girls need them," USLTA Disciplinary Committee chairman Forrest Hainline sent the tournament promoters a telegram, warning them that any players who participated were subject to suspension. Larry and co-promoter Dennis van der Meer urged the junior players (those who were still eligible for USLTA 18 & under tournaments) to withdraw from the qualifying tournament in order to preserve their amateur status. Of the adult players, only two – Eliza Pande of California and Birgitta Lindstrom of Finland – withdrew out of concern for possibly getting suspended for playing in a non-sanctioned tournament.⁵⁷ In Friday's matches, eight players – Marcie Louie, Tory Fretz, Vicki Berner, Esme Emanuel, Vicki Smouse, Jane O'Hara, Sally Holdsworth, Cynthia Sieler and Vicki Berner – won their second round of qualifying matches and earned spots in Saturday's preliminary matches.

In the weekend's preliminary matches, eight higher-ranked women were paired against the eight survivors of the qualifying phase. By Sunday evening, four players had won two matches and earned their spots in the championship flight in San Francisco, with the biggest surprise coming from Marcie Louie, an 18-year old student at the University of California-Berkeley who won the California state women's singles title. In her preliminary matches, Marcie upset the more experienced Kerry Harris on Saturday and Lesley Hunt on Sunday. Joining Marcie in the championship flight in San Francisco were Pam Teeguarden, another young Californian, and 1971 tour regulars Karen Krantzcke and Ceci Martinez.

Forty-eight hours after the USLTA warned the women about competing in an unsanctioned tournament, Bob Colwell agreed to provide the San Francisco tournament with a USLTA sanction approval for \$480, and he allowed the same reduced USLTA sanction fee amount for the next three stops on the Virginia Slims Circuit events, in Long

Beach, Boston, and Fort Lauderdale. The decision to require tournaments on the Virginia Slims Circuit to pay the standard sanction fee of 6% of prize money “has been questioned because of lack of adequate prior notice,” the USLTA announced in *Tennis USA*.

“Accordingly, the removal of the temporary sanction fee of \$480 on women’s events and the reinstatement of a fee for women’s events in the same percentage as that for men’s events will be submitted to the Executive Committee for proper adoption at its meeting on February 11, 1972, and will not be effective until after such date.”⁵⁸

Joe Cullman was encouraged by the thawing of relations between the USLTA and the Virginia Slims Circuit, as he indicated in letter to Bob Colwell:

Dear Bob:

I have been following the exchange of correspondences between you and Gladys with great interest. I was particularly pleased to note in her letter to you of January 11 that apparently some real progress is being made in developing a working arrangement between the Women’s Pro Tour and the USLTA. I am confident that if you and Gladys apply yourselves to the resolution of this problem, a satisfactory solution can be developed. Certainly some of the USLTA rules that have been on the books so long should be modified, as you suggested.

I would like to set the record straight on one important point in relation to the position I took last September in connection with Philip Morris sponsorship of future telecasts of the U. S. Open.

I did not at that time withdraw Philip Morris’ television support from the U. S. Open. I did say that in the event the ILTF ban of the World’s Championship Tennis men players was upheld or in the event the USLTA should bar the Virginia Slims girls, we would consider our commitment to CBS to sponsor future telecasts of the U. S. Open to be terminated. The following quotation from the last paragraph of my letter to CBS clarified the situation: “Accordingly, we wish to notify you further that, in the event the USLTA should bar the Virginia Slims Girls as well as uphold the ILTF ban of the World’s Championship Tennis

men players, we shall consider our commitment to CBS to sponsor future telecasts of the U. S. Open Tennis Championships as terminated.”

Philip Morris on behalf of both Marlboro and Virginia Slims has expended significant sums in the interest of supporting big time tennis in the United States. We are continuing to devote considerable energies and monies in support of the Virginia Slims circuit. I think that tennis has benefitted from this Philip Morris investment and so has Philip Morris.

I hope very much that you and Gladys can work out a satisfactory arrangement so that women’s tennis in the U.S.A. can get the greatest benefit from our support of the Virginia Slims circuit.⁵⁹

Sincerely,

Joseph F. Cullman 3rd

The championship flight of the British Motor Cars Invitational started on Wednesday, January 12 at the Civic Auditorium in downtown San Francisco. Six of the eight seeded players – Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals, Francoise Durr, Virginia Wade, Nancy Richey Gunter, and Judy Dalton – won their opening round matches in straight sets. Fourth-seeded Kerry Melville was pushed to 6-4 6-7 6-4 against Mary Ann Eisel, and fifth-seeded Helga Masthoff was easily defeated by Helen Gourlay, the Australian who reached the final of the 1971 French Open. Since Helga was a clay court specialist who rarely played indoors, the result was not very surprising to knowledgeable tennis observers.

In Thursday’s quarterfinals, two more Australians scored upsets. Kerry Melville outlasted third-seeded Francoise Durr, 3-6 6-3 6-2, and Judy Dalton eliminated second-seeded Rosie Casals, 4-6 6-0 6-3. “I just tired out after the first set,” Rosie said afterward. “After coming back from New Zealand last month, I took two and a half weeks off. I went to Lake Tahoe, relaxed, never touched a tennis racquet. My first workout was four days ago before this tournament and it really showed today.”⁶⁰ Judy found motivation to beat Rosie by looking at the sports car parked near the court.

“Before I left Australia, my husband David said that if I played well this season, I could have an MG,” she said. “Every time I looked up and saw that MG displayed at the side of the court, I thought about David and his promise. I had to win.”⁶¹

The most anticipated match of the quarterfinal round was the encounter between Billie Jean King and Nancy Richey Gunter. After her marriage in late 1970 and a limited schedule in 1971 – when, for the first time in ten years, she failed to win a tournament – Nancy’s place in the unofficial world rankings dropped considerably. Although the tournament in San Francisco was her first competition since Rosie beat her in Phoenix three months earlier, Nancy planned to rededicate herself in 1972.

Billie Jean won the first set 6-2 by abandoning her usual net-rushing tactics and playing patiently. “With her you can’t hit out like you want to,” Billie Jean said later. “I have to keep telling myself ‘hold back, place the ball, hold back.’ You have to move the ball around, try and get her to run.”⁶² Nancy then reversed the momentum in the second set, easily winning it 6-1.

Billie Jean held serve to open the third set; after that, there were nine consecutive service breaks as neither player was able to hold serve for the remainder of the match. Each time Nancy served, at 0-1, 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, and 4-5, she was just one game away from leveling the score; each time she served, she let another opportunity slip away. After the final game, both players were physically exhausted, and they received a standing ovation as they left the court. Billie Jean was finished for the evening, but Nancy needed to come back on court after a short rest to play a doubles match with Ceci Martinez against Kerry Melville and Wendy Overton. Jim Bainbridge of the *San Francisco Examiner* observed Nancy’s frustration after her loss to Billie Jean.

She congratulated Mrs. King, thanked the officials and repaired to the southwest corner of Civic Auditorium to call her father. It was there, finally wrapped in the privacy of a phone booth with a half dozen racquets and two hours of welling frustration, that she finally let loose. Mrs. Gunter talked and she gestured and she held her head and she cried. Everything came rushing out. When it was over and she was once more composed, Mrs. Gunter scooped up her racquets and walked

back down the long hall toward the lobby and then back into the Auditorium to once more face the crowd of more than 2,000. ⁶³

Emotionally and physically drained, Nancy could only go through the motions as she and Ceci lost, 6-2 6-2. Within a few hours after losing the doubles match, Nancy was on a late flight back home to Texas. “I suppose our matches have always been a bit more tense than most,” Billie Jean told Bainbridge after their match. “I was ranked behind her for a long time, from the time we were fifteen, I guess, and I always wanted to get ahead of her, to become number one. The press has made a lot out of our personal differences. There’s really no animosity. Nancy’s just a loner and when we play, we play hard. Our competitiveness makes the match seem tense ...” ⁶⁴

In Friday’s singles semifinals, Billie Jean won the last three games of each set in her 6-4 6-3 win over Virginia Wade. “It was pretty close, really. She was just a little better,” Virginia said after the match. “I’ve been playing quite well lately and I was just on the edge of playing really well tonight.” Reporters were curious to get the recent Australian Open’s assessment of the Virginia Slims Circuit. Virginia responded that she felt the world’s major championships were still the premiere events on the tennis calendar. “Australia is one of the top four,” she said. “Let’s face it, the tour doesn’t quite get the international coverage. But I’m going to play on the tour about five weeks. I haven’t had a chance to play much lately against Billie Jean, Rosemary Casals and these other girls, and I’d like to try.” ⁶⁵

Billie Jean was standing nearby, waiting to be interviewed next, and she heard Virginia’s comments. When it was her turn to speak with reporters, she disputed Virginia’s claims that the traditional international tournaments were more important than the Virginia Slims circuit events. “Those tournaments don’t have the depth of good players anymore, because most of the good players are playing on the tour,” Billie Jean argued. “I wonder who Virginia and Evonne played in the semifinals (of the Australian Open). The Australian just doesn’t count that much anymore. Neither do Italy and France. I know the press over there doesn’t cover the (Virginia Slims) tour much, but they’re going to have to because all the good players are going to it. The tours are the

future of tennis.”⁶⁶ Billie Jean should have known that the losing semifinalists in the 1972 Australian Open women’s singles draw were Karen Krantzcke and Helen Gourlay, two regular participants on the Virginia Slims Circuit.

Kerry Melville earned her spot in the championship singles match with a 6-2 6-4 semifinal win over Judy Dalton. In the final, Kerry came close to winning the first set; Billie Jean needed to save three set points when serving at 5-6 love-40. Billie Jean leveled the first set at 6-6, and then won the tiebreak 5-0. The second set was just as close, with Kerry pushing Billie Jean to another tiebreak before finally losing the match. “I couldn’t get psyched,” Billie Jean said afterward. “I knew I wasn’t in shape, so it was just blood and guts out there. But when it really counted, I played the shots well.”⁶⁷ Despite her self-criticism, it was a good start to the year for Billie Jean; she hoped to repeat the success she had on the previous year’s Virginia Slims Circuit.

As he did in 1971, Larry King promoted another tournament in Billie Jean’s hometown of Long Beach, California, the week after his event in San Francisco. This time, four locations were used; qualifying and preliminary playoffs were held outdoors at the Old Ranch Tennis Club in Seal Beach, and the championship flight was scheduled to be played outdoors at the Billie Jean King Tennis Center in Long Beach, with evening matches played indoors at the Cerritos College gymnasium and the Long Beach City College gymnasium. At the conclusion of the qualifying and preliminary draws, played Saturday, January 15 through Wednesday, January 19, four women earned their way into the main draw: two young Americans, Barbara Downs and Wendy Overton, Lesley Hunt of Australia, and Betty Stove, and tall, hard-serving player from Holland.

A crowd of 1300 spectators watched the opening round matches at the Billie Jean King Tennis Center. Nearly 700 of them were local high school students who were admitted free of charge during their physical education classes. Virginia Wade opened the program with a 6-2 6-3 win over Valerie Ziefgenfuss, and Kerry Melville had the same score against Betty Stove. Number-two seed Rosie Casals lost the first set against Karen Krantzcke before rebounding 6-1 6-0, and Helen Gourlay eliminated Barbara Downs, 6-0 6-3.

In the biggest surprise of the day session, qualifier Wendy Overton easily dispatched Judy Dalton, the seventh seed. Judy opened the match by serving two double-faults, and her game deteriorated from there. “She made so many errors, I couldn’t believe it,” said Wendy after the match.⁶⁸ In one of her service games, Judy double-faulted four times. She was at a loss to explain why she played so poorly, except to say she did not care for the Bancroft Tretorn tennis balls that were being used in the tournament.

The final match of the day session, between Francoise Durr and Lesley Hunt, was rescheduled to be played later that evening, indoors at Cerritos College gym, due to the cold weather. Only 627 spectators came to watch the matches that evening, even though Billie Jean was scheduled to play. After Francoise advanced past Lesley, 6-0 6-4, Billie Jean allowed Pam Teeguarden a fewer number of games, easily winning 6-1 6-2. Billie Jean was gracious to her young opponent afterward, telling Bob Martin of the Long Beach Independent Press-Telegram that “the match was tougher than the score indicates. Pam returned serve well and is very good off the ground.”⁶⁹ In the final match of the evening session, fifth seed Helga Masthoff was defeated in the first round, just as she was in San Francisco the previous week. This time, Julie Heldman took advantage of the West German’s aversion to fast, indoor courts and won 6-2 7-5.

Another crowd of 1300 watched Friday’s action at the Billie Jean King Tennis Center. Rosie Casals and Wendy Overton started their quarterfinal match at 11:30 am; for Rosie, who preferred late nights to early mornings, the start time of the match was a challenge. Although she prevailed in three sets, she told a reporter that her performance was “lousy.” Asked if she thought was running as well as she did the previous year, Rosie responded, “Running well? No, I wasn’t running well. But who can run well so early in the morning?”⁷⁰

Kerry Melville and Virginia Wade had not played each other in eighteen months, and for the first time in her career, Kerry won. After her 6-2 7-5 victory, Kerry said “it was awfully tough toward the end. I thought I hit my groundstrokes well throughout the match. I’ve got more confidence on my topspin forehand and backhand since working for a few months at the end of the year with my coach in Australia, Neil Guiney.” Like

Judy Dalton, Virginia was not happy with the heavy Bancroft Tretorn tennis balls. “I can’t get the feel of these balls,” she said. “Kerry is playing very well, but these balls suit her game ... There will be a lot of other tournaments this year.”⁷¹

The final match of the day – following two singles matches and three doubles matches – was a quarterfinal singles encounter between Francoise Durr and Julie Heldman. Unhappy that she was playing so late in the afternoon, when the temperature had dropped considerably and the court lights were turned on, Julie yelled after making an error, “Oh, I can’t do anything now! Why don’t they schedule me at two in the morning next time?”⁷² Francoise kept her composure and won easily, 6-2 6-1.

A small but enthusiastic gathering of 900 spectators watched Billie Jean play Helen Gourlay on Friday evening at the Cerritos College gymnasium. In a very competitive match that Bob Martin called “brilliant,” Billie Jean and Helen stayed even until 6-6 in the first set. Although Billie Jean easily won the subsequent tiebreak, 5-1, to claim the first set, Helen was not deterred. She continued to play well, and she eventually found herself serving for the second set at 5-4. Helen reached 40-30 – set point – only to double fault. Two points later, on her second set point, Helen thought she won the set with a winning backhand volley at the net. A late “out” call by the linesperson – which some observers thought was incorrect – put the score back to deuce. Two points later, Billie Jean secured the game to level at 5-5 and held serve to pull ahead 6-5. Helen then served to stay in the match, and as her backhand sailed out on the final point, Billie Jean yelled “Bless you!”⁷³

The following evening, at Long Beach City College, Billie Jean faced Francoise Durr in a semifinal match before 2,180 fans. Both players fought hard in the first set, which the Frenchwoman won 6-3. Suddenly, Billie Jean seemed to stop trying, not running for shots that she would normally have no trouble returning. After losing the set 6-0, Billie Jean quickly left the court without speaking to reporters. “Many of the spectators were stunned by Billie’s second set performance,” wrote Bob Martin of the Independent Press-Telegram. “Strictly bush behavior,” one spectator said. “She simply gave up.”⁷⁴

Francoise told Martin she thought Billie Jean “played well in the first set, but then, I don’t know, she seemed to quit trying. Maybe it’s her knees, but then again, maybe it’s partly in the head.” Larry and Billie Jean’s father, Bill Moffitt, said that she suffered a thigh muscle injury in her match against Helen Gourlay the previous night. Larry speculated that Billie Jean’s knees could have been the reason for her performance. He told Martin that Billie Jean had complained of knee pain when competing in New Zealand in December, and she visited her doctor Dr. Donald Larson in Long Beach as soon as she returned to the United States. Larry said that Billie Jean would try to see Dr. Larson on Sunday, and she would not be able to play in the third place playoff match. Judy Dalton agreed to play Kerry Melville, who lost to Rosie Casals in the other semifinal match, in the third place match on Sunday afternoon.⁷⁵

I can remember ... during the second year of the Virginia Slims tour, when I was angry a Larry about something, totally frustrated ... I showed him how mad I was at him by throwing a match, and then later throwing a fit, screaming “You don’t care!” at the top of my lungs at Larry, and then driving off into the night.⁷⁶
 -- Billie Jean King, 1982

The championship singles match between Rosie and Francoise started at 8:00 pm at the Long Beach City College gymnasium in front of the biggest crowd of the week – 2200 spectators, who were probably hoping to see Billie Jean in the championship match. At the beginning, it was a dull match, with Francoise making numerous unforced errors. Rosie won the first set 6-2 and raced to 5-0 in the second. With her back against the wall, Francoise suddenly relaxed and mounted an incredible comeback. She reeled off five straight games – saving three match points along the way – to level the set at 5-5. Each player then won a game, sending the second set into a tiebreak that went all the way to the sudden-death ninth point – simultaneous set point for Francoise and match point for Rosie. Taking a gamble, Francoise came forward to the net and Rosie netted her attempted backhand passing shot. The appreciative spectators gave Francoise a standing ovation for her amazing comeback.⁷⁷

Rosie regained her momentum and took early leads in the third set, reaching 4-1. At 5-2 she served for the match and held another match point, only to double fault. Two points later, on her eighth match point, she closed out the match with a backhand volley that landed just inside the sideline.

Dan Ridder, editor and publisher of the *Independent Press-Telegram*, presented Rosie with the winner's check of \$3,400 and Francoise with the runner-up check of \$2,200. Afterward, Bob Martin asked Rosie if she thought the match had slipped away when Francoise came back to win the second set. "It sort of looked like it," Rosie admitted. "But it's typical of Frankie to get hot when she is behind. She feels no pressure then and starts hitting great shots." Francoise was at a loss for explaining her slow start to the match. "I just couldn't get started," she said. "I don't know what it was. Maybe it was something I ate for dinner. Rosie played very well all the way, but I thought I had a good chance after catching up."⁷⁸ Rosie and Virginia then defeated Helen Gourlay and Karen Krantzcke in the doubles final, 6-4 5-7 7-5 and earned \$250 apiece; Helen and Karen each received \$150.

Billie Jean decided to skip the next stop on the circuit, the \$18,000 Virginia Slims Indoor Tennis Championships at the Old Colony Tennis Club in Hingham, Massachusetts. Rosie was given the top-seeded position and favored to win the title, but it was the surprising performance of another American player that created one of the biggest sensations. 24-year old Wendy Overton, listed at number fourteen in 1971 USLTA women's singles rankings, defeated Pam Teegarden and Valerie Ziegenfuss to earn a spot in the quarterfinals against the number-two seed, Kerry Melville. With 1,400 spectators watching, Wendy played aggressively and won the first set 6-4, and Kerry came back to take the second set 6-2. Wendy took a 3-0 lead in the third, but then lost confidence in her forehand as Kerry evened the score to 3-3. Wendy regained her composure to win three of the next four games for the biggest win of her career, and by reaching the semifinals she was guaranteed her largest tennis payday. "I guess I'll get to know the tax man," Wendy said after her win. "I only made \$3,800 on the circuit last year, and the worst I can do here now is \$1,300, my biggest payday."⁷⁹

Wendy Overton was an example of how the Virginia Slims Circuit provided new financial opportunities for women professional tennis players. After graduating from Rollins College in 1969, Wendy took a position as a secretary at a tennis club in Chevy Chase, Maryland and occasionally played in local tournaments. “I’m the Middle Atlantic champion,” she told Bud Collins of the *Boston Globe*, “but that’s just a sectional title, not a pro thing like this.” In late 1971, she decided to quit her job and try playing on the tour full-time, which was “sure better than sitting at a desk.” After losing her second preliminary match and failing to make the championship flight at the British Motor Cars Invitational in San Francisco, Wendy made her breakthrough the following week in Long Beach. She won both of her preliminary matches and then upset Judy Dalton in the first round, before losing in three sets to Rosie Casals. By the time she arrived in Hingham, Wendy was no longer required to play qualifying or preliminary matches. Still, she could hardly believe her recent success, waking up in the middle of the night after her upset win over Kerry. “I was excited,” she told Collins. “I said to myself, my God, I’m still in the tournament!”⁸⁰

In the semifinals, Rosie took a 4-1 lead against fourth-seeded Virginia Wade in what Collins called “blazing, attacking tennis.” Despite her deficit, Virginia did not panic. “Relax,” she said aloud. “Watch the ball and take your time.” Rosie’s serve began to falter, and Virginia worked her way back into the match with low sliced backhand return of serves that were difficult for her opponent to volley. Rosie had a chance to finish the first set when she served at 5-4, but two double-faults – one at set point – permanently changed the complexion of the match. After losing her serve, Rosie only won two more games and Virginia pulled away for a 7-5 6-2 win. “You would have thought we were playing for a million dollars,” Virginia said later. Referring to her on-court comments, she explained that “when you play Rosie, she plays so quick that you fall into her pace. You hurry, and you tend to watch her because you never know where she’ll be. I just had to play my game.”⁸¹

In the other semifinal, number-two seed Francoise Durr ended Wendy Overton’s surprising run. It was Wendy’s first on-court encounter with Francoise, which she later described as “weird.” None of Wendy’s tactics worked; when she hit a drop shot, the

speedy Frenchwoman tracked it down, and when she approached the net she could not anticipate her opponent's unorthodox yet effective passing shots. Francoise won the first set 6-1, had a temporary let-down when she fell behind 0-3 in the second set, but then closed it out 7-5.⁸²

Looking ahead to the final with Virginia, Francoise was relaxed. "If I lose, the money is not bad – and if I win, it is great," she said, referring to the winner's check of \$3,500 and the runner-up prize of \$2,300. Francoise told Collins she preferred to play as many tournaments as possible because she liked the money; in 1971, she played for 37 weeks and earned \$65,000. For Virginia, however, the schedule of weekly tournaments on the Virginia Slims Circuit was already wearing on her, even though this was only her third event of the five that she committed to play in. "I can't stand the pace," she confessed. "After five weeks, I need a rest. I made \$30,000 last year and didn't play overly much."⁸³

The singles and doubles finals of the Virginia Slims Indoor Championships were played on Saturday, January 30 in front of a standing-room-only crowd of 2,300 spectators. Bud Collins called the singles match between Virginia and Francoise "an enthralling 74-minute duel ... Francoise made countless amazing recoveries, her garish strokes scoring as many winners as Miss Wade's clean-cut bolts. A heavily sliced backhand usually took Virginia to the net where she did the most damage." Each player took leads in the match and then lost them; Francoise went ahead 4-3 in the first set before Virginia took the set with a run of four games. Virginia went ahead 3-1 in the second set, only to see her lead evaporate when Francoise held serve for 5-4. Virginia lost only three points in the next three games, holding serve at love to finish the match 6-3 7-5. "She hits the ball harder than anybody on the circuit," Francoise said after the match. For Virginia, it was a satisfying accomplishment, but she was looking forward to a rest. "I'm tired," Virginia told Bud Collins. "I can't go week after week like Francoise and some of the others. One more tournament, then I'm going to run and hide for awhile in the Alps – St. Moritz. I want to do some skiing."⁸⁴

After the awards presentations, Virginia and Francoise were back on court as opponents in the doubles final. Virginia and Rosie Casals won only two games in the

first set against Francoise and Judy Dalton, and then came back to take the second set 6-3. The third set could not have been any closer. At 6-6, a sudden-death nine-point tiebreak was played, which went to 4-4 – match point for both teams. Rosie’s winning volley ended the match, and she and Virginia earned \$250 each. Although the difference between winning and losing was only \$100 – Francoise and Judy were each given \$150 – the loss was too much for the Frenchwoman. As the players went to their chairs to collect their belongings, a frustrated Francoise repeatedly smashed her racquet into the court while an amused Virginia watched.⁸⁵

The tour then traveled to Fort Lauderdale, Florida for the \$25,000 Tennis Club Women’s International. The WLOD Women’s Invitational that George Liddy promoted in nearby Pompano Beach for four years had outgrown the Lighthouse Point Racquet and Yacht Club, and the newly built Tennis Club provided more seating for spectators. The tournament was also a means of advertising the Tennis Club’s condominiums. It was a unique, tennis-oriented facility, with seven five-story residential buildings that surrounded twenty clay tennis courts, a clubhouse and a pool.

Before the 32-player championship flight started on Tuesday, February 1, the same number of players competed in a qualifying tournament. Among the eight players who qualified was Jeanne Evert, the tiny 14-year old sister of Chris. Jeanne was placed at the top position in the USLTA Girls 14 and under rankings after winning the national title in 1971. The women’s tournament in Fort Lauderdale was her first competition against professionals, and she defeated Shari Barman and Janet Haas to earn a spot in the championship draw against the number-two seed, Rosie Casals.

Jeanne and Rosie played their first-round match on Tuesday afternoon in front of a large crowd. Rosie won a close first set, at 6-4, by bringing the five-foot tall Jeanne into the net with drop shots and hitting lobs over her head. In the second set, Jeanne focused on keeping her groundstrokes as deep and high as possible, a tactic that prevented Rosie from hitting her drop shots. Jeanne’s strategy worked, and she took the second set, 6-3. Chris attended school that day, and as soon as classes were dismissed she raced to the Tennis Club in time to watch the third set. Jeanne established and maintained a lead in the third set, and she soon realized she was on the verge of a major

upset. “In the end, I tried not to let the score come into my head,” Jeanne said later, “but I didn’t think I was going to win until it was over.” Jeanne won the final set, 6-3, and tears were in her eyes as she came off the court and accepted congratulations from the throng of fans. Chris ran over to her sister and affectionately whispered in her ear. “Don’t be a crybaby.”⁸⁶

Jimmy Evert was ambivalent about Jeanne’s remarkable upset. “I wasn’t sure I really wanted her to win,” he said after the match. “I want these things to come – eventually. Chrissie at fourteen never had a win like this, but you can’t compare the girls on how they do against older players where the pressure is different.”⁸⁷ There were no mixed emotions from Rosie; she wanted to leave as soon as possible. She did not pose for a post-match photograph with Jeanne, refused to be interviewed by reporters, withdrew from the doubles competition and made arrangements for a flight out of Fort Lauderdale that evening.⁸⁸

The following night, another young Floridian played in the featured match against Billie Jean King. Fifteen-year old Kathy Kuykendall came through the qualifying tournament, with wins over the more experienced Jill Cooper of Great Britain and Kris Kemmer of California, but could only collect two games against Billie Jean. After the surprising loss of Rosie the day before, Billie Jean was careful to not take any of the young players for granted.

Thursday’s matches provided more surprising results. Fifth-seeded Virginia Wade was beaten in three sets by the 1971 French Open finalist, Helen Gourlay of Australia, and Wendy Overton won with surprising ease against fourth-seeded Francoise Durr. Six days earlier, Wendy was perplexed in her first encounter with Francoise at the Virginia Slims Indoor Championships in Hingham, Massachusetts. During their semifinal match, Wendy could not devise a strategy that worked against the speedy and deceptive Frenchwoman. This time, however, Francoise earned only five games against Wendy. She had smashed her fiberglass Donnay racquet in anger after losing in the doubles final in Massachusetts, and in Fort Lauderdale she needed to borrow a racquet from her doubles partner, Judy Dalton.

The most anticipated match of the day was Jeanne Evert's encounter with Karen Krantzcke. When they walked onto the court together, many of the 2,000 spectators giggled at the site of the six-foot-one Australian next to the five-foot tall schoolgirl; Jeanne barely came up to Karen's shoulders. "I was surprised to hear people laughing," Jeanne admitted later, but Karen said "when you're as tall as I am, you learn to live with it."⁸⁹ Karen's strategy was much different than the drop shot and lob approach that Rosie attempted on Tuesday; she played aggressively on every point, attacking Jeanne's weak serves and moving forward to the net to put away volleys and overheads. Karen made more errors in the second set, and Jeanne won most of the games as the crowd cheered her on. Karen was known for playing in an agonizingly slow manner – toweling off her face, her hands, and her racquet handle in between points – and as the set progressed and her delays became longer, the crowd started to grumble. With Jeanne leading 5-1 in the second set, and with Karen toweling off in shade of the backstop, the umpire announced over the loudspeaker, "Miss Krantzcke, your opponent is waiting." Nonplussed by umpire's admonition and the crowd's growing restlessness, Karen snapped, "Let her wait!" Her delays were to no avail; she promptly lost the game and the set, 6-1.⁹⁰

Jeanne continued to play steadily and waited for her opponent to commit errors, reaching 4-2 in the final set. Suddenly, Karen's accuracy returned and she won the next two games. At 4-4, Karen stopped played for an extended period of time while she argued with the umpire over a line call; the delay seemed to affect Jeanne's concentration, and Karen won the next two games to finish the match. "Perhaps it did distract her," Collette Evert said about the stop in play, "but that's part of tournament tennis. She has to learn to overcome those things if she's going to play on this level."⁹¹ In contrast to her reaction after beating Rosie, Jeanne did not cry until she was away from the public, in the privacy of the clubhouse. With her mother consoling her, this time the tears were from the disappointment of losing.

An hour later, Chris came onto the court for her first meeting with Helga Masthoff, considered to be one of the world's best clay court players. Helga reached the final of the French Open in 1970, and she won the Ford Capri Open in Venice in 1971

with wins over Julie, Billie Jean and Rosie. The tall German, however, was no match against Chris and managed to win only three games.

On Friday, February 4, Chris had another first-time meeting with a world's top-ten player. Kerry Melville should have been a threat to Chris in their quarterfinal match, since the Australian possessed a slithering sidespin forehand and one of the best drop shots in the game. Perhaps intimidated by the partisan crowd of 2,000 spectators, Kerry did not offer much resistance, and Chris won handily, 6-3 6-1.⁹² In the other half of the draw, Billie Jean was even more efficient, winning her second round match against Valerie Ziegenfuss with the loss of only two games.

Even though Chris did not play on Saturday, 3,000 fans came to watch the remaining three quarterfinal matches. After Judy Dalton defeated Karen Krantzcke in three sets, the crowd anticipated the next match between Billie Jean King and Nancy Richey Gunter. These were the top two American women throughout most of the 1960s. Billie Jean won more major championships during the decade, but Nancy won most of their head-to-head matches. Billie Jean reversed the trend in the fall of 1970, after she recovered from her knee operation. She defeated Nancy in Richmond in November of that year, three more times on the 1971 Virginia Slims Circuit, and most recently in a tense three-set match during the 1972 British Motor Cars Invitational in San Francisco.

Using a variety of drop shots and passing shots, Billie Jean won the first eight games of the match, racing to 6-0 2-0. At this point, Nancy finally began to work her way into the match and reeled off four games in a row for a 4-2 lead. Billie Jean won three of the next four games to level at 5-5. After the set reached 6-6, Billie Jean won five straight points in the tiebreak for her sixth consecutive win over her longtime rival. In the final match of the day, Wendy Overton continued her improved play and eliminated Helen Gourlay, 6-3 7-5 to reach her second semifinal in as many weeks.⁹³

In Sunday's semifinals, Chris returned to action and won another first-time encounter with a top player, defeating Judy Dalton 6-1 6-3. After Billie Jean dismissed Wendy Overton, 6-2 6-1, she talked about the strategy she planned to use in Monday's final. "There's only one way to play Chris," Billie Jean told reporters. "The catch is you have to know how to do it."⁹⁴

During the course of the tournament, Billie O'Day of the *Miami News* women's section interviewed Billie Jean. A number of topics were discussed: how the women's tour developed, how Billie Jean earned \$100,000 in 1971, her relationship with her husband, and her assessment of the Evert sisters. O'Day also asked about a petition that had recently appeared in the inaugural issue of the new feminist magazine, *Ms.* Under the heading "We Have Had Abortions," fifty-three well-known American women demanded the repeal of current abortion laws. "Actually, I haven't had an abortion,:" Billie Jean told O'Day, "but I've talked to a lot of girls who have. I believe a woman should have a choice."⁹⁵ O'Day's article appeared in the *Miami News* on Monday, February 7, the same day as the championship match between Billie Jean and Chris.

On Monday afternoon, most of the 3,300 fans who bought seats arrived one hour before the match began; an additional 1,000 spectators crowded the venue for standing room positions. On the rooftop of one of the Tennis Club's five-story condominium buildings, fifty spectators had gathered to get an aerial view of the proceedings. George Liddy, after receiving permission from Billie Jean, staged what he called "a planned spontaneous demonstration" before the match. While a Dixieland Jazz band played "When the Saints Go Marching In," hundreds of Chris' fellow students from St. Thomas Aquinas High School waved signs and cheered, nuns wore "We Love You, Chris!" tags, and priests offered religious medals and good wishes to Chris' parents. Chris' ten-year old brother John led a parade of sign-carriers in a snake dance around the court, and a plane – hired by the Palm Aire Tennis Club in nearby Pompano Beach, where Billie Jean was the touring professional – flew overhead with a banner proclaiming "Billie Jean, the pride of Palm Aire. We love you! Sorry we don't have a band."⁹⁶

Billie Jean was introduced first, and as she walked to her chair she smiled broadly and gave a quick fist-pump to several of her fellow tour players in the stands; she clearly enjoyed the carnival-like atmosphere. In contrast, Chris was expressionless as the capacity crowd cheered her entrance. It was not much of a match. Billie Jean served first and was broken immediately. Chris then held her serve and broke Billie Jean again for a 3-0 lead. "After three games, I knew I was in trouble," Billie Jean said later. "My game stunk from the start. She could tell it. Chris kept knocking the ball back, waiting

for me to make the mistakes. And, baby, I made ‘em.” After losing the first five games, Billie Jean finally got on the scoreboard when Chris double-faulted. Chris quickly regrouped, broke Billie Jean to take the set, and then won six more consecutive games for a stunning 6-1 6-0 result. “Let’s face it,” Chris said when it was over, “Billie Jean was never in it.”⁹⁷

Despite the most lopsided loss of her career, Billie Jean was gracious during the awards presentation. “The only thing I’ll say to Chris is that you played too well,” she said. “Good luck to all you two-handed backhand kids.” For her runner-up performance, Billie Jean was given \$3,000 and a diamond necklace. Chris said that she would “always remember this as long as I live because I played well,” and as the spectators laughed and clapped, she clarified, “no, no, what I mean is I haven’t played in a tournament since Forest Hills and I was afraid I might be rusty. I especially want to thank the fans. Next year I hope I get to keep the money.”⁹⁸ Chris was referring to the USLTA regulation that did not allow a junior player to accept prize money until his or her eighteenth birthday. Since the tournament did not have to pay the first prize of \$4,400, tournament director George Liddy promised to pay the Evert family’s expenses when Chris competed at Wimbledon in June.

After the awards presentation, Chris told reporters she knew what to expect from Billie Jean. “At Forest Hills, Billie Jean just put my serve away,” she recalled. “I was determined that she wasn’t going to do that again. I just got my serve in and she got discouraged ... Concentration, I think that’s where Billie Jean failed today.” She was asked about a small group of spectators in the stands who kept yelling, “Go get her, Billie Jean.” Amused, Chris said, “Those were her fellow tour players clapping for her. They stick together ... Of course. I heard them. How could I have helped it, by putting cotton in my ears?”⁹⁹

Billie Jean spoke candidly with reporters about her performance. “I just couldn’t believe I could play so terrible ... the surface had nothing to do with it. But, I’ll be back. I’ll reach my peak in June when the big events are here. I won’t play as often this year. I went flat out, from January to December last year, to become the first woman athlete to

win \$100,000 in a year. I did it, big deal. Now I want to win Wimbledon where I played so terrible last time.”¹⁰⁰

John Crittenden of the *Miami News* asked Billie Jean about playing Chris in front of an adoring crowd. “The fans? I loved them,” she said. “She’ll have the people cheering for her no matter where we play. She might be the sentimental favorite even if we were playing in my hometown. The fans like youth. A lot of women who played against her in this tournament pressured themselves right out of the match, thinking about having to face Chris in her own town.” Billie Jean also said she enjoyed the pre-match festivities. “A fantastic spectacle, I guess you’d say. Tennis needs more pageantry,” she said. “The only thing that bothered me was the umpire telling the crowd to be quiet. Of course they were going to be biased in favor of Chris. What could anyone expect? If the Dolphins were playing a team from California in Miami, would you expect the Miami fans to be polite to the other team?”¹⁰¹

Billie Jean was asked to give her assessment of Chris’ game since their previous match at the 1971 U. S. Open. “I don’t think her game has changed that much,” she observed. “Her serve still isn’t that hot.” Overall, however, Billie Jean was very impressed with Chris and predicted that “no matter where we play, nobody’s going to think about her as a teenager anymore. She plays like a pro, even if she doesn’t take the money.”¹⁰²

Jimmy Evert was concerned about his daughter’s convincing score against Billie Jean. “I’m not so sure such a lopsided win was such a good thing,” he said. “Everybody will be out to get her, and don’t worry, she’ll be thrown to the wolves.”¹⁰³ Earlier, Billie Jean gave the same opinion to John Crittenden. “I’m anxious to see what happens to her career after all this attention,” she said. “If she comes out on tour, she’ll find out the facts of life.” Chris had no reservations about becoming a target for other players. With wins over most of the world’s best women professionals, Chris was eager to test herself on the Virginia Slims Circuit. “I think I’ll try it,” she told Crittendon.¹⁰⁴

When she returned to her hotel room, Billie Jean gave a telephone interview to longtime friend Bud Collins of the *Boston Globe*. “Never, since I began playing this game fifteen years ago,” Billie Jean told Collins, “have I ever lost that bad to anybody ...

never! It was just the wrong day for me, you know? I was never so embarrassed. She never missed and I hardly ever hit. I'm lucky I'm old. I can think rationally about this. I can forget. I realize how good Chrissie is for tennis. I'll have more shots at her. This rivalry is going to mean a lot of money for both of us." ¹⁰⁵

Collins' story about the match – which also included an interview with Chris – appeared in *Boston Globe* on the morning of Tuesday, February 8. For those readers who were not aware of the *Ms.* petition, it was the first time they learned of the abortion that Billie Jean underwent one year earlier.

She was so busy winning and earning, and trying to make the women's pro tour succeed that she decided not to take the time out to start a family. Billie Jean's abortion was made public in a declaration by a number of prominent Americans in the new feminist magazine, "Ms" under the heading "We have had abortions." Among other signers were poet Anne Bexton, historian Barbara Tuchman, singer Judy Collins, writer Hortense Calisher. Two days after the operation, according to a friend, Billie Jean played Chrissie for the first time in St. Petersburg, last spring. Billie Jean had to quit, exhausted... ¹⁰⁶

Later that day, the USLTA opened its week-long annual meeting at the Houston Oaks hotel in Houston, Texas – Gladys' hometown. Key decisions during the week included the men's and women's national rankings, whether or not to align with the ILTF and ban the WCT contract professionals from open tournaments, and a revision of the sanction and schedule regulations in order to avoid further conflicts with the Virginia Slims Circuit. ¹⁰⁷

USLTA Executive Director Bob Malaga was hopeful that the national association and the women's professional group would reach an agreement. "I don't foresee the women withdrawing (from the association)," Malaga told a reporter in Houston. "The problem will be resolved. There may be a splinter group, but it will be resolved. We want to get along, but a lot of conflict has been caused by a certain magazine," he said, referring to World Tennis. USLTA Schedule and Sanction Chairman Stan Malless

concurred, saying that Gladys “writes in her magazine that we’re a bunch of stupid men, but all our members have been successful in their respective businesses.”¹⁰⁸

Former Davis Cup captain Donald Dell – who was also an attorney in the Washington, D. C. area, the agent for a number of independent professionals and contract professionals, and the promoter the Washington Star International men’s tournament – was one of the attendees at the USLTA meeting. During his time in Houston he hoped to coordinate an agreement between the USLTA and the Virginia Slims Circuit. Dell was the promoter of the upcoming Virginia Slims Invitational in Bethesda, Maryland, and according to Gladys, he was “a protagonist of Women’s Lib.”¹⁰⁹

*Joe Cullman was a personal friend of mine ... very simply, Joe called me to try and mediate between Gladys and the USLTA, and work towards a solution between the two ...*¹¹⁰
 -- Donald Dell, 2013

In his efforts to create a partnership between the USLTA and the women’s tour, Dell was able to recruit his friend Jack Kramer as an ally. Gladys and Billie Jean had always contended that Kramer was not a fan of women’s tennis, but in this instance Kramer saw the necessity of getting the USLTA and the Virginia Slims Circuit to settle their differences. Kramer realized that if the women professionals were disassociated from the USLTA, they might decide to join forces with WCT and Lamar Hunt. As the originator of the ILTF Grand Prix, Kramer wanted nothing more than the demise of the rival WCT circuit. If the women were aligned with the USLTA and the ILTF, it would prevent Hunt from having a stranglehold on the game.

On Wednesday evening, Dell submitted a contract to Gladys and USLTA president Bob Colwell. For the next four days, the contract was revised and retyped. Finally, on Saturday, both parties were satisfied with the conditions and signed the contract. Colwell named Gladys as the chairperson of the USLTA Women’s Open Circuit Committee; in this voluntary position, she would be responsible for the scheduling and sanctioning of all women’s professional tournaments in the United States. Colwell also

agreed to continue with the reduced sanction fee agreement of \$480 for tournaments on the Virginia Slims Circuit; with the tournaments approved by the USLTA, Colwell suggested that they become part of the ILTF Grand Prix, and he proposed that Gladys should try to get appointed to the ILTF Grand Prix Committee. “It took a great deal of courage on the part of USLTA President Bob Colwell to sign the contract,” Gladys wrote in *World Tennis*, “since there was some strong opposition to the agreement.”¹¹¹

Opposition most likely came from USLTA Executive Director Bob Malaga and USTA Sanction and Schedule Committee Chairman Stan Malless. According to Gladys, Malaga and Malless told a Houston reporter earlier in the week that she “was a thorn in their sides.”¹¹² Surprisingly, one of the supporters of the agreement was USLTA First Vice President Walter Elcock, who was in line to become the association’s president the following year.

At the conclusion of the USLTA meetings on Saturday evening, Gladys invited Colwell and Elcock to her home on Timberwilde Drive to drink a toast to the future. As the USLTA officials walked into her house, Gladys threw her arms around Colwell and said, “Bob, I really did USLTA presidents!” Remembering all the controversies that plagued the final year of Alastair Martin’s USLTA presidency, Colwell replied, “Yes, you dig our graves!”¹¹³ His hopes for a problem-free final ten months of his term would turn out to be wishful thinking.

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CHAPTER 10: MY BABY IS BECOMING A TEENAGER

Pepsico's involvement in professional tennis did not last very long. In 1970, Jack Kramer convinced the company to contribute \$35,000 to his Pacific Southwest Open in Los Angeles and \$125,000 to his pet project, the ILTF Grand Prix bonus pool. On November 30, 1971, after once again sponsoring the Pacific Southwest Open and providing \$150,000 for the ILTF Grand Prix, Pepsico decided to step aside. "We had not completely evaluated the results for 1971," explained Norman Heller, European vice president of Pepsi, "but from what we had observed, we felt the cost was greater than the return to us."¹ Heller was also disappointed that some tournaments on the ILTF Grand Prix schedule refused to promote Pepsi products.

Less than two months later, Kramer and numerous USLTA officials held a news conference in New York to announce that Commercial Union, a London-based insurance company, was the new sponsor of the ILTF Grand Prix. "We hope to make a positive contribution to the sport of tennis as a whole," said Harry Stone, President and CEO of Commercial Union Companies. "We want the Commercial Union Grand Prix to be a prestigious international competition, and we are confident that our partners in this project, the ILTF and USLTA, will act in the best interests of the game as a whole."² Commercial Union's contribution of \$250,000, combined with ten percent of the prize money from each ILTF Grand Prix tournament, resulted in a \$100,000 bonus pool that would be distributed among the top fifteen women and \$250,000 that would be divided among the top twenty men; the first-place woman player was scheduled to earn \$22,500, and \$50,000 was reserved for the first-place man.

Ironically, Kramer supported Gladys' installment as the USLTA Chairperson of the Women's Open Circuit. In his battle with Lamar Hunt, Kramer realized that the ILTF

would be weakened if the Virginia Slims Circuit partnered with WCT. At the beginning of 1972, WCT players – most of the world’s best men players – were still barred from playing in the world’s major championships. If the Virginia Slims Circuit players joined forces with WCT, the major championships would have no drawing cards, and the ILTF would be forced to surrender and submit to Hunt’s demands for player appearance fees and television rights. Gladys was aware of the political maneuvering – “a stranger group of bedfellows has never been seen in tennis!” she wrote in *World Tennis* – but her desire for power, and her reluctance to relinquish any control of the women’s tour to Hunt, outweighed any reservations she may have held. Yet, she was also hopeful about the partnership. “No one could be happier about the agreement between the Women’s Pro Tour and the USLTA than the girls themselves,” Gladys wrote in her April, 1972 *World Tennis* editorial. “The contract is so specific and the agreement so amiable on all sides that it is difficult to believe that peace is not forever ... Bob Colwell and Walter Elcock bent over backwards to help the women.”³

To make the partnership with the ILTF even more ironclad (and to make sure that Lamar Hunt would keep his distance from the women’s tour), Jack Kramer arranged for the Virginia Slims Circuit to become part of the ILTF Commercial Union Grand Prix. The Grand Prix format was Kramer’s concept, and he was the U. S. representative on the ILTF Grand Prix Committee. It was too late for the already-completed women’s tournaments in San Francisco, Long Beach, Hingham and Fort Lauderdale to be included on the Grand Prix schedule, but the remaining events – starting with the tournament in Oklahoma City – were added. For each of these tournaments, ten percent of the prize money was contributed to the Grand Prix bonus pool.

USLTA president Bob Colwell suggested to Kramer that Gladys be placed on the ILTF Grand Prix Committee as well; this interested Gladys very much, since she had long desired to have some influence with the world governing body. Her inclusion on the ILTF Grand Prix Committee would also give her the opportunity to determine how the Virginia Slims Circuit tournaments were rated for bonus points allocations. The committee evaluated all of the tournaments on the Grand Prix schedule – taking into consideration the amount of prize money offered – and divided them into five categories:

Group AA, Group A, Group B, Group C or Group D. The largest amount of bonus points was at stake at the three Group AA tournaments (Wimbledon, French Open, U. S. Open), and the amount of points decreased in descending order for the next four groups.

While most of the Virginia Slims Circuit tournaments were placed in Group C, some of the traditional co-ed European tournaments were rated higher by the ILTF, despite their lower prize money for women (the higher group ratings of the traditional tournaments were due to the fact that total prize money offered to men and women was included together). All of the tournaments on the Pepsi Grand Prix contributed ten percent of their prize money to the bonus pool, and the unbalanced distribution of bonus points resulted in greater rewards for those women who played in the traditional tournaments and had no desire to join the Virginia Slims Circuit. The inflated evaluation of European tournaments by the ILTF Grand Prix Committee would anger Gladys and the Virginia Slims Circuit players later in the year.

After the first four tournaments on the 1972 Virginia Slims Circuit – in San Francisco, Long Beach, Hingham, and Fort Lauderdale – the tour took a one-week break before resuming in Oklahoma City, the first women’s event on the ILTF Commercial Union Grand Prix schedule. As she did in 1971, Joyce Turley organized the tournament and raised half of the \$20,000 in prize money by selling box seats to patrons.⁴ All of the tour’s top players were entered – Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals, Francoise Durr, Kerry Melville and others – and once again the tournament was held in the gymnasium of Frederick Fieldhouse on the campus of Oklahoma City University.

Edwin “Bud” Shrake of *Sports Illustrated* was in Oklahoma City to write an article on the Virginia Slims Circuit and one of its top players, Francoise Durr. On the night before Francoise’s first round match, Shrake spent time with Francoise and her fiancé, Bill Cutler, in the bar of the Lincoln Plaza Hotel. “It’s an exhausting, lonely life,” Francoise told Shrake. “You meet many people, but then you don’t see them again for a year. If you want to be the best, be on top, you must work very hard. It all depends on what you want out of life. The life of a professional athlete is superficial and the satisfaction is very short.”⁵

Francoise gave Shrake an overview of the tour's toughest competitors, including Nancy Richey Gunter, whom she was scheduled to play the following evening. "Her whole life has been based on tennis," Francoise said about Nancy. "She has sacrificed a lot for the game ... She's most difficult to beat, maybe is too steady for me. Nancy never gives up, no matter how far she might be down."⁶ Cutler told Shrake that he "noticed a tremendous predisposition among the women players about which ones they can beat and which ones they can't ... Frankie's got this idea that she has a hard time with Nancy ... Billie Jean King thinks she can beat all of them, and they know it, and she wins some matches she should have lost because her opponent will realize late in the match that she's not supposed to beat Billie Jean and will fall apart."⁷

Shrake asked Francoise about the inevitable speculations of lesbianism on the tour, given the fact that few of the women were married. "I have heard the things people say," Francoise admitted. "It could be a problem, alright. I don't know. I doubt we are any different from any other group of people."⁸

Bill Cutler's observation about players doubting themselves whenever they played Billie Jean was apparent the following afternoon. Billie Jean easily won the first set, 6-1, against Lesley Hunt, the Australian who lost to Chris Evert in the quarterfinals of the previous year's U. S. Open. Lesley then capitalized on some strong backhand returns, as well as numerous errors from Billie Jean, to take the second set 6-2. With Lesley leading 2-1 in the third set, Billie Jean hit a lob that cleared the electronic scoreboard that was suspended from the ceiling. Billie Jean's remarkable shot – she would have lost the point if the ball hit any part of the scoreboard – helped her level the set at 2-2. Lesley maintained her composure and broke Billie Jean's serve in the fifth game of the third set, giving her a 3-2 lead as the players sat down on the changeover. At this point, Lesley must have realized how close she was to winning the match, and she won only one more game out of the next five; Billie Jean quickly closed out the match, 6-1 2-6 6-4.⁹

Later that evening, Francoise Durr prepared for her first round match against Nancy Richey Gunter. After having dinner, she went to the Frederickson Fieldhouse to borrow some racquets from Judy Dalton and Betty Stove. Three weeks earlier, Francoise smashed her fiberglass racquets after she and Judy lost the doubles final in Hingham,

Massachusetts, and she was still waiting to get replacements. “Imagine a golfer playing with borrowed clubs,” she told Shrake. “It is ridiculous, I think.”¹⁰

Against Nancy, Francoise quickly fell behind 0-3 in the first set. Walking to her chair for the changeover, Francoise flung Judy’s wooden Wilson racquet under a table and picked up one of Betty’s metal Slazenger frames. After many pummeling baseline rallies, Francoise worked her way into the set and eventually won it, 7-6. The long points began to take a toll on Francoise; and after losing the second set 2-6 and falling behind 0-3 in the third, she sat dejectedly at courtside. “I don’t care,” she mumbled, “she can have it.” Francoise, however, did not give up; with another surge of strength she reeled off four straight games to lead 4-3. Nancy held serve to level at 4-4, and Francoise won the next two games to finish the match. “She came off the court, her red ponytail limp with sweat,” Shrake observed, “her feet covered with blisters from running for two hours on the artificial carpet.”¹¹

Francoise had not fully recovered from her marathon match with Nancy when she played Valerie Ziegenfuss in the next round. Since she did not have a strong record coming into Oklahoma City, Valerie was required to play in the qualifying tournament. She won three matches in the qualifying to earn a spot against fifth-seeded Helen Gourlay in the first round of the main draw. After defeating Helen in straight sets, Valerie was ready for her quarterfinal match against Francoise, the tournament’s number-two seed.

On Thursday afternoon, Francoise and Valerie played evenly to 6-6 in the first set; after Valerie won the tiebreak and the opening game of the second set, an exhausted Francoise could not recover. Valerie’s 7-6 6-4 win was one of her best singles results since joining the tour. “I’ve been working real hard on my singles play,” Valerie told Tom Dirato of the *Oklahoma Journal*. “Last year, I was trying to gain some experience, but this year I’m trying to gain consistency in my all-around play. I really enjoy the travelling around and meeting new people, but it really is a full-time job. It has to be a full-time job. That’s the reason I didn’t stay at San Diego State. The playing just took up too much time.”¹²

Tournament director Joyce Turley said she got “sick to her stomach” when Billie Jean nearly lost to Lesley Hunt on Wednesday; those feelings came back to Joyce when

the tournament's top drawing card lost to Betty Stove on Thursday. Betty, a tall and powerful Dutch woman, followed the same route as Valerie Ziegenfuss in Oklahoma City; after surviving three rounds of qualifying, she upset eighth-seeded Karen Krantzcke in the first round of the main draw. Billie Jean and Betty played evenly during the entire match, and none of the spectators were sure who would win until the final point. After the first set reached 3-3, Betty ran off three consecutive games to take the set. Billie Jean won the first three games of the second set, and then Betty utilized her booming serve and powerful groundstrokes to forge ahead 4-3. Each player then held serve for the next five games to reach 6-6, setting up the nine-point tiebreak. Following the pattern of the entire match, Billie Jean raced to a 4-2 lead in tiebreak and Betty won the next two points to level at 4-4: simultaneous match point for Betty and set point for Billie Jean. On the deciding point of the match, Billie Jean served and hit her next shot past the baseline, giving Betty the best win of her career.¹³

Rosie Casals overpowered Betty in Friday's semifinals, running the tall Dutchwoman from side to side for an easy 6-3 6-1 win. Valerie Ziegenfuss continued her surprising run, winning another match against a seeded player when she took out Judy Dalton, the tournament's number-six player. After losing the first set, Judy pulled a tendon in her heel; with her foot heavily tape, she offered little resistance as Valerie coasted to a 6-3 6-2 decision. Typical of the hardy Australian – and most of the other players on the tour who realized the importance of giving the paying spectators a full program of matches – Judy went back onto the court after her singles loss to partner Francoise Durr in a doubles semifinal victory over Valerie and Wendy Overton.¹⁴

On Saturday evening, Rosie won her second tournament of the year – as well as the first prize of \$4,000 – with a 6-4 6-1 victory over Valerie in front of 3,200 spectators at the Frederickson Fieldhouse. The win put Rosie atop the Virginia Slims Circuit prize money standings, with \$10,650 earned in the course of five tournaments. For Joyce Turley, two years of promoting the tournament was enough for her; she told Bob Hartzell of the *Tulsa Tribune* that the event was “too hard on her nerves.”¹⁵ Although Joyce was confident that the tournament would return the following year and that someone else

would be the organizer, it would be another fourteen years before women's professional tennis returned to Oklahoma City.

As soon as Billie Jean King lost to Betty Stove in the quarterfinals of Oklahoma City, she was eager to move on to the next tournament and halt her string of losses. By Monday, February 21, she was in Bethesda, Maryland for the upcoming Virginia Slims Invitational of Washington, D. C. To help promote the tournament, she sat down for an interview with Mark Asher of the *Washington Post*, a knowledgeable tennis writer who followed the sport closely.

Asher discussed numerous topics with Billie Jean, including how much money she made on the tour and her opinions on the Women's Lib movement. Asher then asked Billie Jean if she had an abortion the previous year; he had seen the "We Have Had Abortions" petition in *Ms.* magazine and had read Bud Collins' recent *Boston Globe* column, suggesting the same.

*I told him I was there to promote a tennis tournament and to play in it, and I didn't think his question was relevant to that. He said he was sorry, but that he had to ask.*¹⁶

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Asher pressed the issue, and Billie Jean told him that a woman should have a choice. She insisted if every woman who had an abortion admitted as much, the decision would not have a social stigma. Billie Jean also found it incredible that teenagers were not allowed access to contraception but were allowed to have abortions in certain states. "Can you believe that?" she said. "It's putting the cart before the horse."¹⁷

*I said as to whether I'd actually had an abortion, he'd have to come to his own conclusions ... Finally, I asked him to please not write about the abortion issue at all, as a personal favor to me.*¹⁸

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

The following day, Asher's article appeared in the *Washington Post*, under the headline "Abortion Made Possible Mrs. King's Top Year" and leading with a quote from Billie Jean that she "feels strongly about abortion."¹⁹ The various news wire services picked up the story, and on Wednesday, February 23, it ran in newspapers across the world.

The Virginia Slims Invitational of Washington D. C. was played at the Linden Hill Bath and Tennis Club in Bethesda, Maryland. The appearance of Chris Evert, playing in her first Virginia Slims Circuit tournament outside of her home state of Florida, ensured the financial success of the event. When officials announced that Chris had entered, the last four days of the tournament – the sessions on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday – sold out immediately.²⁰

Chris was seeded second in the draw, behind Billie Jean and ahead of Rosie Casals and Francoise Durr, the third and fourth seeds. If the seeds held true, Chris would have her first career meeting with Rosie in the semifinals and her fourth match against Billie Jean in the finals. Two weeks earlier, Chris handed Billie Jean the worst defeat of her career, a 6-1 6-0 demolition in the finals of the Tennis Club Women's International in Fort Lauderdale. That match, however, was on a clay court in front of Chris' hometown supporters; Billie Jean was eager to even the score on neutral territory, on the faster indoor Sportface surface at the Linden Hill club.

The championship round of the tournament opened on Wednesday, February 24, with no surprising results. All four seeds who saw action that day – Rosie Casals, Francoise Durr, Kerry Melville and Wendy Overton – won their matches. Rosie defeated Valerie Ziegenfuss, a repeat of the Oklahoma City finals only three days earlier. As was the case in Oklahoma City, Valerie won only five games against her fellow Californian; this time the score was 6-1 6-4.

For twenty four year-old Wendy Overton, the tournament was a homecoming. She had spent two years at the Linden Hill club, working as a tennis instructor and saving enough money to support herself on the tour for at least one year. Her worries about making ends meet were unfounded; after joining the tour as a qualifier in the summer of 1971, she became one of the surprises of the 1972 tour. Wendy earned \$5,200 in five

tournaments, placing her at number seven on the Virginia Slims Circuit prize money leader's list. By the time the tour came to Bethesda, Wendy was a seeded player and the Linden Hill club labeled Wednesday's opening of the tournament at "Wendy Overton Day." After defeating qualifier Kerry Harris, 6-3 7-6, in her first match, Wendy looked forward to playing Chris in the next round. "I'd give up my eyeteeth to play her. I'd be the underdog. I would have nothing to lose. It's those kind of matches when you play better."²¹

While the women were competing in Bethesda on Wednesday, John Newcombe and Stan Smith were being honored at a luncheon in New York City for being the top male players of 1971. After being presented with the Martini and Rossi Tennis Trophy, Newcombe and Smith used the occasion to urge an end to the current ban of WCT players from ILTF events. "I think it is a shame," said Newcombe, the Wimbledon champion and WCT contract professional. "We are told that we won't be allowed to play Wimbledon and Forest Hills this year ... I don't see why the people who run tennis can't get together and settle this once and for all. To show you how really stupid this is, do you know how much expense money WCT is asking? It's asking only \$360 a player for two weeks – or about \$10,000 in all for a tournament like Wimbledon ... I would be very disappointed if I couldn't play at Wimbledon or Forest Hills."²²

Although Smith had no concerns about being banned from the world's major championships – he was an independent professional still under the jurisdiction of his national association – the U. S. Open champion hoped to see all of the world's best players competing together. "It's best for tennis that tournaments be open to all players," he said. "I don't think any of us would get any satisfaction out of winning a big tournament like Forest Hills or Wimbledon if the field were restricted."²³

Since the women on the Virginia Slims Circuit were no longer considered contract professionals, they did not have to worry about being banned from tournaments. For the most part, 1972 was a peaceful year in women's tennis; the USLTA put Gladys in charge of women's professional tennis in the United States, the tournaments on the Virginia Slims Circuit were sanctioned by the USLTA and included in the ILTF Commercial Union Grand Prix, and the emergence of Chris Evert and Evonne Goolagong

promised a bright future for the game. It was, however, the calm before the storm that would tear women's tennis apart in only a few months.

On Thursday, February 25, four more first-round matches were contested at the Virginia Slims Invitational of Washington D. C. Chris Evert set up her second round match against Wendy Overton by losing only five games to Karen Krantzcke, and Nancy Richey Gunter was even more efficient in defeating eighth-seeded Helen Gourlay, 6-0 6-2. Number six seed Judy Dalton, still nursing a foot injury sustained the previous week in Oklahoma City, could only manage to win two games from Barbara Downs, one of four players who survived the qualifying round. Judy's loss may have been surprising, but it was nothing in comparison to the defeat of the Billie Jean, the tournament's top seed.

Earlier in the week, Billie Jean awoke with an infected toe on her left foot, which limited her practice sessions all week. She was originally scheduled to play her opening round match on Wednesday, but requested to play on Thursday in hopes of giving her toe more time to heal. A doctor had given her a cortisone shot, which enabled her to take the court against Julie Heldman on Thursday night.²⁴

Billie Jean comfortably won the first set 6-3, and with the second set tied at 4-4, she was only six points away from finishing the match. Julie fell behind in her service game, love-30, and on the next point made a rare venture to the net, where she hit a crisp backhand volley winner. From that point on, Julie won 21 of the next 24 points, closing out the second set 6-4 and cruising through the third set with the loss of only one game. After the match, Julie told reporters that Billie Jean "gave her the third set on a silver platter. I am appreciative. She didn't want to win the third set. I don't think she was trying to win."²⁵

As Billie Jean began the news conference in the press room, Mark Asher – the *Washington Post* sports reporter who wrote the story about Billie Jean's abortion – entered the room.

*... when Asher walked in, I saw red ... I felt he'd betrayed me and broken a trust, and I couldn't even believe he'd had the guts to show up ... I refused to talk to the press until Asher left. He wouldn't, and I walked out.*²⁶

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

In the dressing room, Billie Jean told tour officials that she did not want to play any more tournaments until further notice. Billie Jean also wanted to withdraw from the doubles competition, where she and Rosie Casals were the top-seeded team. Tour manager Pip Jones persuaded her to accept a compromise; she would take an immediate leave from the tour, but would return to action at the Maureen Connolly Brinker Tennis Championships in Dallas, Texas in two weeks. Billie Jean insisted that future contact with reporters would be limited to one hour group news conferences, and no more individual interviews.²⁷

Steve Lurie, a Philip Morris employee who was the public relations director for Virginia Slims Circuit, gave reporters a written statement. "I'm physically and mentally exhausted and I can't play my best," Billie Jean indicated. "I choose not to risk further damage of my big toe. The foot didn't hurt at all. There was no pain. You can't blame my loss on that. The thing that hurt me is I couldn't practice all week. But it's just indicative of the way I've been playing lately."²⁸ Lurie spoke with Asher about Billie Jean's claims of being exhausted. "She overreacts and overexerts the role she plays," he said. "If she does as much as she thinks she does, she wouldn't have time to play a match. But she also undeniably does more than any two other girls combined. She's not trying to promote herself, but the game, and that definitely takes its toll as she has found out now."²⁹

Virginia Slims assistant brand manager Bill Cutler took issue with Lurie's criticism. Cutler told Asher about the amount of time that Billie Jean devoted to promote the Virginia Slims Invitational in New York the previous year. "She did a television show in the morning," Cutler recalled, "did a promotion at a ski and tennis shop in the afternoon, taped the Dick Cavett television talk show and then played a match that ended at 11 pm. Four young boys, ages ten to eighteen, asked her to hit with them. She went

back out on the court and did. She was enjoying herself out there. You could see her joy that she was helping them. That's the kind of effort she'll make to help tennis grow." ³⁰

The next morning, Billie Jean was at the U. S. corporate headquarters of Head Ski and Sports Wear in Columbia, Maryland. Even though many of the women on the Virginia Slims Circuit were wearing tennis dresses designed by Ted Tinling, Billie Jean was in the final year of a three-year contract with Head to be the company's tennis fashion consultant. "I'm just not myself," she told sportswriter Barry Tarshis in the company's conference room. "I've got an infected toe that the doctors think, believe it or not, is gout. My concentration is lousy. I'm just not playing good tennis. I'm going to have to stop thinking 'women's tennis' for awhile and start worrying about Billie Jean's tennis." Billie Jean talked about the demands of being the tour's top attraction. "Last year was exhausting," she said, "for both me and my husband. It wasn't just the tennis. It was everything else – the parties, the interviews, the promotional trips. I hardly had a chance to practice." ³¹

Later that evening, as Billie Jean and Larry departed for a one week vacation in Hawaii, Chris Evert played Wendy Overton in front of a sold-out crowd of 1,750 spectators. For the first time in her short career, Chris was not the crowd favorite; since Wendy taught tennis for two years at the Linden Hill club, the fans were rooting for her to win. Wendy tried to bring her opponent forward to the net with drop shots, but Chris returned the short shots and retreated to the baseline. The strategy was not successful enough, and Chris won handily, breaking Wendy's serve seven out of nine times. After the match, she was asked about her semifinal match with Rosie Casals, who earlier had beaten Barbara Downs, 7-6 6-1. "I'll play my steady backcourt game and hit everything," Chris said. "When I get an opening, I'll try for a winner." ³² Saturday's other semifinal would pit Kerry Melville, a 6-1 6-4 winner over Francoise Durr, against Nancy Richey Gunter. Taking advantage of Billie Jean's unexpected dismissal from the tournament, Nancy made quick work of Julie Heldman, winning 6-1 6-3.

Another standing room only crowd of 1,750 spectators watched Nancy and Kerry play a baseline duel on Saturday afternoon. After her 6-4 6-4 win, Nancy told Mark Asher of the *Washington Post* that she was "starting to play as well as I have in the past,

as well as in 1968, when I was ranked second in the world.” Nancy credited her improved play to drinking eight glasses of skim milk every day. “I’ve been drinking milk for a year now and I’ve had no injuries,” she said. “Before that, every other day in practice I’d come up with a pulled muscle.”³³ Later that evening, Nancy telephoned her brother Cliff, who was competing in the Clean Air Classic in New York City, to give him the good news. Cliff told Nancy that he had lost earlier in the day, in the semifinals to Stan Smith. “Come down here and practice with me,” Nancy asked her brother. Since Cliff did not need to be at his next tournament, in Hampton, Virginia, for several days, he made arrangements to fly to Washington, D. C. on Sunday morning.³⁴

On Saturday evening, Chris Evert and Rosie Casals played each other for the first time. Rosie lost a three-set match to Chris’ fourteen year-old sister, Jeanne, in the first round of the Tennis Club Women’s International in Fort Lauderdale four weeks earlier; she was so upset with the loss that she defaulted from the doubles competition and took a plane out of Florida that evening. Rosie expected a tougher match from Chris, but she hoped the faster indoor surface might give her a slight advantage.

Rosie decided to vary all her shots against Chris; she wanted to break Chris’ rhythm with high spinning topspin forehands, sliced backhands, drop shots and lobs. Whenever possible, she planned to attack the net and put Chris on the defensive. Some of Rosie’s forehands spun so high that Chris needed to retreat to the back wall to return them. Both players held serve until the tenth game of the first set, when Rosie served at 4-5. A winning lob and a backhand service return down the line gave Chris the break and the first set. With a 4-3 lead in the second set, Chris broke Rosie’s serve again with two winning returns and two passing shots. Chris then held serve for the tenth consecutive time to conclude the match, 6-4 6-3. “Last summer my serve had a hitch,” she told Asher earlier in the week. “It was like two strokes. Now it’s one motion. I’m also getting my racket back much quicker on my serve. I might miss a lot, but I’m hitting my second serve harder. You can’t baby your serve. You have to hit out on it.”³⁵ Chris hoped her improved serve would help her in the championship match on Sunday, because in Nancy Richey Gunter she would be playing against one of the best service returners in the game.

Several hours before the Sunday afternoon championship match, Nancy and her brother Cliff practiced for forty-five minutes, with the two taking frequent breaks during the hitting session to discuss strategy for the match against Chris. “You can count on one hand how many volleys will be hit in this match,” Cliff told Asher before it started.³⁶ Another standing room only crowd of 1,750 was on hand to watch, including a special guest who was given a front row seat.

I had gotten a call from the White House ... Spiro Agnew wanted to come watch when it was announced that Chrissie was playing in the final, and I had to keep quiet about it ... people didn't know it at the time, but Nixon was out of the country, in China, so Agnew was the acting president ... John Granville was the brand manager and I told him “you sit right here, John” and he said “why should I sit here, the box is empty” ... “just sit here, just sit still” I said, and when the match was announced, in comes Agnew with three or four friends plus three or four secret service guys, and they went to sit down in the box with John ... Agnew really wanted to see that match, so he came.³⁷

-- Bill Cutler, 2012

The first set lasted fifty-six minutes, with some of the grueling baseline rallies extending for one minute or longer. Both players held serve for the first five games of the match, and Chris pulled ahead when she broke Nancy to take a 4-2 lead, hitting a winning drop shot on game point. Nancy responded by winning three consecutive games and an opportunity to serve for the set at 5-4. Once again, Chris used her excellent service return to tie the set at 5-5. Each player held service to set up the nine-point, sudden-death tiebreak, which Nancy easily won 5-1. In the second set, Nancy's groundstrokes became even more severe, running her young opponent from corner to corner. When she complete her 7-6 6-2 victory, Nancy squealed in delight, threw her racquet over her head and ran to the net to shake hands.³⁸

Spiro Agnew came onto the court to make the check presentation, but he had to wait while Nancy went into the stands to accept congratulations from Cliff. Agnew

waited patiently, and when Nancy made her way back onto the court, he told the crowd that “we saw some absolutely superb tennis.” He presented Nancy with a check for \$3,500, and then paid compliments to Chris. “Chrissie is going to be an asset to this country for years to come,” he said. “What steadiness, what patience she brings to the game of tennis.”³⁹ Since she was still an amateur, Chris was unable to accept the runner-up check of \$2,400.

Speaking to reporters in the press room, Chris acknowledged how well Nancy had played. “I don’t think anyone could have beaten her the way she played today,” she said. “It’s not that I played bad; she didn’t give me a chance to play my game.”⁴⁰ Nancy thought the turning point may have come in the first set tiebreak. “I knew she was getting either tired or shaky when I won the last three points in the tiebreaker so quickly,” she analyzed. “I don’t mind staying out there and hitting all those shots. I’m in good shape, feel strong on court and I hit the ball where I wanted to.” Asked if it helped to have Cliff watching the match, she responded that “it’s great having at least one of your family in the crowd. You know at least somebody is rooting for you.”⁴¹ Nancy’s victory was her first tournament title in sixteen months and her first as a married woman; the last time she won a tournament, she defeated Billie Jean and Rosie to win the Pacific Coast International in Berkeley, California in October, 1970.

While the tour then headed to Birmingham, Michigan for the K-Mart Invitational, Billie Jean and her husband Larry relaxed at their home in Hawaii. For Billie Jean, it was a time to reflect on whether or not she wanted to continue playing competitive tennis.

*In Hawaii, Larry got me to jog a mile or two a day, which I hate to do even when I’m feeling good, but I didn’t play any tennis at all for ten days except for some social doubles.*⁴²

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Despite the absence of Billie Jean, Nancy, and Chris, the promoters of the K-Mart Invitational staged another successful tournament, just as they had done the previous year. In front of a capacity crowd of 1,700 at the Oakland University Sports Center,

fourth-seeded Kerry Melville won the tournament, defeating top-seeded Rosie Casals in the final. Kerry held two match points at 6-3 5-1, and four more match points at 5-4, but Rosie refused to surrender and forced a third set. The final set reached 4-4, and Rosie led 30-love in the ninth game before Kerry reasserted herself and closed out the match, 6-3 6-7 6-4. “I never thought I’d win it,” Kerry confessed after collecting the first prize of \$3,000, “but I was determined I wasn’t going to lose.”⁴³

On Monday, March 6 – the day after the finals in Birmingham, Michigan – Billie Jean and Larry flew from Hawaii to Berkeley, California, where they kept an apartment. The next stop on the Virginia Slims Circuit was the \$30,000 Maureen Connolly Brinker International, and all of the players who were directly in the main draw needed to be in Dallas by Tuesday. If Billie Jean wanted to play in Dallas, she would need to get on a flight the following day.

Hoping that some fresh air and exercise would clear her mind and help her make a decision, Billie Jean asked Larry to hit a few tennis balls on a court within walking distance of their apartment. During the course of a casual hitting session, Billie Jean’s thoughts were torn between two options – at one moment she wanted to stop playing competitive tennis, and at another moment she wanted to play in Dallas. Finally, after five minutes of mental vacillations, Billie Jean stopped hitting, walked to the net and told Larry that she did not want to play in Dallas. Larry asked her if she was sure, and Billie Jean sadly responded, “Yeah, I’m sure. It’s all over.”⁴⁴

*On the way back to our apartment we had to walk through two huge parking lots, and I’m still not sure what happened, but by the time we got home, I’d changed my mind – again. Just reversed myself completely. “Don’t call Dallas,” I said. “I can’t cop out anymore. I’m gonna play. I’m gonna be sore and I don’t care if I lose in the first round, or to Evert or Goolagong or whoever’s there, but I’ve got to turn myself around, and Dallas is gonna be the start. That’s it. Finished. End of discussion.” And I hopped the next plane to Texas.*⁴⁵

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

The Maureen Connolly Brinker Tennis Championships, played at the T Bar M Racquet Club in Dallas, was the highlight of the 1972 winter-spring Virginia Slims Circuit. With total prize money of \$30,000, it was the richest tournament on the winter-spring tour. The tournament created immense media coverage since it was going to be the American debut of Evonne Goolagong, the reigning French Open and Wimbledon champion. With the entry of Chris Evert, most tennis observers were hoping that Dallas would be the site of the first career meeting between the game's two most exciting young players. In addition, it would be the first time that Billie Jean, Evonne and Chris competed in the same tournament.

Hoping to see an historic first encounter between Evonne and Chris, a number of well-known tennis observers traveled to Dallas. In addition to Gladys, the visitors included Joe Cullman, Jack Kramer, Richard Evans of the *London Evening News*, Associated Press sportswriter Will Grimsley, George McCann of the Australian Consolidated Press, Walter Bingham of *Sports Illustrated*, and British dress designer Ted Tinling.⁴⁶

Tinling made six new dresses for Evonne's debut in America. "We were 10,000 miles apart and I only had her 1971 Wimbledon fittings to work from," he said. "I had no idea whether she had gained or lost weight. Then we ran into the power emergency – nineteen days without full use of electricity. We were rationed to six and nine hours a day of electricity, three days a week. My office is in the tower of a building. To complete the job, we had to hang blankets over the windows and use lights illegally. I personally worked fifteen hours a day from February 6 to March 2. Evonne and I arrived in this country within two hours of each other, and I delivered the dresses."⁴⁷

Nancy Jeffett started the tournament in 1969 as a fundraiser for the Maureen Connolly Girls' Tennis Foundation, which was founded by the late champion to benefit local juniors. Jeffett raised the \$30,000 in prize money from local sponsors, and she wanted to have the championship finals broadcast on national television. When the commercial networks declined, she successfully pitched the idea to the Public Broadcasting Service, and her friend Raymond Nash agreed to underwrite the \$15,000 production costs.⁴⁸

Evonne Goolagong's entry in the Dallas tournament created a disagreement over the seedings. Tour manager Pip Jones wanted to follow the Virginia Slims Circuit point standings, which had Rosie Casals in first place and Billie Jean King in second. Since Evonne had never played in Virginia Slims Circuit event she had no points, but Jones was willing to give her the number three position. Nancy Jeffett was a longtime USLTA volunteer and wanted to use a traditional method for determining the seeds; she felt that Evonne deserved the top seeding based on her Wimbledon title and world number-one ranking. Furthermore, Jeffett believed that Virginia Wade should be seeded at number two since she was the most recent major tournament champion, defeating Evonne at the Australian Open in January. Ultimately a compromise was reached; Evonne was given the top seed, Rosie was placed at number two, Virginia was the third seed and Billie Jean became the fourth seed. To make matters worse, Chris Evert was seeded fifth and ended up in Billie Jean's quarter of the draw, with the winner projected to play Evonne in the semifinals. "Tennis is not noted for its common sense," observed Walter Bingham of *Sports Illustrated*, who traveled to Dallas to report on the tournament, "and after some infighting among factions, there emerged a draw that somehow stuck the three of them in the same bracket, where they could kill off each other."⁴⁹

First round matches in the championship flight started on Tuesday, March 21, after four days of qualifying matches. Virginia did not justify her inflated seeding, losing to another English player, Nell Truman, by the scores of 5-7 7-6 6-2. Evonne came very close to losing her match with Wendy Gilchrist, a fellow Australian who won the 1969 Wimbledon Junior title and was a regular on the Virginia Slims Circuit. Evonne won the first set 6-0, but the momentum swung in second set as her concentration vanished. Wendy took the set 6-1 by lobbing into the lights and hitting a series of forehand winners. With spectators on the edge of their seats and officials frantic that the top seed was on the verge of losing, Evonne served at 5-6 to stay in the match. Wendy got as close as deuce – two points from victory – before Evonne held serve and won two more games to finish the match. Since the tournament committee decided to use Wimbledon scoring, tiebreaks were not played in final sets, and Evonne's resulting score was 6-0 1-6 9-7.⁵⁰

On Tuesday evening, as Evonne was struggling to get past Wendy, Chris and her father Jim arrived in Dallas from Fort Lauderdale. Chris went to the club for a practice session; by then, Evonne had finished her match and departed. The two young stars finally met the following day, along with Chris' father and Evonne's coach and manager Vic Edwards, in the club's dining room the following afternoon.⁵¹

Throughout the week in Dallas, Evonne and Chris were constantly the centers of attention; they had dozens of requests for interviews, and everyone wanted to take photographs with them, get their autographs, or simply stare at them. Evonne, in particular, was insulated from much of the adulation by Edwards. Walter Bingham of *Sports Illustrated* observed that whenever Evonne became engaged for any length of time with someone, Edwards would interrupt the conversation and say "I think you've had your share." He angered many of the other women professionals in Dallas by unsuccessfully attempting to get an appearance fee for Evonne – ever since his pupil won Wimbledon, he often extracted \$1500 from tournament promoters – and requesting his standard fee of \$50 from any reporter who wanted to interview her. Edwards also refused to let Evonne promote the Dallas tournament on television unless she was paid.⁵²

For the first time since the Virginia Slims Circuit started in early 1971, Billie Jean was not the center of attention for the fans and the media. "It's a kick in the pants," she told Will Grimsley of the Associated Press. "Fans are very fickle. I hear whispers, 'Well, it looks like Billie Jean is over the hill' and I want to turn to them and tell them what I think. I'm far from being over the hill. I'm twenty-eight. Women play their best tennis in their thirties." Referring to her string of recent surprise losses, Billie Jean told Grimsley that she "spent fifteen years building a reputation and I don't mean to have it destroyed in three weeks."⁵³

Chris lost only three games in her opening round match on Wednesday against Australian Cynthia Sieler, and she was just as efficient the following night when she played Valerie Ziegenfuss. Evonne, however, once again had to extricate herself from a dangerous situation. Against Helen Gourlay – a rematch of the 1971 French Open final – Evonne won the first set 6-3 but fell behind 3-5 in the second. She eventually recovered and won the second set 7-6, not losing a point in the tiebreak. "I went walkabout,"

Evonne said after the match, referring to an Aboriginal term for one's loss of concentration. "I don't know what happens to me. I start off well and then fizzle out. They say I don't have the killer instinct."⁵⁴

After second-seeded Rosie Casals lost to Lesley Hunt in a three set match that lasted more than two hours, Billie Jean finished Thursday evening's program with an easy win over Karen Krantzcke. Afterward, she looked ahead to her Friday evening quarterfinal match with Chris. "I'm playing better," she said, having beaten Kristien Kemmer in the first round, 6-2 6-1 and Karen in the second round, 6-3 6-4. "I just don't know what to expect of myself."⁵⁵

Ted Tinling told Walter Bingham of *Sports Illustrated* that the match between Billie Jean and Chris was one of the five best matches he had seen in the past three decades. In the first set, Chris ran Billie Jean all over the court as the score reached 6-6. In the sudden-death nine-point tiebreak, both players scored four times to set up simultaneous set point. Billie Jean served and rushed the net; Chris hit a sizzling return, and Billie Jean hit a backhand volley inches wide of the sideline.⁵⁶

Buoyed from winning the first set, Chris swept the first three games of the second set as Billie Jean impatiently tried to end the rallies too soon. Serving at 0-3, Billie Jean was twice within one point of facing a 0-4 deficit and certain defeat. With her back against the wall, she hit three blistering serves to salvage the game. She then reeled off five more games by constantly attacking the net to clinch the set, 6-3.

Billie Jean maintained the momentum in the third set and reached 4-1. Next, it was Chris' turn to make a run of games, and she won four in a row to lead 5-4. Serving to stay in the match, Billie Jean served the first point of the tenth game and could barely move for Chris' return – she had suddenly gotten muscle cramps in both legs. Despite the pain and lack of mobility, Billie Jean willed herself to win eight straight points and take a 6-5 lead. After the changeover, Billie Jean's cramps had subsided and she reached match point on her serve. Chris, however, was not ready to surrender, and it took three more match points before Billie Jean finished off the match, 6-7 6-3 7-5.⁵⁷

Chris admitted later that she lost concentration when she led 7-6 3-1. "I started thinking about what I was going to do after I won," she told reporters. "I was thinking of

playing Evonne.”⁵⁸ Billie Jean sympathized with Chris’ comments. “I thought about winning a match one time while I was playing when I was about sixteen – and I lost,” she said. “I have never done that again.” When a reporter asked her what she said to herself when her legs cramped at 4-5 in the third set, Billie Jean responded, “Don’t give up. Show some guts.”⁵⁹

*I went into the locker room to change for a doubles match, and there was Chrissie bawling her eyes out. I didn’t know her – we’d just met a day or so before – and I didn’t say anything. There wasn’t anything to say; I was embarrassed. I never know what to say to somebody who’s taking a loss so hard. I can’t understand it. I thought, “I hope I never come to this.” I don’t think I will. I’ll know something’s wrong if I do. Games aren’t something to cry over.*⁶⁰
 -- Evonne Goolagong, 1974

In front of a full house of 1500 spectators on Saturday evening, Billie Jean looked tired and sore when she started her semifinal match against Evonne. The previous night, after her marathon match with Chris, she had to go back on the court to play a doubles match that did not finish until well past midnight. In contrast, Evonne was refreshed and energetic, and she glided through the first set in seventeen minutes, with the loss of only one game.

Billie Jean regrouped for the second set and used her entire repertoire to turn the match around; she served and volleyed, hit delicate drop shots and well-place lobs, changed the pace and spins on her groundstrokes, and constantly attacked Evonne’s weak second serve. During one stretch of games in the second set, Billie Jean lost only one point in four of her service games. The critical point came when Evonne served at 4-5 30-40. Billie Jean hit a winning return from a first serve, but Evonne thought the serve was out and made no attempt to play Billie Jean’s shot. Many spectators thought Evonne’s serve was indeed out, but the call stood, and the set belonged to Billie Jean. The third set was not a contest; Billie Jean sailed through it, 6-1.⁶¹

Thrilled with her result, Billie Jean told reporters that “the old lady is not over the hill yet.” When asked about her slow start in the first set, she admitted that she “was so sore I didn’t think I’d be able to move.”⁶² Billie Jean’s opponent in Sunday’s final was Nancy Richey Gunter, who quietly moved through the bottom half of the draw. Nancy had lost only ten games in her first four matches, but the two biggest obstacles in her path – Rosie Casals and Virginia Wade – were upset in early rounds. As a result, Nancy only needed to beat Vicki Berner, Francoise Durr, Nell Truman and Lesley Hunt to reach the final – solid players, but not as difficult a challenge as what Billie Jean had to overcome.

Before a live national television audience on Sunday, Billie Jean and Nancy battled to a first set tiebreak. After Nancy won it 5-2, she cruised through the second set, 6-1 as Billie Jean’s serve deserted her. Nancy won \$11,000 for the victory, the largest payoff in the history of women’s tennis. In accepting the winner’s check, Nancy told the spectators and the television audience that the money was nice, but winning the event was more satisfying.⁶³

In the press room, however, Nancy told reporters that “it’s nice to win some real money after playing so long for nothing.” She attributed her recent success to a re-dedication to training. “I got tired of losing,” she said. “I just decided to really start working hard. I have more confidence and I’m hitting my serves harder than I ever have in my life.”⁶⁴ Billie Jean agreed that Nancy had lifted her game to another level. “Nancy obviously has been training hard,” she said. “I felt I was the number one player in the world last year, but out here on the tour you have to prove it every day. Nancy is tough. She knew my legs were hurting me and kept hitting the ball at my feet ... I got by the youngsters but they did me in for the final.”⁶⁵ Shortly after the singles final, Billie Jean was back on the court for the doubles final, in which she and Rosie defeated Francoise Durr and Judy Dalton, 6-3 4-6 7-5.

*I lost to Nancy Richey Gunter in two sets in the finals, and I didn’t care ... I just knew I was back from wherever it was I’d been, and I felt everything would be okay the rest of the year.*⁶⁶

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

One well-known Dallas resident who did not come to the T Bar M Racquet Club to watch the women's matches was Lamar Hunt, owner of the WCT men's professional circuit. Hunt and his assistants, Al Hill and Mike Davies, flew to London for three days of secret talks with ILTF officials on Thursday, March 9. With the WCT contract professionals banned from playing in the world's major championships, the meeting was an attempt to find a compromise between the men's tour and the world governing body. After three days of negotiations, ILTF secretary Basil Reay told reporters on Sunday, March 12 that "the situation remains completely unaltered and both sides have agreed that no further statement can be made."⁶⁷

Upon his return to the WCT offices in Dallas, Mike Davies was contacted by Neil Amdur of the *New York Times*. Davies did not want to discuss what happened at the London meetings, and he also declined to comment on the rumor that WCT was about to schedule a tournament in a major U. S. city during the first week on Wimbledon. Davies did acknowledge that a news conference was scheduled to be held in St. Louis the following day. "I'm not at liberty to discuss the contents," he told Amdur, "but let's just say that it will have some bearing on Wimbledon." Davies also could not comment on the possible inclusion of the WCT players at the U. S. Open in August. "Forest Hills is still up in the air," he said. "We haven't scheduled a tournament against Forest Hills yet."⁶⁸

USLTA Executive Director Bob Malaga told Amdur that he knew nothing about WCT's plans, and felt that if the male contract professionals were banned from the French Open and Wimbledon, the difference were unlikely to be settled in time for the U. S. Open. "We didn't have all of them last year," Malaga said, referring to the absence of Rod Laver, John Newcombe and other WCT players, "and we still did pretty well."⁶⁹ The 1971 U. S. Open, of course, was a financial success due to the remarkable debut of Chris Evert.

The following day in St. Louis, WCT officials announced that the \$50,000 Holton Tennis Classic would be held at the Dwight Davis Tennis Center in suburban Forest Park, Missouri. The tournament would be held June 27 through July 2, during the same time as the first week of Wimbledon, and would feature all of the WCT contract professionals,

including John Newcombe, Rod Laver, Ken Rosewall, and Arthur Ashe. Disappointed to learn about the news, Rex Bellamy of the *Times* lamented that the upcoming Wimbledon Championships would “have their weakest men’s singles field in years.”⁷⁰ As was the case at the 1971 U. S. Open, the absence of the world’s top male players from a major championship was another opportunity to showcase women’s tennis.

After the Maureen Connolly Brinker Tennis Championships, the women’s tour took a one-week break before resuming with the Virginia Slims Invitational of Richmond, Virginia. Played at the Westwood Racquet Club, the site of the second Virginia Slims tournament in 1970, the tournament’s seeds were just as odd as those in Dallas; Rosie was placed at number one, and Kerry Melville was given the second position. Although Billie Jean and Nancy were the third and fourth seeds, at least they were in opposite halves of the draw. Billie Jean got through to the final without the loss of a set, and easily dispatching Kerry in the semifinals, 6-3 6-0. Nancy had a more difficult time getting to the final; against Rosie in the semifinals, she quickly lost the first set and was two points in the second before turning the match around and winning, 1-6 7-5 6-2.

The singles final between Billie Jean and Nancy was close for the first five games. Billie Jean’s usual strategy against Nancy was to stay on the baseline and engage her in long baseline rallies, hoping to tire her by making her run and giving her a variety of pace and spin. The fifth game went to deuce five times, and after Nancy finally won it she tired visibly. Billie Jean then took the next four games. The second set followed a similar pattern; Nancy led 3-2 after another marathon fifth game, after which Billie Jean closed out the match 6-3 6-4. It was Nancy’s first loss after thirteen consecutive singles wins on the tour, and Billie Jean’s first title in six tournaments. “It’s been a long time since I’ve been that long without winning, but there was no way I was going to win because I was just so out of shape,” she said. “I’m playing better now because of my legs I can run down more balls, and I think eager again, winning again. Losing hurts your pride, and you get tired more easily.”⁷¹

Billie Jean earned \$3,400 for her singles victory, in addition to the \$250 she received for winning the doubles title with Rosie. After playing in seven tournaments on

the 1972 Virginia Slims Circuit, Billie Jean's \$17,200 in earnings put her in third place on the tour's money leader list. "I'm way behind schedule," she admitted. "This time last year, I was up to about \$25,000. It's not better for me, but I think it's better for the tour, better for the crowds. We've had six different winners in nine weeks and I think people always want to see new names."⁷² Nancy remained the circuit's top money winner; after collecting the \$2,000 runner-up check in Richmond, she had accumulated \$19,000 from five tournaments.

The following week's Caribe Hilton International in San Juan, Puerto Rico, was the first time on the 1972 Virginia Slims Circuit that the women players shared the spotlight with the men professionals. The men's event was an eight-man round robin exhibition, while the women had a qualifying tournament that fed into a sixteen-woman championship flight. Each of the top four seeds – Rosie Casals, Billie Jean King, Nancy Richey Gunter and Chris Ever – advanced to their allocated spots in the semifinals. Chris defeated Rosie for the second time in two matches, 6-1 7-5, and Billie Jean had another memorable encounter with Nancy.

During the first set, Billie Jean complained that one of the linesmen was waving to his friends in the stands instead of watching the ball. Later, Nancy insisted that another linesman be removed after a questionable call. When the same linesman subsequently missed another line call, the entire audience became involved in calling shots "out" and Billie Jean muttered that perhaps the linesman needed to be replaced. By the time the hotly contested first set reached 6-6, Nancy refused to continue playing until the linesman was removed. After his replacement, Nancy won the tiebreak 5-4 and ran away with the second set, 6-1, as the brilliant Caribbean sun glared on Billie Jean's glasses and hindered her vision.⁷³

The singles final between Nancy and Chris was a repeat of their match in Bethesda, Maryland and featured lengthy baseline rallies. Nancy was more convincing this time, overpowering her opponent in a routine 6-1 6-3 victory. Her first prize of \$3,500 was the same amount that the winner of the men's event, Stan Smith, received. Since Chris was still an amateur – and, according to USLTA regulations, could not become a professional and accept prize money until her eighteenth birthday at the end of

the year – she had to decline the runner-up prize of \$2,000. She was, however, allowed to have the tournament promoters pay for her expenses during the week.⁷⁴

A crew from the CBS Television show *60 Minutes* was in San Juan, gathering information for an upcoming segment on Billie Jean. Film footage was taken of Billie Jean playing her match against Nancy, watching others play in the tournament, jogging and doing calisthenics, and going back to her hotel room at the Caribe Hilton after a day of matches. Safer interviewed Larry King in California, who related that “anybody that devotes themselves so intensely to one thing is very successful, but also very difficult for someone else to be with ... Billie Jean is very emotional and very intense. I think we’re a good team because I’m less emotional and less intense and more of a Steady Eddy type person.” After her loss to Nancy in the semifinals of San Juan, the film crew followed Billie Jean to the airport and on the flight to her next tournament. “It’s a hard life,” she said, “and I miss Larry very much.”⁷⁵

In between matches at the Virginia Slims Invitational in Jacksonville, Florida, Safer sat down with Billie Jean and talked about her reputation, her vulnerabilities and her feelings about losing. “I think people think I must be the toughest little old lady that ever lived when they see me play tennis, but I don’t think I’m tough off the court. You know, there are a lot of sides to every person.” Despite being the tour’s top attraction and most visible spokesperson, Billie Jean admitted that “the one thing I appreciate more than anything else now is privacy. I’ll go into a city and I’ve never met these people ... I really feel petrified ... In way, they own me though, because I’m part of their lives now, they know my name and they know I play tennis ... I feel I owe it to them to give them some time.”⁷⁶

Safer asked Billie Jean, with her intense on-court personality, if she could ever retire from the game gracefully. “I’m not going to be around forever and I like seeing new names like Chris Evert and Evonne Goolagong,” she said. “These kids are the future of the game and even though I can’t stand losing, I know there will be a day ... I was young once and I know what it was like to start beating world champions, and I could see their faces and their reactions and it was very tough on them. I always promised myself

that I would try to understand there's going to be a day when the youngsters are going to beat me, and if I'm a great champion then I should understand." ⁷⁷

The Jacksonville tournament was a new stop on the Virginia Slims Circuit, one that was bumped from the 1971 summer tour when Gladys was battling with the USLTA over scheduling conflicts. Played on the clay courts of the Deerwood Country Club, the \$18,000 event featured Billie Jean as the tournament's top attraction and number-one seed, and Kerry Melville was seeded at number two. Many of the tour's other top players were absent for a variety of reasons. Chris Evert needed to return to her high school classes, and Nancy Richey Gunter wanted to take a week's break. Rosie Casals did not want to play on the clay courts in Jacksonville or in St. Petersburg, Florida, the following week. Francoise Durr needed to have her wisdom teeth removed after representing France in the Federation Cup matches in South Africa one week earlier. Julie Heldman's break from the tour was also taken out of necessity; after the tournament in Dallas, she returned to London to have surgery performed on her knee. ⁷⁸ Virginia Wade, Helen Gourlay, Lesley Hunt and Betty Stove were also absent, electing to stay in South Africa at the conclusion of the Federation Cup to play in the two-week South African Open, which coincided with the Virginia Slims Circuit events in San Juan and Jacksonville.

At the Virginia Slims of Jacksonville, Marie Neumannova of Czechoslovakia provided most of the week's surprises. She defeated seventh-seeded Nell Truman with the loss of only one game and then easily beat Kerry Melville, the tournament's second seed and the world's sixth-ranked player, by the score of 6-2 6-2. In Saturday's semifinal against Kerry Harris, Marie won the first set 6-4, lost the second set 1-6, and battled to 6-6 in the third. The tiebreak went to the ultimate point – 4-4, simultaneous match point for both players – and Marie won it when Kerry served, came to the net and missed a backhand. In the other semifinal, Billie Jean was leading Lita Liem of Indonesia 5-2 in the first set when rain postponed play for the rest of the day. The match was scheduled to be completed the following morning, with the winner get a few hours' rest before playing in the finals in the afternoon. ⁷⁹

Billie Jean completed her 6-2 6-2 win against Lita on Sunday morning and then played the final against Marie in the afternoon. Both of Billie Jean's opponents that day

presented special strategic challenges that would be confusing for most people. Lita did not possess a backhand; she hit forehands from either side by switching her racquet between hands. Marie's game was just as unique; she served with her left hand and then used her right hand to hit the rest of her shots.

In the championship singles match, Marie broke Billie Jean's serve in the seventh game to take a 4-3 lead and she closed out the set three games later. Billie Jean raced to 3-1 in the second set, but Marie – chasing down all of her opponent's shot and lobbing effectively – won five consecutive games to win the match, 6-4 6-3. "I still don't believe it," Marie said afterward. "It's by far the best tournament I ever played."⁸⁰

Billie Jean, although disappointed with the result, tried to maintain a positive perspective. "It seems like every time I lose, I get in the news," she said. "It was a great day for tennis, but a lousy one for Billie Jean King. It was extremely windy, but I usually play well in the wind. She just played far superior and deserved to win. This old bag hasn't had a rest in some time. I feel in good shape, but I just have to get it together. I haven't exactly set the world on fire lately, but I'm coming along."⁸¹ Tour publicist Steve Lurie predicted that Billie Jean's return to the top of the tennis world was only just a matter of time. "Even when she's not top seeded, she's always the favorite," he said. "She likes to be number one – winning the most dollars, most points or the most of whatever you're giving away."⁸²

Marie Neumannova's journey from her hometown in Czechoslovakia to the winner's circle in Jacksonville was the most unexpected story of the 1972 winter-spring Virginia Slims Circuit. In order to play on the tour, she needed to get permission from her nation's tennis federation, which in turn needed to get approval from the Minister of Foreign Affairs. After those two hurdles were cleared, the national federation reversed its offer to pay her airfare. Marie borrowed enough money to travel to the United States and arrived in San Francisco, for the circuit's first event, with a suitcase, one tennis racquet and five dollars. After she lost in the preliminary draw in San Francisco – earning no money – she called lines during the rest of the tournament, earning five dollars per match in order to pay her expenses. Her \$3,400 first prize in Jacksonville was the

largest payday of her career and put her close to the top ten money winners on the Virginia Slims Circuit.⁸³

While Marie was defeating Kerry Melville and Billie Jean King at the Virginia Slims of Jacksonville, Evonne Goolagong was working her way through the draw at the South African Open – her first significant title since winning Wimbledon ten months earlier. Even though there was less money offered for the women players in Johannesburg than in Jacksonville - \$15,000 versus \$18,000 – there were more ILTF Commercial Union Grand Prix bonus points at stake. The ILTF decided to categorize the long-standing and traditional South African Open as an “A” group tournament, and the Virginia Slims of Jacksonville as a lowly “D” group tournament. As a result, Evonne earned \$2,700 and 75 points for winning in Johannesburg, and Marie won \$3,400 and only 20 points for her victory in Jacksonville. An even greater disparity was evident in the runner-up points; Virginia Wade earned \$1,700 and 52 points for getting to the final in South Africa, and Billie Jean was given \$2,000 and a mere 12 points in Jacksonville. The insistence of the ILTF to award a greater number of points at traditional tournaments would cause the peaceful cooperation between the Virginia Slims Circuit and the USLTA and ILTF to rupture three months later.⁸⁴

After the tournament in Jacksonville, the women’s tour moved on to St. Petersburg for the Virginia Slims Masters Invitational (which also included a second-rate men’s field, not sponsored by Virginia Slims). Tournament chairman Myles Johns was very disappointed that Rosie Casals and several other top American women had decided to bypass the clay court events in Jacksonville and St. Petersburg. “They’re saying publicly that there are too many tournaments in a row,” Johns told the *Evening Independent*. “However, I think the real reason is that we wouldn’t bar the juniors from our tournament ... they asked us to bar the juniors and we refused to give in ... most realize they could be embarrassed by these outstanding youngsters. I don’t think the attitude is a healthy one.”⁸⁵ Johns listed several outstanding Florida juniors who were entered in the St. Petersburg tournament, including Betsy Nagelsen, Donna Ganz, Sue Epstein and Jeanne Evert, who had upset Rosie in Fort Lauderdale three months earlier.

On Wednesday, April 12 – the opening day of the tournament – Billie Jean spoke to reporters in the clubhouse of the St. Petersburg Tennis Center. She told them that the upcoming Wimbledon Championships “might be my last unless their format is changed. The top prize for women at Wimbledon is \$3,600 yet they gross \$1.3 million during the two-week event ... Unless Wimbledon changes and gives more prize money, then I have to consider not playing there. Why should Wimbledon be THE tournament? I owe my allegiance to the Virginia Slims Circuit. It has made my life. I believe I should really think about the circuit first. If I could help it by not playing Wimbledon, then I would do it.”⁸⁶

The tournament’s top three seeds – Billie Jean, Nancy and Chris – arrived in the semifinals with little trouble. The fourth seed, Kerry Melville, withdrew before her quarterfinal match with Judy Dalton due to a leg injury. In Friday’s other matches, Billie Jean defeated Francoise Durr, 7-5 6-2, and Nancy was given a slight challenge from the younger Evert sister. Jeanne was fell behind 0-3 in the first set before winning four consecutive games. Jeanne’s run ended at that point; Nancy took the next three games to win the first set and lost only two more games in winning the second. The biggest surprise of the day was Chris Evert’s struggle to get past Karen Krantzke. Chris easily won the first set, but her tall Australian opponent came back to win the second set in a tiebreak. Chris reestablished her superiority in the third set, despite laboring for nearly two hours for the 6-1 6-7 6-1 victory.⁸⁷

An overflow crowd came to the St. Petersburg Tennis Center to watch Saturday’s semifinals. After Nancy defeated Judy Dalton in the first semifinal, the 2,500 spectators eagerly awaited the next match between Billie Jean and Chris. Unable to play her usual serve and volley game on the slow clay court, Billie Jean attempted to hit drop shots against Chris as often as possible. The strategy was futile; Chris was too steady for Billie Jean and won easily, 6-2 6-3. “She tried a lot of drop shots and they were good, but I could get to them and put them away,” Chris said after the match, adding that her opponent “didn’t come in and mix them up. I played really well, but even though it was a really good win for me today, I can’t afford to think about it.”⁸⁸ Chris was hoping to keep her focus for Sunday’s final against Nancy.

Every seat was taken for the women's singles final between Nancy and Chris on Sunday. "I never thought I'd see the day I'd rather watch the women play than the men," tournament director Don Sullivan said before the women's singles final, "but that's happened, too."⁸⁹ After Tom Mozur defeated Peter Burwash to win the men's singles title, Nancy and Chris began their match on the stadium court. Nancy raced to a 5-1 lead and held four set points before Chris salvaged that game and won one more. Serving at 3-5, Chris lost the game and first set on a double fault. She led 4-3 in the second set, but another double fault spurred Nancy to a run of three games to finish the match, 6-3 6-4.

After the match, Chris talked to reporters about the special challenges that Nancy presented. "It's hard to play someone who has the same type of game. I feel confident when I play Billie Jean or Rosie Casals. They don't have the patience of Nancy. I'd rather play Billie Jean any day ... Nancy Gunter has surpassed Billie Jean King. She's my nemesis. She's the world's number-one woman tennis player."⁹⁰

Nancy talked about her approach to playing Chris. "Other pros get impatient with Chris," she explained. "They try to put away a point in three or four strokes. You can't do that against her. You must be ready to return a lot of balls, waiting for the one you can put away." Nancy also disclosed the reason for her improved play on the 1972 Virginia Slims Circuit. "I got tired of losing and worked hard on my game last December," she said. "I'm playing the best of my life, and although I don't thirst for a \$100,000 season like Billie Jean did, it would be nice."⁹¹ Nancy's win in St. Petersburg earned her \$3,400 and put her tour total to \$25,975. She remained on top of the money winner's list, ahead of Billie Jean, who had accumulated \$22,275.

After Sunday's singles final between Nancy and Chris, Billie Jean once again spoke to reporters about her desire to boycott Wimbledon due to the low women's prize money. "I really don't think we should play," she argued. "This is one time I wish the girls would stick together. If we could guts it out this year, we'd have it made from then on."⁹² Nancy agreed with Billie Jean, saying that the women's prize money at Wimbledon was "a joke." Within a few minutes, Judy Dalton and Francoise Durr – who had just lost to Karen Krantzcke and Wendy Overton in the women's doubles final – had joined Billie Jean and Nancy in the tentative boycott; Billie Jean also offered that she

could vouch for Rosie Casals. For Chris Evert, however, missing her first Wimbledon was not an option, since her father planned her tournament schedule. “He’s in the dark ages,” Billie Jean told Colette Evert, Chris’ mother. “Let me talk to him and I’ll tell him some tales of how to get used.”⁹³

During the final three days of the Virginia Slims Masters Invitational, the ILTF Management Committee was convening in Copenhagen, Denmark. A few days earlier, Neil Amdur of the *New York Times* broke the news that several proposals were to be presented at the meeting, asking for the inclusion of the WCT contract professionals in the world’s major tournaments. “Hopefully, we’ll be able to have open tennis after the meetings,” USLTA vice president Walter Elcock told Amdur before departing for Copenhagen. “I think we can compromise ... we’ve got to have some type of settlement for the good of the game, and it’s up to the leaders in the sport to achieve a settlement.”⁹⁴

The USLTA’s proposal was authored by Stan Malless, and Joe Cullman had asked his friend Donald Dell – the attorney and player agent who negotiated the partnership between the USLTA and the Virginia Slims Circuit two months earlier – to compose another version. The USLTA wanted to see the best men’s players compete at the U. S. Open, and so did Cullman; he had just announced that Miller High Life beer, a Philip Morris brand, would sponsor CBS Television’s broadcast of the U. S. Open. A strong men’s field at Forest Hills would Cullman ensure higher television ratings and more exposure for Miller High Life. Accompanying Dell to Copenhagen was Jack Kramer, who conceived the ILTF Grand Prix bonus points system in order to keep players from signing WCT contracts with Hunt. Like the USLTA officials and Cullman, Kramer knew that a peaceful partnership between the ILTF and WCT was the best solution for the game.⁹⁵

After two days of meetings, ILTF president Alan Heyman issued a brief statement on Sunday, April 16, indicating that the numerous proposals had been discussed and would be further explored. Heyman asked everyone in attendance – Elcock, Dell, Kramer and the ten members of the ILTF Management Committee – to keep silent about the meeting’s discussions until an announcement was made.⁹⁶ The committee then composed its own peace proposal and mailed it to Lamar Hunt in Dallas.

After the women's tournament in St. Petersburg, the tour traveled to Tucson, Arizona for the \$18,000 Virginia Slims Conquistadores, played at the Tucson Racquet Club. Neil Amdur of the *New York Times* telephoned Billie Jean for an interview, and once again the idea of boycotting Wimbledon was discussed. "Unless Wimbledon changes and gives more prize money for women," Billie Jean said, "I have to consider not playing there."⁹⁷ She told Amdur that Wimbledon has a gross income of \$1.3 million per year, yet pays the women's singles winner only \$3,600. Billie Jean also disclosed that most of the Virginia Slims Circuit players were bypassing the British Hard Court Championships in Bournemouth, England in early May due to the low women's prize money. In addition, many of the players were considering taking a break during the two-week French Open, which offered similar limited financial returns.

Amdur then spoke with Gladys, who said she was planning to "write letters to Wimbledon, the French and United States opens on behalf of the girls. We're not going to make any demands, we just want to explain the situation. The girls feel that with WCT out of Wimbledon and the quality of the women's tour, they should be getting a bigger share of the prize money." Gladys told Amdur that the women's singles first prize at the two-week Wimbledon was less than almost any first prize for a one-week event on the Virginia Slims Circuit. "If many girls don't choose to go to the French or Wimbledon, there's nothing we can do," she said. "We don't control the girls on the tour from mid-May until August."⁹⁸ Gladys was concerned, however, about women players not participating at the French Open and Wimbledon, since that was a requirement in order to receive bonus money from the Commercial Union ILTF Grand Prix.

The unfair treatment of the women at international tournaments was the subject of Gladys' next *World Tennis* editorial. Although she felt that Billie Jean "may not have used the most tactful approach," she admitted there "a few minor irritations on the international circuit." Gladys was disappointed that the ILTF gave greater weight, for bonus points purposes, to the lower prize money co-ed tournaments in Europe and South Africa than the more lucrative Virginia Slims Circuit events. "The mistake made by the ILTF was in counting the *men's* prize money in figuring out the status of the *women's* Grand Prix," she wrote.⁹⁹ Gladys was also disappointed that the ILTF awarded Grand

Prix bonus point for the men's Davis Cup competition but not for the women's Federation Cup or Wightman Cup events, the elimination of the Virginia Slims of Richmond as a Grand Prix event (since it was held during the Federation Cup), the reduction of the Virginia Slims event in San Juan, Puerto Rico to Class D status (since it was held at the same time as the South African Open, rated as a Class A tournament), and the granting of Grand Prix status to tournaments that gave appearance money or guarantees to players, such as the Italian Open.¹⁰⁰

The practice of giving appearance fees to players was a sore point with Gladys. When she began planning the Virginia Slims Circuit in late 1970, she specifically asked the women players to refrain from negotiating their own appearance fees at European tournaments. The success of the tour depended on the women acting as a group, and Gladys needed to be able to negotiate with tournament directors to assure minimum prize money standards. Furthermore, since Billie Jean King agreed to no longer negotiate her own appearance fees for the good of the other women on the circuit – and she could have easily commanded a high price – it would not have been fair for any other woman to do so.¹⁰¹

Gladys' editorial argued that "appearance money and guarantees should be things of the past ... Every dollar goes into prize money." According to Gladys, under-the-table payments adversely affected tournament tennis, and she related what happened when Vic Edwards, Evonne Goolagong's coach and manager, demanded appearance fees from tournament directors. "Last season all the Australian tournaments had to pay guarantees ... and in one case the guarantee was so high ... that no other player was given so much as a nickel in prize money. This player will receive no guarantees from the French, Wimbledon, or U. S. Championships nor will she from the Virginia Slims Circuit, but she can carefully choose smaller events which will not have the same competitive field. There is nothing illegal about this practice, but the player is certainly not putting her neck on the block." While players were not supposed to receive appearance fees at Grand Prix events, the practice still occurred. If Evonne, or anyone else, accepted under-the-table payments at Grand Prix tournaments, Gladys insisted "she most certainly should not receive any Grand Prix points for such events. To award her

Grand Prix points is grossly unfair to the others. Since the player involved is so delightful a person, one hopes that she or her agent-manager will one day eschew this practice.”¹⁰²

While Billie Jean considered the possibility of boycotting Wimbledon, she easily won her first two matches in Tucson, as did second-seeded Rosie Casals. That all changed on Friday evening, when Billie Jean and Rosie barely survived their quarterfinal matches. Against Karen Krantzcke, Rosie won only one game in the first set. At 2-3 in the second set, Rosie's temper flared when hit three consecutive double faults in losing her serve. Karen's lead of 6-1 4-2 seemed insurmountable, and when she held a game point to go ahead 5-2, the match appeared to be over. Rosie, however, suddenly regained her composure; she fought off the advantage point and then won eight consecutive games enroute to a 1-6 6-4 6-1 turnaround. "I probably played too carefully," Karen lamented after her loss. "I might have been more aggressive. But, that's easy to say now, isn't it?" A reporter told Karen that she appeared to tire as Rosie made her comeback. "I looked tired?" she asked. "Actually, I was more mentally tired. That happens against a ranked player. Rosie might have been more mentally prepared for this since she hasn't been on the tour for two weeks." ¹⁰³

As close as Rosie came to losing, Billie Jean came even closer. Kerry Harris, an athletic Australian who liked to play aggressively, took the first set, 7-5. Billie Jean responded by winning the second set 6-3, and then Kerry took a 4-1 lead in the third. Two games later, Billie Jean served at 2-5 and faced match point on three occasions. Billie Jean survived the crisis and swept five consecutive games to win the match, with the daring shots of both players prompting numerous standing ovations from the crowd of 1,200 spectators. After winning the match, Billie Jean flung her racquet high into the air and immediately left the club, saying "I don't want to talk to anyone." ¹⁰⁴

Kerry spoke with reporters when it was over, and she conceded that Billie Jean "didn't play as well as she can, otherwise it wouldn't have been that close. I've played better myself." In the previous round, Kerry had beaten the eighth seed, Lita Liem. "There was no pressure here like the last match," she said. "I knew I could and had to

win the last match. This was different. The crowd was behind her at the end. I guess I had my share, though.”¹⁰⁵

Sunday’s finals were played in an 87-degree temperature and attracted 2,200 spectators to the Tucson Racquet Club. The previous day, Billie Jean defeated Judy Dalton in the semifinals, 6-2 6-2, and Francoise Durr won against Rosie, 6-1 7-6. Billie Jean often had difficulty against the Frenchwoman; ever since the Virginia Slims Circuit started in 1971, Francoise had more wins against Billie Jean – five – than anyone else.

Billie Jean made quick work of the match, controlling the net and winning the first set without the loss of a game. The heat bothered Francoise; she repeatedly threw her racquet down onto the court as she lost control of her lobs and backhands. By the second set, Francoise’s form had improved and her passing shots and service returns became sharper. Down 2-4, she broke Billie Jean’s serve and had a chance to level the match when she served in the eighth game. The game went to deuce six times, and along the way Francoise buried and overhead in the net and double faulted. After Billie Jean won the game with a forehand passing shot, she held serve to complete the 6-0 6-3 victory.¹⁰⁶

Happy with her best result since winning at Richmond four weeks earlier, Billie Jean said that she “was really psyched up for this match. When I’m psyched up, I always play my best tennis. I was eager and played very well out there.”¹⁰⁷ Francoise was disappointed with her performance, saying that she “was not very good today, and Billie Jean did not make three mistakes the whole match. Even if I had played well, she still maybe would have beat me. My backhand down the line has not been working all week. I just played very, very poorly this afternoon.”¹⁰⁸ Billie Jean’s winner’s check of \$3,400 put her ahead of Nancy Richey Gunter on the money winner list, with a total of \$26,200 for the year.

Speaking with Jan Petranek of the *Tucson Citizen*, Billie Jean gave insights about the pressures she faced with spectators and tournament promoters. “It’s terrible,” she admitted. “You never have a moment to yourself. People will crowd around you before and after a match. There’s no time to concentrate. And everyone wants to touch you or grab your arm. I don’t even have any privacy in the locker room after a match. I’m

undressed, trying to get into the shower, and women are still talking to me or trying to get an autograph. Nancy Richey Gunter is twenty-nine and she said the other day that she thinks she can play tournament tennis for another ten years. Well, I told her, ‘Nancy, it’s all yours, baby!’ I’d like to cut down on the number of tournaments I play, but I can’t seem to do it. Tournament sponsors make it tough, they put pressure on you. If you say you’re not going to play their tournament, they say ‘What’s wrong? Don’t you like our place?’ Or they tell me that if I’m pushing tennis so much, why don’t I do something for their tournament.”¹⁰⁹

Petranek asked Billie Jean if she was envious of all the attention that Chris Evert was receiving since exploding on the national scene in 1971. “Envious? No, I’m glad for the game,” she answered. “This is what those of us who feel strongly about tennis have been working for – to develop junior players and improve the women’s circuit. Sure, she’ll have chances that I didn’t have eleven years ago – I was alone then – much less competition and no prize money. Losing to Chris doesn’t bother me. I know what she’s going to have to go through. Already, she’s being exploited.”¹¹⁰

Although Billie Jean wished she had more privacy, she told Petranek that she enjoyed “doing things for kids. I want to keep them hooked on the game. For some of them, it takes a lot of courage to come up and ask for an autograph. I don’t want to hurt them.”¹¹¹

After the Virginia Slims Conquistadors of Tucson, the women’s tour took another one-week break before the final winter-spring tournament in Indianapolis. It was also the week of the Italian Open, a combined men’s and women’s event that offered the women only \$15,000 of the total \$70,000 in prize money. Linda Tuero, the eighth-ranked American who chose not to play regularly on the Virginia Slims Circuit, won the biggest title of her career – and \$1,600 – by defeating Helga Masthoff in the semifinals and Olga Morozova in the final. Manuel Orantes of Spain also won his first major title, earning \$10,000 for defeating Jan Kodeš in four sets in the men’s singles final.

The most significant development of the week, however, was the news that the ILTF and WCT had reached a compromise that would allow the men contract professionals to finally play in the world’s major championships again. On Wednesday,

April 26, Lamar Hunt sat next to Alan Heyman at a news conference in London and announced the peace settlement.¹¹² At the same time, USLTA officials held a news conference at the Longwood Cricket Club in Brookline, Massachusetts. Under the terms of the agreement, Hunt would no longer sign players to contracts and would honor all existing contracts for their original lengths. In return, Hunt would receive control of the men's tennis schedule for the first four months of every year, during which time he would schedule his own tournaments, as well as other new ones throughout the world. For each of his tournaments, Hunt agreed to pay sanction fees to ILTF. For the remaining eight months of the year, the ILTF would have the exclusive right to schedule and promote its tournaments. All players, those not under WCT contract and those still under contract, would be free to enter any tournament they wished.¹¹³

Heyman told reporters that the agreement needed to be ratified by the 96-member body of the ILTF at its next meeting, which was scheduled to be held in Helsinki in mid-July – one week after Wimbledon. As a result, there was no possibility that John Newcombe, Rod Laver, Ken Rosewall, Arthur Ashe or any of the other WCT players would play in the French Open or Wimbledon. Although the agreement would not start until December 24, 1972 – in time for the Australian Open – Heyman expected the USLTA to seek permission for the WCT players to appear at the U. S. Open. Hunt said that there were no WCT tournaments scheduled during Forest Hills and saw “no reason why they shouldn't play there, if the ILTF agrees.”¹¹⁴ Wimbledon, however, was a different situation. Even if the ILTF were to approve the peace settlement immediately, it would not be enough to bring the WCT players to Wimbledon. “We are committed to play at St Louis the first week of Wimbledon,” Hunt said. “I held that date open until March 15, but we could not reach an agreement at that time.”¹¹⁵

With WCT controlling the first four months of the year, Hunt said there would be two concurrent tours. Each tour would have eleven \$50,000 tournaments and would accommodate thirty-two players. The top players from each tour would play in the World Cup at the end of the year, for which players would qualify by playing at the Italian Open, French Open, Wimbledon and the U. S. Open. “The game is now truly open,” Hunt said, “and WCT's goals are intact.” Hunt and Heyman also gave credit to

Jack Kramer and Donald Dell for bringing peace to the men's game. Hunt praised them for spending "a tremendous number of hours to put this thing together," and Heyman called Kramer and Dell "the tower of strength."¹¹⁶

Heyman was convinced that, as the existing WCT player contracts expired, the distinction between contract professionals and independent professionals would disappear. He envisioned three to four million dollars in prize money for the men players each year. "There will be a helluva lot of money around for the top one hundred and twenty players in the world," he predicted. Heyman was also confident that the agreement would be ratified by the full body of the ILTF when it met in Helsinki in July. "This agreement would not have been signed by me," he said, "unless I was assured of wholehearted support. The war is over."¹¹⁷

At the news conference in Massachusetts, Elcock told reporters that he expected the agreement "to be a milestone of tennis as a spectator sport. In effect, everyone will become an independent pro. WCT will really act as a promoter. This makes it possible for all tennis players to play together. At long last, we will have open tennis in a real sense."¹¹⁸ Arthur Ashe, competing in a WCT tournament in Denver, was happy to hear the news. "If it is true," he said, "this is a fantastic idea. Any agreement wherein all of the best players in the world are allowed to play is a good step."¹¹⁹

One week later, at a WCT tournament in Dallas, Ashe was cautious about the ILTF's involvement in men's professional tennis. He told Temple Pouncey of *Dallas Morning News* that "if the ILTF thinks it will inherit the authority to govern the players from WCT, they're severely mistaken." Since January, Ashe had been urging his fellow WCT professionals to organize a strong players' association. "The fight is over control of the players," he said earlier in the year. "The fight will continue as long as the players refuse to get themselves together. But in the absence of a very strong players' association, this fight can continue." Ashe believed that a players' association could have an influence on playing conditions, the distribution of prize money, the scheduling of tournaments and other factors such as the scoring system, pensions, and insurance. "Most of the players don't care," Ashe lamented. "All they want to do is play and get paid. Tennis players are a very docile group. They say they've got it good now, why

rock the boat ... it can't last forever. They're very shortsighted. The trouble is that there aren't enough players interested in the game. They just want to make money and get out." ¹²⁰

When peace finally came to men's tennis in April 1972, Ashe told Poncey that "the association is an idea whose time has come. It is an inevitability and an imperative if the players are to be justly treated. The groundwork is being laid now. We'll proceed at a slow but sure pace toward an association which reflects the sentiment of the players only. Nobody can stop it." ¹²¹ John Newcombe was also eager to see the development of a players' association. Bitterly disappointed that the peace settlement between WCT and the ILTF would not take effect until after Wimbledon – thereby making the defense of his Wimbledon title impossible – Newcombe told Richard Evans of *World Tennis* that "this affair has only made me more determined than ever to throw my full weight behind the Players' Association." Newcombe was no stranger to player unions; in the summer of 1969, he founded the International Players' Tennis Association (ITPA) with the support of more than fifty contract professionals and independent players. The ITPA hoped to have a voice in the administration of the game and organize its own events, such as an open Davis Cup competition. The following spring, Eugene Scott, a top U. S. player and attorney who was the general counsel for the USLTA, announced the formation the Association of Independent Tennis Professionals. Neither the ITPA nor the AITP had any significant influence in the game.

The final stop on the winter-spring Virginia Slims Circuit was the \$20,000 Virginia Slims of Indianapolis, played at the Indiana State Fairgrounds Coliseum. The tournament's top four seeds were Billie Jean King, Nancy Richey Gunter, Rosie Casals, and Francoise Durr. In addition to the \$4,000 first prize, the prestige of being the top money winner on the winter-spring Virginia Slims Circuit was at stake. Billie Jean arrived in Indianapolis with a prize money total of \$26,200, and Nancy had accumulated \$25, 975. Since Billie Jean and Nancy were separated by only \$225, whoever had the better showing in Indianapolis would earn the tour's top money winner crown.

While the Virginia Slims of Indianapolis was being held, Virginia Wade was playing in the Rothman's Hard Court Championships in Sutton, England. Virginia did

not commit to the entire Virginia Slims Circuit; after the Maureen Connolly Brinker Tennis Championships in Dallas, she went to South Africa to represent her country in the Federation Cup and then play in the South African Open. After that, she returned home to England, eventually playing in Sutton during the same week as Indianapolis.

Virginia Wade ... broke her promise. She promised faithfully not to play in a competing tournament when she left America. She went to Europe and played in a competing tournament and we said to her, "You will have to pay a fine for breaking your promise." ¹²²

-- Pip Jones, 1973

Virginia's greatest offense was receiving an appearance fee for the Sutton tournament. Since the event was not part of the ILTF Commercial Union Grand Prix, taking an appearance fee was perfectly legal. However, when Gladys began planning the tour in late 1970, she specifically warned players on the Virginia Slims Circuit about accepting appearance fees at any tournament in the world.

In an effort to establish guidelines for players on the Virginia Slims Circuit, and perhaps inspired by the formation of the WCT Players' Association, Gladys and Pip Jones held a player meeting in Indianapolis to discuss the formation of a women's association. Unlike the WCT Players' Association – a union whose goal was to limit the powers of the WCT and ILTF – the proposed women's association wanted to establish a set of guidelines for player responsibilities.

We had a meeting because it was becoming apparent that we needed written rules and regulations. Previously we had worked by shake of hand only, and one or two of the girls were becoming very naughty and disobeying the rules, and we thought in the interests of everybody we should have these rules written down and agreed by everybody who played on our tour as a regular member ... We had a discussion on the penalties which should be invoked if they failed to keep the

*terms. Those penalties were agreed by the girls in open meeting. I then went away, had the documents typed and circulated amongst the girls for signature.*¹²³

-- Pip Jones, 1973

*I had discussions about the player association, and I had guaranteed the girls that I would give them a player association contract...*¹²⁴

-- Gladys Heldman, 1973

Gladys told Myrta Pulliam of the *Indianapolis Star* that she was happy to watch some tennis for a few days, and she was pleased that the circuit was running smoothly and was finally in cooperation with the USLTA. “The magazine is almost a full-time job, so unfortunately I don’t get to see many tournaments ... Now the USLTA is supporting us fully and it’s going beautifully. The girls are making more money than they ever have before and they like the tour.” She also told Pulliam what was expected from the players. “The girls can say anything they want to the press, they can behave badly on the courts, but they can’t miss a clinic or be late to a match,” she said. “That’s about all the rules there are. After all, it isn’t fair to keep 4,000 spectators waiting. And if a girl is rude on the court, the gallery will let her know it and it only hurts the player.”¹²⁵

After three rounds of qualifying matches across town at the Indianapolis Racquet Club, the main draw started on Wednesday morning at the Coliseum. During the first match of the day, Wendy Overton ran for a shot against Kris Kemmer and collided with one of the seated linespersons. There was only thirteen feet of playing space behind each baseline, hardly enough for top-level tennis. After Wendy defeated Kris in straight sets, there was a delay in the program while workers installed an additional eight feet of space to each end of the court.¹²⁶

Once play resumed, Judy Dalton and Francoise Durr won their matches handily, and the sparse number of spectators waited to watch Billie Jean King play her first round match against Laurie Tenney. Billie Jean was ready to play, but unfortunately her young opponent was nowhere to be found; she was practicing outdoors at North Central High School and had lost track of the time. Pip Jones made an announcement to the spectators

that the match would be played as soon as Laurie arrived at the Coliseum. Jones told Bob Williams of the *Indianapolis Star* that Laurie would have been defaulted under normal circumstances, but he did not want to disappoint the fans who paid up to four dollars to watch the tournament's star attraction. Laurie eventually arrived for the match one hour late, and Billie Jean made quick work of the match, winning 6-4 6-1.¹²⁷

During the week in Indianapolis there were few exciting matches; almost all of them were straight-set encounters. The week's best contest – and the tournament's only three-set singles match – was the second-round battle between Billie Jean and Mary Ann Eisel. Since she had not played many events on the 1972 Virginia Slims Circuit, Mary Ann had to play in the qualifying tournament at the Indianapolis Racquet Club. She easily won three matches to earn a spot in the main draw, in which she defeated eighth-seeded Kerry Harris to set up a Thursday evening quarterfinal match against the top-seeded Billie Jean.

In a match between two serve-and-volley players, Mary Ann earned a service break in the first set to lead 6-5 on her service. During the course of a game that went to deuce fourteen times, Mary Ann held set point on seven occasions. Billie Jean refused to surrender; she won the game to level the set at 6-6. Mary Ann had one more set point when the ensuing tiebreak went to sudden death at 4-4, but once again Billie Jean was not to be denied. Mary Ann rebounded to win the second set 6-3, and she scored an early service break to lead 2-1 in the third. Her lack of match play was evident, however, as Billie Jean came back to win the third set with the loss of only one more game. "Billie Jean missed some early and after we got into the match I thought I might be able to win it," Mary Ann said afterward. "I tried to play aggressive, because I know how well Billie Jean adjusts to anything. I tried to serve and volley and cover the net as best I could ... I'm more relaxed from the layoff, and maybe that's why I'm playing so well."¹²⁸

For the second day of the four-day tournament, few spectators were present. "Unless the attendance picks up considerably the last two days," observed sports writer Bob Williams, "Indianapolis could set a record low for fourteen cities on the circuit." Tournament promoter Bill Colbert told Williams that ticket sales for the final two days of

the tournament looked promising, and he hoped to have several thousand fans in attendance for Saturday's finals.¹²⁹

While Billie Jean eased into the finals with a straight-set semifinal win over Wendy Overton, Nancy Richey Gunter advanced through the draw without the loss of a set. She did not lose a game to Marge Cooper in the opening round, lost only five games to Karen Krantzcke in the quarterfinals, and lost only four games in her semifinal match against Rosie Casals. Heading into Saturday's singles final, Nancy was playing like the best women's player in the world, and another win over Billie Jean would give her a good argument. As it turned out, less than one thousand fans turned out on each of the tournament's final two days.

In Saturday's final, Nancy started strongly against Billie Jean, getting an early service break and staying even with her until 3-3 in the first set. Billie Jean then took command of the match, using a potent serve and teasing drop shot to win nine of the remaining twelve games for a 6-3 6-3 victory. "I thought I played well and I thought it was a good match," she said afterward. "I was serving well. It's something I've been working on all week. And the drop shot was going pretty well. I had to do something to break up Nancy's rhythm. She's not as flexible, hits everything flat, so it was up to me to take the chances."¹³⁰

Billie Jean also expressed her displeasure with the low turnout of the spectators during the week, which did not total more than 3,000 fans for the entire four days. "It was just a bad time to come to Indianapolis with the Speedway and all," she said. "We've had small crowds before, but we had a full house in Jacksonville the week of the Masters golf tourney." Despite the small crowds in Indianapolis, Billie Jean was happy with the financial and political progress the tour had made in the past year. "We're playing for about \$750,000 in prize money this year," she said, "and I'm happier with the USLTA than I've ever been because they're finally trying to cooperate with the girls."¹³¹

On the other hand, Billie Jean was not pleased with the preferential treatment that some tournament directors were giving to Evonne Goolagong. When asked by Dick Denny of the *Indianapolis News* if she planned to return to Indianapolis in August to defend her title at the U. S. National Clay Court Championships, Billie Jean said she

“will not come if Evonne Goolagong is in the field. She always gets a guarantee and that is illegal under Grand Prix rules. I can’t prove she will get a guarantee, but I’m just positive she will, and Vic Edwards gets his. I don’t feel it’s fair. There’s no boycott collectively. If they want Evonne, that’s great. But I’ll be honest, it’s better having us all than just Evonne.”¹³²

Billie Jean was suspicious about Evonne’s interest in playing in the U. S. National Clay Court Championships, which offered considerably less prize money than a Virginia Slims Circuit event. “She hasn’t beaten anybody since she won Wimbledon, and why did she pick Indianapolis?” she asked. “She’s not playing anyplace else. She’s not supporting our circuit, either, and that’s her choice. But the future of women’s tennis is in this tour and I wish she’d support it. Evonne really isn’t playing any tournaments with depth. There’s no reason why they should pick and choose the \$40,000 tournaments and we support the \$18,000 tournaments. We do all the work and then she asks for a guarantee and comes boppin’ in. It’s up to each girl to do her part.”¹³³

Stan Malless, tournament director of the national clay court tournament, had heard the rumors that there might be a boycott by Virginia Slims Circuit players if Evonne came to Indianapolis. He was aware that the players held a meeting earlier in the week, and that Evonne’s potential participation in the U. S. Clay Court Championships had been discussed. “Some of the girls came to me at the Coliseum and begged me not to take Goolagong so that they could come to the Clay Court tournament,” he told Bob Williams of the *Indianapolis Star*. “I’m not going to deprive Indianapolis of a chance to see Goolagong play, just because she’s not a member of the Virginia Slims tour.”¹³⁴ Malless also denied the accusation that Evonne and her coach were to receive appearance money for coming for Indianapolis. “I resent Billie Jean’s implications,” he said. “I promise you I haven’t paid a guarantee to a man or woman since prize money tournaments began and I’ve given no expense money to any player playing for money. The Virginia Slims people know this. The first time we had prize money at the Clay Courts, Nancy Richey asked me for a guarantee and I told her no. She told me she wasn’t coming this year.”¹³⁵

Evonne was welcome to play in Indianapolis, Mallless said, and he insisted that he had no intention of letting other players influence him. “I won’t turn her down because others threaten not to play,” he insisted. “I’m anxious to have Miss Goolagong here because the people in Indianapolis never have seen her. Besides, I’ve never been one to yield to unfair pressure. This thing is a power play for Virginia Slims. The key is that Vic Edwards is her legal guardian and sets up her schedule. They’ve tried to get her, but Edwards won’t sign up. They’ve been chasing her ever since she won Wimbledon ... The Slims people have tried to get her for some time and only since she turned them down have they tried to apply pressure. They wrote Edwards, and Pip Jones telephoned Edwards in South Africa, that Evonne wouldn’t be allowed to play in the Slims tournaments if she played in tournaments that weren’t on the tour. I talked to Jones last week and informed him that he doesn’t have that authority, that all the tournaments are sanctioned by the USLTA, nor Virginia Slims.”¹³⁶

At the conclusion of the Virginia Slims Circuit, only a handful of players – including Betty Stove, Kerry Harris, Helen Gourlay and Valerie Ziegenfuss – went to England and Europe to play in the low prize money events that led up to the French Open. Billie Jean debated whether or not to play in the world’s premier clay court tournament. It was the only grand slam singles title that was missing from her collection, and in her six previous appearances there she had never gotten past the semifinals. With the tournament entry deadline approaching, Billie Jean finally decided to play. She wanted to get more match play, and she also knew that her participation in Paris was mandatory in order to receive the year-end Commercial Union ILTF Grand Prix bonus money.

After Indianapolis, Billie Jean had ten days off before the start of the French Open. She flew to Houston for a four-day “20-30-50” party that Gladys was hosting, celebrating the twentieth anniversary of *World Tennis*, the thirtieth anniversary of her wedding to Julius, and her fiftieth birthday.¹³⁷ Among the many guests were Joe Cullman, Philadelphia tournament directors Ed and Marilyn Fernberger, Virginia Slims brand manager John Granville, Tony Roche and his wife Sue, John Newcombe and his wife Angie, and former players Beverly Baker Fleitz and Carol Hanks Aucamp. On the

evening of Friday, May 12, Mary Ann Eisel and Don Beattie arrived in Houston, and they announced that only ten hours earlier they were wed at the city hall in St. Louis.¹³⁸

While Gladys was entertaining guests in Houston, the USLTA announced that Chris Evert, Wendy Overton, Valerie Ziegenfuss, Patti Hogan and Linda Tuero would represent the United States at the Wightman Cup competition at Wimbledon in June. The three highest ranked American players – Billie Jean King, Nancy Richey Gunter and Rosie Casals – had earlier expressed no interest in playing on the team, and Billie Jean and Rosie planned to play in the West of England Championships in Bristol instead. Julie Heldman, writing a series of articles for the *Sunday Times* in London, asked Nancy about her reasons for not playing. “If they won’t give the big prize money, like \$20,000 to the winning team, let the amateurs play,” Nancy said. “I’ve played since 1962 and the thrill of just being chosen has gone.”¹³⁹ Two months earlier, when Edy McGoldrick – a longtime USLTA volunteer and the first woman ever given a seat on the association’s Executive Committee – was named captain of the team, Billie Jean urged her to ask the USLTA to increase the stipend given to each team member. The amount was eventually increased from \$500 to \$1000 per player, still not enough to attract the top three American professionals. “The Wightman Cup doesn’t mean as much if the best people aren’t playing,” Billie Jean told Julie. “You could say that we are holding out for better conditions.”¹⁴⁰

After the parties in Houston, Billie Jean flew to California to spend Mother’s Day weekend at her parents’ home in Long Beach. On the evening of Monday, May 15, Billie Jean and her parents sat down to watch the CBS Television show *60 Minutes*, which was airing the segment that was filmed during the Virginia Slims Circuit events in San Juan and Jacksonville. During his interview with Larry in California, Morley Safer asked if there were any plans to start a family. “Until our life becomes more stable there’s no way that Billie Jean and I can have children,” Larry said. “It would be too selfish to have children and not be able to give them the proper amount of time and attention. Billie Jean’s a perfectionist in more ways than just on a tennis court and if she couldn’t be a good mother she wouldn’t want to be a mother.”¹⁴¹

Safer then asked Billie Jean, during their conversation in Florida, if her decision to have an abortion was the result of her successful tennis career. “No, that wasn’t the reason at all,” Billie Jean insisted. “The main reason that I had an abortion was because we really didn’t want a child at this time. My tennis career had nothing to do with it. Even if I wasn’t playing tennis I still would have had the abortion.”¹⁴² Billie Jean’s parents had learned about the abortion from Mark Asher’s newspaper story in February, and they had not spoken to their daughter about it.

*That broke the dam and I could have died. Mom said she’d cried for three days when she first heard about it. She asked me if I loved kids. She asked me if I loved Larry. She said she trusted me but she just couldn’t understand. I told her I didn’t expect her to understand, that Larry and I had our reasons – personal reasons I didn’t want to go into – and through it all I was mainly sorry I hadn’t had the guts to tell her first myself. The hate mail was coming in by then too, letters from people who called me a killer and predictably, I guess, refused to sign their names. In all, it was a pretty grim period.*¹⁴³
-- Billie Jean King, 1974

The next day, Billie Jean flew to Fort Lauderdale, rented a car at the airport and drove to the Evert family home. “Let’s practice,” she told Chris. For six hours they drilled in the hot Florida sun, after which Chris was exhausted and Billie Jean was still eager. “Don’t call me ‘the old lady’ anymore!” Billie Jean joked with her young friend. She then took a flight to Paris, physically prepared and – despite the uncomfortable conversation with her mother the previous day – mentally ready for the French Open.¹⁴⁴

Based on her lead in the ILTF Commercial Union Grand Prix standings, Evonne Goolagong was given the number-one seed at the French Open, followed by Nancy Richey Gunter, Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals and Francoise Durr. The tournament utilized a non-traditional draw format, in which the seeded players received two rounds of byes, placing them directly into the third round. The non-seeded players had to battle each other in the first two rounds, and they were unhappy with the draw format because it

protected the seeds from early round upsets.¹⁴⁵ None of the matches on the first three days of the tournament featured seeded players, which resulted in low spectator attendance early in the first week. On the tournament's opening day, only one thousand fans were on the grounds at Roland Garros.¹⁴⁶

The top eight women's seeds did not see action until Thursday, May 25. Just one hour before her match against Gail Chanfreau, number-two seed Nancy Richey Gunter sent a telegram from Texas, informing the tournament organizers that she would not be coming to Paris due to an injury. Since it was already three days into the tournament, it was too late to make another draw. Tournament referee Jacques Dorfmann was angry, and ILTF joint secretary Benny Berthet informed Nancy that she needed to send a medical certificate verifying her injury or she would not be eligible for any ILTF Commercial Union Grand Prix bonus money.¹⁴⁷ Billie Jean, planning to play doubles with Nancy at the French Open and during the summer, was able to get Betty Stove as a last-minute doubles partner.

The most exciting women's match of the first round – and probably of the entire tournament – was Kerry Melville's four-hour 9-7 4-6 16-14 win over Pam Teeguarden of California. Pam had two match points when she served at 6-5 in the third set, and unable to close it out, she served for the match four more times. Battling finger cramps and frazzled nerves, Pam lost the match on a double-fault. After shaking hands with Kerry, Pam slumped in her courtside chair and wept for fifteen minutes before she collected herself and walked to the dressing room.¹⁴⁸

Billie Jean safely arrived in the quarterfinals, where her opponent was Virginia Wade. From the very first game, Billie Jean utilized a perfectly executed drop shot. If Virginia was able to reach the shot, Billie Jean lobbed her or passed her with ease. The new strategy helped Billie Jean win all of her earlier matches in straight sets, and against Virginia the trend continued; she easily won, 6-1 6-3.¹⁴⁹

Before their semifinal match with Billie Jean, clay court expert Helga Masthoff was concerned about Billie Jean's drop shot. "It's very deceptive," Helga said, "because they come off the racquet just like her slice shot and you think they are going high, then they just drop down."¹⁵⁰ Billie Jean knew that Helga would be a tough opponent; two

years earlier in Paris, she lost in the quarterfinals after winning the first set and getting leg cramps in the third.

During the pre-match warm-up, Billie Jean noticed that the clay court had been rolled and was harder; the court was not as soft as when she beat Virginia Wade. She decided to abandon her drop shot strategy, since the bounce on the firmer court would be higher and easier to reach. Billie Jean elected to remain on the baseline and beat her tall German opponent with steady, medium-paced groundstrokes. Her strategy resulted in many long rallies, but it was good enough to give her a 6-4 6-4 win. “My instinctive way of playing seems to be to Helga’s advantage,” Billie Jean said about her decision to abandon her usual aggressive strategy. “Helga seems to play better and better the harder I hit.”¹⁵¹

In the other semifinal, Francoise Durr served for the first set at 5-4 against Evonne Goolagong. Michael Katz of the *New York Times* observed that Evonne “appeared bored and lethargic,” and it was only when she faced danger did her game awake. Evonne leveled the first set at 5-5, eventually won it 9-7 and closed out the match with a 6-4 second set.¹⁵² Looking ahead to the women’s singles final, Vic Edwards told Laurie Pignon of the *Daily Mail* that he hoped that Evonne’s loss to Billie Jean in Dallas would motivate her win this time.¹⁵³

More than 12,000 spectators packed Stade Roland Garros to watch the women’s and men’s singles finals on Sunday, June 4. Evonne served the opening game and lost it at love, and Billie Jean continued to hit three-quarter pace forehands and backhands in building a 5-3 lead. A second service break gave Billie Jean the first set, and she maintained her strategy and concentration in the second. Evonne also attempted to reduce the pace on her shots and hit short shots on purpose, but Billie Jean welcomed the opportunity to come forward and volleyed brilliantly. Down 2-3 in the second set, Billie Jean won three consecutive games to lead 5-3. In the ninth game of the set, there were a number of lengthy, baseline rallies as each player waited for the other to make a mistake. “When you smell victory,” Billie Jean said later, “you don’t get too anxious.”¹⁵⁴ With Billie Jean serving at match point, a lengthy baseline rally followed; Evonne eventually hit a shot slice forehand to Billie Jean’s backhand, drawing her opponent forward. Billie

Jean approached down the line and intercepted Evonne's attempt at a forehand crosscourt passing shot. Billie Jean's volley was short and sat up, and Evonne tried another passing shot, this time a backhand down the line. Billie Jean let the shot sail long, and when she saw it land beyond the baseline, she threw her racquet into the air.¹⁵⁵

Billie Jean earned \$4,000 for her French Open victory and 100 points in the ILTF Commercial Union Grand Prix, putting her in first place in the bonus point standings. She also took the women's doubles title with last-minute partner Betty Stove, beating the British team of Winnie Shaw and Nell Truman in the final, 6-1 6-2. Evonne received some consolation for losing the women's singles title by winning the mixed doubles with fellow Aussie – and Vic Edwards pupil – Kim Warwick over the defending champions Francoise Durr and Jean-Claude Barclay, 6-2 6-4. Billie Jean wept after winning her first French Open singles title, and Spain's Andres Gimeno wept even more after defeating local hero Patrick Proisy in four sets to capture his first major singles title. The men's singles first prize of \$12,000 undoubtedly added to his joy.

During the French Open, the male independent professionals formed their own players' union. Just as the recently-formed WCT Player's Association was a remnant of the International Tennis Players' Association that John Newcombe founded in 1969, the Independent Players' Association (IPA) was a re-invention of the Association of Independent Tennis Professionals that Eugene Scott and Jim McManus started in 1970. At the first meeting of the IPA, Andres Gimeno was elected president, and McManus, Frew McMillan, Stan Smith, Barry Phillips-Moore, Ion Tiriac and Jaime Fillol were chosen as officers.¹⁵⁶

After the election of officers, the IPA determined how the association would be funded. Instead of establishing a fixed amount for annual dues, such as the \$100 per year fee to be a member of the WCT Players' Association, the IPA decided to assess each of its members a fee that was one half to one percent of earned prize money. Regardless of the amount paid by each player, all members would have one vote.¹⁵⁷

The IPA declared its general support of the agreement between the ILTF and WCT, but had some reservations concerning some of the details. WCT Executive Director Mike Davies had earlier indicated that in order to play on the WCT tour during

the first four months of 1973, a player needed to commit to all eleven tournaments. Independent professional Clark Graebner did not feel it was reasonable to expect a player to compete in all eleven tournaments, and he suggested that more reasonable number of required tournaments be established.¹⁵⁸

The WCT Players' Association had already established a five-man committee of Arthur Ashe, Cliff Drysdale, Mark Cox, Ismail El Shafei, and Ray Ruffels. While he was not allowed to play in the French Open, WCT player Mark Cox was present at the IPA meeting. It was agreed upon that the IPA would choose its own committee of five members to meet with their WCT counterparts to discuss the possibility of becoming a single, unified players' association.

The ILTF Grand Prix Committee – which finally named Gladys as the Women's Pro Tour Representative – also met during the French Open. Gladys wanted to receive some explanation for why the traditional, lower-prize money tournaments in South Africa and Europe were given more Grand Prix bonus points than the richer events on the Virginia Slims Circuit. "For five months (the women pros) had been collecting 10% of their own money and putting it into a Women's Pro Tour bank account, waiting for the ILTF to allow them a representative at an ILTF Women's Grand Prix meeting," Gladys reported in *World Tennis*. "ILTF president Allan Heyman had appointed only men to this committee and strenuously fought having a women's representative. Eventually a Women's Pro Tour representative was appointed and when a meeting was finally called, the Virginia Slims girls were 'put in their place.' The promise of distributing Grand Prix points on the basis of prize money only was ignored, and small European prize money events were given far more points than the rich Virginia Slims tournaments."¹⁵⁹

As a member of the Grand Prix Committee ... I have been present at all the Committee Meetings ... I would like to correct an impression that you gave, that at the meeting in Paris the girls were "put in their place." In fact, every member of the Committee, which included Gail Chanfreau to represent the rest of the girls, did everything in their power to meet the requests of the Women's Pro Tour Representative.

From the date of that meeting, all tournaments were graded according to a prize money scale agreed with the two ladies, and one of the earlier Virginia Slims tournaments was upgraded. The only area of disagreement was the request from the Women's Pro Tour Representative that some of the earlier (South African and European) tournaments be downgraded. The rest of the Committee, including the other lady representative, were unanimous in saying that having advertised a tournament to be in a certain category with the girls playing for specific points, it would be morally wrong, and perhaps even legally wrong, to reduce the grading and the points retrospectively ...

... In any new competition, there are bound to be areas where improvements can be made and the Grand Prix Committee and Commercial Union have every intention of making any changes in the future needed to improve and strengthen the Grand Prix.¹⁶⁰

G. S. Mullis

London, England

During the meeting in Paris, the ILTF Grand Prix Committee authorized Gladys to stage a women's \$50,000 Grand Prix finale at the end of the year. Commercial Union Assurance Company, the sponsor of the ILTF Grand Prix, agreed to contribute \$25,000 towards the total prize money, and Gladys would need to solicit the remaining \$25,000.

One week later, Gladys found a tournament promoter and a sponsor. The Boca Raton Hotel and Club in Boca Raton, Florida – a five-star resort – agreed to contribute \$35,000 in prize money and construct spectator seating at its tennis complex. George Liddy, who had been promoting women's professional tennis tournaments in South Florida since 1968, wanted to promote the event and was eager to showcase Chris Evert in another one of his events. Gladys relayed the news to the committee that the ILTF women's Grand Prix finale would be able to offer \$60,000 in total prize money, which was \$10,000 more than what was going to be offered for the season-ending men's Grand Prix finale.

The ILTF officials did not respond immediately; they had instructed Gladys to organize a \$50,000 tournament, and they did not like the idea of the women playing for more money than the men. Gladys was told that no decision would be made until the ILTF Annual General Meeting in mid-July, but she wanted no delays; she informed the ILTF and Commercial Union that she needed to know by July 1 if they wanted to be involved in the tournament. "If the ILTF turns down Boca's offer to hold the Grand Prix," she wrote in *World Tennis*, "then the tournament will become the \$60,000 Virginia Slims Masters, with that big beautiful company once again coming to the rescue of the women. Either way, the best women players in the world will compete in Boca Raton during the second week of October."¹⁶¹ In the next issue of *World Tennis*, Gladys ran a full-page advertisement that promoted the tournament, but did not mention whether Commercial Union or Virginia Slims would be the sponsor.

After the French Open, some of the players went to Hamburg to play in the German Open, and others went to England to play in the grass court tournaments to prepare for Wimbledon. Helga Masthoff finally won the German Open, on her eleventh attempt, by defeating Linda Tuero in a 2 ½ hour marathon final that went to 8-6 in the third set. The victory put Helga in fourth place on the Commercial Union ILTF Grand Prix bonus points standings, behind Billie Jean King, Evonne Goolagong, and Nancy Richey Gunter. Billie Jean decided not to defend her German Open final; instead, she played in a four-woman exhibition in Nottingham, England, along with Evonne, Rosie Casals and Virginia Wade. The scheduling conflict angered the organizers of the German Open, and they protested to the ILTF, complaining that the Nottingham event depleted the quality of the field in Hamburg.¹⁶²

The following week, while the Wightman Cup was being contested in London, the West of England Championships were taking place at the Bristol Lawn Tennis Club. Before the tournament got underway, a number of the women refused to play unless the draw was remade. Judy Dalton led the revolt, which started when Karen Krantzcke came through the qualifying tournament and drawn to play Billie Jean in the first round of the main draw. When Julie Heldman withdrew before her first round match against Pat Pretorius, the tournament organizers moved Karen to Julie's spot and put Kristien

Kemmer – a “lucky loser” from the qualifying tournament – against Billie Jean. “When the committee started to move players about just to suit themselves,” Judy said, “that was really the end.” The women also felt the seeds were not made according to ILTF Grand Prix rules; the first three seeds – Evonne Goolagong, Billie Jean King, and Rosie Casals – were in appropriate order, but Kerry Melville should not have been seeded at number four while Francoise Durr was unseeded. In addition, the draw was unbalanced; there were too many qualifying players in one half of the draw and too many top players in the other half.¹⁶³ The tournament committee held an emergency meeting, and in what the *Times* called “an unprecedented move,” the seeds were revised and a new draw was made.

Ironically, Kerry defeated Francoise in the quarterfinals, 6-3 3-6 7-5, while Evonne and Billie Jean won their matches comfortably. The third seed, Rosie Casals, split the first two sets of her match against Betty Stove. There were frequent disputes over line calls during the two hour match, and while serving at 4-4 in the third set, Betty Stove hit two double-faults. After Betty clearly hit a third double fault, chair umpire Jim Huntington mistakenly gave her the point. Rosie complained about the incorrect score, and the chair umpire ordered the point to be replayed.

Despite the score confusion, Rosie won the ninth game of the third set and served for the match at 5-4. The net judge Cecil Collett called a “let” on one of Rosie’s serves, and she made a gesture towards him. After the match, Collett reported Rosie’s actions to the umpire and told reporters that “it happened in the final game. Miss Casals made this rude sign to me with her fingers. I came here to help the tournament, not to be insulted by these people.” Huntington reported the incident to the tournament committee, saying that Rosie “was argumentative, showed general bad behavior and gamesmanship and made a rude sign to a linesman.” The committee prepared to hear the case immediately, but Rosie had already left the Bristol Lawn Tennis Club for her hotel.¹⁶⁴

The following day, before her semifinal match against Billie Jean, Rosie was required to appear before the committee to explain her actions. Although she insisted that she did not make a rude sign and merely raised her arm in exasperation, Rosie offered an apology. The committee permitted her to continue playing in the tournament,

but told her she was “warned about her future conduct.” Rosie then went onto the court for her match against Billie Jean, wearing a warm-up suit that had a large Virginia Slims “Ginny Girl” logo. She was ordered to remove the top of the suit, after which she played without intensity and won only five games against Billie Jean.¹⁶⁵

In the other semifinal, Kerry trailed Evonne 1-3 in the first set, took a 5-3 lead, fell behind 5-6 and then saved two set points before prevailing 9-8. She won only two games in the second before closing out the match 6-2 in the third for what she called “the best win of her career.” Billie Jean was too strong for Kerry, easily winning the final, 6-3 6-2, and collecting the first prize of \$5,200.

While the tournament in Bristol was concluding, spectators were crowding onto Court One at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club at Wimbledon to watch the 45th annual Wightman Cup competition and the foreign debut of Chris Evert. In the event’s opening match, Great Britain’s Joyce Williams gave the home team an early lead with a three-set win over a nervous Wendy Overton. “Then came Chrissie’s Wimbledon debut,” wrote Mary Hardwick in *World Tennis*. “As she walked on the court there was a hushed silence, and only the clicks of dozens of cameras could be heard. Then suddenly the crowd realized that this slight, dainty, graceful, lithe diminutive figure standing beside the strong and powerful Virginia Wade was champion they had come to see. They broke into spontaneous applause. All at once Chris was surrounded by cameramen, and one felt sorry for England’s number one, left alone on her side of the net with her captain, Ann Jones.”¹⁶⁶

Virginia took an early 2-0 lead, and then Chris leveled the score with piercing drives and perfect lobs. Chris moved her opponent around the court “as if on a string,” and she was not bothered by the British player’s stinging serve. Virginia saved two set points before yielding the first set at 6-4. In the second set, Chris easily raced to 5-1 and match point, but Virginia made one final attempt and won three straight games. Chris wrapped up the match 6-4 6-4, and after a 45-minute break, she was back on court with Patti Hogan, winning the doubles in straight sets against the French Open finalists, Winnie Shaw and Nell Truman.¹⁶⁷

The next day, after Patti beat Corinne Molesworth to give the United States a 3-1 lead, Chris clinched the cup for the United States with a win over Joyce Williams. Whereas Virginia did not seem to have an effective game plan against Chris the previous day, Joyce attempted to exploit the weaker Evert forehand with change of pace and high bouncing lobs. She led 2-1 in the first set, but the lengthy rallies began to take its toll. Chris kept her opponent moving, wrong-footed her in the rallies and surprised her with perfectly placed lobs. The final score was 6-2 6-3, giving the Wightman Cup to the United States for the 37th time.¹⁶⁸

With the opening of Wimbledon only one week away, the players used a variety of final preparations. Most of them entered either the Rothmans London Grass Court Championships at Queen's Club or the Rothmans South of England Championships at Eastbourne. Billie Jean King decided to play only in the doubles competition at Queen's Club; Evonne Goolagong was also at Queen's Club, but opted to take the week off from tournament play and just practice.

At Queen's Club, Rosie Casals was given the number one seed position, but before the tournament started she withdrew, citing tendonitis in her right shoulder. Julie Heldman made her first appearance since undergoing knee surgery; she led South Africa's Brenda Kirk 6-3 4-2 before her knee began to bother her, and she lost in three sets. Chris Evert, the second seed, had little trouble in her first four matches, and was only challenged by Wightman Cup teammate Wendy Overton in the semifinals. Wendy took the first set 7-5 and led 2-1 in the second before Chris won nine consecutive games and won 6-1 in the third. In the final against Karen Krantzcke, after taking a 3-1 lead in the first set, Chris was never threatened and won 6-4 6-0. Although Chris was still an amateur and could not accept the first prize winnings, she was happy to win her first foreign tournament and go into Wimbledon undefeated on English grass.¹⁶⁹

Just as Chris was making her English debut in the summer of 1972, so was Jimmy Connors, the nineteen-year old fifth-ranked American. Connors won the men's round robin exhibition at Nottingham, followed by the men's singles title at Queen's Club. His impressive wins over Alex Metreveli and Clark Graebner made him a legitimate threat at Wimbledon. In between their matches at Queen's, a friendship between Connors and

Chris soon developed, and during the next two weeks at Wimbledon the aggressive and creative British press would fabricate it into a whirlwind romance.

One of the biggest stories of the week at Queen's Club was the disqualification of Pancho Gonzalez from the men's singles competition. Playing against John Paish in the semifinals, Gonzalez won the first set 7-5 and trailed 2-3 love-40 in the second. For the third time in that game, a close call went against Gonzalez and he demanded the removal of the linesperson. Gonzalez told the referee, former Wightman Cup captain Beatrice Seal, that he refused to play anymore unless his demands were met. Seal lectured Gonzalez, pointed her finger in his face, and with the sweep of her arms signaled that the match was over; Gonzalez was defaulted. "What I didn't like was her giving me her opinions of the calls," he later told Rex Bellamy of the *London Times*. "I wasn't going to have her preaching to me. When I run my tournament at Caesar's Palace, I never refuse any player's request to change a line judge. I don't hit as hard as I used to. If I can't hit for the lines with confidence, I don't have a game anymore."¹⁷⁰

The default of Gonzalez was the perfect opportunity for Virginia Slims Circuit tour manager Pip Jones to announce that the women had succeeded in forming the World Players' Association. Instead of being a players' union – like the WCT Players' Association, the Independent Players' Association, or the British Players' Association, which was also formed during the Bristol tournament – the women's association was "a volunteer group within the sanctions of the International Federation" and was more focused on player obligations. Those who agreed to join were required to abide by a list of nine rules and a series of fines for failing to appear at tournaments, lateness at matches and bad behavior."¹⁷¹ The fact that the World Players' Association wanted to cooperate with the ILTF may have been an attempt by Gladys to gain favor with the world governing body. By May 1972, she still had not been asked to join the ILTF Grand Prix committee – something she wanted to do very much. In any case, a true women's players' union would not be formed until the following year.

On the opening day of Wimbledon, a nude sketch of Evonne Goolagong appeared in *The Sun*, one of the numerous sleazy British tabloids. The man who created the drawing, Paul Trevillion, met and spoke with Evonne a few days earlier.

Before Wimbledon one year ... I did this sketch of Evonne Goolagong in the nude for The Sun ... she had the greatest body I've ever seen. If I don't see them I won't draw them, so I met her before drawing her. I said, "Your backhand is so good, it's such a hard shot." She said it was the easiest shot. She got a hat and put it on the hat stand, with a backhand movement. As she was moving I was watching her body. I asked her to stand up for a moment and to turn around. "Why, Paul?" she asked. "I just want to look at you." ¹⁷²

-- Paul Trevillion, 2011

When Evonne arrived at the All England Club on Monday, several people whom she knew jokingly called her "cuddly." Unaware of the joke, Evonne was mortified when someone told her what *The Sun* had published. Beneath the headline "Goolagong in the Altogether" there were images of a nude Evonne in various tennis poses. An accompanying description by Frank Nicklin explained Trevillion's inspiration and rationale.

This is Evonne Goolagong, Queen of Wimbledon, as you have never seen her before! Evonne in the altogether – as brilliant young artist Paul Trevillion sees her. Trevillion describes his new slant on the champions as "the naked truth about sports." He says: "I believe that sports stars become part of their sport. Goolagong is round, soft, cuddly, bouncy – she's like a fluffy new tennis ball. Her cheeks are round like a tennis ball; her whole body is rounded. She is a round tennis ball – a playful object." Why does he draw them in the nude? "I see players as objects because I see players without clothes. Clothes hide and distort form. Sports stars are artists – they paint with their bodies." Do you like the way he sees his stars? Or do you think he is some kind of nut? Sunsport invites you to give your views. And if you would like to see more nude studies of the big people in sport, give us their names.

I've never been so embarrassed ... I was totally flustered. Was the man a Peeping Tom? Where had he ever seen me undressed? Even if he had, how could he put it in the paper? What sort of newspaper was this? I wanted to go hide ...

*Wimbledon, which had been so joyous for me, became an ordeal. I hated to go to the grounds because I thought everybody knew about the drawing was imagining me undressed. It made me feel all funny. I wanted to get out and go home to Sydney. It didn't help my tennis.*¹⁷³

-- Evonne Goolagong, 1974

*She really believes I saw her in the dressing room with no clothes on. I didn't. I know bodies enough. In most of my drawings there are no clothes on before finishing.*¹⁷⁴

-- Paul Trevillion, 2011

For the next four weeks, Trevillion attempted to apologize to Evonne by sending flowers to her when she competed at Wimbledon, and later, in Dublin and Hoylake. "Evonne refused to accept them," reported *Tennis World*, "and the various florists were left holding the bouquets they had so painstakingly fashioned."¹⁷⁵

More appropriate publicity for women's tennis occurred when Chris Evert appeared on the cover of the June 26, 1972 issue of *Newsweek* with the heading, "Tennis: The Women Take Over." Although the accompanying article gave positive profiles on Chris, Billie Jean, Evonne and the development of the Virginia Slims Circuit, some of the players' comments were telling. Virginia Wade, interviewed during one of the few Virginia Slims Circuit events she played, said "it doesn't do girls any good to be stuck around together all the time. They become de-sexed, a terrible thing. It's easy to get caught up, not caring how you look, and lose the good points of one sex." Rosie Casals disagreed with Virginia's observation and insisted she had no reservations about being an athlete, saying "if someone says it's not feminine, I say screw it."¹⁷⁶

The article gave credit to Billie Jean's accomplishment on and off the court, and Chris explained why she admired her so much. "She's very intelligent and really loves

tennis,” Chris said. “A lot of people, like some housewives and men who hate women’s lib, cut her down for being so hard and forceful. But I think she’s just a born leader – although I doubt if I could ever do the things she’s done, making all those appearances and taking all that criticism.”¹⁷⁷ Billie Jean was happy with how much progress the women’s tour had made in less than two years, saying “the level of women’s tennis is going up all over, because there’s so much more opportunity in it. A girl can look at me and see where she can go.” She admitted, however, that she was not yet ready to surrender to the young players, and that she was still haunted by her loss to Evonne in the semifinals of Wimbledon the previous year. “It was the worst match of my life,” Billie Jean said. “I’m head and shoulders above her and everyone else. Now I just have to prove it.”¹⁷⁸

The Wimbledon draw created a sensation with the public and the media; Evonne was seeded number-one and Chris was the fourth seed, putting them on track to meet for the very first time in the semifinals. Although Billie Jean was seeded second, she was the oddsmakers’ favorite at 5-4 to win the title she won from 1966 to 1968. Billie Jean’s path to the championship was not going to be easy; if the seeds held to form, she would have to play Virginia Wade in the quarterfinals, Nancy Richey Gunter in the semifinals, and Evonne – or possibly Chris – in the final.

Due to rain on Tuesday, Chris did not play her first round match until Wednesday. On Court One against her Wightman Cup teammate Valerie Ziegenfuss, Chris started poorly and won only one game in the first set. Valerie played superb grass court tennis at the beginning of the match; serving strongly, hitting forceful groundstrokes and attacking the net. Every available space around Court One was filled with spectators, and when Chris lost the first set, a nun who was standing on tip-toe and craning her neck over rows of people said “She’s not as good as I thought she would be.” It was not until Valerie led 3-2 in the second set did she falter and commit seven consecutive errors. Suddenly, the match turned, and Chris won ten of the next eleven games. She reached match point by rifling a backhand passing shot, and she ended the match with a backhand lob that caught Valerie flat-footed at the net. “The last two shots of the match were so brilliant,” wrote Roy McKelvie of *Tennis World*, “that the nun must have changed her mind.”¹⁷⁹

The next day, Chris made her Centre Court debut against Janet Newberry. It was a rematch of the previous year's USLTA Girls' 18 National Championships, when Chris lost only four games. This time Chris won 6-3 6-0, and despite the one-sided score the 14,000 spectators and BBC television audience were treated to a number of fine rallies. Although the British public was intrigued with Chris, they did not wholeheartedly embrace her; she did not have the sunny, carefree disposition of their favorite, Evonne Goolagong. "I think that's why we haven't warmed to Miss Evert yet," said one spectator. "We can't understand a seventeen-year who's such an efficient cold fish. To us, a seventeen-year old is a nervous, giggly schoolgirl. Miss Goolagong grins and laughs. We like that." ¹⁸⁰

Chris was once again given a Centre Court assignment for her second match on Friday. Her opponent, Mary Ann Eisel, was an accomplished grass court player who almost beat her at the previous year's U. S. Open. Chris kept Mary Ann running around court at the beginning of the match, and built first set leads of 3-0 and then 5-2. At 5-3, Chris held a set point but could not take advantage; Mary Ann suddenly took control of the match with her powerful first serve and decisive crosscourt forehands. She went ahead 6-5 and arrived at her own set point. Chris saved the set with an angled crosscourt backhand, won the game to level the set at 6-6 and then held serve in the thirteenth game with a perfectly executed drop shot. The pressure was then back on Mary Ann, and while serving at 6-7, 30-all she double faulted. One point later, the set belonged to Chris, and she won the second set by the same score to finish an 8-6 8-6 winner. ¹⁸¹

In the same half of the draw, Evonne Goolagong was below form in losing seven games in her opening match to unheralded Marilyn Pryde; the defending champion was obviously distracted by the drawings that appeared in the *Sun*. In Saturday's third round match against Russia's Olga Morozova – played on Court Two, which was nicknamed "the graveyard court" because of the history of upsets that occurred on it – Evonne was again out of touch and lost the first set. She responded to the potential upset by not losing a game in the second set, surrendering only ten points. The momentum swung back to the Russian in the opening game of the third set, when Olga broke serve after Evonne held two game points. The Russian then raced to 5-2 and served for the match.

Evonne kept her composure, broke serve and held her own service to narrow the lead. At 5-4, Olga had another chance to serve out the match. She continued to serve and volley, but Evonne produced three passing shots and a forehand winner down the line to level the set at 5-5. The crisis for was over; after each player held her own service two more times, Evonne broke Olga in the fifteenth game and then held a final time to complete a narrow 3-6 6-0 9-7 victory.¹⁸²

Traditionally, no matches are played at Wimbledon on Sunday to give the players – and the grass courts – a rest. Four thousand miles away, in St. Louis, Missouri, John Newcombe was in the men's singles final of the Holton Tennis Classic against Nikki Pilic. Newcombe, the reigning Wimbledon champion, was not allowed to defend his title due to the conflict between the ILTF and WCT. The two organizations resolved their differences, but the agreement would not take effect until after Wimbledon. After beating Pilic in the final, 6-3 6-3, Newcombe was happy to accept the winner's check of \$10,900, but he clearly preferred to be in London. "I hope to return to St. Louis next year," he told the crowd during the check presentation, "but not at the same time that Wimbledon is being held."¹⁸³

As the second week of Wimbledon started, the relationship between Chris Evert and Jimmy Connors was scrutinized by the prying British press. Chris' mother, Colette, told reporters "there is no question of wedding bells. Tennis is still first with Chris." The two teenage stars found the stories ridiculous. "I enjoy Jim's company," Chris said, "but all I'm thinking about really is winning my matches." Connors responded that "Chris and I are just good friends. Marriage doesn't enter into it. I only met her twelve days ago. That's hardly enough time to fall in love."¹⁸⁴

On Monday, July 3, all four women's quarterfinals were played. Evonne once again narrowly escaped defeat when Francoise Durr served for the first set at 6-5 and for the second set at 5-2. Evonne looked interested in the match only when she was in danger, and whenever Francoise had her opportunities she either hit the ball past the baseline or into the net. Billie Jean made Virginia Wade look mediocre in the first set of their match, winning it 6-1 and dampening the hopes of all British fans watching on Centre Court and on television. Virginia then won the first two games of the second set

and began to play with abandon; as the crowd roared, she bombarded Billie Jean with blistering serves and lashing forehands to take the second set, 6-3. Billie Jean kept her composure and waited for Virginia's game to cool off, which it did in the third set. When Virginia's first serve began to fail and her second serve fell short, Billie Jean resumed her attack and finished the match by winning the third set, 6-3.¹⁸⁵

Nancy Richey Gunter was considered a darkhorse to win the Wimbledon women's singles title by some observers, and a victory at this tournament would have helped put her at the top of the year-end world rankings. Against Rosie Casals, whom she beat in their last two matches, Nancy won a 6-3 first set by hitting her typical firm, deep groundstrokes. Rosie eventually got her timing under control and began to break down Nancy's backhand by changing the pace and spins of her shots. Rosie went ahead 4-1 in the second set, and Nancy then evened the score at 4-4. Nancy got as close as 30-love in the ninth game of the second set – only six points from victory – but Rosie continued to use her variety of shots and won it 6-4. Afterward, Nancy was demoralized and Rosie ran away with the match, not losing a game in the final set.¹⁸⁶

In the remaining quarterfinal, Chris defeated another Wightman Cup teammate, Patti Hogan, who had earlier upset Kerry Melville. After losing the first set, Patti blasted seven aces in winning the second. Patti continued to attack in the third set, but was too often caught in the mid-court by Chris' laser-like passing shots. The stage was set for the semifinal showdown with Evonne, and Chris was looking forward to it. 'I'm going to think I really want to win,' she told Fred Tupper of the *New York Times*, "and I'm going play slowly and hit to her forehand."¹⁸⁷

Evonne contemplated the upcoming encounter with Chris much more casually. "I guess this must be a big match," she said, "because everyone keeps telling me so." Vic Edwards was not overly concerned by his star pupil's lackadaisical approach. "She's not concerned or bothering to do anything about it," he observed. "She doesn't want to practice. There's nothing wrong, really. The crunch will come against Evert."¹⁸⁸

Dress designer Ted Tinling said he had "never seen anything like it. Great players have met before, but not in these circumstances, not for the first time on Centre Court. It's amazing they haven't played before, but it's marvelous. It heightens the

drama. The only thing I can compare it with is 1926, that one time Suzanne Lenglen, the great champion of the 1920s – perhaps the greatest of them all – played young Helen Wills, who at twenty was on the way up as Suzanne’s successor. That was splendid theater – Suzanne won – but after all it was the final of a minor tournament at a small club in Cannes. Not a setting to be compared with this. Of course Evonne and Chrissie will play many times, unlike Suzanne and Helen, but we’ll cherish the first.”¹⁸⁹

Once again, Tinling created several new dresses for Evonne’s matches at Wimbledon. He knew that Chris would be wearing her favorite dress – white with red trim, designed by Mondessa Swift – for the encounter with Evonne. “She will be wearing red,” he told Evonne, “and you must meet her challenge and also wear red.” His created a two-piece bolero-style outfit with red embroidered edges, which Evonne would wear for the first time against Chris. “My prestige is on the line,” he said. “I’m a wreck!”¹⁹⁰

The two women’s semifinal matches were the main attractions for Wednesday’s Centre Court matches. Billie Jean and Rosie were scheduled to start at 2:00 pm, followed by Evonne and Chris. Although everyone was sure who would win – Billie Jean had lost only once to her friend in their previous nineteen matches – it was actually Rosie’s dress that created the biggest surprise. Every Wimbledon competitor was aware of the All England Club’s dress code: all attire must be predominately white and must not have more than 20% color. Rosie’s dress – created by Ted Tinling for the Virginia Slims Circuit – had quarter sections of purple squiggles. Upon closer examination, one could see that the squiggles were actually the letters “V” and “S” – a clever advertising for Virginia Slims.

They played evenly for the first four games, after which Rosie “looked apprehensive and despondent, as if traveling down a well-trodden road to the land of the lost,” as Rex Bellamy of the *Times* observed.¹⁹¹ Billie Jean won four consecutive games to win the first set, and after losing her serve in the opening game of the second set the match became close again. Rosie had a break point for a 5-4 lead, but “Billie Jean retaliated with a tremendous display of shot which at times reached perfection,” wrote Mary Hardwick in *World Tennis*.¹⁹² Bellamy noted that the match resembled “a school

mistress arguing with her best pupil ... these two always seem to play similar roles. Their matches have the flavour of highly skilled exhibitions.”¹⁹³ Nevertheless, they were finished in an hour, and the Centre Court crowd awaited the most anticipated match of the year.

*I never want to hear about strategy before a match. I simply play. But this time, because I was going against the unknown Chris, I had asked him what to do. “You’ve got to take advantage of her double-handed backhand,” he said. He’d coached Jan Lehane O’Neill, a fine Australian who uses both hands for her backhand, and he knew the weaknesses. “Slice your backhand short crosscourt to her backhand. She has to take extra steps to handle anything on the backhand, but if she has to go after a low, short ball, she’ll work that much harder. She can’t hit it as well on the run, and she doesn’t bend too well. Pull her out of position that way.”*¹⁹⁴
 -- Evonne Goolagong, 1974

While sitting in the players’ waiting room that opens onto Centre Court, Chris asked Evonne the proper way to curtsy, since Princess Alice would be watching. “Just bob, that’s all,” Evonne said. They entered to thunderous applause, walked up to the service line, turned and curtsied to the Royal Box. “The worst two curtsies I’ve ever seen,” grumbled an older male spectator. Bud Collins of the *Boston Globe* wrote that “they looked like a couple of Protestants trying to genuflect. After this wobbly-kneed performance, they giggled at each other and got on with the battle that would exceed all expectations – one of those rare confrontations that, like Ali-Frazier, surpassed the buildup.”¹⁹⁵ In the BBC broadcast booth, Dan Maskell, Jack Kramer and Ann Jones prepared to commentate on the match, which was also being televised live to Australia.

Chris served to start the match, and both players were nervous and tentative, since they were trying to get a feel for each other’s game. On the first point, Evonne charged the net and Chris rifled a crosscourt backhand past her. After that, Evonne decided to

stay in the backcourt and tease Chris into errors by hitting soft slices. The strategy worked, and Evonne broke Chris' serve to win the first game.¹⁹⁶

The Centre Court crowd was unabashed in its support for Evonne; whenever she won a point or earned a game, a roar swelled throughout the enclosure. They gave Chris polite and subdued applause whenever she scored, but it probably did not matter; Chris was focused on her strategy, which was keeping Evonne in the backcourt and hitting to her forehand as frequently as possible.¹⁹⁷

Neither player held serve for the first five games. With Chris leading 3-2, Ann Jones told the television audience that "Evonne is trying very hard to exchange fairly lengthy rallies with Chris from the baseline, giving her no pace or very little pace, playing the ball nice and deep in the center of the court or slightly to the backhand and then producing this sliced crosscourt, trying to draw Chris into net where she obviously is not at home." The few times that Evonne did come to the net, she missed the easiest of volleys. Her only answer was to remain on the baseline and hope to draw some errors from Chris by hitting the low sliced shots. "I would think that Chris is really very happy with the way Evonne is trying to play her," Jack Kramer said in the television broadcast booth after Chris surged ahead, 5-2. "If she gets in these long exchanges, Chris Evert's game is going to improve, and she's the master of the long rallies. It seems to me that Evonne Goolagong is throwing away her best game here."¹⁹⁸

Serving to stay in the first set, Evonne fell behind love-30 but reached game point, thanks to two errors from Chris and a sharply angled overhead. When she won the game with an easy volley, the crowd erupted with the loudest ovation of the day. Chris served for the first set at 5-3 but was unable to win a point, hitting a forehand past the baseline to give Evonne a chance to even the score in the next game.¹⁹⁹

For the next four games, Evonne played a level of tennis that was mediocre at best. On her service returns, she rarely got the ball into play. When a rally did ensue, she pushed backhands past the baseline, steered forehands wide of the sideline, approached the net with caution, missed easy volleys and flubbed overheads. It was reminiscent of her performance in the first round of the British Hard Court Championships earlier in the year, when Peter Wilson on the *Mirror* wrote he'd "never seen such dribble played by a

Wimbledon champion.” The quality of play was so bad, at least from Evonne’s end of the court, that the Centre Court crowd was mostly silent. Evonne seemed to lose her concentration and she appeared embarrassed; after making a error, she usually smiled and shook her head. She was handing the match to Chris, who wrapped up the first set 6-4 and surged to 3-0 in the second. When Evonne walked out to serve after the changeover, she knew the match was at a critical juncture.

I watched the match on television from the dressing room and I could see that Evonne had her mind on the grandstands, not on the court. Every now and then she’d eke out this feeble grin like she was thinking, ‘Oh yeah, I’d better smile now.’ She got behind a set and 0-3 in the second, but suddenly I noticed a change in her during the next game. I thought to myself, ‘If she wins this game, she’ll win the match.’²⁰⁰

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Jolted by the prospect of losing, Evonne suddenly raised the level of her game. Her serves became more forceful, and she came forward to the net to knock off volleys and overheads. At the same time, however, Chris sensed victory and began hitting her forehands and backhands with more authority. The game reached 30-all, and Chris was just ten points away from winning the match. Evonne reached game point by slicing the ball low and short to Chris’ backhand, and she repeated the tactic on the next point to win the game. The crowd was suddenly re-energized, and Evonne began her comeback.²⁰¹

Chris did not win more than two points in any of the next five games. Evonne was confidently aggressive; she served with purpose and covered the net with ease. When she remained in the baseline and engaged Chris in a rally, she changed the height and pace of her shots in order to break her opponent’s rhythm. She continued to hit short angled slices, and she brought Chris into the net where she exposed the youngster’s volley weakness. Within a few minutes, Evonne had erased a 0-3 deficit and won the second set, 6-3.²⁰²

Everyone settled in for the third set, which promised to be a good one; Evonne and Chris were hitting their strides, and each one knew what was needed in order to win. They each held serve, and then there were four consecutive service breaks to level the set at 3-3. During the baseline rallies, Evonne did not want to give Chris any pace; she sliced the ball softly with her backhand, and on her forehand she either sliced or lofted high shots deep to the baseline. Evonne survived a break point in the seventh game to hold for 4-3, and Chris evened the score by hitting a series of passing shots that hit the lines.²⁰³

Each player was only two games away from victory at 4-4. Evonne easily held serve by coming in to the net at every opportunity, hitting a winning overhead, a backhand volley, and pressuring Chris to miss a forehand pass down the line. At 4-15, she scored once more with the tactic that had been working for her all afternoon: a low angled crosscourt slice forced Chris to hit a backhand into the net.

At 4-5, Chris was serving to stay in the match. She attempted a drop shot from too deep in the court, and Evonne won the point by countering with a drop shot of her own. On the next point, Evonne lured Chris towards the net and passed her with a heavily sliced crosscourt forehand. After that, Chris hit a backhand into the net to give Evonne three match points. Chris got her first serve in, and after a short rally Evonne approached the net with sliced forehand to the backhand corner. Chris picked her spot and aimed her backhand passing shot crosscourt; Evonne anticipated it and hit a short angled backhand volley to end the match.²⁰⁴

The players were given a standing ovation as they shook hands at the net, and by the time they reached the umpire's chair they were engulfed in a swarm of photographers. In the press room afterwards, Chris was asked about losing her second set lead. "I should have taken my time, but I wanted to win so badly I rushed. Perhaps I was a little too confident."²⁰⁵ She was also complimentary towards her opponent, saying that "Evonne moves so quickly, probably better than anyone else in the women's game. She runs so well, and changes direction with her shots. Her attitude was so good. She never got mad. She was always smiling." Despite disappointment of losing the match, Chris knew that it was only the first in an emerging rivalry. "I enjoyed the match ... The pressure was on

me this time, but I will be playing Evonne many times again, and next time the pressure will be on her. There are plenty more Wimbledons ahead.”²⁰⁶

Evonne had her own take on the turn of events in the second set. “I can’t explain why I play my best when I’m behind,” she said. “It’s a challenge, I guess. I could feel the crowd was behind me. It must have been hard for Chris. She did not seem to hit the ball as hard as I thought from watching. But she places the ball well.”²⁰⁷ Evonne was also relieved. “I can’t believe the match is finally over,” she told Chris. “It seemed like we were out there forever today.”²⁰⁸

The following day, Stan Smith defeated Jan Kodes and Ilie Nastase beat Manuel Orantes to set up Saturday’s men’s singles final. Later in the afternoon, Nastase and Rosie Casals walked onto Court One to play a quarterfinal mixed doubles match against Hank Irvine and Betty Stove. As Rosie approached the umpire’s chair, a swarm of photographers surrounded her; she was wearing another dress from the Virginia Slims Circuit, this one with a large “Ginny Girl” figure emblazoned on the front. Nastase joked with Rosie and the photographers as he held his racket in front of the caricature. Tournament referee Captain Mike Gibson was at courtside and saw the commotion with Rosie and the photographers. He walked onto the court and told Rosie that her dress was not in compliance with Wimbledon’s dress code; she needed to return to the dressing room and change into another outfit if she wanted to play the match. Rosie argued that she had worn the dress twice before during her matches without incident, and Gibson responded that it was unfortunate that he had not known. While an announcement was made to the crowd that there would be a short delay before the match started, Rosie returned to the dressing to put on another dress.²⁰⁹

Gibson told reporters that “Miss Casals tried to flout the traditions of Wimbledon and if she tries to do it again I am sure the committee will withdraw her from the championships. I had wind that something would happen when she came on tonight, and as soon as she undid her cardigan it was clear what it was. All the photographers began to take pictures.”²¹⁰

After the match, Rosie was notified that Gibson had reported the incident to the Wimbledon Management Committee, and her appearance before members of the

committee was requested on Friday. “Captain Gibson said he couldn’t allow such blatant advertising, but they can’t have it both ways,” she complained. “If they won’t allow Virginia Slims advertising then they shouldn’t allow the Fred Perry leaf on shirts, the British Leyland cars that take the players to their hotels, or the Commercial Union results board giving the placings to date in the Grand Prix organized by the firm.”²¹¹

The next day, just a few hours before the women’s singles championship, Rosie and Larry King – acting as her attorney – appeared before the committee. A statement was read, notifying Rosie that “we have been asked to inform you that should you, in our opinion, fail again to observe the conditions, not only will you not be allowed on court but, also, serious consideration will be given to the acceptance of your entry in the future.” Afterward, Larry expressed his displeasure with the entire incident, saying that “Wimbledon is run for the benefit of the committee” and suggested that Billie Jean would not return the following year unless the women’s prize money was increased.²¹²

Any thoughts that Billie Jean may have entertained about boycotting Wimbledon in the future were temporarily suspended when she walked onto Centre Court later that afternoon. Although she had beaten Evonne in Dallas and Paris, Billie Jean’s loss to the young Australian in the previous year’s Wimbledon semifinals still gnawed at her. “I began preparing for this match,” she would say later, “when I shook hands with Evonne after our match last year.”²¹³

In her previous Wimbledon match against Evonne, Billie Jean was tentative, unhappy with her racquet and reluctant to come forward. This time she was in a much better frame of mind, and she attacked relentlessly. From the outset of the match, it was clear which player the Centre Court fans hoped would win; on the first point, after Billie Jean served and dumped a half-volley into the net, they applauded resoundingly. There was no reaction from the spectators when Evonne missed a backhand return on the next point. Billie Jean, no stranger to partisan crowds, smiled wryly and focused on the task at hand. Despite two double faults, Billie Jean held serve to win the opening game of the match.²¹⁴

Billie Jean broke Evonne’s opening service game and then struggled to convert the break in an attempt go ahead 3-0. At deuce, Billie Jean hit a sliced served that

Evonne returned wide of the sideline, and as she prepared to serve the next point a linesman called “out.” Billie Jean was incredulous, and even Evonne was surprised by the call. “Evonne certainly didn’t think it was out, Dan,” Jack Kramer told Dan Maskell in the BBC broadcast booth. Billie Jean kept her composure, and four points later she won the game to secure her 3-0 lead.²¹⁵

On the changeover, Ann Jones gave the BBC viewers some insight as to why Billie Jean committed four double faults in her first two service games. “She’s not at all happy with her serve,” said Ann, who knew Billie Jean’s game as well as anyone. “She knows it’s very important to her to get to the net as quickly as possible, and she seems to be running to the net before she’s hit the ball, and consequently this is throwing off her service and her first volley at the moment.” After the change of ends, the Centre Court gave Evonne a resounding ovation when she won four consecutive points to hold serve for the first time.²¹⁶

Leading 3-1, Billie Jean served and volleyed her way to 40-love. On game point, she approached the net again and hit a forehand volley to the corner. As Evonne ran to the ball, she froze in her tracks as the linesperson called Billie Jean’s shot out – she clearly thought the ball was good. Since she was so far ahead in the game, Billie Jean realized the call was not worth getting upset about, and she wisely did not want to antagonize the crowd. After missing an overhead on the next point, Billie Jean finished the game with a backhand volley to climb ahead 4-1.²¹⁷

Evonne then held serve again to close the gap slightly, and if she broke Billie Jean in the seventh game, she would put the match back on service. Billie Jean began the game with an awkward high volley that she hit yards outside the court, and Evonne was embarrassed as the crowd roared its delight with the missed shot. Three errors by Evonne put Billie Jean ahead 40-15, and after another volley that missed its mark, Billie had one more chance to take a 5-2 lead. She sent her first serve out wide to Evonne’s backhand, and even though the shot brought up a puff of chalk, the elderly woman who was calling the sideline called the serve out. Evonne turned towards the linesperson in disbelief, and Billie Jean approached the net and said, “You’ve got to be kidding!” The linesperson was undaunted, and the chair umpire announced that the serve was a fault. Billie Jean

returned to the service line and hit a spinning second serve, which Evonne guided down the line for a winner. Fighting to keep her emotions in check, Billie Jean missed a half volley and a forehand volley to lose the game. The match was back on serve, and the crowd erupted in approval.²¹⁸

Suddenly the match became close, as Evonne served at 3-4 with a chance to level it. Two consecutive first serves put her ahead 30-love, and on the next point another first serve put her in a good position at the net for a winning volley. Billie Jean, disgusted with herself for losing four straight points, wound up and slapped a backhand passing shot with all her might. Another first serve from Evonne put her at 40-15, and she had the game on her racquet but hit an easy backhand volley into the net. On the next point, Billie Jean demonstrated why she was one of the best net players in the world – male or female. Evonne missed her first serve, got the second serve in, and Billie Jean attacked the net. Evonne could not get the ball past Billie Jean, who utilized her unparalleled lateral movement to hit a series of stretch volleys. Two careless errors by Evonne cost her the game, and in the next game Billie Jean was at her most efficient. Serving at 5-3, she was successful with all of her first serves and won the game without losing a point. The first set took exactly thirty minutes, and Billie Jean was half way to the Wimbledon title.²¹⁹

The first six games of the second set was grass court tennis at its best. Each player held service three times, never losing more than two points in any game. The most critical juncture of the match – and perhaps the players did not know it at the time – came when Evonne was serving at 3-3 and 40-15, a chance to take the lead for the first time all afternoon. Up to this point, Evonne had served a total of 41 points in the match, and she successfully placed her first serve on 32 of those points – an excellent first-serve percentage of 78%. Furthermore, when she did place a first serve, Evonne won the point 70% of the time. The odds were in her favor – on at least one of her two game points – to place a first serve and win the point for a 4-3 lead. It never happened; at 40-15, Evonne missed her first serve and Billie Jean attacked the second serve, followed by a backhand volley winner. At 40-30, Evonne failed again to deliver a first serve, and once again Billie Jean pressed forward, forcing Evonne to hit a passing shot out. The game went

back and forth between deuce and the receiver's advantage several times. Facing the third game point against her, Evonne hit a first serve and came forward, only to be passed by a trademark Billie Jean topspin backhand.²²⁰

Billie Jean sensed victory, and she took calmly took care of her service game, not missing a first serve and losing only one point in the process. Serving at 3-5, the pressure was on Evonne to stay in the match. She won the first two points with a forehand volley and a missed backhand from Billie Jean. On each of the next four points, Evonne got her first serve into play and came forward for the putaway volley – and each time, Billie Jean hit clean passing shot winners. After the last one, an angled cross court backhand, Billie Jean threw her racquet skyward and ran to the net to shake Evonne's hand. As soon as the players got to the umpire's chair, they were surrounded by photographers. Billie Jean was overcome with emotion, and she wept as she buried her head in her hands.²²¹

After the Duke of Kent presented the ladies' singles trophy, Billie Jean posed for the dozens of photographers around the umpire's chair. Roy McKelvie of *Tennis World* wrote that Billie Jean held the trophy “high above her head, turned away from the cameramen and showed it to the crowd. This was an act of revenge, a gesture of retaliation against the crowd who had so openly and unashamedly rooted for Evonne.”²²² Actually, the crowd was clamoring for Billie Jean to show them the trophy, and on two occasions she turned around to give them a quick glimpse. The fans applauded both times, and Billie Jean smiled at their reaction.

In the crowded press room, Evonne told reporters that she was “not that upset about losing. I feel more relieved. I am not the real competitor type. I have won Wimbledon and I feel sort of satisfied.” When asked if she could ever become a great champion with that attitude, she said “I don't know. I get more disappointed if people get disappointed in me. I can sort of forget things straightaway myself. It's just me. I still love tennis. The enjoyment of the game means as much as winning. I hope I don't change.”²²³ Evonne's joy of playing was dampened in the final, when the Centre Court crowd cheered for Billie Jean's errors. “When she hits a bit short or hits out and everybody claps, it upsets me,” she revealed. “I just don't think it's fair.”²²⁴

Billie Jean was not surprised by her reception from the Centre Court fans, and may have expected it. “They love you here when you’re coming up,” she said about the Wimbledon spectators. “But they don’t like winners. And they especially don’t like me because I talk about money all the time. I’m mercenary. I’m a rebel.”²²⁵ Despite the crowd’s dislike of her, Billie Jean was thrilled to win her fourth Wimbledon singles title. “In many ways this Wimbledon probably meant more to me than any other,” she explained. “I’ve got so close in the last three years. I wondered if I could ever do it again. It’s kind of icing on the cake. Now there’s nothing else for me to accomplish. I’ve achieved all my childhood dreams. I am the happiest I have ever been with my game, over here. I thought I played my best tennis in the French.”²²⁶

Several days later, Billie Jean spoke with Julie Heldman, who was writing a Wimbledon summary for *The Sunday Times*. “This year I recovered my legs,” Billie Jean told Julie. “I could run and bend the way I did in 1964. I played on Friday for women’s tennis, independence and for our own circuit. When Chrissy beat me in the U. S. she got a telegram from Stan Smith, Tom Gorman and Erik van Dillen saying ‘A victory for femininity, down with women’s lib!’ But there’s a queue of male chauvinists wanting to play mixed doubles with me. They love money more than principle.”²²⁷

Billie Jean and her mixed doubles partner, Clark Graebner, were back on court after the women’s singles final to play a semifinal against Rosie Casals and Ilie Nastase. Rain suspended play midway through the match, pushing the entire schedule of remaining matches to the following day. The rain continued all day on Saturday, and for the first time in the history of the Wimbledon Championships, all of the remaining matches – including the men’s singles final between Stan Smith and Ilie Nastase – was scheduled to be played on Sunday. The Wimbledon Ball, however, still proceeded as usual on Saturday evening. Traditionally, the women’s singles champion and the men’s singles champion were given the honor of the first dance at the ball. Since the men’s singles champion had not yet been determined, Billie Jean was accompanied by her husband Larry in the opening dance. As if envisioning his destiny – or perhaps for good luck – Stan Smith asked to cut in on the dance.²²⁸

The next afternoon, as Smith and Nastase walked onto Centre Court for the historic first-ever Sunday men's singles final, another precedent was being set on an adjacent court. Since the rain on Saturday had played havoc with the scheduling, the women's doubles final was scheduled to be played on Court One, which had never happened before. In front of only five hundred spectators – everyone else was watching Smith and Nastase – Billie Jean and Betty Stove defeated Judy Dalton and Francoise Durr, 6-2 4-6 6-3. For Judy, the match was not a happy occasion. She decided that this would be her final Wimbledon as a player, and she would retire after the North of England Open in two weeks' time. "I feel it was a disgrace to put the final on Court One instead of the Centre Court," she told Alan Williams of the London Daily Express. "Surely there could have been a better way of organizing it. I can't think they'd have put the match on there if, say, Virginia Wade or Winnie Shaw had been in the final. It was an insult. There was just no atmosphere. I'd have loved to have finished my Wimbledon career on Centre Court, and I felt sorry for Betty who was so looking forward to playing her first final there."²²⁹

Next door, Smith was battling Nastase in one of the most memorable men's singles finals ever played on Centre Court. They split the first four sets, and Nastase served to stay in the match at 5-6 in the fifth. Smith reached match point for the fourth time, and as Nastase served and came to the net, he put up a short lob. Just as he was about to hit a high backhand volley, a spectator gasped, and a distracted Nastase hit the shot into the net. Smith jumped over the net to shake hands, and as the photographers surrounded the new champion, a disconsolate Nastase alone at courtside.

Nastase had some consolation after the singles final, when he and Rosie completed their rain-suspended semifinal mixed doubles match against Billie Jean and Clark Graebner. After winning 9-8 7-5, they took a short break and went back onto Centre Court to play the mixed doubles final against Evonne Goolagong and Kim Warwick. Rosie and Nastase won the match, 6-4 6-4, reclaiming the title they won two years earlier. This time, to avoid any controversies, Rosie wore an all-white dress for the final.

In the weeks after Wimbledon, those players who wanted to get more grass court competition went to the Welsh Championships in Newport, the Irish Open in Dublin, and the North of England Championships in Hoylake. The clay court experts also had their choice of many tournaments in Europe, including the Swedish Championships in Baastad, the Swiss Open in Gstaad, and the Austrian Championships in Kitzbuhel. In the meantime, all of the world's tennis officials gathered in Helsinki, Finland for the ILTF Annual General Meeting.

On Wednesday, July 12, the member nations of the ILTF voted 232-15 in favor of allowing the WCT contract professionals to compete in their tournaments. The only opposing votes came from the Soviet Union and its satellite nations in Eastern Europe, which contended that none of their players were professionals. As drafted three months earlier, the agreement gave Lamar Hunt control over the tennis calendar during the first months of the year, and the ILTF would be in charge of the remaining eight months. Hunt also agreed to cease signing players to contracts, in effect ending his involvement as a tennis tycoon and making him a tournament promoter.²³⁰

The reinstatement of the WCT contract professionals as ILTF-eligible players made them eligible for Davis Cup competition as soon as their contracts expired, pending approval from each player's national association. The possible return of Rod Laver, John Newcombe, Arthur Ashe and other top players to the Davis Cup was a key discussion during the ILTF Davis Cup Committee meeting in Helsinki. The committee also voted to restore South Africa to good standing and eligible for competition in 1973. South Africa had been barred from the Davis Cup since 1970 due to its apartheid policies, and during the previous ten years the Soviet Union unsuccessfully argued for its permanent expulsion from the ILTF.²³¹

The ILTF Grand Prix Committee also convened in Helsinki, and Gladys attended the meeting to inquire about Commercial Union's sponsorship of the proposed \$60,000 women's Grand Prix finale in Boca Raton, Florida. She was told that her proposal to stage a \$60,000 women's Grand Prix finale was denied, since the men's Grand Prix finale was offering only a total of \$50,000.

Gladys already had a back-up plan in place. On her way home to Houston, she stopped in New York to visit her friend Joe Cullman. On Thursday, July 14, a news release was sent from the Philip Morris office, announcing that the \$100,000 Virginia Slims Championships – the richest women’s tennis tournament ever held – would be played on October 8-15 at Boca Raton Hotel in Florida. “The Commercial Union Grand Prix did not exercise its option for a \$50,000 women’s final tournament by the July 1 deadline,” Gladys was quoted in the news release. “I approached Virginia Slims about sponsoring the final. They turned down a \$50,000 tournament, preferring to stage this \$100,000 event.”²³²

The release also included a comment from Billie Jean King, who did not play any tournaments after her Wimbledon victory and was at home to California. “I can’t believe it,” Billie Jean said. “I’ve been dreaming of something like this my entire life. Now that dream has come true. I’ll die if I don’t take advantage and win it. This has to be the fourth event of the grand slam. It’s a natural to follow the French Open, Wimbledon and Forest Hills.”²³³

Another player who was interested in the ever-growing money in women’s tennis – as well as a traditional grand slam – was Margaret Court. After losing to Billie Jean in the North of England Open in Hoylake in July 1971, Margaret learned she was pregnant and took an immediate leave from the game. She gave birth to a son, Daniel, in March of 1972, and three months later she began training again. She decided to make her return to tennis at the inaugural Bonne Bell Cup in Cleveland, Ohio, a women’s team competition in late July that pitted the United States against Australia.

*I was more determined than ever to go back to the tennis circuit despite my motherhood. Here was the kind of challenge I love. Had any player ever returned with a baby in tow? I didn’t think so. The thought of traveling the world with an infant didn’t dismay me at all, and Barry was sure that we’d manage somehow.*²³⁴

-- Margaret Court, 1975

Margaret was the playing captain of the Australian team, which also included Evonne Goolagong, Kerry Melville and Lesley Hunt. Carole Graebner, who also captained the victorious U. S. Wightman Cup team in Cleveland the previous year, led the American squad of Chris Evert, Valerie Ziegenfuss, Wendy Overton, Patti Hogan and Linda Tuero. Carole held team practices several days before the competition started, and on one occasion she noticed that her star player was not present. “Carole Graebner first was puzzled, then, as the minutes passed, she started to fume,” a news story from the UPI reported. “She looked like an upset mother waiting for her teenage daughter to come home from a date ... Thirty minutes later, a blue convertible pulled up to the Harold T. Clark courts with a handsome young lad at the wheel and pretty suntanned lass by his side. It was Jimmy Connors and Chris Evert. Chris was late and she knew it. She managed to smile at Carole as she hunched down in the car.”²³⁵

The bleachers at Harold T. Clark Stadium accommodated 7,000 spectators, and every seat was sold for the three-day competition. On the opening day, Evonne Goolagong defeated Valerie 6-4 6-0, and Chris won against Margaret 6-3 6-3 – their first match since their incredible initial encounter in Charlotte two years earlier, after Margaret had just completed the grand slam and Chris was an unknown fifteen-year old teenager.

The next day, with the team score tied at 1-1, Wendy Overton appeared to be on the verge of winning when she led Kerry Melville 6-2 5-4 30-love. Wendy raised her arms to the crowd, as if to say “I’ve got it,” but Kerry hit four consecutive winners to level the second set at 5—5. She then held serve and broke Wendy to send the match into a final set. After a twenty minute break, Wendy developed a leg cramp in the second game of the third set, and Kerry was in complete control. Trailing 0-5 love-30, the pain became too intense for Wendy and she was forced to retire.²³⁶ Evonne and Lesley Hunt then put Australia ahead 3-1 with an easy straight-set win over Chris and Patti Hogan.

In the best-of-seven series, the United States team needed to win all three matches on Sunday, July 30, in order to become the Bonne Bell Cup champions. Margaret distinguished the Americans’ hopes with 6-1 6-1 demolition of Valerie Ziegenfuss. Even though the team champions were determined, none of the spectators left because the

highlight of the series was next on court – the second encounter between Chris and Evonne, a rematch of their exciting Wimbledon semifinal. The organizers of the Bonne Bell Cup installed a portable court surface at the Harold T. Clark Stadium, which played much slower than the grass courts of Wimbledon and favored Chris' style of play. Chris kept the ball deep, waited for Evonne to make errors, and easily won the first set. Evonne turned the match around by becoming more aggressive, but by the third set she had lost her focus and Chris finished off the match, 6-3 4-6 6-0. "Evonne lacks a little concentration," Chris said later. "If she's losing 5-0, she'll still smile." Evonne totally agreed with the assessment, adding that "Chris is a tough competitor. You have to get on top of her and stay on top or she will kill you. I tried, but I couldn't do the same as I did at Wimbledon. If you get into a groove of what she wants, she makes you play her game."²³⁷ In the meaningless final match of the day, Margaret and Kerry swept past Valerie and Wendy, 6-1 6-2. Despite her loss to Chris in singles, Margaret left Cleveland feeling very positive about her comeback.

Margaret's next competition was the Western Tennis Championships, a long-standing USLTA event – this was the 85th year of the tournament – played on the clay courts at the Queen City Racquet Club in Cincinnati, Ohio. Top-seeded Evonne and Margaret – seeded third behind Linda Tuero – were the star attractions of the entire championships, overshadowing the presence of Jimmy Connors and Guillermo Vilas, an exciting young left-handed player from Argentina. They predictably reached the singles final, and in what was promoted as a rematch of their 1971 Wimbledon final, they split the first two sets. After she fell behind 3-5 in the third, Margaret changed the focus of her attack and began to pressure Evonne's forehand. The strategy worked, as Margaret won four straight games to win the match and the \$2,500 first prize. "It just shows what a champion Margaret is," said Evonne after the match. "She's been away from tennis for over a year and she's behind in the third, but she still comes back and wins."²³⁸ Margaret and Evonne then teamed up to win the doubles title and \$250 each with a 6-4 6-1 final round victory over Brenda Kirk and Pat Pretorius, the South African pair who were the heroines of the Federation Cup four months earlier.

While the Western Tennis Championships were being contested in Cincinnati, the summer/fall Virginia Slims Circuit opened in Columbus, Georgia. Since Gladys was given the position of USLTA Director of Women's Professional Tennis, she was cooperating with the national association and avoiding any scheduling conflicts. The Western Tennis Championships, however, made a last-minute change of its dates, so a conflict with the tournament in Columbus was unavoidable.

When Gladys returned to the United States from the ILTF Annual General Meeting in Helsinki in July, she was annoyed that her proposal to hold a \$60,000 women's Grand Prix finale was rejected, solely because the men's Grand Prix finale would only offer \$50,000. The Virginia Slims Circuit joined the ILTF Commercial Union Grand Prix in February 1972, and each tournament director was supposed to send ten percent of the event's total prize money to the ILTF. The money would be added to a pool, which would be distributed among the top fifteen bonus point earners at the end of the year. Gladys, however, instructed each tournament director to send the Grand Prix money directly to her, with checks made payable to the Women's Professional Tennis Tour. She then deposited the money into a bank account, planning to withhold it until she was given a seat on the ILTF Grand Prix committee. By end of the winter-spring Virginia Slims Circuit, the amount of money in the bank account had grown to \$17,500. Although she was named to the ILTF Grand Prix Committee in late May, by early August she still had not turned the money over to the ILTF.²³⁹

A few hours before the championship flight of the Virginia Slims of Columbus started on Wednesday, August 2, Gladys and the players met at the Columbus Country Club. They discussed the initially imbalanced Grand Prix bonus point allocation, and – most likely not informed by Gladys that the Grand Prix committee had already adjusted the bonus points allocation and upgraded the Virginia Slims of Jacksonville – the women professionals unanimously agreed to withdraw from the Grand Prix and put the withheld prize money into the Virginia Slims Championships in Boca Raton, Florida. This decision meant that none of the women on the Virginia Slims Circuit would be eligible to receive any of the year-end Grand Prix bonus money. Billie Jean King was making the

greatest sacrifice; by being in first place on bonus points list, she stood to receive \$25,000 from the bonus pool.

Billie Jean and Rosie also wanted to boycott the upcoming U. S. Open, where the prize money for the men players was \$50,000 more than what was offered to the women. Just as she did two years earlier, when the women wanted to boycott Jack Kramer's Pacific Southwest Open in Los Angeles, Gladys did not feel that a boycott was the best solution. She did not think it would be fair to demand that U. S. Open tournament director Billy Talbert raise an additional \$50,000 for the women in only three weeks' time.²⁴⁰

The upcoming \$100,000 Virginia Slims Championships in Boca Raton were also discussed, and it was determined that any player who wished to participate must have played in at least four Virginia Slims Circuit events during the year. All of the tour's regular players met the criteria, as did Chris Evert, who would be playing in her fifth Virginia Slims event of the year on the grass courts in Newport, Rhode Island, one week before the U. S. Open. Margaret Court would also be eligible, since she was planning to play in Newport as well as the three Virginia Slims tournaments that followed the U. S. Open. Virginia Wade, who played in five Virginia Slims Circuit events before participating in an English tournament while the Virginia Slims of Indianapolis was being staged, would not be allowed to play in Boca Raton unless she paid a fine. Evonne Goolagong had no interest in playing any of the Virginia Slims Circuit tournaments and planned to return home to Australia immediately after the U. S. Open, with stopovers at Disneyland and Hawaii along the way.²⁴¹

Billie Jean opposed the idea of barring Virginia Wade from the tournament in Boca Raton; she felt that the women had been fighting for such opportunities for years, and all the women players should be able to benefit. The group determined that Linda Tuero, one of the best young American players, would also be barred from playing in Boca Raton because she preferred to play in USLTA and traditional European events instead of the Virginia Slims Circuit. Billie Jean wanted Linda included in the tournament, but she was voted down by the group.²⁴²

The Virginia Slim Circuit players' decision to withdraw from the ILTF Commercial Union Grand Prix was immediately relayed to the press in Columbus. The announcement was carried by the Associated Press and appeared in newspapers on Thursday, August 3. "The Virginia Slims Circuit has more than \$600,000 prize money during the course of the year, over three times as much as the other tournaments in the world combined," Billie Jean was quoted in the story. "We are being asked to put ten percent of our prize money into the Grand Prix, only to see it distributed to girls who play in the weaker European events." Billie Jean erroneously explained – perhaps not informed by Gladys that the Grand Prix Committee had already made the appropriate bonus points adjustments – that the \$18,000 Virginia Slims of Jacksonville, Florida was worth only 20 bonus points to the winner, while the champion of the \$15,000 South African Open was given 75 points. Referring to Helga Masthoff, Billie Jean complained that a West German player had accumulated more points than Chris Evert, even though the American had played a much tougher schedule and had better results.²⁴³

The decision to pull out of the Grand Prix – and the subsequent loss of substantial income – may have affected Billie Jean's play once the championship flight started on Wednesday afternoon on the clay courts of the Columbus Country Club. She was pushed in the first set of her opening match against Jade Schiffman, an obscure qualifier from New York, had a comfortable win over Wendy Gilchrist the following day, and was then beaten 6-0 in the first set of her quarterfinal match against Helen Gourlay on Friday. She recovered to win the next two sets, 6-3 6-3, to arrive in Saturday's semifinal against Francoise Durr.

Billie Jean played her best tennis of the week in the opening set against Francoise, winning it 6-2. At the start of the second set, however, she appeared to lose her concentration and Francoise hit a series of passing shots and overhead winners to take the next two sets, 6-2 6-2. "Billie Jean has been in a bad mood all week," Francoise said after the match. "I think today the loss of concentration got to her."²⁴⁴

Third-seeded Rosie Casals also worked her way to the championship round on Saturday, winning all of her previous matches in straight sets. Francoise won the first set, 7-6, and reached match point at 6-5 in the second. Rosie held on to win the game and

force another tiebreak, which she won with losing a point. The match was then over in a matter of minutes; Rosie won 32 of the final 37 points, not losing a game in the final set. “After two sets, I realized one of us would probably have to drop dead,” Rosie said after the 6-7 7-6 6-0 victory, worth \$6,000 to her. “I felt pretty good going into the third set, but she was obviously still steaming after losing the second set.” Francoise admitted that the lost match point opportunity affected her. “In the first game of the third set, I tried,” she said, “but after losing it, I knew I would not have anything left. Rosie just wasn’t missing anything at all.”²⁴⁵

None of the stars of the Virginia Slims Circuit played in the following week’s U. S. National Clay Court Championships at the Woodstock Tennis Club in Indianapolis. Even though the tournament exceeded the women professionals’ minimum prize money standard (\$20,000 was offered in women’s singles and women’s doubles), and there was no other tournament on the schedule, Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals, Nancy Richey Gunter, Kerry Melville and Francoise Durr stayed away. Perhaps some of the players did not want to compete in Indianapolis if Evonne Goolagong was in the draw, suspicious of her receiving an appearance fee. Nevertheless, tournament director Stan Malless was delighted with the women’s field, which may have been the strongest in the history of the tournament. In addition to Evonne, who was making her Indianapolis debut, the tournament also featured the first-time appearances of Chris Evert and Margaret Court.

As was the case in the previous week’s Western Championships in Cincinnati, the women’s field at the U. S. National Clay Court Championships was far more exciting than the men’s division, especially after the top two seeds in the men’s singles, Ilie Nastase and Andres Gimeno, failed to arrive. Chris lost only four games in her three matches, including a 6-1 6-0 demolition of Lesley Hunt in the quarterfinals. “Poor Lesley tried to serve and volley,” Chris’ 18-year-old brother Drew said. “It was sort of funny.”²⁴⁶

Evonne Goolagong had a more difficult time in her quarterfinal match, getting pushed to 6-4 7-6 by South Africa Pat Pretorius. Evonne then had a surprisingly easy semifinal match against clay court expert Linda Tuero, a former U. S. National Clay Court champion and winner of the 1972 Italian Open. In the other semifinal, Chris Evert

earned her third consecutive win over Margaret Court but had to work for the victory; the 6-3 7-6 score indicated that the Australian was working her way back into form. The women's singles final would feature the dream match of Evonne versus Chris. For third match of their young rivalry, the final in Indianapolis would be their first meeting on clay, as the previous two encounters – at Wimbledon and the Bonne Bell Cup – were played on grass and a rubberized synthetic court, respectively.

In front of 2,500 fans and a national television audience on PBS, an aggressive Evonne raced through the first five games and served for the set at 5-0. Chris won her first game of the match when she broke Evonne's serve in the sixth game, and she held serve for the first time in the seventh game. Evonne served for the set again at 5-2, and this time she held a set point. Chris continued to erase the deficit, leveling the set at 5-5 and then taking a 6-5 lead. Evonne, suddenly playing passively, found herself serving just to stay in the set, which she did to force a tiebreak at 6-6. Chris easily took the tiebreak, 5-2, and then coasted to win the second set, 6-1, for her first U. S. National Clay Court title. Since she was still an amateur and not allowed to collect prize money – according to USLTA regulations – until she turned professional on her eighteenth birthday in December, Chris declined the first prize of \$5,000. For reaching the final, Evonne earned \$2,500 plus \$500 for winning the women's doubles with Lesley Hunt.

After the singles final, Evonne told reporters that she “probably did lose my concentration, but Chris is like a machine. You just have to have the stamina to play well all the way through, and I'm afraid I still don't have the patience. On grass you can serve and volley, and the bounces are quicker. On clay, Chris has a much better chance of getting the shot back.”²⁴⁷

Chris was surprised by her comeback as well as Evonne's sudden loss of aggressiveness. “I don't think I've ever done that before,” she said. “I didn't think I had any chance to win the set, even after I had broken her serve a couple of times to get back to 3-5. I was pretty discouraged at 0-5 because I was playing really sloppy. I knew I had to stop being defensive and play more aggressive, but I couldn't believe what happened. This wasn't the same Evonne Goolagong I saw at Wimbledon. I sometimes wonder what

Mr. Edwards says to her after a match like that. If I had played that way, my dad would have really gotten after me, talked to me, said ‘Hey, what are you doing out there?’”²⁴⁸

*I got very upset with Mr. Edwards after the final of the National Clay Court championships at Indianapolis ... He said I'd stopped trying after losing the first set. I can't say I played well. In fact, I played pretty stupidly. Chris lulled me into playing her game. Instead of attacking, I got cautious and stayed on the baseline. So did she, but that's her game, and she chewed me up. That's the first time we'd played on clay, and I wasn't quite sure what to do. But I should have figured out about halfway through the set that I might as well go down shooting. I was getting nowhere from the baseline, so I should have gone to the net. I thought I should try to put some pressure on her, even if I did lose. Well, I didn't, and he thought I'd given up. I've never given up, and I always try, and I just didn't think he should have told people that I did. We have our fallings out, just like anybody else, and that was one of them.*²⁴⁹

-- Evonne Goolagong, 1974

While the U. S. National Clay Court Championships were being contested, Gladys received word from the USLTA and the ILTF regarding the Virginia Slims Circuit players' decision to withdraw from the Grand Prix. She was told to immediately submit the \$17,500 in bonus pool money that she had deposited into a bank account; otherwise, a \$35,000 lawsuit would be filed against her and the upcoming \$100,000 Virginia Slims Championships in Boca Raton, Florida, would be denied a sanction approval.²⁵⁰

For the first time since she started the Virginia Slims Circuit, the USLTA and ILTF refused to compromise with Gladys. Since the ILTF and the WCT men's tour had reached a peace settlement and all the world's best male players would be competing at the major championships again, the women professionals were once again expendable. In addition, the governing bodies knew that the game's two most appealing players –

Evonne Goolagong and Chris Evert – would stay in line with them, as Margaret Court probably would as well.

Gladys also knew that if the USLTA and ILTF refused to sanction the tournament in Boca Raton, the woman who competed there would once again be declared contract professionals and most likely barred from the world's major championships, just as the ILTF had no qualms about barring the WCT male contract professionals from Wimbledon and the French Open. Furthermore, the denial of a sanction for the Boca Raton tournament would certainly result in the withdrawal Chris Evert, who wanted to remain in good standing with the USLTA. Without Chris, the success of the tournament would be in jeopardy, since her participation was the reason why tournament promoter George Liddy became involved in the first place.

Forced to comply with the demands from the USLTA and ILTF to turn over the Grand Prix money, Gladys was backed into a corner for the first time in her life. Tired of fighting with the tennis establishment, and humiliated over her powerlessness, Gladys could think of only one solution. On Tuesday, August 15, she sent a news release from the *World Tennis* offices in Houston, resigning her volunteer position as USLTA Director of Women's Professional Tennis, effective October 15, 1972,

The Women's Pro Tour has been an enormously successful venture. In the two short years of the Tour, prize money on the Women's Circuit has jumped from less than \$40,000 to over \$600,000. It has taken a lot of time, effort and money to inaugurate the tour, but it has been well worth it. It could never have been done without the help of Virginia Slims, who consistently backed the Women Pros (in and out of suspension) from the very first tournament. Other sponsors who backed the girls in huge prize money events were British Motor Cars, Four Roses, K-Mart and the Tennis Club of Ft. Lauderdale. Now that we have established 22 tournaments, we feel that the USLTA can and should have the opportunity to take over. I am certain they will do a proper job for the players, the sponsors and tournament directors. I would stay in forever, but the job of running the circuit is

tremendously time-consuming and expensive. I cannot neglect World Tennis, which is 'my baby' and which is now rapidly becoming a teenager.²⁵¹

Gladys was also quoted in the next issue of *World Tennis* as "cheerily" sure that the "USLTA and ILTF will carry on. Right on!"²⁵² In reality, Gladys was bitterly unhappy about her decision to relinquish the administration of the women's tour. Although she was unable to work anymore with the USLTA or the ILTF, the thought of those two organizations controlling the women's professional game was even more unappealing to her. *World Tennis* may have been her "teenager," but the Virginia Slims Circuit was her "toddler," and she was not going to give it up without a fight.

Notes

- ¹ Norman Heller, quoted in "Tennis Prix Minus Pepsi," *St. Petersburg Times* (St. Petersburg, Florida), December 1, 1971.
- ² Harry Stone, quoted in "Commercial Union Grand Prix," *Tennis USA*, March 1972, 18.
- ³ Gladys Heldman, "USLTA and Women Pros Kiss and Make Up," *World Tennis*, April 1972, 82.
- ⁴ Joyce Turley, interview with the author, May 5, 2012.
- ⁵ Francoise Durr, quoted in Edwin Shrake, "A Long Way, Bebe," *Sports Illustrated*, March 6, 1972, 35.
- ⁶ Francoise Durr, quoted in Edwin Shrake, "A Long Way, Bebe," *Sports Illustrated*, March 6, 1972, 35.
- ⁷ Bill Cutler, quoted in Edwin Shrake, "A Long Way, Bebe," *Sports Illustrated*, March 6, 1972, 35.
- ⁸ Francoise Durr, quoted in Edwin Shrake, "A Long Way, Bebe," *Sports Illustrated*, March 6, 1972, 35.
- ⁹ Tom Dirato, "3 Seeds Fall in Net Meet," *Oklahoma Journal* (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma), February 17, 1972.
- ¹⁰ Francoise Durr, quoted in Edwin Shrake, "A Long Way, Bebe," *Sports Illustrated*, March 6, 1972, 35.
- ¹¹ Edwin Shrake, "A Long Way, Bebe," *Sports Illustrated*, March 6, 1972, 35.
- ¹² Valerie Ziegenfuss, quoted in Tom Dirato, "Val's Started Something," *Oklahoma Journal* (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma), February 18, 1972.
- ¹³ Tom Dirato, "Top Net Seeds Ousted," *Oklahoma Journal* (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma), February 18, 1972.
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CHAPTER 11: THE SCHOOLGIRL SCAB

As USLTA Vice President Walter Elcock scanned the sports section of the *New York Times* on Tuesday, August 15, he was shocked to read that Gladys had relinquished her responsibilities with the Virginia Slims Circuit. Elcock was surprised because Gladys had not directly notified any USLTA officials about her decision; she announced her resignation via a news release sent from the *World Tennis* office in Houston.

Elcock did not contact Gladys when he read the story in the *New York Times*; instead, he telephoned Stan Malless in Indianapolis. Elcock asked Malless to fill the duties vacated by Gladys, which included working with tournament directors, players and sponsors, and the scheduling of future women's prize money tournaments; Elcock also thought that Edy McGoldrick, the U. S. Wightman Cup captain and a member of the USLTA Executive Committee, would be a valuable asset.¹

The next stop on the Virginia Slims Circuit was in Denver, Colorado, and the players asked tour manager Pip Jones to call a meeting to discuss Gladys' resignation. On Tuesday, August 15 – sitting on a shady spot on the lawn at South Denver High School, the site of the tournament – the women discussed their future without Gladys' direction. Since they did not want the USLTA to administer their tournaments, they decided to compose a letter, signed by all the players, pleading with Gladys to reconsider her decision.²

All of the top players on the Virginia Slims Circuit were present in Denver – Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals, Nancy Richey Gunter, Francoise Durr and Kerry Melville. A total of \$25,000 in prize money was offered, with \$6,000 and fifty Grand Prix bonus points going to the winner, based on its classification by the ILTF as a Group

B tournament. During the same week, Evonne Goolagong, Margaret Court and Virginia Wade competed in the \$72,600 Rothman's Canadian Open in Toronto. The Canadian Open was a combined men's and women's event, however, with the women receiving only \$12,500 of the total prize money. Unlike the South African Open earlier in the year, when the ILTF allocated an unfairly high number of Grand Prix bonus points, the women's event at the Canadian Open was properly rated as a Group D tournament and the singles winner earned 20 Grand Prix bonus points.

Two weeks earlier, in Columbus, Georgia, the women professionals unanimously agreed to withdraw from the Grand Prix due to the way the ILTF allocated the bonus points allocation for the South African Open and other low prize money European events. The ILTF, in return, demanded that Gladys submit the \$17,500 in Grand Prix money that she had been holding onto. Under the threat of a \$35,000 lawsuit, Gladys was forced to comply, which then led to her resignation from the USLTA and her relinquishment of the women's tour. Before she turned over the Grand Prix money to the ILTF, however, she wanted the Virginia Slims Circuit players to sign a release form, authorizing the payment of the funds to the ILTF. During the week in Denver, and the next two tournaments in Newport, Rhode Island and the U. S. Open in New York, Julie Heldman collected the players' signatures on the release form.³

Julie's boyfriend, Vincent Hanna, was also at the tournament in Denver, creating a short film about the Virginia Slims Circuit for the BBC television show *Midweek*. Billie Jean talked about how the circuit was creating independence and helped to bolster the players' self-esteem. "There's nothing better for a human being than to get paid for playing the sport well," she said. "We are entertainers, we are performers. A lot of the girls have changed for the better in that they have a lot more personal pride ... they feel, 'I've done it. I didn't have to ask Mom and Dad for the money, I didn't have to ask a group for the money. I did it because I played well, I earned that money.'" ⁴

Francoise Durr – no longer engaged to Bill Culter – lamented how difficult it was to maintain a relationship due to the constant travel that the circuit required, and predicted that she would not be playing for much longer. "I think it's about time I quit," she reflected. "I think tennis is a good life, but I don't think it will be part of my whole

life and I think it's about time I make some other steps." Asked by Hanna how it felt to be a spinster on the tour, Françoise admitted that "it can be really difficult because you are travelling so much, one week after one week somewhere, and if you meet somebody nice you can never see him again and it would be very difficult. So I think it's a very difficult social life on the tour."⁵ Nancy Richey Gunter, one of the few married women on the circuit, also looked forward to her life after tennis. "I've led a regimented life for twenty years, and I mean really regimented," she said. "My time really has not been mine at all for twenty years, and I feel that I don't really want to be tied down for another twenty years after I quit playing tennis. I want to be able to do what I want to do. I don't want to be tied down to a home with children."⁶

On the newly-resurfaced hardcourts at South Denver High School, second-seeded Rosie Casals was surprised in the first round by Jill Cooper of Great Britain, who won 6-4 6-2. Pam Teeguarden, after nearly beating Kerry Melville at the French Open, held match point against number-two seed Françoise Durr in the second round but could not close it out. Top-seeded Billie Jean King reached the final, getting tested by Julie Heldman in the quarterfinals. Julie had won their previous encounter, at the Virginia Slims of Washington D. C., when Billie Jean was hampered by a sore toe. This time, Billie Jean started strongly and won the first set 6-1. Julie then turned the tables and won the second set by the same score, before Billie Jean regained her momentum closed out the match with a 6-3 third set. In the other half of the draw, Nancy easily advanced to the championship round, not losing more than five games in any of her matches.

In the final, watched by a sellout crowd of 2,000, Billie Jean won the seven of the first eight games, racing to a 6-1 1-0 lead. Nancy fell behind 15-30 in the next game, but managed to hold serve and level the set at 1-1. At that point, there was a five minute delay as new tennis balls could not be located, and several ballboys were sent to find some. "I lost my momentum when the kids went to get the new balls," Billie Jean said later. "I never played the same after that. That was the turning point."⁷

When the match resumed, Billie Jean and Nancy stayed on serve for the next six games. At 3-4, Billie Jean thought one of Nancy's serves was out, and she casually hit the ball away. The "out" call never came, and the point was awarded to Nancy. In the next

game, Billie Jean missed an opportunity to take a 5-4 lead. Instead, Nancy broke serve to get the lead, and she then held serve at love to take the set, 6-4. During the intermission before the third set, Billie Jean asked chair umpire Bill Landin to remove the linesman who made the questionable call several games earlier.

After Billie Jean lost her serve in the opening game of the third set, she noticed that the linesman still had not been removed. During the intermission, Landin had spoken with tournament referee Lee Hill about replacing the linesman; they decided that his calls were correct and he would not be removed. "I asked for a linesman to be removed between sets," Billie Jean later explained. "They didn't have the courtesy to tell me about their decision. They tell us that nothing should bother you when you're a pro. My trouble is I think about the whole game and when that kind of thing happens, I blow up. I wasn't patient enough. It was my fault."⁸

Although she was losing her concentration and composure, Billie Jean managed to pull ahead 3-2. Several more questionable line calls, and several more arguments, did not sway the crowd; they were clearly rooting for Billie Jean. Nancy, however, was not to be denied. She broke serve to level the set at 3-3, and then swept the last three games to take the title and first prize of \$6,000. Despite her disappointment, Billie Jean appreciated the support she received from the spectators, calling them the "all time audience in ten years. They were really good to me, I'll never forget it."⁹

One week before the U. S. Open, there were three top-level grass court tournaments from which the world's best women players could choose from: the \$18,000 Virginia Slims Grass Court Championships at the Newport Casino in Newport, Rhode Island, the \$15,000 Pennsylvania Lawn Tennis Championships (of which the women received a total of \$3,600 for singles and doubles) at the Merion Cricket Club in Haverford, Pennsylvania, and the Eastern Grass Court Open in South Orange, New Jersey.

Of the three U. S. Open warm-up events, Newport had the strongest field. In addition to Billie Jean King, Chris Evert, Rosie Casals, Kerry Melville and Francoise Durr, the tournament featured the Virginia Slims Circuit debut of Margaret Court. One year earlier, Margaret had planned to join the tour at the Virginia Slims International in

Houston, Texas, before she discovered that she was pregnant. The Eastern Grass Court Open limited its women's field to eight players and included Olga Morozova, Patti Hogan and Linda Tuero. Although the tournament at the Merion Cricket Club accommodated thirty-two women in the women's singles draw, Virginia Wade was the only world's top-twenty player entered. The prize money at Merion was a fraction of what was offered at Newport, yet Virginia did not have much of a choice; she was still "suspended" from the Virginia Slims Circuit for playing in a conflicting tournament earlier in the year and not paying the subsequent fine imposed by Pip Jones.

The Virginia Slims Grass Court Championships were held for the second year at the historic Newport Casino, the site of the International Tennis Hall of Fame. Tournament director James Van Alen once again had the players use the radical scoring system that he invented. The Van Alen Simplified Scoring System (VASSS) did not employ the traditional scoring of love, fifteen, thirty, forty, deuce and advantage. Instead, the points were called as 1, 2, and 3, and if a game reached 3-3, the winner of the next point won the game. With the simultaneous "sudden-death" game point at 3-3, lengthy deuce games were eliminated. Van Alen also invented the sudden-death nine-point tiebreak, used when the games in a set reached 6-6. Although the nine-point tiebreak had been used on the Virginia Slims Circuit and other tournaments for the past two years, the no-ad game scoring system was not as widely embraced. Van Alen invented VASSS in order to make the game more appealing to fans and more manageable for television broadcasts, but it was nerve wracking for most of the players.

*I thoroughly disliked this scoring method, but to my surprise proved to be very successful using it ... It forced me to concentrate on every point, since they are all equally important ... Nobody dared come to the net or go for a winning shot. We all tightened up and stayed on the baseline, content to get the ball safely over the net. The system was designed for television, to finish games quickly, but actually they were lasting much longer because of the endless rallies.*¹⁰

-- Margaret Court, 1975

Sudden Death is obviously what the customers want. That's why we'll always use it on the women's tour. It gives you a heart attack to play it, that's what Pancho Gonzalez said, and that's what pro sports is all about – tension. No more meaningless points. You have to play every one hard. Our game is universally understood, you know. By using No-ad, you can count points 1-2-3-4 instead of 15-30, etc. Anybody can understand, and that's better for the public. ¹¹

-- Billie Jean King, 1972

After defeating Rosie Casals in the quarterfinals, Margaret used the no-ad system to her advantage in her semifinal against Chris. In their first grass-court encounter, Chris took a 2-0 lead and went ahead 3-1 in the third game. Margaret then decided to change her strategy; she engaged Chris in lengthy baseline rallies, brought her up to the net with drop shots and then ended the points with accurate passing shots. The momentum of the match turned when Margaret won the third game at sudden-death; after that, Chris managed to win only one more game. The 6-3 6-0 match was actually much closer than the score indicates; in the first set, Margaret won 26 points and Chris won 24 points. ¹²

Top-seeded Billie Jean King had no difficulties reaching the singles final; in each of her matches, she won a set without the loss of a game. Sunday afternoon's final saw the sixth consecutive day of sold-out attendance of 2,500 spectators, and fans began lining up at the ticket window at 7:30 am to see first match between Margaret and Billie Jean in over a year. There was a rainstorm the previous night, and even though the grass courts were covered with tarpaulins, the court conditions were slow and heavy. Margaret delayed her approaches to the net and waited for the right opportunity to attack, and this tactic worked against Billie Jean. Margaret broke serve in the opening game and held her own throughout the first set, taking it 6-4. Billie Jean continued to approach the net in the second set, but more often than not she was foiled by Margaret's accurate passing shots. Billie Jean was also undone by four double faults in the second set as Margaret won it easily, 6-1. "I'm serving better than I ever have in my career," Margaret said after collecting the first prize of \$3,400, "and after losing some weight seem to be moving better, too." ¹³

Three days later, the U. S. Open started at the West Side Tennis Club in Forest Hills, New York. Wimbledon champion Stan Smith was tested in his first-round match against 15-year old Billy Martin of California, who earned a spot in the main draw by winning four qualifying matches. Most of the top stars did not see any action until Thursday, August 31, as Billie Jean King, Evonne Goolagaong, Chris Evert and Margaret Court easily won their first round matches. Arthur Ashe, sixth-seeded in the men's singles, won the first two sets against Pakistan's Haroon Rahim and then seemed to lose his concentration, dropping the fourth set before winning the match in a fourth set tiebreak. Ashe's lapse might have been expected, since he was up late the previous night helping to organize a men's players' union that was comprised of contract and independent professionals.

Ashe was instrumental in forming the WCT players' association earlier in the year, and when the Association of Independent Players' Association was organized during the French Open, it was only a matter of time before the two groups merged. In the U. S. Open Club, a restaurant beneath the stadium, sixty players from sixteen nations – 32 WCT contract professionals and 28 independent players – gathered on Wednesday evening to found the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) and elect Cliff Drysdale of South Africa as president. In addition to Ashe, other members on the eleven-man board of directors included Andres Gimeno, Stan Smith, Jim McManus, Jaime Fillol, Ismail El-Shafei, Nikki Pilic and Pierre Darmon. The members discussed the association's bylaws (which were prepared in advance by Donald Dell), and agreed that the yearly dues per member would be \$500. An organizational mission statement was composed, and a series of goals and objectives were established: ¹⁴

- To unite, promote and protect the mutual interests of all tennis professionals
- To act on behalf of its membership with all related bodies, specifically World Championship Tennis, the International Lawn Tennis Federation and its national associations, and tournament directors of prize money events.
- To draft a code of ethics and rules for professional players
- To draft a fair and honest approach to Davis Cup play for professionals

- To draft an ATP schedule of tournaments in conjunction with all interested promoters

After his match against Rahim on Thursday, Ashe told reporters that the purpose of the ATP was formed because the players were “tired of being stepped on by two elephants,” referring to WCT and the ILTF. “They’re both good organizations, but sometimes they don’t consider the players,” he said. “We now have a powerful organization. We have all the big names and our constitution was drawn from all other sports.”¹⁵

ILTF president Allan Heyman, who was in New York for the U. S. Open, said he welcomed the ATP and expressed his hope that “it will help avoid most of the problems and frictions which have arisen in the past.” While Heyman also hoped that the men and women professionals would unite into one association, Drysdale said it was unlikely. “We only have admiration for the way in which they have organized themselves so far,” the ATP president said, “and we will cooperate with them fully whenever possible. But we definitely think that it is in the best interest of both the men and women to have separate associations.”¹⁶

*The men had formed the ATP, and I said “I hope you’re including the women.”
They said “You must be joking.”¹⁷
-- Billie Jean King, 2006*

With Gladys stepping away from running the circuit, and with the ATP restricting its membership to men, Billie Jean felt the women players were left stranded, or worse, at the mercy of the USLTA and ILTF. Edy McGoldrick, the U. S. Wightman Cup captain and the only woman on the USLTA Executive Committee, spoke with Billie Jean during the first week of the U. S. Open and tried to allay her concerns. McGoldrick told Billie Jean that the USLTA had appointed her to organize the women’s professional circuit, and she wanted to know how the women players would respond. Billie Jean said that she and

the other players just wanted to play tennis and not have to worry about suspension threats or other problems, and McGoldrick understood completely.¹⁸

Walter Elcock also spoke with Billie Jean during the week, and he explained his difficulties in dealing with Gladys and his belief that she was attempting to control women's tennis. Billie Jean disagreed, explaining that the women's circuit was always open to any woman who wanted to participate. Elcock told Billie Jean that the women players expected too much, and that they would never make as much money as the men; the USLTA was willing, he said, to provide a circuit in which the women were playing for \$20,000 per week. Billie Jean asked Elcock what would happen "if we played a tournament with the fellows and you had the best women and the worst men?" Elcock responded that the men would still get more money, and Billie Jean replied that he did not have the women players' interest at hand. "Well, I am sorry," Elcock said, "but I think I do."¹⁹

As she had done for years, Gladys was present at the U. S. Open. No longer the administrator of the women's professional tour, she came to Forest Hills as a spectator and a reporter for *World Tennis*. Billie Jean saw Gladys on the grounds of the West Side Tennis Club and asked her if she was sure about her decision to walk away from the Virginia Slims Circuit. Gladys told Billie Jean that she was still ambivalent about having anything to do with professional tennis; she felt that all the time she devoted to running the women's tour had adversely affected *World Tennis*. Apparently, however, Gladys had not come to terms with relinquishing the tour to the USLTA; when she saw Walter Elcock at a social gathering during the tournament, she burst into tears and was unable to speak.²⁰

Before the conclusion of Labor Day weekend, four men's seeds – Ken Rosewall, John Newcombe, Tom Okker, and Jimmy Connors – had been upset, but it was the defeat of the women's number-two seed, Evonne Goolagong, that created the biggest sensation. She played against Pam Teeguarden, who started playing on the Virginia Slims Circuit as a qualifier and was listed at number 18 on the U. S. rankings. Evonne was making her U. S. Open debut, and it was her first visit to New York City.

I was unhappy the moment we got to Manhattan, and I stayed that way ... We were afraid to walk very far from our hotel ... Maybe we were overly cautious, but we'd read the scare stories about New York. ²¹

-- Evonne Goolagong, 1974

On Labor Day Monday, Los Angeles teaching professional Jerry Teegarden walked along Continental Avenue toward the West Side Tennis Club entrance to watch his daughter play against Evonne. A man who identified himself as the Roland Koh, Bishop of West Malaysia, approached Teegarden and said, "God will be with you." ²² It proved to be a good omen. Playing in the stadium, Evonne served for the first set at 5-4 and held two sets points at 40-15. Pam brushed aside both set points by hitting her flat forehand down the line to Evonne's backhand, eventually leveling the set at 5-5. After that, Mary Hardwick wrote for *World Tennis*, Pam "went from strength to strength, confidently lashing out with her fine forehand and seizing every chance to come to the net to finish the point." ²³ The errors began to fly off Evonne's racquet, she was not moving quickly and she appeared to have lost her concentration. When Pam reached her first match point at 5-1 in the second set, she came forward and hit a winning crosscourt volley to register the best win of her career.

In the press room, Evonne was asked if she lost the match due to one of her celebrated "walkabouts," or loss of concentration. Evonne did not want to make any excuses, saying "I don't think I played up to par, but on any particular day the best player of that day will win. Pam was the best player out there today." For Pam, the win helped to erase the pain of losing to Kerry Melville at the French Open and Francoise Durr at the Virginia Slims of Denver, when she held match points each time. "I won it for my father," she told reporters, adding that playing on the Virginia Slims Circuit had improved her game tremendously. ²⁴

The next day, another Australian champion was eliminated. Rod Laver won the first set against Cliff Richey, 6-3, and towards the end of the second set he felt a twinge of pain in his back. Laver knew immediately that an old injury had come back to haunt him, and his mobility was severely hampered. Tom Gorman – who had his own history

with back problems – got up from his seat in the covered marquee. “I couldn’t bear to watch,” Gorman told tennis writer Richard Evans. “I know exactly what Rocket’s going through. It’s hell.” Richey won the second and third sets in tiebreaks, and easily took the fourth set as Laver’s pain was apparent. Asked afterward about the strategy he used to win the match, Richey – who had great respect for Laver – replied sarcastically, “Yeah, I figured I’d get him into third set and let his back go out, and then I’d beat him.”²⁵

As the second week of the U. S. Open progressed, Gladys finished collecting all the signatures from the Virginia Slims Circuit players, authorizing her to turn the withheld Grand Prix money over to the ILTF. She enclosed a check in her letter of resignation and gave it to Donald Dell, who then delivered it to Walter Elcock on Wednesday, September 6 – the same day that Chris Evert played in one of the most thrilling matches of the entire tournament.²⁶

Chris knew she would have a challenge in her first career meeting with Olga Morozova of the Soviet Union, an accomplished grass court player who came within a few points of defeating Evonne Goolagong at Wimbledon. The stadium crowd of 8,900 cheered for Olga as she stayed even with Chris for the six games. Then the Russian began to vary the pace of her shots, lofting high shots from the back of the court. The soft shots forced Chris to create her own pace, and she began to make errors. Whenever Olga sensed an opening, she came forward to the net to punch away crisp volleys. With Chris’ rhythm disrupted, Olga won three straight games to close out the first set and take a 3-2 lead in the second.²⁷

An upset seemed likely when Chris fell behind 15-40 on her serve in the sixth game of the second set. “This was when control of the battle changed hands,” Mary Hardwick of *World Tennis* observed. “Chris was fighting with all her stroke and tactical knowledge ... She is a born match player. When defeat is facing her, her magnificent mental discipline never falters.” Chris coolly held serve and took the second set 6-3. The stadium crowd, initially cheering for the Russian underdog, changed its allegiance in the third set and encouraged Chris as she raced to 5-2.²⁸

Only one game away from defeat, Olga recaptured control of the match. Using the same strategy that succeeded for Evonne at Wimbledon, Olga sliced the ball low to

Chris' backhand and then hit winning forehands and volleys off the weak responses. The tactic paid off as Olga won four consecutive games and served for the match at 6-5. Once again, Chris displayed her cool under fire; she broke Olga at love to level the set at 6-6, and in the tiebreak she lost only one point, winning it 5-1. "I thought I had the match sewed up at 5-2," Chris said after her 3-6 6-3 7-6 victory. "The lobbing may have thrown me off a little, but I didn't mind as when Olga was getting in her good serve and hitting the ball low. That's how she won the first set. I really thought I was going to lose the match then."²⁹

In other women's singles quarterfinal matches on Wednesday, Margaret Court was pushed by Rosie Casals on the Grandstand Court before winning 6-4 4-6 6-4, and Kerry Melville easily advanced to the semifinals with 6-0 6-2 decision over Pam Teeguarden. Just before Billie Jean and Virginia started their match in the Stadium, the crowd was asked to stand in a moment of silent mourning; the previous day, eleven Israeli athletes had been seized and killed at the Olympic Games in Munich, West Germany. "I felt as if I turned white inside at that moment," said Billie Jean later. "I couldn't help crying. What can you do at a time like that? You have to wonder, 'What am I doing out here playing a game? What is this life all about?'"³⁰ Billie Jean started the match mechanically but gradually focused on the task at hand, winning 6-2 7-5.

On Thursday, September 7 - while the men's singles quarterfinal matches were being contested - the Association of Tennis Professionals announced that Jack Kramer had been named as the organization's Executive Director. Kramer told reporters that the ATP planned to "to provide tournaments throughout the world with the top players, as long as those tournaments meet our standards in prize money and playing conditions. The formation of the association doesn't mean the players will be demanding big prizes everywhere. We'll be working with the ILTF and the USLTA for the benefit of all. Until they prove they can't keep pace with the growth of the game, we'll cooperate and we hope that will be forever."³¹ Kramer also indicated that his first goal in the ATP was the development of a code of ethics and rules, and a solution that would allow professionals to play in the Davis Cup.

The Association of Tennis Professionals had been formed ... to provide organizational backing for any player who would otherwise be defenseless against his national organization and the International Lawn Tennis Federation. I had been named executive director of the ATP, which was the last job I wanted in the tennis world. I had had a lifetime of fighting and wanted to sit back and run my course in peace. But Ashe softened me up, and then Dell practically brought me to tears one night telling me that I was the only figure who could work well with all elements of the game ... I agreed to take the job if the board of directors voted for me unanimously and if I could take the job without pay. I felt that would help convince people that I wasn't taking the position just for power.

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-- Jack Kramer, 1979

As was the custom, the USLTA Executive Committee convened on the final Friday of the U. S. Open, this time at the Stanhope Hotel in Manhattan. USLTA secretary Stan Malless outlined his plans for the 1973 summer circuit, which included weekly \$50,000 64-player tournaments for men and weekly \$25,000 32-player tournaments for women. Malless noted that his Sanction and Schedule Committee recommended the elimination of the special \$480 USLTA sanction fee that was assessed for women's professional tournaments in 1972, and the Executive Committee approved the change; for 1973, all women's professional tournaments in the United States would be required to pay a sanction fee equal to 6% of total prize money offered. Among other matters discussed at the meeting, USLTA president Bob Colwell relayed the news about Kramer's selection as executive director of the ATP. Colwell also announced that Gladys had decided to step down from all USLTA capacities, and the Executive Committee unanimously voted to accept her resignation.³³ An announcement of Gladys' resignation was printed in the October 1972 issue of *Tennis USA*.

The USLTA at its Executive Committee Meeting on September 8 accepted Mrs. Gladys Heldman's request to resign from all USLTA committees and associated USLTA Women's Professional Tournament activities. Sanction and Schedule

Chairman Stan Malless has already set up a women's summer circuit with eight tournaments, each offering a minimum of \$25,000 in prize money. At press time, Mr. Malless has said he had received affirmative indication for ten winter/spring women's tournaments offering a minimum of \$20,000 in prize money. It is planned to have a complete 1973 USLTA women's professional circuit similar to that arranged by Mrs. Heldman in 1972. A complete schedule will be announced later this month.³⁴

While some members of the USLTA Executive Committee may have been relieved to see Gladys walk away from the game, unknown to them she was actually planning her return – something that may have been inspired by Margaret Court's return to the game. Gladys had hoped to have Margaret participate in the first Virginia Slims tournament in Houston in 1970, but the Australian withdrew due to an ankle injury. The following summer, Margaret was prepared to play on the Virginia Slims Circuit after Wimbledon, but she took a leave from the game due to her pregnancy. Margaret made a spectacular comeback in the summer of 1972, defeating Evonne Goolagong to win the Western Championships in Cincinnati and beating Chris Evert and Billie Jean King to win the Virginia Slims of Newport. Seeing Margaret at the U. S. Open convinced Gladys that a tour with one of the greatest players of all time would be hugely successful. Only three weeks removed from her resignation as the USLTA Director of Women's Pro Tennis, Gladys sent the word out among the women players at the West Side Tennis Club that she wanted to hold a meeting in the locker room at the end of the week.

*Gladys wanted me involved. She asked me because she knew it wouldn't be successful without Billie Jean and myself, as we were the top two players.*³⁵

-- Margaret Court, 2015

On Friday afternoon, the first of two women's singles finals was played on the Stadium Court. In a rematch of the final played at Newport two weeks earlier, Billie Jean King did not lose her service against Margaret Court and won 6-4 6-4. Margaret lost her service in the third game of the first set and in the opening game of the second, and that was all Billie Jean needed as she attacked relentlessly. The match ended on sour note; with Billie Jean serving at 5-4, she reached triple match point at 40-love. Margaret hit a sizzling forehand placement and then a volley winner to erase the first two match points. On the next point, Billie Jean was caught in mid-court as Margaret hit a forehand down the line. Billie Jean thought the ball was out and tossed her racquet in celebration; however, no call came from the linesperson, and Margaret walked to the deuce court to return serve. After a delay, the umpire announced that the ball was out and that Billie Jean had won the match. Margaret dejectedly walked to the net the shake hands, and Billie Jean apologized to her for the way the match ended.³⁶

Billie Jean told reporters after the match that Margaret is "too strong and too rangy for any woman to overpower. Trying to match Margaret's power is a mistake many smaller players make. What we should use is brain power. To me, getting the first ball in is the name of this game on grass." She also talked about her chances of defending her U. S. Open title. "Inner peace has come to me. Until about three days ago, I've felt uneasy, not caring much about winning and concerned more with other problems," she said, perhaps a reference to the tragedy in Munich, getting rejected by the ATP and an unknown future for the women's circuit. "Suddenly, at dinner the other night, a kind of wave passed over me, and I said to Larry, my husband, 'It's okay, everything's going to be alright.'" ³⁷

An unusual sight for spectators at the West Side Tennis Club was the splash of colored clothing that the players wore. To increase the visibility for television audiences, CBS Television requested from tournament officials an exception to the club's all-white clothing policy, as well as the use of yellow tennis balls for the first time. "I cleared this with the club's tournament committee," said U. S. Open tournament chairman and director Billy Talbert, who introduced the use of James Van Alen's radical sudden-death nine-point tiebreak two years earlier. On the U. S. Open entry form, Talbert indicated

that “white is preferred; however, pastels would be allowed with approval of the tournament director.” For Ted Tinling, the news was staggering.

*Gene Scott, legal counsel to the USLTA in 1972, told me as a throwaway comment that for the first time in all tennis history, colored tennis dresses would be allowed at Forest Hills ... I'd been waiting for ten years.*³⁸
 -- Ted Tinling, 1979

In her semifinal match, Billie Jean wore a shocking pink dress and blue Adidas shoes. “Margaret, almost demure in traditional white,” wrote Mary Hardwick, “must have felt she had returned to another world after a 14-month absence.”³⁹ Although Billie Jean was still under contract to wear Head tennis wear, many of the other players wore the colorful dresses that Tinling had designed for the Virginia Slims Circuit.

Kerry Melville wore a peach-colored Tinling outfit for her semifinal match against Chris, who was equally dressed for the occasion in a white Mondessa creation trimmed in blue and green. Kerry’s feminine attire belied the nature of her aggression; from the opening point, she attacked Chris with a combination of strong forehands and well-disguised drop shots. Chris was usually able to reach the drop shots but she did put them away; she simply returned them deep into the court, allowing Kerry to pass her with ease. Chris was able to maintain the lead for most of the first set, but serving at 4-4 she missed a forehand volley and hit a forehand beyond the baseline to give Kerry the lead for the first time. After holding serve to win the first set, the Australian kept her lead for the remainder of the match, reaching 3-2 in the second set by hitting the lines with her forehand and winning three more games to finish the match. Reflecting on her own strategy, Chris admitted she “should have slowed the pace down. Kerry usually makes great shots and a lot of errors. Today she made great shots and no errors.”⁴⁰

Billie Jean and Kerry were scheduled to play the women’s singles final after the two men’s semifinal matches were completed on Saturday, September 9. Cliff Richey and Arthur Ashe – who defeated top-seeded Stan Smith in straight sets in the quarterfinals – opened the program at 11:30 am, followed by Ilie Nastase’s match against

Tom Gorman, who had earlier survived five-set matches against Jimmy Connors and Roscoe Tanner.

While the men were playing in the stadium, Gladys held a meeting in the West Side Tennis Club women's locker room, with nearly two dozen players present. She announced that she had finally decided to once again organize the Virginia Slims Circuit for 1973, but it would be totally independent of the USLTA and ILTF – none of the tournaments would be sanctioned by either of those ruling bodies.⁴¹ In the wake of the formation of the men's ATP, Gladys also explained her plans to form a women's tennis association; one year earlier, while interviewing Lamar Hunt for an article in *World Tennis*, she mentioned that “some thought has been given to forming a Women's International Tennis Federation ... because the USLTA constantly blocks the setting up of any of our tournaments.”

Gladys told the women they would need to sign written contracts if they wanted to play on the circuit in 1973, something that had not been required before. During any week in which there was a Virginia Slims Circuit tournament scheduled, no one could compete in a conflicting tournament, play in an exhibition or give a clinic. After several Virginia Slims Circuit players – including Virginia Wade and Helga Masthoff – appeared in other tournaments during the 1972 season, Gladys wanted to make sure this never happened again. She informed the players that her attorney, C. Frederick Leydig, was helping her to prepare a contract, and she planned to bring copies to the next Virginia Slims Circuit tournament – the Four Roses Premium Classic in Charlotte, North Carolina – the following week.⁴²

On Saturday, September 9, there were 14,683 fans seated in the stadium – a record number of spectators for one day at the U. S. Open. After Ilie Nastase and Arthur Ashe won their matches to set up Sunday's men's singles final, Billie Jean and Kerry came onto the Stadium Court to play for the women's title. Billie Jean faced a break point in the opening game, but she quickly extricated herself with forceful, accurate serving and soon led 3-1. Several points later, a heavy downpour halted play for ten minutes; when the match resumed, Billie Jean completed the game in progress and led

4-1. Both players then held serve for the next four games, giving Billie Jean the first set, 6-3.⁴³

A brisk wind came on the heels of the rain, and the swirling current in the stadium's concrete bowl affected the players' timing. The conditions were more annoying to Billie Jean, who was nevertheless able to reach 3-1 in the second set despite several wild errors. Kerry held serve and then – for the first time in the match – broke Billie Jean to even the score at 3-3. She held serve again for a 4-3 lead when Billie Jean tripped and fell on the court while chasing down a lob. They stayed on serve until 5-5, when Kerry lost her serve on a double fault. Billie Jean served for the match at 6-5, taking the final point at 40-15 with a serve down the middle and backhand crosscourt volley.⁴⁴

During the trophy and check presentation, Billie Jean noticed the new automobile that was about to be driven onto the court. "I'm getting a little nervous here," she laughed. "I think they're about to have a drag race." As the 1973 Ford Pinto – a bonus prize for the champion – made its entrance, Billie Jean said, "Last year when I won, my mom was disappointed that I did not give her the car. So this one's for you, mom."⁴⁵

Although the \$10,000 prize was the most money ever given to a women's singles champion at the U. S. Open, Billie Jean was not happy about it – especially since the men's singles champion was to be given \$25,000. Earlier in the week, Billie Jean said that "the prize money here disappoints me. It's really the pits – that means terrible. The women should have their own national tournament. We'd do a lot better." In the press room after the final, she said "last year, the women saved Forest Hills. This year just as many people are watching the women as the men. So why shouldn't the prize money be equal? If it isn't equal to what the men are making, then I won't play here next year and I don't think the other girls will either."⁴⁶

Billie Jean disclosed that more than forty women on the Virginia Slims Circuit, during a meeting at the tournament in Columbus, Georgia, had voted unanimously to boycott the U. S. Open in protest over the low prize money. The players were talked out of such drastic action because Virginia Slims had already committed to give the women's singles champion a new Ford automobile and had paid for a "Virginia Slims Day" during

the tournament. A boycott of the Virginia Slims Circuit players would have been embarrassing for the sponsor. “But this time,” Billie Jean said, “we’re announcing our intentions a year in advance. If we can’t get equal prize money, we’ll hold our own separate national championship. I’m not speaking for Billie Jean King, but for all the girls.” Kerry Melville, sitting nearby, nodded in agreement.⁴⁷

The following morning, Gladys had breakfast with Donald Dell, who told her that the USLTA had accepted her resignation. No longer under contractual obligations to the national association, she was free to proceed with her plans to start another tour.⁴⁸

On the Sunday, September 10 – the last day of the 1972 U. S. Open – the women’s doubles championship opened the program at 1:00 pm in front of another record crowd. Francoise Durr and Betty Stove, playing in only their second tournament as a doubles team, defeated Margaret Court and Virginia Wade to share the \$2,000 first prize. Their win was especially thrilling for Ted Tinling; Durr and Stove were the first women to win an international tennis title in colored dresses. Afterward, the losing men’s semifinalists, Cliff Richey and Tom Gorman, played a one-set third-place playoff, something that had never been done before at any major championship. Richey, a 6-4 winner, was given \$1,000 in addition to his semifinal paycheck; a third-place playoff set between Margaret Court and Chris Evert surely would have been enjoyed by the spectators, but was not offered by the tournament organizers.

On the first day of the U. S. Open, Arthur Ashe told a friend that he had “a certain feeling about this tournament.” Seeded sixth, Ashe was flawless in his quarterfinal and semifinal matches, not losing a set to Stan Smith or Cliff Richey. Against Nastase in the final, he led two sets to one and had a 4-2 lead in the fourth set. At that stage of the match, Ashe’s serve deserted him as he lost four straight games and, as Richard Evans observed for *World Tennis*, “he and Nastase and just about every spectator was aware that control of the match had shifted.” Although he broke Nastase in the opening game of the fifth set, Ashe still could not recover the rhythm on his own serve. Nastase scored the critical break to take a 4-2 lead, and three games later the title was his. Ashe was devastated by the loss, but he was able to smile during the trophy presentation and make a comment about Nastase’s on-court antics. “Ilie is a great player,” he said, “and when

he brushes up on his manners, he'll be an even better player. Maybe I ought to do the same thing.” Nastase was back on court moments later, partnering Rosie Casals in a straight set loss to Margaret Court and Marty Riessen in the mixed doubles final. It was the best-attended U. S. Open in history, with 130,010 spectators on the grounds of the West Side Tennis Club in the course of the twelve-day tournament.⁴⁹

The next day, Gladys went to the Philip Morris headquarters on Park Avenue and asked Ellen Merlo, assistant brand manager for Virginia Slims, if she could use the services of a secretary. She had a hand-written player contract for a women's circuit she wanted to run in 1973, which she needed typed and photocopied.⁵⁰ After the contract was typed and copies were made, Gladys flew to Charlotte, North Carolina for the next stop on the Virginia Slims Circuit.

The \$40,000 Four Roses Premium Classic – sponsored by the Four Roses bourbon company – was played at the Olde Providence Racquet Club, a spectacular facility that boasted eighteen tennis courts, a ten-acre parking lot, and the 7500-seat Julian J. Clarke Stadium. Tournament director Cliff Turner had been running USLTA prize money events in Charlotte since the late 1960s, and the Olde Providence Racquet Club was the site of the United States-Romania Davis Cup final in 1971. After the Virginia Slims Circuit made peace with the USLTA in early 1972, Turner decided to host the women professionals. It was the first appearance in Charlotte for many of the players, although Margaret Court knew the place well; two years earlier, after completing the Grand Slam, she was beaten in the semifinals by 15-year-old Chris Evert.

Gladys arrived in Charlotte early in the week and distributed the contracts to the players. She made it clear that her proposed 1973 circuit would not be affiliated with the USLTA, and she had no intention of paying sanction fees or seeking approval from the national association or the ILTF. As a result, as Gladys and the players were well aware, there was a chance that the participants on the non-sanctioned circuit would not be allowed to play in USLTA or ILTF events, such Wimbledon and the U. S. Open. The contract required a player to compete in all eighteen tournaments of the proposed tour – barring injury or illness – and a player could not play in another tournament or exhibition, or give an instructional clinic, during the same week as a tour event. Each tournament on

the circuit would have minimum prize money of \$25,000, and any player would be excused from the circuit if she wanted to play in her country's national championships. The circuit would have two segments – a winter-spring portion that would run from January through May, and a summer-fall portion that would run from August through October. The contract also guaranteed housing at each tournament.⁵¹

Since the proposed 1973 tour would not pay sanction fees to the USLTA or ILTF, and it would not be part of the ILTF Commercial Union Grand Prix, Gladys decided to keep those fees and use them for tour expenses. Each tournament director would be assessed \$1,000, an amount equivalent to what they would have paid for USLTA and ILTF sanctions. In addition, the tour would keep 10% of each player's prize money, the same amount of money that would have been contributed to the ILTF Commercial Union Grand Prix bonus pool. Gladys told the players "to consult their lawyers, their parents, their friends" before signing the contract, but she needed to have a decision by October 1. Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals and Margaret Court wanted to review their contracts in more detail; Julie Heldman and Nancy Richey Gunter, however, signed theirs immediately.⁵²

Gladys then called Ron Bookman, the associate editor of *World Tennis*, and in the next twenty-four hours they telephoned two dozen tournament directors, asking each one to commit to holding an event on the 1973 tour. Gladys and Bookman let each tournament director know that the new tour would not work with the USLTA and would not seek any sanction approvals.⁵³ Unaware of Gladys' plans, Walter Elcock sent a telegram to Cliff Turner on September 14, 1972, reassuring him that the USLTA definitely planned to continue the women's professional circuit for 1973.

*... I knew the girls were going to be at Charlotte and a number of the girls had spoken to me at Forest Hills and were wondering if we were going to have a circuit, and I just decided to make it official for them so that they would see that we intended to have a circuit.*⁵⁴

-- *Walter Elcock, 1973*

The top four seeds at Charlotte – Billie Jean King, Nancy Richey Gunter, Margaret Court and Rosie Casals – advanced to the semifinals, although it was not easy for most of them. Rosie fought off a match point against Florida teenager Kathy Kuykendall in the first round, and Nancy did the same against Wendy Overton in the quarterfinals. Billie Jean was pushed to three sets by Mona Schallau, losing the second set in a tiebreak. In the semifinals, Billie Jean dampened Rosie’s 24th birthday with another straight set win, and Margaret had little trouble with Nancy – a surprise, since the tournament was played on clay, Nancy’s favorite surface.

Billie Jean played her best tennis of the week in the final against Margaret, winning five straight games from 1-2 in the first set, and doing the same in the second. After her 6-2 6-2 win, Billie Jean was so happy with her performance – as well as the first prize of \$12,000, the richest ever offered at a women’s event – she suggested that Charlotte might be a good location for the women’s national championships. “These are probably the best facilities in the country right now,” she said. “There’s no reason why the U. S. Championships shouldn’t be held on clay.”⁵⁵

When Gladys announced the tentative summer-fall Virginia Slims Circuit schedule in early 1972, an \$18,000 tournament sponsored by British Motor Cars was planned to be staged by Larry King in Seattle the week after the Four Roses Premium Classic. Kjell Qvale, the Norwegian-born owner of the highly successful British Motor Cars import business, had sponsored Virginia Slims Circuit tournaments in San Francisco in 1971 and 1972. When the proposed tournament in Seattle did not transpire, Larry moved it to Golden Gate Fields, a racetrack owned by Qvale in Albany, California, on the windy shore of San Francisco Bay. New tennis courts were constructed for the tournament, which was called the Golden Gate Pacific Coast Classic and offered \$20,000 in prize money.

... it was held simultaneously at two different sites, on different surfaces. One site was at a race track in Oakland where you couldn’t make a phone call because of restrictions on betting. The other site was in San Francisco, and you didn’t know until the night before when the schedule was made where you would be playing.

To save money, the tournament was played with a different kind of balls, where were horrible. ⁵⁶

-- Julie Heldman, 2010

Billie Jean King, Margaret Court, Rosie Casals and Kerry Melville were the top four seeds, and they all won their opening matches handily. Francoise Durr, the fifth-seed, was not so fortunate, winning only five games in a first round lost to qualifier Kristien Kemmer. Francoise was furious because the court sloped too much; after her loss, she announced to the spectators that she was going to demolish it. She then began hacking away at the concrete surface with her aluminum racquet. “How can they build a court where the wind is so bad?” she asked later. “The court is terrible. It runs downhill. How could they build a new court like this?” ⁵⁷

Two days later, the tournament had progressed to the quarterfinals without any other major upsets. As they walked to the court for their match, Julie Heldman told Billie Jean that Larry was to blame for making the tournament the worst-run event of the year. “What did you say?” Billie Jean asked. Julie asked Billie Jean if she thought the tournament was well-organized. “Julie, there’ve been worse and there’ve been better,” Billie Jean replied, “but this deal’s sure better than not playing.”

I was furious at her for running down the tournament but even more pissed because she’d jumped on Larry. He was cool, as usual. He just sat there calm and collected and kept telling me not to get steamed up but I couldn’t help it. Julie and I spun the racket for service, and I mustered up just about the dirtiest look I could – and she wilted. I worked by buns off that match. Just played great. Julie tried everything in the book and I had an answer for it all. She won exactly two games. ⁵⁸

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Billie Jean continued her efficient play in the semifinals, losing only two games to Kerry Melville. In the final she once again faced Margaret Court, a straight-set winner

over Rosie Casals in her previous match. Billie Jean started off well, but after breaking Margaret's serve in the sixth game to take a 4-2 lead, she was only able to win one more game. Billie Jean had two break points to go ahead 5-3, but Margaret persisted and leveled the set at 4-4. Margaret then broke Billie Jean's serve in the ninth game and held in the tenth to take the set, 6-4.

Early in the second set, Billie Jean hit a drop shot that landed deeper and higher than she intended. Margaret easily tracked it down and whipped a forehand crosscourt, leaving Billie Jean motionless on the baseline. Some of the spectators thought that Billie Jean was not trying, and they began to jeer her. After that, Margaret quickly finished off the second set, 6-1, to win the first prize of \$4,000. "One minute in the second set she seemed to be trying, and the next she wasn't," Margaret told John Simmonds of the *Oakland Tribune*. "It's hard to play a player like that. In a championship match, you try for that last point. You just don't throw it away like that."⁵⁹

During the awards presentation, Billie Jean told the crowd that she was tired, and then later told reporters that she tried as best as she could. "I just didn't have anything today," she said. "I had one of those insignificant feeling days. I had a walkabout, as Evonne Goolagong would call it." When asked about the crowd's reaction early in the second set, Billie Jean explained that she "went for a drop shot and missed it and hit it too deep. They wouldn't have booed if they knew what happened."⁶⁰ With her runner-up singles prize money of \$2,500, Billie Jean was less than \$2,000 away from reaching \$100,000 in earnings for the year, a goal she was likely to reach at the next Virginia Slims Circuit event in Phoenix.

The Virginia Slims of Phoenix, played for the second year at the 22-court municipal Phoenix Tennis Center, featured \$25,000 in prize money and a strong field that included Billie Jean King, Margaret Court, Nancy Richey Gunter, Rosie Casals, Kerry Melville and Francoise Durr. On Tuesday, September 26 – the final day of the tournament's qualifying phase – tour manager Pip Jones received a telephone call from Edy McGoldrick, the U. S. Wightman Cup captain and only member of the USLTA Executive Committee.⁶¹ One week earlier, the USLTA issued a news release announcing that it would stage a women's professional circuit in 1973. The release – which was sent

to the *World Tennis* office in Houston – indicated that USLTA Sanction and Schedule Committee chairman Stan Malless was working on the schedule, and that Malless “wanted to assure the women players that their tournament circuit would continue ... it should be comforting for the sponsors to know all girls are free and welcome to play in any, or all, events on this circuit.”⁶² McGoldrick, as well as the other USLTA officials, was unaware that Gladys was already planning to start her own tour in 1973.

*She said she wanted to come down to address a meeting of the girls, and would I be kind enough to set a meeting up. I said I was not sure I could do so because it was the middle of a very big tournament, that tennis players don't like to get involved in meetings during a tournament, but I would see what I could do. I advised Mrs. Heldman of the position, and she said she would like the meeting set up, if it were possible. I went down to the club – I had spoken (to McGoldrick) from the hotel – and spoke to the girls who all said yes, by all means, let us have a meeting. I fixed the meeting up with the tournament director for the following morning so that it would not interfere too much with the tournament. I went back to my hotel and phoned Mrs. McGoldrick at her home to find out where I could locate her. Having got the telephone number, I telephoned the hotel to which she was going and left a message that I had set up the meeting for the following morning.*⁶³

-- Pip Jones, 1973

The next morning, Pip was very surprised to see Malless arrive at the Phoenix Tennis Center with McGoldrick. Malless told the gathering of thirty players (which did not include Billie Jean King) about the women's prize money tournaments that the USLTA was going to stage in 1973, and he wanted the players to participate in them. As Malless distributed copies of the news release and list of tournaments, Julie Heldman called the documents “ridiculous.” She, and several other players, noted that schedule was simply a copy of an outdated, tentative 1973 Virginia Slims schedule that Gladys had been working on a few months earlier. Several of the tournaments listed – including

those in San Francisco, Long Beach and Richmond – had been with Gladys for two years and had no intention of aligning with any circuit proposed by the USLTA.⁶⁴

It was then that McGoldrick and Malless realized that Gladys was planning to run her own tour in 1973. Pip told the players that anyone who had already committed to Gladys would be released from their contracts if they wanted to play on the USLTA circuit. No one accepted the offer, and Valerie Ziegenfuss spoke for many of the players when she stated that she did not trust the USLTA to keep its word. After their hostile reception, Malless and McGoldrick returned home and told Walter Elcock what had transpired.

*When Mrs. McGoldrick and Mr. Malless came back from Phoenix, they reported to me. That was the first of my knowledge that Mrs. Heldman was back in business.*⁶⁵

-- Walter Elcock, 1973

As most would have expected, Billie Jean King and Margaret Court advanced to the singles final on Sunday, October 1, without much difficulty. In front of 4,100 spectators – the largest crowd to ever watch a tennis match in Arizona – and in temperatures that reached 112 degrees, Margaret jumped ahead 5-3 in the first set. Billie Jean held serve and got her break back in the tenth game to level at 5-5, and two games later she won the tiebreak, 5-3. Margaret opened another lead in the second set to go ahead 3-2, but Billie Jean secured breaks in the seventh and ninth games to wrap up the match, 7-6 6-3. Exhausted after the match, Billie Jean felt the difference was my greater mobility and my return of her service was better. Margaret has such a long reach just by taking one step, so I have to be quicker.”⁶⁶

The semifinal and final round matches were televised nationally on PBS, and the tournament organizers angered Virginia Slims executives when the sponsor’s banners were taken down from view just before the live broadcast began.⁶⁷ Billie Jean once again passed the \$100,000 prize money mark in Phoenix, just as she had done the previous year, this time by winning her semifinal singles match against Rosie Casals.

Before the singles final on Sunday, Margaret gave Pip an executed copy of the WITF contract, agreeing to play on Gladys' proposed circuit in 1973.⁶⁸

Gladys included a clause in the contract stating if she did not get at least two of the world's top four players – Billie Jean King, Evonne Goolagong, Chris Evert and Margaret Court – to sign by October 1, 1972, she had the option of canceling everyone's contract and not proceed with the tour. Billie Jean had signed earlier, even though she requested an exception to the requirement that everyone needed to play in all eighteen planned tournaments; she wanted to include a "mental fatigue" clause that would enable her take some time off, but Gladys was advised by her attorney against making any revisions. Nevertheless, Billie Jean signed the contract, and when Margaret committed to play on the 1973 tour, Gladys was ready to make the announcement.⁶⁹

From the *World Tennis* office in Houston on Monday, October 2, Gladys distributed a news release officially announcing the formation of the Women's International Tennis Federation. A revision of the Women's Player Association that was organized for the women players earlier in the year, the WITF was intended to be a ruling body. Gladys envisioned the WITF would work in cooperation with, but not under, the USLTA and ILTF. In that regard, the WITF would stage its own tournaments and schedule them around the world's major championships, the Wightman Cup and the Federation Cup; it would not, however, pay sanction fees to the USLTA or ILTF. Gladys announced that twenty-two players had agreed to play for the WITF, including Billie Jean King and Margaret Court. The association planned to have eighteen tournaments in 1973: thirteen events from January through May would offer total prize money of \$410,000, followed by an additional five tournaments between July and October. The highlight of the circuit's first segment would be an \$80,000 tournament in Hilton Head, South Carolina, sponsored by *Family Circle* magazine. "It isn't a war of women against men," Gladys told Neil Amdur of the *New York Times*. "It's a war against a few officials who have simply been too tough."⁷⁰

After learning about the formation of the WITF from Edy McGoldrick and Stan Malless, and after reading about it in the newspaper, Walter Elcock telephoned Gladys to set up a meeting the next time she was in New York.

*I arranged it. I called Mrs. Heldman. Mrs. McGoldrick had told me that she had been talking with Mrs. Heldman, and Mrs. Heldman had indicated that nobody from the USLTA had been communicating with her, so I called Mrs. Heldman and asked her if she would be kind enough to have dinner with Mrs. McGoldrick and myself. She said she certainly would, and we had a very nice talk on the telephone. At that time she said she really did not want any war, that she would just like the USLTA to let her go her own way and (she would) sanction her own tournaments.*⁷¹

-- Walter Elcock, 1973

They agreed to meet for dinner on the evening of Friday, October 6, the same day that Elcock had scheduled a meeting with a dozen tournament directors at the Admiral's Club in LaGuardia Airport in New York to discuss plans for the 1973 USLTA circuit.

I had asked Mr. Malless to arrange to have his meeting and the first time that he made some calls to get some people, they could not be available ... We had planned to have it at Forest Hills, but we couldn't get the information that we wanted. The incentive for the meeting was to go over the schedule, to get commitments from the tournament organizers ... I got up and gave a brief history of the agreement that the United States Lawn Tennis Association had had with Mrs. Heldman which commenced in February of 1972 when we were out in Houston, and I brought them up to date and told them of her resignation, and I believe I read the article from her magazine where she stated that she was turning everything back to the USLTA and hoped that we would carry forward as well as we could ... We had a great deal of discussion with the tournament directors as to how we could reach an accord, or how I could reach an accord with Mrs. Heldman so that there couldn't be this terrible split ... These tournament managers wanted to have all the girls play and they urged me to try and work with Mrs. Heldman to solve this problem ... I told them that Mrs. Heldman had

*told me on the telephone that they (her tournaments) would not be sanctioned by the USLTA.*⁷²

-- *Walter Elcock, 1973*

The meeting included Elcock, Stan Malless, Edy McGoldrick, USLTA assistant executive director Michael Burns, USLTA publicist Preston Hadley, and numerous past and potential tournament directors. Myles Johns, the chairman of the Virginia Slims Masters tournament in St. Petersburg, Florida, took personal notes during the meeting and subsequently included them in a letter that was published in *World Tennis*. Johns noted that Elcock told him the purpose of the meeting was to decide “what to do about Gladys Heldman’s unauthorized, improper and unsanctioned proposed tour.” According to Johns, Elcock stated that “contract girls will be suspended exactly like Hunt’s men were suspended,” and “no compromise can be worked out with Gladys’ group.”⁷³

Elcock asked if there were any questions, and Gardnar Mulloy – the former American champion who started *World Tennis* magazine with Gladys in 1953, and planned to stage a USLTA women’s prize money event in Miami, Florida – told the other attendees that he “knew Gladys Heldman well. I was her former business partner. She won’t take this lying down. The penalties must be directed against the women players, and a suspension for three or four months won’t be sufficient. The suspension must be for at least one or two years, and they must be publicly announced quickly so that the girls won’t sign with Gladys Heldman.”⁷⁴ After a whispered conversation with Elcock, Malless announced that the USLTA “will immediately suspend anybody who signs up with Gladys Heldman as a contract professional. We will not give sanctions to Gladys Heldman’s group. Anyone who plays in one of Gladys Heldman’s tournaments will be suspended and will not be allowed to appeal until January 1, 1975.” After more discussion, the tournament directors were asked if they planned to commit to the USLTA tour or the Virginia Slims Circuit in 1973. All responded that they would align with the USLTA; Johns also agreed to do so, on several conditions, including the guaranteed appearances of Chris Evert and Evonne Goolagong, which Elcock had promised.⁷⁵

Later that evening, Elcock and McGoldrick went to Gladys' apartment in Manhattan. Joe Cullman was there when they arrived, and the four of them had cocktails.

At Mrs. Heldman's apartment, to my recollection, it was nothing but social. She offered us a cocktail and she showed us her new apartment, and was most gracious. ⁷⁶

-- Walter Elcock, 1973

They then went to dinner at the exclusive Sky Club restaurant, in the Pan Am Building on Park Avenue, where Virginia Slims brand manager John Granville joined them. Elcock then summarized what happened at the Admiral's Club meeting earlier that day.

Basically he said that in the future any problems that we had during the preceding few months could be resolved and that we could all work together. He then said that he had a meeting that morning, and this was a warm and very friendly meeting ... He said that he had called the meeting to advise those tournament directors that there were certain rules and regulations in the constitution of the USLTA, to advise them that there would be a USLTA circuit, to invite them to work with the USLTA on that circuit, to advise them not to work with anybody who might put on a non-sanctioned tournament, and that furthermore he had got the support of the overwhelming majority of people for that particular position ... He told us that there were certain rules of the USLTA constitution which required that if the girls played on the (Heldman) circuit, if it were not to be sanctioned, then they would be disbarred or locked out of USLTA tournaments. ⁷⁷

-- John Granville, 1973

Mrs. Heldman did most of the talking at the dinner. We discussed the various problems, we discussed the meeting that we had out at LaGuardia. I told them that some of the tournament managers were present at that meeting and they had

*indicated that they were going to go with the USLTA and promote sanctioned tournaments. I told Mrs. Heldman some of the people who were there, and she seemed quite amazed that some of these people had agreed to go with the USLTA. I talked about the fact that the Virginia Slims or Mr. Granville had repeatedly indicated to me and to Mrs. McGoldrick that the Philip Morris company would go with wherever the girls went ... and Mr Cullman asked, "Where did you hear that?"*⁷⁸

-- Walter Elcock, 1973

Before Elcock could answer, Gladys said to Cullman, "Tell him, Joe. Tell him, Joe." Elcock was confused and wanted to know what had just transpired, but Cullman wanted to change the topic of conversation. Gladys then asked, "Joe, have I ever lied to you?" Cullman agreed that Gladys had never lied to him, "but neither has Walter Elcock." After an awkward silence, Cullman continued with the subject, asking Elcock who told him that Virginia Slims would sponsor whichever circuit the women wanted to support as a group. Elcock said he was told so by John Granville, and Cullman responded, "Well, that's not true. Philip Morris was always going to go with Gladys."⁷⁹

*... I said, "if I had known this, I wouldn't have been trying to work this out and I would have been out trying to get other sponsors for our tournaments, but I have been acting in good faith, hoping that you would go wherever the girls went."*⁸⁰

-- Walter Elcock, 1973

For her upcoming circuit, instead of paying the standard USLTA sanction fee of 6% of total prize money, Gladys offered Elcock a flat sum of \$20,000 if the national association would leave her alone. "If that's not enough," Cullman said, "I will throw some more in."⁸¹

I said it wasn't a matter of money. I said all I wanted was the tournaments to pay the legitimate sanction fee. What I was mostly interested in was having them live

*up to the rules and the bylaws of the USLTA. It was not a matter of money. I was not trying to be bought off ... As we were about to leave, I think Mrs. McGoldrick and Mrs. Heldman excused themselves, and Mr. Cullman paid the check, and we walked over and looked out the window, and he put his arm around me and said, "Walter, we have got to try to work this thing out and we should try to do it at Boca Raton." He asked me not to release any press statements or anything until we met at Boca Raton. He offered to fly me to Boca Raton in his private plane.*⁸²
-- Walter Elcock, 1973

The next day, qualifying matches at the \$100,000 Virginia Slims Championships in Boca Raton, Florida started. From a qualifying field of forty players, eight survivors earned a spot in the first round of the preliminary draw, where eight other higher-ranked women were already placed. After two rounds of preliminary matches, the four remaining women earned spots in the championship draw, where they competed against the top stars such as Billie Jean King, Nancy Richey Gunter, Margaret Court, Kerry Melville, Rosie Casals, and Francoise Durr.

The Virginia Slims Championships featured a record amount of total prize money ever offered for a women's tournament, and the \$25,000 first prize was historical as well. Players who lost in the earlier rounds also received unprecedented amounts of money; a first round loser in the championship draw earned \$2,000, a player who lost in the final phase of the preliminary round was given \$1,000, and first round losers in the qualifying draw were paid \$125.

Although there were many accomplished players in the qualifying and preliminary draws – including Kristien Kemmer, Jill Cooper, Betty Stove, Kerry Harris and Pam Teeguarden – it was the presence of numerous Florida teenagers that received the most interest among spectators. Foremost among these were Laurie Fleming and Jeanne Evert, Chris' 15-year-old sister who defeated Rosie Casals in Fort Lauderdale earlier in the year. Laurie and Jeanne won two matches in the qualifying tournament on Saturday and Sunday to earn spots in Monday's preliminary phase. On Sunday, spectators also enjoyed a doubles exhibition between Billie Jean King and Ann Jones

against Chris Evert and Margaret Court. Ann had stopped playing on the tour in the spring of 1971 when she became pregnant; after the birth of her child, she traveled on the Virginia Slims Circuit with her husband Pip, the tour manager. Ann came out of retirement to play doubles with Billie Jean in Albany and Phoenix; she was, however, three months pregnant, and after the completion of the tournament in Boca Raton, she and Pip planned to retire to their home in Birmingham, England and no longer travel on the circuit.

Chris Smith, the sportswriter for the *Palm Beach Post*, came to watch the qualifying matches and doubles exhibition on Sunday and spoke with Gladys, who was happy to talk about tennis politics. “The United States Lawn Tennis Association is dominated by men and they want to make all the decisions concerning women’s professional tennis,” Gladys said. “They want to tell us when and where we can play. They threaten our players with suspension.” Referring to the formation of the WITF, Gladys reasoned that “all we want to do is govern ourselves. The USLTA wanted to suspend all the girls who played in the Boca tournament, but didn’t.” She told Smith that she was planning to meet with USLTA vice president Walter Elcock on Tuesday and “was willing to donate \$20,000 for the year as our sanction fee. If he won’t accept that, then I guess he’ll have to suspend the girls.” Gladys explained that the USLTA would have limited power if Chris Evert joined the WITF. “If Chris decides to go with us,” she said, “I don’t think there’ll be any suspensions.”⁸³

The next day, while Laurie and Jeanne were winning their first-round preliminary matches, Bob Getz of the *Boca Raton News* spoke with Gladys, Pip and several players. Referring to the formation of the Women’s International Tennis Federation, Gladys told Getz that “we’ll probably get recognition for our women’s federation sooner or later. I’m very optimistic. What we want to do is hold our circuit on the same weeks we had last year and this year. We’ll play in their tournaments.”⁸⁴ Pip agreed, adding that the USLTA want to “take it over. We’d still like to work with the USLTA, you must have an overriding authority. What we really want is to run our own circuit our own way and we want their blessings.”⁸⁵ Knowing that Walter Elcock was coming to Boca Raton to speak with the women about playing on the proposed USLTA circuit in 1973, Billie Jean

predicted that the women players would not be intimidated if the national association threatened to suspend them or barred them from the world's major championships.

Margaret Court agreed with Billie Jean, but realized that possible exclusion from Wimbledon and the U. S. Open would be a difficult proposition for some players. "To the young ones, like Chris and Evonne, who are playing for fun, it is hard," Margaret said. "They are playing for the love of the game. They'd like to win Wimbledon. I have stood by the USLTA in the past because I thought they were going to do something for women's tennis and up the prize money, but they didn't do anything." Chris, the most appealing tennis player in the world, was suddenly the most prized possession in the developing battle between Gladys and the USLTA. "If Chris joined us," Margaret said, "then the USLTA would have to change."⁸⁶

Chris had no desire to be a pawn in a power struggle. "I wish they would get together," she said about the USLTA and the WITF. "I like both groups, and I think both groups feel confident I'll join their group. We're still learning new things about what will happen between the two groups, so I can't really decide anything yet. There's pressure on me to go against the USLTA, but I don't want to if I can avoid it. It wouldn't be good at all to join the women's (WITF) tour and not get to play the big tournaments. I've talked to Billie Jean, and I agree with everything about the tour except not being able to play Wimbledon and Forest Hills. To her, Wimbledon and Forest Hills don't matter that much anymore, since she's won both of them so many times. But I never have. To me, they're the most prestigious tournaments, and they're what I've worked for. I haven't talked to anyone from the USLTA. Anyway, I don't have to make up my mind until my birthday. It's mine, Jeanne's and Laurie's decision. It is not Billie Jean's decision."⁸⁷ Chris did not need to make her decision for several months, on her eighteenth birthday on December 21 – the earliest date that USLTA regulations would allow her to become a professional.

Walter Elcock and Edy McGoldrick arrived in Boca Raton on Tuesday, October 10. To their surprise, no meeting with the players had been set up, which was the whole purpose of their trip to Florida.

I asked to have a meeting for the girls, and when I arrived at Boca Raton, I found that the meeting had not been set up. I was in having lunch with Mrs. McGoldrick, and Mrs. Heldman came in and I believe she was accompanied by Mr. Jones. They sat down and had lunch with us or a drink, or something like that, and we discussed the problems, and I still asked her to sanction the tournaments, and she said there was no way, as she told me previously, the night of the Sky Club meeting, there was no way she was going to have her tournaments sanctioned by the USLTA. ⁸⁸

-- Walter Elcock, 1973

Later that day, Gladys told Ron Smith of the *Palm Beach Post* that she offered Elcock “a compromise, and I’m still willing to settle for a compromise,” referring to her previous offer to pay the USLTA a sum of \$20,000 if the national association did not interfere with her circuit. The cash offer, however, had a condition attached – Gladys insisted that it be used for junior development programs. “I even suggested he go to the girls,” she said. “He says he has an offer, but I sure can’t find out what it is.” ⁸⁹

Walter Elcock was getting increasingly frustrated with Gladys. “She made a compromise and I simply had no authority to accept,” he told Smith. “I would like to talk to the girls. They’re doing everything to prevent me from having that meeting, at least so it appears.” ⁹⁰ Eventually, a meeting with the players was arranged for Wednesday morning. “It’s strictly up to the girls,” Gladys said about whether or not any players would attend. “At 10:30 am we’ll see if they show. Maybe he’ll tell the girls privately what that offer is. Or maybe they’ll sue me again. Oh well, thank God they abolished the electric chair.” ⁹¹

Unlike USLTA president Bob Colwell, Elcock had no interest in negotiating with Gladys about money. He had come to Florida to convince Gladys to get the tournaments on her upcoming circuit sanctioned by the USLTA, and if that failed, to ask the women professionals to consider playing on the proposed USLTA tour. Looking ahead to the player meeting the following day, Elcock said he was “not interested in banning anyone. If they play in unsanctioned tournaments, it is a problem. I just hope to tell the girls

what the USLTA is going to do for them in 1973. I'm not going there to plead." Elcock also said that Gladys' plans to control women's professional tennis, and her desire to become independent of the USLTA and ILTF, was not an option.⁹²

Billie Jean was skeptical when she was told that the proposed USLTA tour would have fourteen to sixteen events during the winter and spring, with prize money at each tournament ranging from \$20,000 to \$75,000. "Where are they going to get one million dollars?" she asked. "That's what we're going to have." Asked if she would play on the USLTA tour if it offered prize money equal to the Virginia Slims Circuit, Billie Jean replied, "No way."⁹³

As Gladys and Elcock stated their positions to the press on Tuesday, the final round of preliminary matches were being played on the Boca Raton Hotel courts. Betty Stove and Wendy Gilchrist won their matches to qualify for the championship flight, and Laurie Fleming and Jeanne Evert delighted the audience with their victories as well. Jeanne wore down British player Jill Cooper on the stadium court in a two-hour match that featured interminable rallies; Julie Heldman observed that "three spectators walked out to get a beer, drank it and returned to find the point was still going on."⁹⁴ Since the tournament was played on slow clay, and the temperatures were excessively high during the qualifying and preliminary rounds, physical conditioning became an important factor.

Margaret Court watched the match between Jeanne and Jill, since she knew she was scheduled to play the winner the following day. In between the long rallies, Margaret told Ron Smith of the *Palm Beach Post* that the Evert sisters "are something else. I think they have very similar styles, but of course Chris is better at this point. She is probably more agile on the court. Who knows what the situation will be in a few years." After her 6-4 6-4 win, Jeanne was asked about her upcoming match with Margaret. "Oh, forget it," she said. "She's great. I guess I'll have to ask my sister about her. She's played her before."⁹⁵

The following morning, about twenty players attended the meeting with Walter Elcock. Also present were Gladys, Pip, Edy McGoldrick, Forrest Hainline, the vice president and general counsel of the American Motors Corporation who volunteered as the chairman of the USLTA Disciplinary Committee, Jack Smith, the Director of Sports

Information for Philip Morris, and C. Frederick Leydig, Gladys' attorney who drafted the WITF player contract.

*I told the girls that when Mrs. McGoldrick came back from Phoenix, that she had asked me to come down to Boca Raton to talk to them directly, to tell them officially that the United States Lawn Tennis Association would be having a winter tour for the women, and I told them of some of the tournament places that had indicated they wished to sponsor our tournaments ... The girls had every right to do what they wanted to do. They could go off on their own and not come under the jurisdiction of the USLTA or that they could stay within the bounds of the USLTA. The decision was not one that we were to force upon them but was one that they were to make themselves. It was their decision. We hoped that they would stay within the national organization which had been in business since 1881.*⁹⁶

-- Walter Elcock, 1973

We met with the women players out on the patio by a restaurant there, and after some preliminary remarks by Mr. Elcock, he introduced me for the purpose of discussing the application of USLTA rules to professional tennis players ... I pointed out that the particular women players there had every right, which I understand they wanted to do, of in effect leaving the USLTA, forming their own league, so to speak, playing tennis for money just as the men had done several years before, the World Championship Tennis group ... I pointed out to the women players that if they elected to leave the USLTA, that they would then become what are generally known as contract professionals ... that is, professionals who play for money and do not accept the jurisdiction of the national association ... just as the men had done, and that when they did this, then they would become ineligible to participate in tournaments sanctioned by their respective national associations unless those tournaments were sanctioned as open to all categories ... I explained to them that as far as whether a particular

country had an “open-to-all categories tournament,” that was a decision for the respective countries to make. It was my understanding at that time, and based on the questions asked, that the women players were really concerned about the national championships, our USLTA championships at Forest Hills and Wimbledon. One of the girls was an Irish girl and she was concerned about the Irish championships. They realized that if they formed their own league, that they would not and could not play in our sanctioned tournaments unless they were open-to-all categories, and whether or not Forest Hills or Wimbledon would be open-to-all was a decision that had not been made, that I would not be participating in such decisions, that it was up to the national associations to make that decision, and so no promises could be made, and what I did want to point out was that if that is what they wanted to do, if they did leave, and if they, in effect, said “We are (contract) professionals,” my committee would have no further business with them. My committee acts only, really, when we are dealing with people that we have jurisdiction over ... I explained that if they wished to come back into the fold, so to speak, that there was a reinstatement process, that the management committee had the right to reinstate following recommendations by my committee as a hearing by my committee in connection with the matter... As I recall, when I was explaining the reinstatement process, I took the time to explain that each case would be judged individually, that no two situations would be alike. And then, at that point, Mrs. King from her chair in the back – I thought at that time facetiously – stated, “Yes, they would probably keep me out for life,” and everybody laughed, and that was the only time that that subject was mentioned during the course of that meeting.⁹⁷

-- Forrest Hainline, 1973

... in the café on the grounds where the tournament was being held, at a rather inconvenient time of the day because the tournament was still going on ... (Walter Elcock) produced a schedule of what he said were tournaments which had been set up, which were not exactly the same as those produced by Mr. Malless (in

*Phoenix) two weeks before, because in several instances the tournament was not named. The date was given and it was marked "to be announced" ... Mr. Elcock read out the list of the tournaments that he said had been arranged by the USLTA, and was immediately challenged by Mrs. Heldman who said that it was untrue to say that some of them were agreed to go to the USLTA, that they were still her tournaments. I remember that distinctly ... (Elcock) maintained that in spite of what Mrs. Heldman said, that he was still telling the truth ... Mrs. Heldman said that it was untrue to say that Mr. Dell (tournament director in Washington, D. C.) or Mr. Benton (tournament director in Denver) had canceled. Mr. Elcock said it was true. He had confirmed it. Immediately after the meeting was over, Mr. Smith of Philip Morris told me had been in conversation with Benton.*⁹⁸

-- Pip Jones, 1973

*Mr. Elcock started out the meeting by talking and telling us about the circuit they had formed, and we found that we had conflicting tournaments. We didn't know who was really holding them after we saw the tentative schedule by the USLTA. He read some telegrams off, stating which tournaments had been affirmed. I think there were approximately eight tournaments. Also, we talked about suspension, and I pointed my question to either him or Mr. Hainline ... I said, "Is it true or not that if we should play on an Virginia Slims tour or women's pro tour, that Rosie Casals and I would be suspended for life and the other girls would be suspended for some undetermined amount of time?" And they said, "Yes, you would be." Mr. Hainline (indicated) that the ILTF would go along with whatever the USLTA decided. He also stated the ILTF was really going to get tough (in) 1973, and they were not going to have any open tournaments, and that we would be contract pros and therefore would be unable to compete in the French, Wimbledon and the U. S. Open, which would no longer be called the U. S. Open.*⁹⁹

-- Billie Jean King, 1973

The meeting with Elcock was not productive, and the players turned their attention back to the tournament. The 16-player championship flight began at noon on Wednesday, and the extreme heat had not subsided. After Kerry Melville lost only one game to Valerie Ziegenfuss in the opening match, Margaret Court must have had a feeling of déjà-vu when she took the court against 15-year old Jeanne Evert. Two years earlier, Margaret lost to another 15-year old Evert, when Chris beat her on a clay court in Charlotte, North Carolina. In that match, Margaret repeatedly rushed the net and was consistently passed by Chris. This time, against Jeanne, Margaret played more cautiously and remained on the baseline and waited for the right time to attack. Margaret led 4-1 in the first set, but she started to get tense as Jeanne retrieved the Australian's best shots, tossing up lobs to get back into position and threading the needle with passing shots. The first set went to a tiebreak, which Margaret should have won since she was serving at 3-1, only two points away from the set. Margaret was still gripped by nerves, and Jeanne surprised herself and the spectators by winning the tiebreak on the 4-4 sudden death point.

Margaret regained control of her nerves in the second set, winning it 6-2, but the energy she expended in the lengthy first set – chasing balls up and down the court, and from side to side, in the excruciating heat – had taken a toll on her. At 4-1 in the third set, the crowd watch in stunned silence at Margaret suddenly went down on one knee and rubbed her thigh. She slowly stood up, shaking her leg to alleviate a muscle cramp. She acknowledged that she could continue, and she proceeded to hold serve to led 5-1. Jeanne won the next game, and the players walked toward the umpire's chair for the one-minute changeover break.

Serving for the match at 5-2, Margaret could only wave in futility as Jeanne won the first point of the game with a drop shot. She dropped her racquet, limped to the sidelines and sprawled out in one of the courtside chairs. After it became apparent that Margaret was unable to continue, the umpire announced that Jeanne had won the match by default. "I started to get cramps and I couldn't hang onto my racquet," Margaret said as her husband Barry massaged her leg. "It was just one of those days. I started having the cramps in the middle of the second set, so I was trying to drop shot her so I wouldn't

have to run so much.”¹⁰⁰ When she was finally able to get on her feet, Margaret and Barry quickly left for the hotel on a golf cart.

Jeanne had mixed emotions about her victory. “I was disappointed for her,” she said after the match. “I know how she felt, even though it’s never happened to me. She had the match. She would’ve won the third set easily. It really isn’t a win in my book.” A reporter asked Jeanne if she thought it was unsportsmanlike to hit a drop shot against an opponent who was clearly suffering. Jeanne raised her eyebrows and asked in astonishment, “What else would *you* have done?”¹⁰¹

Later, a controversy developed when it was announced that Margaret would be given second-round prize money of \$4,000 instead of the first-round loser’s pay of \$2,000. Since Jeanne was an amateur, she could not collect any prize money, so the tournament organizers still came out ahead by \$2,000. Some of the players felt there was a double standard; in the third round of the qualifying tournament, Patty Ann Reese was forced to retire during her match against amateur Kathy Kuykendall due to muscle cramps, yet she was not awarded the winner’s prize money.¹⁰²

Margaret’s loss to Jeanne was not the only upset of the day. After Françoise Durr defeated Julie Heldman, 6-2 6-2, Betty Stove outplayed second-seeded Nancy Richey Gunter with a stream of drop shots and overpowering serves and groundstrokes that hit the lines. “I tried to make her run a lot,” said Betty after the 6-3 7-6 win, “and I think she ran an awful lot.” The score might not have been so close in the second set if Betty had been more consistent with her serve, committing ten double faults. “I’m very happy,” she said between hugs from friends. “She started to read my drop shots there in the second set, but I think the wind bothered her. I know it bothered my serves.”¹⁰³

On Thursday, October 12, Myles Johns, the tournament chairman of the Masters Invitational in St. Petersburg, announced that his tournament committee decided to stay with the Virginia Slims Circuit in 1973, instead of becoming part of the proposed USLTA circuit. Johns said his event would stay with Gladys because she “has most of the top women stars under contract.” The committee hoped that Gladys and the USLTA would settle their differences, allowing the tournament to receive a sanction approval. If staged as an unsanctioned event, the \$25,000 tournament would not be able to include

amateurs and local junior players, as is had done for years. Johns announced that Barnett Bank had agreed to provide \$14,000 for title sponsorship, and Virginia Slims would contribute \$1,000 plus \$3,000 for player expenses. He also stated that the new sponsorship guaranteed the “continued success for a tournament which has enjoyed nothing but increasing success since going with the women pros two years ago.”¹⁰⁴ That success, however, was due in large part to the presence of Chris Evert, and the tournament officials in St. Petersburg were hopeful that Chris would be able to play in it again.

That same day, the four remaining first-round matches in the championship flight were played. A heavy morning rain soaked the clay courts, and the afternoon matches were played under threatening skies and heavy winds. Light rain showers fell several times throughout the day, but it was not enough to stop play. Rosie Casals became the next upset victim, losing to Karen Krantzcke, a powerful Australian who was rarely consistent enough to stay in a long rally. Against Rosie, Karen carefully returned every shot, hit an occasional drop shot and was effective with her passing shots. Rosie was unable to compensate for the wind, and the rain-soaked court made the playing conditions even slower than usual. Serving for the match, Karen suddenly got nervous but quickly recovered in the next game to win, 6-4 6-4 – her first win over Rosie in two years.

After Billie Jean lost only two games to Lesley Hunt, she talked about the surprising losses of Margaret, Nancy and Rosie. “I can’t believe what’s happening here!” she told Bob Getz of the *Boca Raton News*. “I think I’ll quit now and go home,” she joked. “I’m just happy to win my first day ... I guess I’m the first seed to make it. But I think Lesley’s had mono the last five weeks.”¹⁰⁵ Chris Evert was also amazed at the losses of so many top players. “Three of the top seeds! Wow!” she exclaimed after beating her friend, Laurie Fleming, 6-1 6-1. “I was aware of the upsets before I played, and I was determined to not let it happen to me.”¹⁰⁶

In Friday’s quarterfinals, Kerry Melville ended the dream run of Jeanne Evert by hitting drop shots at every opportunity and then passing the teenager with her powerful forehand. “I’m very happy,” Kerry said. “I don’t use drop shots very often, so the first set I knew what I had to do. So, it was just a matter of doing it.”¹⁰⁷ Francoise Durr lost

the first set of her match to Betty Stove, her doubles partner and best friend on the tour. Betty reached 5-2 in the second before Francoise tied the set at 6-6, won the tiebreak, and then sailed through the third set 6-1. “She was playing so well in the first set, there was nothing I could do,” Francoise explained after the match. “When she’s playing well, she can beat anyone. I’m so happy to be in the semis, I don’t know what I’ll do.” By reaching the semifinals, Francoise was guaranteed at least \$7,000.¹⁰⁸

Billie Jean and Chris also won their quarterfinal matches to set up a semifinal meeting on Saturday. “Billie Jean is the best in the world,” Chris said, “but I have had a lot of success against her on clay. But, I haven’t played her this summer. I think I’ll have about a fifty-fifty chance.”¹⁰⁹ Actually, Chris was highly favored to win the match; although Billie Jean won on grass at Forest Hills and indoors at Dallas, she lost all three of the matches she played against Chris on clay.

Before Saturday’s semifinal matches, Gladys announced the details of the 1973 Virginia Slims Circuit (Table 11.1). The tournaments that were previously held in Oklahoma City, Dallas, and San Juan were no longer on the schedule, and new events in San Diego and Akron were added. All thirteen tournaments in the winter-spring segment of the circuit would have minimum prize money of \$25,000 each, culminating with the \$80,000 Family Circle Cup at Sea Pines Plantation on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, to be televised on NBC Television. Sea Pines Plantation was also the location for the CBS Tennis Classic, a men’s WCT tournament that was first televised in 1972 and offered \$47,500 in prize money.

Jack Jones was a Los Angeles businessman who came up with the idea of having a big tennis event. Jack asked John Moreno, a member of his club – the Riviera Tennis Club in Pacific Palisades, California – and a former junior tennis player who was nationally ranked, if he had any contacts. John used to compete against my father in the juniors, and knew my mother, so he immediately called her, and they flew down to Houston to meet with her ... Jack and Johnny did something creative for TV coverage. Instead of having NBC sell the commercials, they

*bought the air time on NBC and sold the commercials themselves.*¹¹⁰

-- Julie Heldman, 2011

*We thought we would make the prize money significantly higher than anything in tennis for men or women, and also put it on network television ... This put women on the map as far as prize money went.*¹¹¹

-- Jack Jones, 1992

Table 11.1 - 1973 WITF/Virginia Slims Circuit

Week of:	Location	Main Sponsor	Prize Money
January 14	San Francisco CA	British Motor Cars	\$25,000
January 21	San Diego CA	British Motor Cars	\$25,000
January 28	Washington DC	Virginia Slims	\$25,000
February 4	Fort Lauderdale FL	Barnett Bank	\$25,000
February 11			
February 18	Indianapolis IN	American Fletcher National Bank	\$25,000
February 25	Birmingham MI	Junior League of Birmingham	\$25,000
March 4	Akron OH	Junior League of Akron	\$35,000
March 11	Richmond VA	Virginia Slims	\$25,000
March 18			
March 25	Tucson AZ	Virginia Slims	\$25,000
April 1	Philadelphia PA	Max Pax Coffee	\$35,000
April 8	Hingham MA	Virginia Slims	\$25,000
April 15	St. Petersburg FL	Barnett Bank	\$25,000
April 22			
April 29	Sea Pines SC	Family Circle Magazine	\$80,000

Despite a stifling heat of 97 degrees on Saturday, a capacity crowd of 4,000 was on hand to watch the semifinals. Kerry Melville's straight set win over Francoise Durr was merely a warm-up act for the much-anticipated battle between Billie Jean and Chris. Electing to stay on the baseline and loft high looping shots, Billie Jean got off to a good

start, leading 3-1 and two points on Chris' serve for 4-1. Billie Jean was uncharacteristically hesitant about attacking, and when she did, she did not seem confident with her overheads. Chris fought off the break points against her in the fifth game to narrow Billie Jean's lead to 4-2, and she broke serve in the next game as well. At 4-3, Billie Jean had another break point but missed the opportunity when she cautiously hit an overhead down the middle of the court instead of going for an angled winner. Given the opening, Chris held serve to level at 4-4, and two games later the first set belonged to her.

In the second set, Chris won four games before Billie Jean got on the scoreboard. With Chris serving at 4-1, Billie Jean slipped and fell on the gritty clay court. She sat up, crossed her legs and exclaimed, "I can't believe it!" She asked for a moment to get composed, and while Chris took a seat in a linesman's chair, "Billie Jean got up," observed Bob Getz of the *Boca Raton News*, "dusted off her dirty pants, cried once in seeming despair and returned to the match." Billie Jean broke serve to win the sixth game, but her motivation was gone. Two games later, Chris served for the match at 5-2, and on two consecutive points Billie Jean made little effort to move to conclude the contest. While Billie Jean left the tennis stadium without speaking to anyone, Chris talked about the match with Getz. "I think she tried everything in the book to beat me," Chris said. "That's why she's such a good player. If one type of game isn't working for her, she tries another ... I was dead out there. I really wanted to win the second set, because I was dying of heat. I was exhausted, and she was exhausted."¹¹²

Another full house was on hand to watch Sunday's championship match between Chris and Kerry. A third-place playoff was scheduled to be played between the losing semifinalists, but Larry King told tournament officials that Billie Jean "has been dragging for the past ten days. At first she thought it might just be a cold or the heat, but it looks like it's much more than that." While playing Chris in the semifinals on Saturday, Larry said that Billie Jean was "very ill, but she was determined to finish that match and not have to walk off the court. At one point the umpire gave Billie Jean his hat so she could be sick in it, but she went out there and finished in the 90 degree heat."¹¹³

Larry said that Lesley Hunt had contracted mononucleosis earlier this year and “was contagious for about three or four weeks. Billie Jean was very close to Lesley on the tour, and we’re afraid she may have come down with mono, too. Lesley is no longer contagious, but she went home to Australia after she was beaten here. She was just hanging on before she went home.” Billie Jean planned to take a flight home to California that day and have blood work done to determine if she had mononucleosis. “If she does have it, then she’ll probably be out for several months ... She didn’t have the tests done before because she was afraid they would have told her she couldn’t play, and she wanted to finish the tour. Billie Jean has been trying to rest, but it’s impossible when you’re on the tour. Everybody wants a little of your time.”¹¹⁴ Since Billie Jean was unable to play, Francoise Durr, the recipient of \$7,000 for losing in the semifinals to Kerry, automatically earned an additional \$2,000 for her third-place default finish.

*I was so tired ... Larry took me right back to California, and everybody was afraid that I had mononucleosis. But I didn’t have any diagnosable disease. I was just plain worn out. The more I had won that year, the less it meant in a way, and the more tired and sad I became. And the more I won, the more people wanted a part of me ... You never get it when you want it, and then when it comes, you get too much. Always groups, always mobs, always parties.*¹¹⁵
 -- Billie Jean King, 1982

Most of the 4,000 spectators on Sunday did not give Kerry Melville much of a chance to beat Chris in the championship match. Kerry had beaten Chris on grass five weeks earlier at the U. S. Open, but it was likely to be a different story on a clay court in Chris’ home state. Kerry served the opening game of the match, and on every point she hit a drop shot. When Chris served in the second game, Kerry won four consecutive points by hitting drop shots off the return of serve. Kerry’s drop shots often outright winners; if Chris was able to reach them, she either netted the next shot or hit it out of bounds. In taking a 4-11 first set lead, Kerry used the drop shot 23 times out of 33 rallies. The strategy worked for Kerry as she reached 5-2 in the first set, and in the next game she

had three set points at love-40 on Chris' serve. Chris began to anticipate and reply to the drop shot as the first set progressed, and she won five straight points to erase the set points and hold serve for 3-5. As Kerry's drop shots started to lose their effectiveness, Chris won four more games to take the first set 7-5.¹¹⁶

Chris' momentum continued into the second set, as she raced to 5-1 and served for the title at 5-2. Chris raced to 5-1 in the second set and served for the title at 5-2, but Kerry refused to surrender and won two straight games. Serving once again for the match at 5-4, Chris fought off a break point that would have leveled the set before completing the victory, 7-5 6-4. "I just had to have patience," Chris said after the match. "I couldn't believe how well she was playing in the first four or five games. But I really couldn't see how she could keep it up. When I was up 5-2 in the first set, I thought for sure I'd lost the first set. When it was 5-all, I had a little more confidence. But I never saw anyone drop shot so beautifully. It got to a point where every shot was a drop shot, so I started running a little sooner each time." Kerry realized how close she had come to winning the match. "I just wish I could've gotten one of those points I needed to win the first set," she said. "That might've made a big difference."¹¹⁷

During the awards presentation, Kerry received her runner-up check and told the spectators that it was "unbelievable to think I have \$15,000 in my hand."¹¹⁸ Since Chris was an amateur and could not accept any prize money, some of the other players felt that Kerry should have received the first-prize of \$25,000. After the tournament organizers awarded Margaret Court second-round prize money of \$4,000 after her loss to amateur Jeanne Evert, the rules were changed in order to save substantially more.

Saving the tournament promoters \$25,000, Chris joked that she was very tempted to accept the first-place check. "That's a lot of money to turn down," she admitted, "but it really doesn't bother me. I am still young and I should be able to win some money next year."¹¹⁹ Chris said that she would not play any more tournaments for several months, taking some time off from tournament tennis to concentrate on finishing her senior year of high school. The next time she competed again, after her eighteenth birthday in late December, she would be a professional. Gladys and Billie Jean hoped she would play on

the Virginia Slims Circuit, and Walter Elcock and Edy McGoldrick were counting on her to play on the new USLTA tour.

As soon as they were eliminated from the Virginia Slims Championships in Boca Raton, several of the Virginia Slims Circuit players – Margaret Court, Julie Heldman, Betty Stove, Wendy Gilchrist and Corinne Molesworth – flew to Great Britain to play on the Dewar Cup Circuit, which also included Virginia Wade and Patti Hogan. Margaret was invincible on the five-tournament tour, winning the first event over Julie and the remaining four titles over Virginia. After the Dewar Cup finale in Nottingham, Margaret and her family returned home to play the Australian Circuit in December and January.

Billie Jean took a vacation after the tournament in Boca Raton, her first extended break from tennis in seven years. With the Virginia Slims Circuit successfully completing its second year, Billie Jean felt confident that the tour was solidly established.

By the end of the year I was washed out physically and emotionally drained ... So, after that tournament at Boca Raton, Florida, in mid-October, I flew back to California and just took off. For three solid months. It was the first real rest I'd allowed myself since I'd started playing tennis full time in 1966 ... I really enjoyed being able to stay up late and not have my days planned by other people or outside events. I read a lot, or I did a lot of nothing, or I got in my car, turned on the stereo, and just drove. Mainly, I went to Stinson Beach, which is the name of a little town and a state park north of San Francisco on the ocean side of Marin County ... I'd always go to the same place. There was a stump at this one particular spot – a tree trunk, actually – that I could lean up against and just look out over the ocean ... It was a real transition period for me ... Those three months gave me a chance to sum up a lot of things, to try to put in perspective everything that had happened to me in the past, and think some about why it had.¹²⁰

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

As 1972 drew to a close, Billie Jean received several awards and honors. For the second straight year, she finished the year with the most ILTF Commercial Union Grand

Prix bonus points and collected the first prize of \$22,500. She also repeated her previous year's feat of earning over \$100,000 in prize money. Unlike 1971, when Evonne Goolagong was selected by most sportswriters as the number-one female tennis player in the world, Billie Jean was unanimously named to the top position based on her victories at the French Open, Wimbledon and the U. S. Open.

Most exciting for Billie Jean, however, was her selection by *Sports Illustrated* as the world's top athlete. It was the first time that a female was chosen for the honor, and it was the first time that the honor was shared – Billie Jean was named Sportswoman of the Year, and UCLA basketball coach John Wooden was named Sportsman of the Year.

I would always read Sports Illustrated, but I never saw myself unless there was a woman's article. If you don't get enough exposure, people don't know who you are. I was the first woman. I was thrilled that I finally could help make a difference in getting the door ajar. My life has always been getting the door ajar and then have the next generation blow it wide open. I knew for me to share the front of the magazine with Mr. Wooden would be a start for women. If I made it, you can make it. If I can do it, you can do it. I was real nervous when we had our photos together. I was like, "Oh God, it's John Wooden." I was like walking on eggshells, I was so excited. I just admired him so much, not just as a coach, but as a human being – the total person – and how he accepted responsibility. He really tried to help his athletes be the best they could be. I'm sure I saw myself through him in some ways ... Among athletes, to be Sportsperson of the Year, I cannot tell you how thrilling it is. Athletes will say to another athlete, "Oh my God, you're the Sportsperson of the Year." That's unbelievable.¹²¹

-- Billie Jean King, 2010

While Billie Jean and Chris took some time away from competitive tennis, and many of the other players were in Great Britain competing on the Dewar Cup Circuit, Gladys continued to build alliances for the upcoming Virginia Slims Circuit. On November 1, she announced that the WITF had entered into a partnership with the

American Tennis Association, an organization that was founded in 1916 as a result of the USLTA policy of barring black tennis players from competition. The ATA held its own national championships and composed its own national rankings, and by the early 1970s the organization consisted of sixty clubs and 4,000 members.

The news conference, held at the Philip Morris offices in New York, included former world champion Althea Gibson Darben and Dr. Clyde C. Freeman, president of the ATA. Also present was Bonnie Logan, the ATA's top-ranked woman player who played collegiate tennis at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland. After her college career, Bonnie played on the Virginia Slims Circuit in the summer of 1971 but never made it out of the qualifying flights. She fared slightly better on the Virginia Slims Circuit in 1972, earning her way in the championship flight in Denver with a qualifying win over Kristien Kemmer and a championship flight appearance in Phoenix by means of being chosen as a lucky loser. She was also among a group of three black players who were invited to compete in the South African Open in 1972. For Bonnie, playing on the circuit was financially challenging; in 1972, she won only a total of \$350 in prize money.

Gladys explained that the WITF would support three to six female ATA players on the Virginia Slims Circuit in 1972, paying for their travel and lodging expenses. Bonnie felt that the partnership between the WITF and the ATA was a "great thing to get other blacks interested in tennis," and Dr. Freeman said that the partnership was one of "mutual recognition." Knowing that any player who competed on the upcoming non-sanctioned Virginia Slims Circuit faced possible repercussions from the USLTA, Neil Amdur of the *New York Times* asked Dr. Freeman what impact the agreement might have on any ATA woman who joined Gladys' group. "I would hesitate to say what might happen," Dr. Freeman responded, "until the USLTA makes a move."¹²²

USLTA officials were predictably less than enthusiastic about the announcement. "I would guess at the moment that if ATA players entered a WITF tournament, that's a no-no," a spokesperson for the national association told Amdur. "They would not be allowed to play our tournaments. They would be liable for the same trouble other girls would be in."¹²³

Gladys' strategy of inviting the ATA to align with the WITF was not purely political; she had always been empathetic to players who were struggling to survive in competitive tennis. As a state-ranked player in the 1950s, Gladys had little success in national and international tournaments, even though she had the time and money to compete in them. When the Virginia Slims Circuit expanded in the summer of 1971, Gladys insisted on offering a qualifying flight at each tournament in order to provide opportunities for women who had aspirations to break into professional tennis.

Shortly after the news conference, Gladys sent letters to the top-ranked ATA players, inviting them to participate on the 1972 Virginia Slims Circuit and offering to pay their expenses. The money would come from a slush fund that Gladys planned to establish, funded by deducting ten percent from each player's weekly prize money. In addition to inviting Bonne Logan, letters were sent to Bessie Stockard, Ann Koger, and Sylvia Hooks, asking them to join the tour when it opened in San Francisco in the middle of January.

Sylvia Hooks did not know what to make of Gladys' offer when it arrived in the mail. "I threw the letter down on the desk, thinking it was some sort of a joke," she told the *New York Times*. "I'm not saying Gladys is selfish, but what does she need me for?" Sylvia played collegiate tennis at Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio, and after her graduation in 1967 she moved to East Orange, New Jersey to work in the city's recreation department. She continued to play tennis, practicing at the Clifton Indoor Racquet Club and at Montclair State College. "Dr. George Pearson, head of the Physical Education department, gives me a gym all by myself on Saturdays and Sundays," she said. "I put up a net and then turn on two ball machines at the same time."¹²⁴

Intrigued by the possibilities, Sylvia decided to contact Gladys. "I figured what did I have to lose, so I telephoned Mrs. Heldman to check this out," she explained. "Gladys is a doll. She explained everything to me and even sent me money to get to California. Before I signed the contract, I thought about it and thought about it. Everybody likes to be secure, to have a regular job with money coming in." She eventually decided to follow her dream, signing the WITF contract and quitting her job at the park department. Afterwards, she had some second thoughts. "Sometimes, I'm

shaky in practice now and I begin to wonder about what I'm doing," she admitted. "If Gladys were anybody else, I'd back out on my contract. I'd say, 'Later, sue me.'" It was, however, a temporary hesitation, and Sylvia looked forward to her new adventure. "I'm expecting to improve, to go places and meet people," she reasoned. "I've really got nothing to lose and everything to gain. Gladys won't leave me stranded anywhere."¹²⁵

As 1972 drew to a close, Walter Elcock had stopped communicating directly with Gladys. He composed a letter to the USLTA membership, entitled "Time for Action," which was printed in the December 1972 issue of *Tennis USA* magazine. Elcock's letter explained the association's opinions about the impasse in women's professional tennis.

For the United States Lawn Tennis Association, it is a time for immediate but thoughtful, perceptive action – for now, for the future ...

The USLTA feels that it must act today to insure the security and growth of tennis generally and women's professional tennis specifically ...

The USLTA's step into organizing women's prize money tournaments was necessitated by the resignation in mid-August of Mrs. Gladys Heldman, chairman of its pro women's scheduling committee. At that time Mrs. Heldman, the Houston-based tennis publisher, turned over all her committee responsibilities to us. Then she reneged! She sought to re-assert her influence and such action by her is interpreted as an effort to force her will, her ambitions and her proposals for the future of the women's professional game on a now reluctant USLTA administration. The USLTA welcomes this opportunity to plan its own direction.

The USLTA will not abdicate its responsibility to women's professional tennis; nor will it forfeit its responsibilities to these players who, indeed, have made tremendous contributions to the sport. The USLTA will be responsive to their needs and take any and all steps to insure a realistic, financially rewarding women's tour ...

The USLTA, some suggestions to the contrary, has long indicated its willingness to achieve the very highest level possible of administration-player performance. There is little argument that the combination of Mrs. Heldman and

the Philip Morris Company have helped to bring that about. However, Mrs. Heldman has seen fit to choose an alternate route, abandoning the important sanctions offered by the USLTA and its widespread tournament support in favor of a separate organization. She has chosen to give the popular women's professional away from the USLTA and the important advantages it offers. That is not to say that she or the Heldman-Philip Morris alliance have not made a significant contribution; but it is to say that the USLTA is American tennis in all its forms, amateur and professional, and cannot be disregarded. The USLTA will do all in its power to maintain and fulfill that role, Mrs. Heldman and her personal ambitions notwithstanding. We willingly and gratefully acknowledge the importance of her alliance and have attempted, in all good faith, to avoid a split in our relationship. But despite three months of arduous negotiation, no accord could be reached that could be mutually beneficial to our aims and her ambitions. That is regrettable. It is our view that Mrs. Heldman is engaged in a self-defeating power struggle. Such a struggle can only do her great harm and affect the women's game, from the highest proficiency of the professionals to the tentative steps of junior performers.

The USLTA refuses to allow that. Indeed, it will not stand by and see an important sector of its responsibility succumb in the face of personal gain. In the long run, its concern is for its participating players – women and men, its far-flung tournaments, and its numerous tournament sponsors. Of course, they are important, but the USLTA will not allow them and the promise of individual riches to be elevated to a position higher than the USLTA's ultimate and final commitment to the game and its traditions.¹²⁶

As vice president of the USLTA, Elcock was in line to become the association's president in early 1973. He was also the USLTA's delegate to the ILTF, and when he attended the world governing body's committee of management meeting in Rome in early November, he reported the problems that Gladys was creating. Elcock told the ILTF committee that Gladys' attorney, C. Frederick Leydig, sent him a letter announcing

that “the Women’s International Tennis Federation – not the USLTA – should be the governing body for its members, and in particular its member professionals.” The ILTF committee then voted unanimously, on Saturday, November 11, to stand behind the USLTA in its confrontation with the WITF. It issued a news release, signed by ILTF president Allan Heyman and all the other committee members, indicating that it would “support the USLTA in any lawful measures it may decide to take if its authority is flaunted, even if this leads to a suspension of a few or a whole group of players.”¹²⁷

British sportswriter Laurie Pignon saw the ILTF news release, and he called Gladys in Houston to inform her and get her response. “We are not prepared to be bullied any longer,” she said. “We will just have to extend our circuit to clash with the French and Wimbledon championships. Any ban will hurt them more than it does us. The decision of a few amateur men officials against women is tragic for tennis and for spectators. Our circuit includes Margaret Court and all the best Australians with the exception of Evonne Goolagong, eighteen of the top twenty-five in the American ranking list and leading Europeans.”¹²⁸

The ILTF announcement was fodder for Gladys’ next *World Tennis* editorial. Calling the ILTF “an all-male organization of amateur officials that claims authority over all women,” Gladys wrote that the world governing body was making a foolish mistake in threatening to suspend the players who were under contract to her, since such a ban would only hurt their international championships. The WITF “had asked for mutual recognition and had offered to limit its circuit to those weeks that did not conflict with major international tournaments,” only to be denied by the ILTF in favor of a USLTA circuit with “fictional prize money, fictional tournaments, and fictional players.” Gladys found it ridiculous that the USLTA was proposing a women’s tour with twenty tournaments and \$600,000 in prize money, insisting that such a venture would never happen.¹²⁹

Gladys urged readers of *World Tennis* to become Associate Members of the WITF for one dollar, and she included an application form in the editorial. By joining the WITF, Gladys wrote, “you will be showing that you are on the side of the players rather than on the side of officials. It means you endorse the policies of the WITF in prohibiting

appearance money, in putting everything into prize money, in opening up tournaments to qualifiers, in establishing satellite events, in creating tournaments when none existed before and enabling a player such as Billie Jean King to win more than \$100,000 in prize money for two successive years. Besides, your dollar will be used to help qualifiers.”¹³⁰

When Elcock returned home from the ILTF meeting in Rome, he told the Associated Press that Gladys was “pulling a power play with *World Tennis*. We have given her everything she asked for, except complete control, and they still aren’t anxious to join forces.” Elcock also indicated that the USLTA and the ILTF could not allow any individual to “control women’s tennis worldwide, which is what Gladys wants. She is not capable and it would be complete chaos.” Any players who compete in any of Gladys’ unsanctioned WITF tournaments would not be allowed to play in USLTA tournaments or ILTF international championships, he warned, adding “there’s no way they can satisfy the regulations of both. It will be their loss.” Elcock was confident that Chris Evert would agree to commit to the upcoming USLTA women’s prize money circuit when she became a professional on her eighteenth birthday and not align with the WITF, because “she wants to win the tournaments that count, like Wimbledon and Forest Hills ... We have Chris and Evonne among others and the world is excited about the younger girls. They’re tired of the Virginia Slims tour and its Billie-Rosie show.”¹³¹

When reached for a response, Gladys scoffed at Elcock’s comments. “We offered a compromise including a \$40,000 payment,” she said, “and does that seem as though we’re so anxious to bolt the USLTA?” Skeptical about the proposed USLTA women’s prize money circuit, Gladys accused Elcock of making up “a fake tour in order to put pressure on our girls and threatened wild suspensions of my players. Had Chris and Evonne signed with us, I think this whole developing war could have been avoided.” Gladys said that when she learned the ILTF planned to bar WITF players from Wimbledon and the U. S. Open, she offered to return the players’ contracts, “but none would take them. They know the USLTA and its threats. They know Walter Elcock and his public threats. They are prepared to face them.”¹³²

In a letter dated November 22, 1972, C. Frederick Leydig – Gladys’ attorney – asked Elcock to explain his comment that anyone who played on the upcoming Virginia

Slims Circuit would be unable to satisfy the regulations of the USLTA. “And because I am aware of the regulations to which you may have referred,” Leydig asked, “I would also appreciate, for the benefit of Mrs. Heldman and the players, your identifying the provision or provisions of the USLTA’s Constitution, By-Laws or Standing Orders under which the USLTA has acted or would propose to act to prevent the women professionals, under contract to Mrs. Heldman, from playing in such tournaments as the National Open Championships at Forest Hills.”¹³³

Leydig’s letter was answered by Forrest Hainline, the chairman of the USLTA Disciplinary Committee who addressed the women players in Boca Raton. “If the women who have signed a contract with Mrs. Heldman wish to leave the USLTA, they have a right to do so,” Hainline wrote. “In such event ... the USLTA would no longer have any authority over them ... When a player becomes a contract professional, he or she is no longer eligible to participate in tournaments sanctioned by the USLTA or some other national association, unless such tournaments have been designated as open-to-all categories. Open-to-all means that both professionals who accept the authority of the USLTA or other national association and contract professionals may participate. Incidentally, the word “open” does not necessarily mean that a tournament is open-to-all categories. Applying the above principles to the women under contract with Mrs. Heldman, the USLTA still considers them professionals. Thus, their contract with Mrs. Heldman does not in itself make them contract professionals. They would not become contract professionals until they first appeared in a prize money event not sanctioned by the USLTA. This is their personal decision.”¹³⁴ Hainline concluded his letter by informing Leydig that the USLTA was in the process of organizing a women’s prize money circuit and advising its sponsors and tournament directors that the women players under contract to Gladys would not be participating.

Gladys’ claim that the upcoming USLTA tour had “fictional prize money, fictional tournaments, and fictional players” would soon be addressed. While she was at the Virginia Slims Championships in Boca Raton, Edy McGoldrick spoke to Chris and Jeanne Evert about playing on the tour; she had a good rapport with the Evert family, since she was the Wightman Cup captain earlier in the year. When McGoldrick returned

home to Boston, she recruited other top players who had not signed WITF contracts, including Virginia Wade, Evonne Goolagong and Gail Chanfreau. She also secured the commitment of two more Wightman Cup team members, Linda Tuero and Patti Hogan, as well as Patti's doubles partner Sharon Walsh and Marita Redondo, the recent USLTA Girls' 18 and under champion. The financially-strapped Soviet tennis federation was also contacted, and two of its best players – Olga Morozova and Marina Kroshina – were invited to play on the circuit, all expenses paid. The Czechoslovakian Tennis Federation, wary of potential ILTF suspensions, decided to send it two top players, Marie Neumannova and 16-year-old Martina Navratilova, to play on the USLTA tour.

On November 20, 1972, Chris Evert ended the speculation and officially announced that she had decided to play on the upcoming USLTA Women's Prize Money Circuit. For Chris, the potential to earn significantly more money on the Virginia Slims Circuit was not enticing to her. "I'll still be only eighteen this summer, and that is too young to be playing for money," Chris said, indicating that her main reason for choosing the USLTA tour was because the Virginia Slims Circuit players could possibly be barred from the world's major championships. Referring to Billie Jean King and Margaret Court, Chris explained that "they have nothing to gain from winning Wimbledon or Forest Hills again because they've already each done it a few times, but I'm not stabilized."¹³⁵

Gladys was disappointed with the news. "I'm sorry for Chris," she said. "She'll make no money this year, she'll have no competition and her father is keeping her from siding with the girls."¹³⁶ Chris took issue with Gladys' comments, insisting that "the decision was mine. I made it. My father gave me advice and told me the facts but I did what I decided to do." Regarding the level of competition on the circuit, Chris said that "there are a lot of good players with the USLTA, like Virginia Wade, Evonne Goolagong and Olga Morozova, who are tough for me."¹³⁷ She was also not concerned about how much money she might make on the USLTA circuit, explaining that "most of the money tennis players make is through endorsements and not tournaments." Chris must have been keeping a secret; only a few weeks later, she signed a four-year endorsement deal, at \$50,000 per year, to wear tennis dresses made by Puritan Fashions Corporation. Several

months later, she also signed endorsement deals with Bonne Bell cosmetics and Wilson tennis racquets.

Bud Collins of the *Boston Globe* interviewed Chris via telephone from her home in Fort Lauderdale, and he asked her if she considered herself a scab for not joining the WITF. “A scab? Me?” Chris asked. “I’m not even sure what you mean, but it sounds bad.” Collins explained to Chris that by refusing to join the WITF – considered by most to be a players’ union – she was siding with management, or, the USLTA. “You are the schoolgirl scab,” Collins said, “but I don’t think anyone really blames you too much, and we will still call you Chris.” Chris said she had been warned that if she played on the Virginia Slims Circuit, she would be banned from the world’s major tournaments. She thought, however, that she would eventually play on it, because “their tour is better and offers more money, but right now money’s not that important. I just want to play all the events, and I wish the USLTA with the WITF so everybody good would be in the top events ... I hope I don’t get lazy, not playing the best players.”¹³⁸

Chris’ decision to play on the USLTA circuit put George Liddy in a predicament. Liddy had promoted women’s professional tennis tournaments in south Florida since 1968, and the inclusion of Chris in his tournaments guaranteed sold-out crowds. During the tournament in Boca Raton, he made an oral agreement with Gladys to run a Virginia Slims Circuit tournament, the \$30,000 Barnett Bank Classic, at The Tennis Club in Fort Lauderdale in January 1973, under the assumption – as Gladys insisted in her *World Tennis* editorial and statements to sportswriters – that the USLTA tour would not materialize. When the USLTA Women’s Prize Money Circuit became a reality, and when Chris announced she would play on it, Liddy decided that he would rather stage a USLTA tournament instead of a Virginia Slims Circuit event. “I decided to go with the USLTA for commercial reasons,” Liddy told Bob Getz of the *Boca Raton News*. “The crowds follow the Everts – that is a proven fact. All the tournaments they play in are packed, and we expect The Tennis Club to be packed next February.”¹³⁹ Since Gladys had signed Barnett Banks as a sponsor to the Virginia Slims Circuit, Liddy needed to find another financial supporter, which did not worry him; the appearance of Chris in the

tournament would make finding a replacement an easy task. Within a few days, Liddy secured S & H Green Stamps as the title sponsor.

With the aid of dress designer Mondessa Swift, Gladys was able to change the location of the Barnett Bank Classic to the Jockey Club in Miami. Liddy, however, did not want to change the dates of his USLTA tournament in Fort Lauderdale. Suddenly, there were two women's professional tournaments during the same week in south Florida, and only thirty miles apart. To make matters even worse, Barnett Banks began to have second doubts about sponsoring the Virginia Slims Circuit tournament, concerned that it might be overshadowed by Chris' appearance in the USLTA event in Fort Lauderdale.

Since Liddy was unwilling to change the dates of his tournament, Gladys had her attorneys file a complaint and a motion for a preliminary injunction in the U. S. District Court of the Southern District of Florida, enjoining Liddy "from promoting, directing, conducting, and/or participating in any way in a women's tennis tournament involving women professional tennis players during the period from January 15, 1973 through and including February 25, 1973." Summons were delivered to Liddy, Dennis Burchell, the tennis professional at The Tennis Club in Fort Lauderdale, and Robert Griese, a quarterback for the Miami Dolphins football team and the hero of the 1972 Super Bowl. Liddy and Griese arranged to have fifteen other NFL quarterbacks play with the women professionals in a pro-am doubles tournament for charity, and a court order was served to the football star during one of his team practices.¹⁴⁰

Before the lawsuit progressed to depositions or an evidentiary hearing, Liddy agreed to change the dates of his tournament so that it did not start until February 26. "We sure get a lot of publicity," he laughed, "whether we want it or not." Liddy was slightly embarrassed that the suit included Griese. "I'm surprised he's still talking to me," he said, adding that that the two of them had recently lunched with Chris Evert.¹⁴¹

The legal actions turned out to be a blessing in disguise for Liddy. With the tournament pushed back for three weeks, he was able to secure the appearance of Evonne Goolagong, who was not planning to arrive in the United States until late February. "It has everything going for it," Liddy gushed about his event. "Chris' professional debut,

the Goolagong-Evert rivalry, the pro quarterbacks, plus it's the tourist season." He was not concerned about the absence of such Virginia Slims Circuit headliners as Billie Jean King and Margaret Court, confident that new stars will emerge from the USLTA tour. "These girls will be constantly in the spotlight," he said, "and the ones who don't have the big reputations will be making names for themselves in the major tournaments."¹⁴²

The development of the USLTA Women's Prize Money Circuit forced Gladys to make changes in the Virginia Slims Circuit (Table 11. 2). In addition to Liddy's tournament becoming part of the USLTA and Gladys finding a new site for the Barnett Bank Classic in Miami, the tournaments in Akron, Ohio and Hingham, Massachusetts shifted. Originally listed as Virginia Slims tournaments when Gladys released the schedule in October, the organizers of these two tournaments decided to align with the USLTA. To fill the gaps in the schedule, Gladys added a \$30,000 tournament in Chicago and a \$25,000 event at Boston Harbor Marina, a commercial development in Quincy, Massachusetts. Just like the situation in south Florida, the Boston area would have two women's professional tournaments within weeks of each other – and close to Walter Elcock's hometown of Brookline, Massachusetts.

Table 11.2 – Women's Professional Tournaments in the U. S., Winter/Spring 1973

Week of:	Virginia Slims Circuit	USLTA Women's Prize Money Circuit
January 14	San Francisco - \$25,000	
January 21	San Diego - \$25,000	
January 28	Washington DC - \$25,000	
February 4	Miami - \$30,000	
February 11		
February 18	Indianapolis - \$25,000	
February 25	Detroit - \$25,000	Fort Lauderdale - \$50,000
March 4	Chicago - \$30,000	Dallas - \$37,000
March 11	Richmond - \$25,000	
March 18		Akron - \$25,000
March 25	Tucson - \$25,000	New York - \$30,000
April 1	Philadelphia - \$50,000	Sarasota - \$20,000
April 8	Quincy - \$25,000	Miami Beach - \$20,000
April 15	St. Petersburg - \$25,000	
April 22		Hingham - \$20,000
April 29	Hilton Head - \$80,000	

For the first two years of the Virginia Slims Circuit, Gladys scheduled a “national” indoor championship in the Boston area. In 1971, the tournament was not recognized by the USLTA as an official national championship, but it was considered so in 1972 when there was a partnership between the Virginia Slims Circuit and the national association. For 1973, the tournament organizers at the Old Colony Tennis Club in Hingham decided to keep their affiliation with the USLTA, and Gladys needed to find a replacement for her “national” indoor tournament at Boston Harbor Marina. The event was fully sponsored by Virginia Slims, and a tournament director and tournament promoter were needed. Ron Colville was named as the event’s promoter, and Carl Hutchison – a part-time tennis instructor who had never run a professional tennis tournament before – became the tournament director.

Hutchison belonged to the same club as Chip Strapp, Walter Elcock’s nephew. Knowing that Hutchison was involved with the Virginia Slims Indoor Championships, Strapp casually mentioned one day that Hutchison might be creating problems by staging the tournament, and he suggested that a telephone call to Elcock might be in order. Hutchison contacted Elcock, and they agreed to meet at Jimmy’s Harborside, a restaurant in Boston. Colville accompanied Hutchinson to the restaurant, and they listened to Elcock’s concerns about the upcoming tournament at Boston Harbor Marina.

He said it was true that he was scheduling a tournament in the same time periods as we expected to have ours. This upset me very much because I said to him I thought it was most unfortunate that this was happening because we could not change our dates, these were the dates given to us by Virginia Slims, we had no choice but to go along with this. Also we weren’t aware of – Mr. Colville nor myself were not fully aware of the circumstances surrounding the tournament ... one of the things he did say at this meeting was Gladys Heldman was out to control women’s tennis and that she had to be stopped. I said because of the conflict in tournaments, that the people who would suffer would be the promoters, also the tennis public. They had to make a choice of which tournament to go to. Mr. Elcock then said, “Well, whose tournament did you think the public would go

to see?" He said he would have Evonne Goolagong, Virginia Wade, Chris Evert, the Russian girl. He said, "Who do you think the press will cover?" I agreed that Chris Evert and Goolagong were good copy but Billie Jean King, Francoise Durr, the Virginia Slims girls were excellent copy and it would be rather interesting to see who the public did go for ... He said we would probably get no local girls to enter the tournament ... My reply was I didn't know of any girls that we would consider of that ability in the area, although we would like to have these girls for preliminary rounds. It does help to fill up the first couple of days of the tournament. He also said it was advisable not to use USLTA ball boys or ball girls because it might cause some difficulty later. He said that we could expect little help from USLTA people. As we were leaving, I said to him I did not know what Mr. Colville's commitments were to the Virginia Slims, and I did not know if it was possible for us to break the contract with Virginia Slims. He said that the commitment was something like \$2,000 that we had paid down and that an easier way to get out of the tournament would be to question the fire regulations. We could say something to the effect that the place was not approved for crowds because of fire regulations ... It was a very pleasant meeting. The meeting ended with Mr. Colville saying he understood Mr. Elcock's position, that he had to do what he had to do because of his position, and Mr. Colville said that he also would do what he has to do because of his commitment. It was a very pleasant meeting. I think Mr. Elcock was trying to be very helpful to us.¹⁴³

-- Carl Hutchison, 1973

While Elcock may have been disappointed in not being able to persuade the organizers of the tournament in Quincy to cancel the Virginia Slims Indoor Championships, he was surely pleased about the status of the tournament in St. Petersburg, Florida. After conferring with Edy McGoldrick about the USLTA circuit schedule, Dr. Howard Reese, the president of the St. Petersburg Tennis Foundation, sent a telegram to Gladys on December 26, 1972, informing her that the tournament would not be part of the Virginia Slims Circuit in 1973 after all.¹⁴⁴ Since Gladys refused to allow

any Virginia Slims Circuit events to apply for USLTA sanction approvals, Reese was disappointed that local juniors would not be able to participate. For several years, the Masters Invitational in St. Petersburg provided valuable competitive opportunities for young players. Several weeks earlier, Reese had hoped that Gladys would listen to his reasoning, and he telephoned Elcock for assistance.

He called me about trying to work it out to get a sanction for Mrs. Heldman and he told me he was going to apply for a sanction for his tournament ... He said he couldn't understand why Gladys Heldman wouldn't sanction her tournaments and spoil tennis for all juniors. He thought she was being very unfair and unreasonable and why couldn't I work it out with her. ¹⁴⁵
-- Walter Elcock, 1973

The final few weeks of 1972 were frustrating for Gladys. She was not able to convince Chris Evert to play on the Virginia Slims Circuit, and as a result the tournaments in Fort Lauderdale and St. Petersburg switched their allegiance to the USLTA. Gladys was aware that Walter Elcock was trying to sabotage the event in Quincy, Massachusetts, and she was also learned that the Virginia Slims Circuit tournament in Indianapolis was in danger of getting canceled due to the withdrawal of the main sponsor, the American Fletcher National Bank. Stan Malless convinced the bank to instead sponsor his U. S. National Clay Court Championships, which would once again feature Chris Evert in 1973. ¹⁴⁶ The subversive actions of Elcock and Malless were the final straw for Gladys. She contacted her attorney, C. Frederick Leydig of the Wolfe, Hubbard, Leydig, Voit and Osann Law Offices in Chicago, and told him to begin the process for filing a lawsuit against the USLTA and its officers.

Notes

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- ⁵ *Midweek*, British Broadcasting Corporation, November 16, 1972, television show.
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- ¹³³ C. Frederick Leydig, letter to Walter Elcock, November 22, 1972.
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- ¹³⁶ Gladys Heldman, quoted in "Evert Spurns Tour, Sticks With USLTA," *Miami News* (Miami, Florida), November 20, 1972.
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- ¹⁴³ Carl Hutchison, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 26, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 134.
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¹⁴⁶ Gladys Heldman, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 26, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 83.

CHAPTER 12: A NICE, WHITE LIE

One bright spot for Gladys at the end of 1972 was the sale of *World Tennis* to CBS Publications for a substantial amount of money.¹ According to the terms of the sale, the magazine's offices would remain in Houston, and Gladys would continue as the editor – enabling her to maintain a bully pulpit in her war against the USLTA and ILTF.

One night when I was there, Gladys had a young lawyer from CBS in New York occupying the other guest room as she was in the process of selling World Tennis for one million dollars, Gladys was on the phone after dinner – no surprise, there – and Julius, a Shell Oil Vice President, the lawyer and I, were enjoying a night cap in the sitting room. Soon either Virginia or Slim – I could never tell them apart – slunk in and started tearing at the expensive fabric that covered the sofa with its long claws. The lawyer jumped up, horrified, “Mr. Heldman! Your cat’s ruining the sofa! Aren’t you going to do something about it?” Julius took another puff on his pipe, “No,” he replied with a little smile. “It’s worth it.” It was worth it, in other words, not to get into an argument with Gladys over what her precious cat could do.²

-- Richard Evans, 2013

After her disappointing loss to Jeanne Evert at the Virginia Slims Championships, Margaret Court embarked on winning streak that would eventually become the fourth-best in the open era. She won all five events on the Dewar Cup Circuit in Great Britain, and she then returned to her hometown of Perth, Australia in December to win the West Australia Open over Evonne Goolagong. Two weeks later in Melbourne, Margaret won

her eleventh Australian national singles title. In the semifinals, she routed Kerry Melville, 6-1 6-0, in only thirty-three minutes and afterward declared, "I don't fear anybody – not Billie Jean King or anybody." Margaret was eager to play Evonne in the championship match. "It would be a thrill to win the title after having a baby," she said. "It would show the world that tennis mums can play – and play well. I'd like to be the best woman player in the world again."³ The following day, in sweltering temperatures that reached 115 degrees and in front of 11,500 spectators, Margaret defeated Evonne 6-4 7-5 for the first major championship of 1973.⁴

Before Margaret departed for the United States and the start of the Virginia Slims Circuit, she played one more tournament in Australia, the New South Wales Open in Sydney. Still hampered by a pulled stomach muscle that was aggravated during the previous week's Australian Open, Margaret barely survived her semifinal match against Karen Krantzcke, winning 4-6 6-0 9-7. In the other semifinal, Virginia Wade was reduced to tears after her loss to Evonne. There were a reduced number of linespersons for each match of the tournament, and Virginia said she was the victim of at least ten bad calls. Facing break point at 4-4 in the third set, Virginia hit what she thought was a winning forehand volley, only to have it called out. "Where are all the officials?" she yelled to the pro-Goolagong crowd of three thousand spectators.⁵ Someone in the stands shouted to her, "We've paid to watch you play tennis, so why don't you get on with it?" Other fans heckled her to "get on with the game." After Evonne won 7-5 4-6 6-4, Virginia broke down and cried.⁶

More than 10,000 fans watched the championship match, in which Margaret and Evonne played the closest match of their rivalry. After winning the first set and losing the second, Evonne served for the title at 5-4 in third. Unable to close out the match, she had one opportunity to win when she served at 7-6. Margaret was resolute in the crisis, finally winning the third set 10-8 for her ninth New South Wales title. In a joint news conference following the awards presentation, Evonne admitted she tightened up when serving for the match in the third set. "That's the first time I ever heard you say you got nervous," Margaret said. "That's the toughest games I've ever had with Evonne in all our encounters. No one has ever pushed me so much, not even Billie Jean King."⁷

While Evonne planned to remain in Australia for two more months before joining Chris Evert on the USLTA circuit in late February, Margaret was preparing to leave for San Francisco and the opening of the Virginia Slims Circuit in her attempt to reclaim the world's number-one ranking.

As the new USLTA president, one of Walter Elcock's first official actions was to explain to the association's members the difficulties he had encountered with Gladys. Regarding Gladys' resignation from her position as USLTA Director of Women's Professional Tennis, Elcock wrote in his *Tennis USA* column that "we took her at her word, which was our most regrettable error in judgment. Even as she was (submitting her resignation), she was forming the WITF and preparing for a battle ... We assigned Edythe Ann McGoldrick to head all women's activities for the USLTA and asked her to try to work out a settlement ... She met with Mrs. Heldman a number of times, listed to all her demands, and manage to meet them – but as soon as she did, Mrs. Heldman would issue some new ultimatum ... Eventually, it became evident that Mrs. Heldman's craving for power was the one irreconcilable issue. She demanded total control over the circuit, and under our international set-up, to give in to this kind of 'power-grab' would have been bad for tennis." ⁸ Edy McGoldrick concurred with Elcock, telling *Tennis* magazine "every time we gave Gladys what she wanted, she demanded something more." ⁹

One week before the British Motor Cars Invitation in San Francisco kicked off the 1973 Virginia Slims Circuit, Gladys filed a lawsuit against the USLTA in the United States District Court in the Southern District of New York, charging six counts of antitrust violations and unfair competition. In a thirty-page complaint filed on January 9, Gladys' attorneys alleged that the USLTA interfered with the contractual relationships between the WITF and its tournament directors and sponsors. The decisions of the tournament directors in Fort Lauderdale and St. Petersburg to switch to the USLTA circuit, the withdrawal of American Fletcher National Bank from the tournament in Indianapolis, Walter Elcock's attempt to persuade the tournament directors in Quincy, Massachusetts to cancel their event, and the decision by Chris Evert to avoid the Virginia Slims Circuit amounted to, according to the complaint, "interference" and "harassment" on behalf of the USLTA. ¹⁰

The legal basis of the action was the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, and the complaint claimed damages of \$175,000 for the loss of Chris Evert and several tournaments. With the mandatory treble damages, Gladys stood to receive more than a half million dollars if she won the case.¹¹ “We want to stop the USLTA from approaching our tournament sponsors and breaking the agreements we have with them,” Gladys told Lee Masters of the *Melbourne Sun-Herald*. “Already they have forced Fort Lauderdale to break their agreement with us, and St. Petersburg has been told that they might not be given another official event if they have anything to do with us,” she claimed. “Lady golfers run their own tournaments, and the same should apply to women tennis players.”¹² Gladys did not mention to Masters that the tournaments in Fort Lauderdale and St. Petersburg switched to the USLTA circuit only because they wanted to assure the appearance of Chris Evert.

*My lawyer in New York, Bob Golde, called me after hearing about the suit and felt we should intervene ... I talked to Larry concerning it, after he talked with Bob, but Bob called me and then I think – I believe he and Larry discussed it also. Then I talked to Larry about it.*¹³
-- Billie Jean King, 1973

Billie Jean’s intervention in Gladys’ complaint was the result of her desire to plan her tournament schedule many months in advance. The USLTA scheduled its annual national indoor championships during the week of April 23 in Hingham, Massachusetts, when there happened to be no Virginia Slims Circuit tournament scheduled. Billie Jean did not like to take time away from tennis; the more she played, the better she played. Anticipating that her entry into the USLTA National Indoor Championships would be denied because of her affiliation with the WITF and Virginia Slims Circuit, she asked to be listed as an intervenor-plaintiff in Gladys’ complaint in the hopes of getting an immediate answer from the USLTA regarding her entry.

In the course of five days, Gladys’s attorneys gathered affidavits from ten individuals all across the country. On January 11, Donald Davis – the vice president of

the Deerwood Club in Jacksonville, Florida and a member of his club's Virginia Slims Tennis Tournament Committee – stated that he had several telephone conversations with Stan Malless, who indicated that staging an unsanctioned tournament could prevent the club from holding USLTA sanctioned events in the future.¹⁴ That same day, Ronald Bookman, the Associate Publisher of *World Tennis* who was also personally employed by Gladys to assist with the administration of the Virginia Slims Circuit, recalled hearing USLTA Disciplinary Committee chairman Forrest Hainline tell the women players at the Virginia Slims Championships in Boca Raton, Florida in October, 1972 that anyone who competed in an unsanctioned tournament would be prohibited from future USLTA and ILTF events.¹⁵

Four more affidavits were collected the following day. Daniel Horan, chief umpire of the 1972 Virginia Slims of Indianapolis, stated that his son John – a qualified line umpire who worked at the U. S National Clay Court Championships – was told by Stan Malless that any umpires who worked on Virginia Slims events risked getting barred from working at sanctioned tournaments.¹⁶ Carl Hutchison, involved with the promotion of the upcoming Virginia Slims Indoor Championships in Quincy, Massachusetts, stated that USLTA vice president Walter Elcock promised a major men's tournament and numerous local tournaments if he severed his ties with Gladys. Hutchinson also recalled that Elcock told him "it might present a problem" if any USLTA junior members worked as ball boys or ball girls at the Virginia Slims tournament.¹⁷

In New York the following day, two Virginia Slims brand managers gave their statements. John Granville recalled the events of October 5, 1972, when he had dinner with Walter Elcock at the Sky Club restaurant and told him that Virginia Slims had decided four days earlier to sponsor Gladys' circuit. Granville stated that Myles Johns, chairman of the Masters Invitational in St. Petersburg, Florida, attended the tournament director meeting at LaGuardia Airport earlier in the day. Elcock made an announcement at the meeting, which Johns later relayed to Graville, that the Virginia Slims sponsorship would go to the circuit that had the stronger players; Granville denied that his office ever made such statement a commitment.¹⁸

Granville's assistant, Ellen Merlo, said she met with Fort Lauderdale tournament director George Liddy on November 22 and he discussed his plans to hold a Virginia Slims Circuit event in 1973. The following day, after learning that Chris Evert had decided to play on the USLTA Women's Prize Money Circuit, Liddy told a newspaper reporter that his commitment to Chris "was greater than any other." Merlo also recalled that William Colbert, one of the promoters of the Virginia Slims of Indianapolis, telephoned her on January 2 to say that Stan Malless was putting pressure on the American Fletcher National Bank to withdraw its sponsorship. According to Merlo, Colbert said that Malless threatened to close his account at the bank if it sponsored the Virginia Slims tournament, the bank withdrew its support three days later.¹⁹

Gladys' ten-page affidavit, given at her home in Houston on January 13, summarized her tennis playing career, the growth of her tennis publications, her successful promotion of the 1962 U. S. National Championships, her development of the women's professional tour and subsequent battles with the USLTA. Her affidavit also contained numerous exaggerations and fabrications. She incorrectly asserted that total prize money for women's tournaments throughout the world from October 1969 through May 1970 was only \$2000, that the women players who competed in Houston in September 1970 were suspended by USLTA president Alastair Martin, that the women players were suspended on two more occasions in the spring of 1971, and that the reason she resigned from her USLTA position as Director of Women's Professional Tennis was due to a lack of cooperation from the national association.²⁰

Billie Jean King gave a short affidavit in San Francisco on January 15, hours before Gladys flew into town to hold a meeting with the players on the Virginia Slims Circuit. She stated that during the Virginia Slims Championships in Boca Raton, Florida, three months earlier, USLTA vice president Walter Elcock told her she would be suspended for life by the association if she competed in unsanctioned tournaments.²¹ In Florida on that same day, Myles Johns – a board member on the St. Petersburg Tennis Foundation – stated that Elcock attempted to convince tournament directors to align with the USLTA Women's Prize Money Circuit by announcing that Chris Evert and Evonne Goolagong had already committed to play (weeks before they actually did). Johns also

recalled that Stan Malless incorrectly told him that the sponsors of the Virginia Slims Circuit event in Miami had instead decided to support the USLTA event in that same city. With their affidavits collected, Gladys' attorneys prepared for the next stop in the lawsuit – filing paperwork for a preliminary injunction, which would force USLTA officials from interfering with the Virginia Slims Circuit until a trial could be held.²²

As Bob Colwell was concluding his two-year term as president of the USLTA, an interview appeared in the February 1973 issue of *Tennis USA* magazine in which he reflected on the triumphs and frustrations of his administration. Colwell admitted that Gladys' behavior during 1971 and 1972 was one of his biggest disappointments. “When I first became president of the USLTA,” he recalled, “I came to the conclusion that she was doing more for women's tournaments than anybody else, and as long as she was the one who was helping the women the most, I felt it was best for the USLTA to work with her. We agreed to do this and started out on a very happy basis ... The trouble was that this arrangement did not last very long ... it was extremely disappointing to find that Mrs. Heldman, who was supposed to be a USLTA official, all of a sudden went back to her old approach to the game and for her own personal satisfaction was encouraging some of the top women to break away from the USLTA.”²³

Qualifying matches for the \$25,000 British Motor Cars Invitation started on Saturday, January 14. Since the tournament was not sanctioned by the USLTA or ILTF, any woman who participated in it would automatically be considered a contract professional and ineligible for any open-to-all events – including Wimbledon and the U. S. Open. On Sunday evening, following the conclusion of the qualifying rounds, Gladys held a meeting for all the players in the front row seats of the empty Civic Auditorium. She informed the women about her upcoming court hearing against the USLTA, scheduled to start in New York at the end of the following week. Gladys announced that Faberge and Max-Pax Coffee would be added as new tour sponsors, with the fragrance company providing \$5,000 for the doubles competitions of the circuit's summer-fall events and \$10,000 for the doubles portion of the year-end Virginia Slims Championships. In addition, Faberge became the title sponsor of the \$40,000 tournament in Phoenix. Max-Pax Coffee agreed to become the title sponsor of the \$50,000 event in

Philadelphia in early April, and would provide \$5,000 to the Qualifier of the Year, an award that would be determined by a committee of players.²⁴

Since Pip Jones and his wife retired to their home in England, Peachy Kellmeyer was named as the new tour manager. Peachy was ranked in the USLTA women's singles top ten in the 1960s, but never reached the higher levels in international tennis. After she stopped competing, she became the assistant athletic director and women's tennis coach at Marymount College in Florida. During the Virginia Slims Championships in Boca Raton in October, 1972, promoter George Liddy – a longtime acquaintance – hired Peachy as the tournament referee. Two months later, she had resigned her position at Marymount College to work on the Virginia Slims Circuit.

Peachy may have not been Gladys' first choice for the position of tour director. *Tennis Magazine* reported that Gladys offered a job with the WITF and Virginia Slims Circuit to Edy McGoldrick – a calculated attempt to get even with Walter Elcock and complicate the administration of the USLTA circuit. McGoldrick, however, declined the offer, preferring to remain in her non-paying post as the USLTA Director of the Women's Professional Circuit. "They don't seem to realize that I'm ready to work with them right now in my position with the USLTA," she said. "Somebody in the USLTA must be aware of what's going on and try to keep the door open. I'm doing that."²⁵

During the player meeting in San Francisco, the election of officers for the Women's International Tennis Federation was also held; two months earlier, the WITF was incorporated in the State of Texas, with Gladys, her husband Julius, and *World Tennis* Associate Editor Ron Bookman listed as incorporators. At the corporation's first annual meeting in January, a slate of officers needed to be elected.

Gladys considered the WITF as a women's professional tennis players' union, along the lines of the men's Association of Tennis Professionals. However, unlike the ATP – which included contract professionals and independent players – the WITF was limited to women professionals who were under contract to Gladys. Billie Jean expressed her concern about this, since she had always wanted to organize and galvanize all female tennis players, regardless of their affiliations. She envisioned an association that would employ Gladys as an executive director, in the same manner that Jack Kramer

worked for, and reported to, the ATP. Gladys was furious at the suggestion, exclaiming, “I’m not working for you broads!”²⁶ For someone who had never been subordinate to anyone in her life, someone who had never worked for anyone else, the idea was revolting.

*It was at the meeting late one night, after the matches in the arena where we played, that the meeting took place in San Francisco. Gladys said that if that was the direction the women wanted to go, that she would no longer be involved.*²⁷

-- Nancy Richey, 2013

*She got upset with me ... she could have been the big kahuna.*²⁸

-- Billie Jean King, 2008

With no other foreseeable options for a womens’ players’ association, Billie Jean agreed to be placed on the WITF board of directors. Other players who were named to the board included Francoise Durr, Julie Heldman, Mona Schallau and Kris Kemmer, and Gladys was elected president. Billie Jean, however, still hoped that someday her vision of an all-inclusive women’s association would become a reality.

The tournament’s preliminary flights were played on Monday and Tuesday, with the championship flight – and the appearance of the top seeds – scheduled to start afterward. As the non-sanctioned tournament progressed, ILTF secretary Basil Reay followed the results with concern. All of the women who played in the tournament, Reay said in London on Wednesday, January 18, were all in “grave danger” of being denied entry into Wimbledon and other major championships. “I am not magnifying the situation, it is very serious,” Reay said, adding that the USLTA planned to take action in the upcoming weeks, and the women who participated in San Francisco would likely be suspended. “And the suspensions are not likely to involve weeks,” he warned, “it could be a year, years, or even life.”²⁹

Disturbed about the possibility of suspensions, the Lawn Tennis Association of Australia sent telegrams to Gladys and the USLTA, expressing its concern and offering to

help resolve the conflict. Esca Stephens, the president of the New South Wales Lawn Tennis Association, thought it was a good move on behalf of the LTAA, telling Rod Humphries of the *Melbourne Sun-Herald* that “we should keep talking to solve the differences. It is a tragedy that so many of the world’s best players are involved – the Australian circuit will suffer mainly with players like Court, Melville, Hunt and Krantzcke not playing. Of course, there must be law and order, but for goodness sake let us keep talking to find a solution.”³⁰ While LTAA vice president John Young said he was willing to mediate negotiations, he said that the Australian association would “automatically fall into line” with any USLTA request for ILTF suspension of players. “Still, it has happened before,” Young told Humphries, “and even though there is a lot of smoke and fire, I’m sure a way out will be found.”³¹

The Australians were not the only national association to lend its support to the USLTA and ILTF in its battle with Gladys and the WITF. Sir Carl Aavoid, president of the British LTA, said any suspensions imposed by the USLTA would have “far reaching effects.” Referring to Gladys’ statements that she did not recognize the authority of the national association, Aavoid said that it “may well be that they USLTA may find it necessary to suspend any players who take part in events under her control. Such suspensions would be supported by the ILTF.” Since the LTA was a leading member of the ILTF, it would support any suspensions endorsed by the world governing body and would ban the women players from Wimbledon. After seeing the dispute between the ILTF and the WCT male contract professionals settled, Aavoid observed that “it is now the ladies who are giving cause for concern. It is hoped that common sense will prevail, and render any drastic action unnecessary.”³²

Once the championship flight in San Francisco got underway, Billie Jean was forced to withdraw from the tournament after her first round doubles match with Rosie Casals, after barely defeating qualifiers Barbara Downs and Kristien Kemmer, 6-3 7-6. Billie Jean was diagnosed with an inflammation of the ulna bone in her right wrist, which would require at least three weeks’ rest. The withdrawal of Billie Jean made the path to the title easier for Margaret Court. After getting pushed to three sets by Rosie Casals in the semifinals, Margaret comfortably defeated Kerry Melville in the final, 6-3 6-3, to take

the \$6,000 first prize, plus an additional \$500 for winning the doubles title with Lesley Hunt.

Gladys did not stay in San Francisco for the entire week, returning home to Houston after a few days. On Thursday, January 19, her attorneys in New York presented the U. S. District Court with an application for a preliminary injunction, to be heard on January 26, asking the court to immediately prevent the USLTA's intentions of barring WITF players from the world's major championships, including Wimbledon and the U. S. Open. A preliminary injunction – an emergency hearing held before the actual trial begins – is typically only granted by a court in the most extraordinary situations; the plaintiff must prove that the defendant's actions are causing immediate or irreparable harm, and the plaintiff must also show that monetary damages alone are not a sufficient remedy. Gladys' attorneys planned to argue that the USLTA officials were attempting to ruin the WITF and the Virginia Slims Circuit. In order to be granted a preliminary injunction, Gladys needed to convince the court that she was free of any inequitable conduct regarding the dispute – in other words, she needed to prove that she did not indulge in similar practices.

While the semifinals and finals of the British Motor Cars Invitation were being played in San Francisco, the ILTF Emergency Committee held a two-day meeting in London to discuss the status of the Virginia Slims Circuit players. The committee decided to defer any decision until the conclusion of Gladys' lawsuit. "But we cannot wait too long before doing something about this problem," said ILTF secretary Basil Reay. "We have to decide whether to suspend these women players, call them contract professionals or outlaw them in some other way."³³ As the meeting began on Saturday, January 21, Herman David – the chairman of the All-England Lawn Tennis Club, where the Wimbledon Championships were held – received a letter from Gladys, requesting that the Virginia Slims Circuit players be accepted into the tournament in late June. "It depends on whether they are in good status with the ILTF by then," David told the Associated Press.³⁴

The next stop on the Virginia Slims Circuit was the \$25,000 British Motor Cars of Los Angeles. Like the tournament in San Francisco, it was promoted by Larry King and

sponsored by Kjell Qvale's import automobile business. Originally scheduled to be played in San Diego, the tournament had a last-minute change of venue and was played at The Forum, with Margaret Court as the top seed and Rosie Casals at number two. Margaret seemed oblivious to the political storm she found herself in, comfortably winning her first two matches at the British Motor Cars tournament in Los Angeles. On the morning of Friday, January 26 – hours before Margaret played her semifinal match against Betty Stove – Gladys, Billie Jean, Pip Jones and Carl Hutchison were in the Foley Square Courthouse in lower Manhattan for the first day of the preliminary injunction hearing.

In front of Judge Milton Pollock, one of Gladys' attorneys, Jerome Doyle, opened the proceedings by asserting that the USLTA used "every weapon at its command to destroy the plaintiff's women's professional tennis circuit and to punish her sixty players."³⁵ C. Frederick Leydig then conducted the first direct examination, in which Gladys explained how she first became involved in tennis, her founding of *World Tennis*, the politics of open tennis in the 1960s, and how she organized the women's professional tour in late 1970. Gladys testified to the problems she had with the USLTA during the first year of the Virginia Slims Circuit in 1971, the short-lived partnership between the USLTA and the women's circuit in 1972, and how it all unraveled later that year – the disagreements over the ILTF Commercial Union Grand Prix bonus points, her resignation from her voluntary position with the USLTA, her change of mind and decision to run a non-sanctioned circuit in 1973, and the subsequent struggles with the USLTA over players and tournament directors.³⁶

While listening to the complicated testimony, Judge Pollock was often confused and asked Gladys to clarify her responses. When Gladys said the USLTA refused to sanction one of her tournaments until she submitted the Grand Prix bonus pool money to the ILTF, Judge Pollock was puzzled by her response.

THE COURT: But the Lawn Tennis Association was saying either comply with your obligations or explain it to our satisfaction before we in effect license you to go ahead with the \$100,000 tournament?

THE WITNESS: Yes.

THE COURT: What is wrong with that?

THE WITNESS: I thought there were going to change – they told me they were going to talk to Jack Kramer about getting the prize money ratings for the tournaments changed.

THE COURT: Go ahead. I don't understand.³⁷

When Gladys recalled that her appointment at USLTA Director of Women's Professional Tennis in early 1972 was the result of "a good deal of bickering, and we were all anxious not to have a war or any more suspensions," Judge Pollock stopped her and said, "We are trying to get to the heart of the complaint that you are making here, and really, I don't think that we need not go into every last detail of the human controversy that occurs. Let's stay on the main path here." Leydig tried to explain to the judge that the problems Gladys was having with the USLTA led to her appointment. "What difference does it make?" Pollock asked. "She got the appointment. She took it. She was on the committee."³⁸

Pollock was also confused about Gladys' actions when she decided to organize another circuit after resigning from her USLTA post in 1972. When Gladys explained that she warned players that signing the WITF contract might result in a USLTA suspension, the judge asked, "So you were offering them a contract and a suspension at the same time?" When Gladys affirmed this, the judge asked her if she was authorized to tell the players that they might get suspended. "The USLTA did not authorize me to tell them," she said.³⁹

THE COURT: This was an offer of a contract under a statement that was not authorized.

MR. LEYDIG: She was not in any official capacity, your Honor, you understand that at that point, I am sure.

THE COURT: No. But the complaint here is that there was an interference with a business opportunity. I don't know who was interfering in the business

opportunity if the plaintiff herself was saying, “Sign my contract, you will be suspended.” Was it the USLTA who was interfering, or was it the plaintiff who was interfering?⁴⁰

J. Robert Cassidy then conducted the direct examination of Pip Jones, who recalled his duties as the Virginia Slims Circuit tour manager in 1971 and 1972, the player meeting in Phoenix in which Edy McGoldrick and Stan Malless presented the proposed 1973 USLTA women’s tournament schedule, and the meeting in Boca Raton in which Walter Elcock tried to convince the players to stay with the USLTA. Roy Reardon, an attorney who specialized in anti-trust litigation and hired by the USLTA, cross-examined Pip. Reardon’s first objective was to show that Pip shared Gladys’ intense dislike for the USLTA and the ILTF. “Is it fair to say that from time to time, you have gone so far as to suggest that the USLTA and the ILTF in 1973, as far as your hopes were concerned, should go to pot?” Pip denied the accusation until Reardon produced a letter that he had sent to Gladys, written on his personal stationery. “Correct,” Pip said, “you have refreshed my memory.”⁴¹

Reardon also asked Pip about Virginia Wade and Linda Tuero, two players who were not allowed to play in Virginia Slims tournaments. Pip recalled that Virginia was “penalized” because she broke a promise by playing in a tournament in England during the same week as a Virginia Slims Circuit event. “She went to Europe and played in a competing tournament,” Pip said, “and we said to her, ‘You will have to pay a fine for breaking your promise.’” Pip also confirmed Reardon’s assertion that Gladys, in order to make the Virginia Slims Circuit a success, said she needed to have control over the players.⁴²

After Pip finished testifying, Cassidy questioned Carl Hutchison, the tournament director of the upcoming Virginia Slims Indoors in Quincy, Massachusetts. Hutchinson told the court about his meeting with Walter Elcock, when the USLTA vice president tried to persuade him to cancel his Virginia Slims Circuit event because the USLTA had scheduled its own tournament in the same area two weeks later. Reardon had few questions on cross examination, but he made a point of asking, “Did Mr. Elcock start the

conversation with you by saying he wasn't there to threaten you or harass you in any respect?" Hutchison replied, "Yes, yes, he was very pleasant, yes." ⁴³

Billie Jean was the next witness on the stand, and Jerome Doyle conducted the first part of the direct examination. Billie Jean talked about her early years as a professional, her recollections of the first Virginia Slims tournament in Houston, and how the Virginia Slims Circuit developed during its first two years. Much of her testimony revolved around Gladys' resignation from the USLTA and her decision to stage a non-sanctioned tour in 1973. Billie Jean recalled being told by a USLTA official – she did not remember whether it was Walter Elcock or Forrest Hainline – that she would be suspended for life if she played on the Virginia Slims Circuit. Doyle asked Billie Jean, if given a choice between a circuit organized by Gladys or one run by the USLTA, which tour she would choose. Billie Jean responded that she would play for Gladys, "because of her track record, because I knew that she would produce. If she promised a certain amount of tournaments, I knew they would be there." ⁴⁴

Billie Jean's own attorney, George Harris, continued with the direct examination. Billie Jean explained that she wanted to play in the USLTA circuit tournament in Hingham because it was held during an open week on the Virginia Slims Circuit, and she wanted to get as much competition as possible. Even though the tournament was three months away, Billie Jean said she needed to know immediately whether or not her entry would be accepted. "In my present state," she said, "I like to know at least six months in advance as to what is happening due to all my business commitments and tournament commitments, previously already planned tournaments ... I should know right now because I am having problems right now with businesses and various people I have endorsements with as to whether I am going to play in the tournament or not, and I have not heard yet what is happening." ⁴⁵

Before court adjourned at 5:30 pm, Jerome Doyle inquired if two witnesses who were under subpoena – Edy McGoldrick and Stan Malless – would be present when court resumed the following Monday. "I have tried and I requested as far back as the 22nd to have Mr. Malless here also," Doyle complained. "Counsel saw fit to tell me he would not produce him. We have process servers all over the East trying to catch up to him.

The only two we have caught so far are McGoldrick and Elcock.” USLTA attorney Roy Reardon was annoyed by the comment. “They ‘caught them’ because I brought them into the courtroom this morning. That is the biggest bunch of malarkey I have ever heard in my life.”⁴⁶

Later that evening, on the other side of the country, Margaret Court defeated Betty Stove, 6-3 6-1, in the semifinals of the British Motor Cars tournament in Los Angeles. Nancy Richey Gunter came through in three sets against Rosie Casals, winning 6-2 0-6 6-3. In Saturday’s final, played before 2,693 spectators at the Forum, Margaret won the first set 7-5 and was leading 4-2 in the second when she pulled a muscle in her left calf. “I had to change my style of play,” Margaret said later. “I just served and charged the net. I couldn’t rally with her from the baseline.”⁴⁷ Nancy took advantage of Margaret’s hindered mobility and took the second set, and the third set remained on serve until 4-4. Margaret broke serve in the ninth game and served for the match at 5-4, only to have her own serve broken. At 5-5, Margaret broke serve again, and she finally closed out the match on her serve, 7-5 6-7 7-5, with the fans giving both players a standing ovation.

Margaret’s calf injury forced her to pull out of the women’s doubles final, ending a run of six consecutive doubles titles. Her singles winning streak, however, had climbed to forty-one matches, and she hoped to continue it at the next stop on the Virginia Slims Circuit in Bethesda, Maryland.

On Monday, January 29, Roy Reardon began his cross-examination of Billie Jean. “Did you ever receive any communication from the USLTA or any of its officials suspending you? Just yes or no, please,” he asked. When Billie Jean responded that she was not sure, and that her husband Larry was unable to find any such communications in her files, Reardon inquired, “Is it possible, then, that you never received any communication from the USLTA or any of its officials that you were suspended, any written communication?” Billie Jean said that she vaguely remembered a telegram, but she was unable to find it.⁴⁸

Reardon asked Billie Jean if she was ever denied entry into a USLTA tournament. Billie Jean told the court that she was not allowed to play in USLTA events in 1968,

except for those that were “open.” Reardon was aware that Billie Jean had given up her amateur status that year to become a contract professional with George MacCall and the National Tennis League. “You knew, of course, when you signed that contract,” he asked, “that you were entering into a new sort of position as far as the USLTA was concerned?” Billie Jean acknowledged that Reardon was correct.⁴⁹

The incident at the 1971 Pacific Southwest Open, in which Billie Jean and Rosie walked off during the final, was then brought up. “As a result of that,” Reardon asked, “did you come under some kind of disciplinary proceeding of the USLTA?” Billie Jean recalled that she and Rosie ended up paying a fine. Referring to USLTA Disciplinary Committee chairman Forrest Hainline, Reardon asked, “did he not literally hold a hearing at which you were invited to attend and give evidence out in California about the facts and circumstances of this particular incident?” Billie Jean said that she “never knew of the opportunity to have a hearing with this committee. I never knew about it.”⁵⁰

Reardon then began a line of questioning regarding the Women’s International Tennis Federation, asking Billie Jean when she first heard about its formation. He was hoping to get Billie Jean to admit that she first learned about the WITF during the 1972 U. S. Open. Such an admission would show that Gladys was planning a rival organization while she was still under contract to the USLTA. Billie Jean, however, insisted she did not know anything about the actual formation of the WITF until later in the year.⁵¹

Since Billie Jean was on the WITF board of directors, Reardon asked her if she would be opposed to having the Virginia Slims Circuit tournaments sanctioned by the USLTA. “I wouldn’t mind us being sanctioned,” she responded, “if we didn’t have to pay six percent of our total prize money.” Reardon informed Billie Jean that Gladys was collecting the same amount of money from players on the 1973 Virginia Slims Circuit as was paid to the USLTA and ILTF the previous year. “That’s great,” she said, “because it goes to the girls who are running the game, the professional side of the game.”⁵²

Reardon reminded Billie Jean that her application to play in the USLTA National Indoor Championships in Hingham required her agreement to abide by all the rules and

regulations of the USLTA and ILTF. When Billie Jean countered that she agreed to abide by all the lawful rules, Judge Pollock asked her to explain further.

THE COURT: Does that mean that you agree to abide by the rules that you like, and don't agree to abide by the rules that you don't like?

THE WITNESS: Well, this way – that is why we are here in court, I believe.

THE COURT: In other words, you will make a determination as to what you agree with? Is that your evidence?

THE WITNESS: Yes.⁵³

On redirect examination by Harris, Billie Jean repeated that she was threatened with a lifetime suspension by the USLTA. “I would just like to know what the story is today and not have to wait because of my various commitments and scheduling of my tournaments.” Judge Pollock became exasperated. “I'd like to know more about what is being referred to as a threat. As I understand the rules here, there are certain ways in which suspensions occur. Have those methods been negotiated and proceeded with, that is what I would like to know, not whether there is some loose talk around in locker rooms or ladies' meetings ... After all, we are attempting to find out whether there is a legal proceeding here, or whether people are giving vent to their personal feelings, and if it is the latter, I wonder what need (we have to) be preliminarily enjoined. That is what has been going through my head all weekend here. I just don't understand what this so-called threat encompasses, if it is not negotiated through the mechanics and the procedures provided for in connection with such a matter.”⁵⁴

Harris asked Billie Jean which USLTA rules she disagreed with. “I object to being under complete control. I think I should have a choice to play anyplace I want to, whenever possible, such as a free week in Hingham, and in the past the USLTA has always tried to keep a monopoly on the game. I think it should be open. I want to play. I want to play tennis. I am so tired of hassling, I want to play tennis whenever I can to make money and to play against the best competition in any given moment.”⁵⁵

Billie Jean's comments gave Reardon an opening for his subsequent recross examination. "You say you want to play with everybody in the world, right?" he asked. "How about everybody in the world being able to play in your tournaments, how do you feel about that? ... And how do you feel about Evonne Goolagong being kept out of the Virginia Slims tournaments in 1972, how do you feel about that?" Billie Jean felt that Reardon's statement was not correct, insisting that Evonne was asked to play on the Virginia Slims Circuit. "Didn't she want to play only in some of the Virginia Slims tournaments," Reardon asked, "and Pip Jones said no, you have to play in all of them?" Billie Jean said she was not aware of that situation, and that Evonne did play in the Virginia Slims Circuit event in Dallas. Once again, Judge Pollock was confused, and asked Billie Jean to explain her answer.⁵⁶

THE COURT: If this lady would want to play in one or fewer than all of the Virginia Slims, would you regard it as a breach of the understanding of the sixty-five ladies?

THE WITNESS: Yes.

THE COURT: In other words, unless they agreed to play in the tournaments scheduled by the sixty-five ladies under the head of Mrs. Heldman, you would say they could not play in any of them?

THE WITNESS: They would not have to play every tournament. They would have to play a certain number, yes.

THE COURT: So that a person either could not join the group or would be subject to discipline by the group, is that it?

THE WITNESS: Right, they would have to wait until the fall to join up for the next year.

THE COURT: How is that different from what the USLTA does?

THE WITNESS: How is that different?

THE COURT: Yes.

THE WITNESS: I don't know.⁵⁷

Reardon reminded Billie Jean that Virginia Wade and Linda Tuero were denied entry into the Virginia Slims Circuit events in Charlotte, North Carolina and Boca Raton, Florida; Virginia for playing in a conflicting tournament in England and refusing to pay a fine imposed by Pip Jones, and Linda for not competing in enough Virginia Slims Circuit events to qualify for the year-end championships. “Yes, and I didn’t agree to that,” Billie Jean said. “I voted against that. I felt they should be able to play.” Reardon asked Billie Jean if she thought it was fair that Gladys required each player on the 1973 Virginia Slims Circuit to play all eighteen tournaments. “I definitely think it is fair,” she said, adding that tournament promoters needed to know which players would be appearing, and the sponsors wanted to be guaranteed as well. Billie Jean said she chose to sign the contract with Gladys, just as she chose to want to play in the USLTA tournament in Hingham during a rest week on the Virginia Slims Circuit.⁵⁸

Judge Pollock asked Billie Jean if anyone at the USLTA denied her entry into the Hingham tournament; after she responded that no one had told her one way or another, Reardon interjected that Billie Jean had submitted her entry application only two days prior. Reardon also broke some news; the ILTF announced it would stage the Federation Cup in West Germany for the week of April 23, and as a result the tournament in Hingham was going to be moved to March, during the same week as a Virginia Slims Circuit event. “And I am telling you that Hingham is not going to be held on April 23. I want you to assume that,” he said. “So is your application withdrawn, if that assumption is a valid one?”⁵⁹

THE COURT: We can’t go on the assumption about Hingham until we get some evidence.

THE WITNESS: Exactly.⁶⁰

Judge Pollock wanted to know what monetary injuries Billie Jean faced if she was unable to play the USLTA tournament in Hingham. “If I am not allowed to play Hingham, I have business arrangements I can make right now,” she said, referring to an offer to play an exhibition in Knoxville, Tennessee for \$2,000. “But I have to know as

soon as possible. I can't keep waiting." Billie Jean also estimated that if she were not able to play at Wimbledon and the U. S. Open due to a suspension by the USLTA, she could lose as much as \$50,000 in endorsement deals.⁶¹

In his final re-cross examination, Reardon reminded Billie Jean of a comment she made during the \$100,000 Virginia Slims Championships in Boca Raton in October, 1972. "This tournament," Billie Jean said at the time, "is more important than Wimbledon or Forest Hills. The future of women's tennis is with our tour and this is the biggest tournament on that tour. They can't compare it to those old, antiquated prestige tournaments." Reardon asked Billie Jean if money was her motivation in determining what was good and what was not good. "No, that is not true," Billie Jean said, "it is a measuring stick for tennis."⁶² With that, Billie Jean's testimony was finished.

Reardon then began his cross examination of Gladys. He spent a considerable amount of time asking Gladys if she recalled the first time she thought about forming the WITF, the details of her contract with the USLTA, and her resignation from her voluntary post as USLTA Director of Women's Professional Tennis. The contract stipulated that the agreement could be terminated before the end of the third year only if both parties approved; Gladys resigned after six months by sending out a news release, indicating the USLTA "can and should have the opportunity to take over. I am certain they will do a proper job for the players, the sponsors and tournament directors." Judge Pollock questioned Gladys about the sincerity of her resignation.

THE COURT: Did you give anybody any reason to believe that you were resigning for reasons other than stated in your press release?

THE WITNESS: A few people knew. I wrote one letter, but only a few knew the real reasons.

THE COURT: So that the press release was an insincere statement on your part?

THE WITNESS: I didn't feel it would be good for the girls or for the USLTA to publicly state my reasons.

THE COURT: So it was published fiction?

THE WITNESS: I would say it did not give all the facts

THE COURT: And it gave the facts stated in a misleading way, did it not?

THE WITNESS: I would say that I did hope the USLTA would be able to produce some tournaments for the girls, and I did wish them luck.

THE COURT: But we are talking about the impression that you conveyed. In the words that you used in that release, weren't you conveying something other than what you now tell me you were really thinking?

THE COURT: I would say it was a nice, white lie

THE WITNESS: I don't know when white lies are nice and when they are un-nice, but I understand you to say that the statement was not true.⁶³

During her testimony, Gladys insisted she did not conceive the idea of the WITF until well after the 1972 U. S. Open, sometime in October. However, during a deposition with Reardon one week earlier, Gladys said she mentioned the idea of forming the Women's International Tennis Federation during a meeting with the women players at the West Side Tennis Club. In her deposition with Reardon, Gladys also stated that she spoke with her attorney, C. Frederick Leydig, about the formation of the WITF "probably around the end of August." On the witness stand, Gladys was asked by Reardon if the letter from the players, composed during the Virginia Slims Circuit event in Denver, influenced her to form the WITF. Gladys responded that it did not, and Reardon once again read her deposition, in which she said the idea of forming the WITF arose "when the girls petitioned me to come back into the pro tour."⁶⁴

When Gladys affirmed that she received the USLTA news release, dated September 19, 1972, indicating that "Stan Malless wanted to assure the women players that their tournament circuit would continue," Reardon inquired as to why there was no communication with the USLTA and the continued planning of a non-sanctioned circuit. "I understand it as deliberately not recognizing what he knew we were doing already," Gladys said about Malless.⁶⁵

Reardon asked Gladys about a letter she wrote, on November 22, 1972, to the players under contract to her, informing them that they were barred from competing in any ILTF and USLTA events. "Had you received anything from the disciplinary

committee or the management committee of USLTA stating in words or substance that the girls have been barred?” Reardon demanded. When Gladys admitted she had not, Reardon wanted to know why she would make such a statement. Gladys seemed rattled. “Because there was a meeting in Italy,” she said, “and the ILTF, and when we checked it with the ILTF in England, at the request of the USLTA, as soon as we played our first Virginia Slims tournament – I better get the release, if there is a copy, which said that we would be barred and that the ILTF would support the USLTA.”⁶⁶

Judge Pollock was confused, and he asked how any of the players could be suspended without a disciplinary hearing, which was clearly stated in the USLTA bylaws as well as the contract that Gladys signed when she became a USLTA official. “When the eight girls that first played in Houston in September of 1970 were suspended, we never – I never personally heard,” she said. “They never heard from the disciplinary committee, they simply were not ranked, not allowed to play Wightman Cup, Federation Cup. We knew. How? Because they were not in the national rankings and not invited to Federation Cup or Wightman Cup. But I never heard a word personally ... I was never told. I figured we were suspended because I could not get a sanction.”⁶⁷

While discussing the details of the WITF player contract, Reardon asked Gladys if any player had ever been released to play in a conflicting USLTA event. Gladys said that Patty Ann Reese, a young player from Florida who played in Virginia Slims Circuit qualifying tournaments in 1971 and 1972, asked to be released from her commitment for 1973. Patty Ann’s father, Howard Reese, was the president of the St. Petersburg Tennis Foundation; Reese originally agreed to hold a Virginia Slims Circuit event in St. Petersburg in 1973, but when Chris Evert announced she was playing for the USLTA, he decided to back out of his agreement with Gladys. Two days before the start of the British Motor Cars tournament in San Francisco, Reese contacted Gladys about releasing Patty Ann from her WITF contract. “I told her father that if he had kept his contract to have a tournament with us, that would be fine with me,” Gladys said, “but since he broke it, I was sending her letter on to my lawyer ... I am very unhappy with her father who broke his contract with me at the last minute to (hold) a USLTA event the same week.”

Gladys said that she had not yet made a decision about releasing Patty Ann from her contract.⁶⁸

Before court adjourned for the day, Reardon asked Gladys if she would allow Virginia Wade to play just one tournament on the Virginia Slims Circuit. “She is the reason we have contracts,” Gladys responded. “She broke away and played four competing events. That’s why we have contracts ... She would not be permitted to play. She has not conformed to the rules.”⁶⁹

Four more witnesses gave testimony during the next two days. Bill Cutler, still employed by Philip Morris but no longer the Virginia Slims assistant brand manager, recalled the compromise that was reached in the summer of 1971 when several Virginia Slims Circuit events were scheduled in conflict with USLTA tournaments. Since Cutler was not involved with the tour when Gladys became a USLTA official in 1972 and formed the WITF later in the year, Reardon had few questions on cross examination. Ellen Merlo, Cutler’s successor as Virginia Slims assistant brand manager, discussed the day when Gladys came into the Philip Morris offices to have the WITF contract typed and photocopied. Merlo testified that Walter Elcock telephoned her one week later to inquire if Virginia Slims was ready to commit its sponsorship of the USLTA circuit, and she recalled saying “we couldn’t give Mr. Elcock any decision because, as he knew, there were other promoters, including Mrs. Heldman, who were now speaking to the women, and since the women had not yet made their decision, Virginia Slims was not ready to make its decision.” On cross examination, Reardon asked Merlo, “You work for Mr. Cullman, don’t you, basically?” Merlo responded that she did, and she also affirmed Reardon’s question when he asked, “You know that Mr. Cullman and Mrs. Heldman are and have been friends for some time, do you not?”⁷⁰

Forrest Hainline, the chairman of the USLTA Disciplinary Committee and summoned as a defense witness, testified about his appearance at the players’ meeting at Boca Raton in October 1972, when he explained the consequences of becoming a contract professional, the reinstatement process, and the how his committee proceeded with disciplinary complaints. He recalled the incident when Billie Jean King and Rosie Casals walked off the court during the final of the 1971 Pacific Southwest Open in a

dispute over a line call. Hainline mentioned that Billie Jean and Rosie filed a lawsuit to against the tournament sponsors and the Southern California Tennis Association.

THE COURT: Was it a lawsuit for money?

THE WITNESS: Yes, sir, damages. They wanted to get the \$6,500.

THE COURT: That is as much as I need to know. ⁷¹

Hainline recalled that “eventually, there was a hearing in Los Angeles, which was the most convenient place from the viewpoint of my committee and for the women involved. Mrs. King and Miss Casals did not appear at the hearing, nor their attorneys. They refused to do so, although they submitted a lengthy letter outlining their case, which I requested them to do. There were findings of fact, conclusions and an order entered in the matter. They dismissed the lawsuits. The effect of the order was that they were fined \$5,000 and they did not appeal. They were not suspended and they continued playing in tournaments.” ⁷²

C. Frederick Leydig conducted a lengthy cross examination of Hainline, which included an examination of the USLTA bylaws that pertained to sanctioning of tournaments and instances in which players could be debarred by the association. Since Hainline was an attorney, much of the testimony was spent jostling over the way questions were posed – further annoying the judge, who expressed his frustration that too much time was being wasted. Leydig asked Hainline why the USLTA rules required contract professionals to be debarred from the USLTA. “What is there in the rules or the by-laws of the USLTA,” he demanded, “that requires a woman to leave the organization in order to earn as much money as she can in prize money tournaments in this country?” Before Hainline could answer, Judge Pollock interrupted.

THE COURT: What is there to compel someone to go into competition with the USLTA?

MR. LEYDIG: To go into competition with the USLTA?

THE COURT: Yes. Isn't that what they are doing by going to this competitive circuit which now has a monopoly on the top players in this country?

MR. LEYDIG: Your Honor, that is a most unusual suggestion, if I may say so.

THE COURT: You tell me how it is unusual in the light of this record.

MR. LEYDIG: I will be happy to, your Honor. In the first place, whatever monopoly she has is simply the result ...

THE COURT: First of all, do we agree that the sixty-five players are among the largest group of that equivalent competent players in the country?

MR. LEYDIG: There is no question about it, your Honor, but it is not a monopoly.

THE COURT: In other words, Mrs. Heldman has the top group tied up?

MR. LEYDIG: How did she do that? That is the point, your Honor. Free will.

THE COURT: We will say she did it lawfully. Anybody is entitled to go out and tie up somebody else with an exclusive contract. It is what you do with it that makes a difference.

MR. LEYDIG: I think that is absolutely right, your Honor. And what she has done ...

THE COURT: If somebody wants to go out and compete with the USLTA by – for her earnings, as you tried to put it – by going into a place where they can earn more money ... when you were in the law practice, I assume you picked the law firm that gave you the most satisfaction, whether it is intellectual, monetary or otherwise. Now, what is there in the rules of the organization that you left, that you should leave, is what you are asking this witness.

MR. LEYDIG: Your Honor, with all due respect, may I respond to that, because I think you are saying some things that go to the heart of the case, and I would really like to express an answer.

THE COURT: I hope so. I'd like to get to the heart of the case.

MR. LEYDIG: So would we, and I welcome an opportunity to comment just briefly on what you said. In the first place, prior to Mrs. Heldman having anything whatever to do with professional tennis in this country, there were no

tennis tournaments for women to earn money in. Her testimony is there was \$2,000 one year, 1969-1970, something around that period. As a result of her efforts it is now to the point where there are over \$800,000 in prize moneys this year for girls. They take that money, the players. The players take it because people want to see them play.

THE COURT: Where do you go from there?

MR. LEYDIG: Where do you go from there?

THE COURT: Yes.

MR. LEYDIG: These are tennis players. A lot of them are Americans. Why should they not be members of the USLTA? Why shouldn't they be allowed to play in their national championship, for example?

THE COURT: Who said they can't?

MR. LEYDIG: Your Honor, don't you ...

THE COURT: Why don't you answer that question? Who said they can't?

MR. LEYDIG: We have asked repeatedly: Can they? What is the situation?

THE COURT: Has anybody ever told you they can't play in the Forest Hills?

MR. LEYDIG: Your Honor, I asked Mr. Hainline by letter in early December – can they do it? And I have never had a response. I have done it on behalf of the girls.

THE COURT: But you are not responding to my question. Has anybody told you they can't play in Forest Hills or Wimbledon?

MR. LEYDIG: No, your Honor. It is the threat of it ...

THE COURT: Aren't you just jumping the gun in this case and seeking to cement a position of the group, of a large group that is collected in a contractual situation?

MR. LEYDIG: Your Honor, I think that there are some basic misunderstandings. If I may say so ...

THE COURT: I don't misunderstand the fact that there has been no determination whatsoever as to whether or not your client's protégés – I am not

sure if they are your client's protégés, if they already transferred to the corporation ...

MR. LEYDIG: They are not transferred to the corporation, your Honor.

THE COURT: Or Mr. Harris' protégé, have been in any way barred from playing in the U. S. Open.

MR. LEYDIG: That is not the only tournament, your Honor, but it is the one that makes sense to discuss here. The point is ...

THE COURT: That is the one you discussed with me. That is the only reason I raise it.

MR. LEYDIG: I discussed it with you, your Honor, because it is a significant tournament. It is one that deserves to be discussed. That is why, as counsel for Mrs. Heldman, I wrote a letter to Mr. Hainline more than a month ago and said will they or will they not be able to play. He had written a letter to me which said in substance just what he testified to about the "open to all" categories. I said was the 1973 open to all categories?

THE COURT: I suppose when the time comes you will know the answer. When they decide that question, you will know their decision.

MR. LEYDIG: Don't you understand ...

THE COURT: The very first thing Mr. Reardon asked you, told you the answer to that question.

MR. LEYDIG: Your Honor, don't you understand, we are talking about women who earn their living playing tennis and ...

THE COURT: I am sympathetic to women and people who earn their living, but that is not this case. The problem in this case is whether or not there should be a preliminary injunction. I am not deciding the merits of this case now.

MR. LEYDIG: Of course not, your Honor, and I don't want to prolong this, but don't you understand, your Honor, when I say this, I am referring only to this fact. Forest Hills is the big tournament in this country.

THE COURT: Why do you refer to it? Because as soon as we talk Forest Hills, we both know that there has been no determination about Forest Hills.

MR. LEYDIG: Why shouldn't they be told whether they will be able to play? That is one of the questions. It is inherent in the threat.

THE COURT: Is that the reason you want an injunction, because they have not spoken?

MR. LEYDIG: It is not the only reason, your Honor, no sir.

THE COURT: Let's get on with the other reasons.⁷³

Billie Jean's attorney, George Harris, also incurred Judge Pollock's wrath when it was his turn to cross examine Hainline. Harris asked Hainline to read the aloud the USLTA regulation that forbade players from competing in certain unsanctioned tournaments. "Players who compete in unsanctioned events where spectator admissions are charged or any player expenses are paid or any prize money is offered may be debarred," Hainline read. Harris then asked if Billie Jean competed in an unsanctioned tournament that offered prize money and charged spectator admission, would she be allowed to play in a USLTA tournament that was not "open-to-all"; Hainline responded that such a determination could not be made until a complaint was filed against her. "I am hereby filing that complaint," Harris said. "You are filing a complaint against her?" Hainline asked. "On that very ground I have given you, yes," Harris responded. "You said anybody can file them. I have just filed it. Please tell the Court."⁷⁴

MR. REARDON: Your mean you really are filing it?

MR. HARRIS: Right now, yes. Please tell the Court.

THE COURT: You are filing a complaint against your client?

MR. HARRIS: The complaint he just talked about. He said he has to have a complaint to act. I want him to act on those facts, your Honor.

THE COURT: Are you serious? You are filing a complaint against your client?

MR. HARRIS: Under these rules, your Honor, the witness said ...

THE COURT: I know about the rules, but I am listening to your words. Are you saying that you have just filed a complaint about your client?

MR. HARRIS: Your Honor, I don't mean that literally.

THE COURT: Then what do you mean?

MR. HARRIS: I do mean to take it for granted that someone, whether it is me or someone else, has filed such a complaint.

THE COURT: If it is you or someone else, I will disqualify you from further representation.

MR. HARRIS: I withdraw the representation that it was myself, your Honor.

THE COURT: Why don't you stop all the histrionics and ask the question that you want to ask?

MR. HARRIS: Judge, I am really not trying to waste time. I recognize you want me to move along. I am not trying to drag.

THE COURT: I have always had misgivings about intervention.⁷⁵

Hainline's cross examination was finished by Leydig, who wanted to know if the USLTA national championships at Forest Hills would be an open-to-all tournament in 1973, which would allow the participation of contract professionals. Hainline responded that the decision to hold an "open-to-all" tournament at Forest Hills did not rest with him or his committee. Leydig asked Hainline if he felt the exclusion of the women under contract to Gladys and the WITF from Forest Hills would have a financial impact on them. "Well, they certainly would not be able to play in that tournament if it isn't open to all categories," Hainline said. "And if it is, they will be. Now, what else they will be doing at that same time, as a fact, such as the World Championship Tennis group, will they have their own tournament and bigger prize money, I don't know. You can measure economic impact in any number of ways."⁷⁶

John Granville, who became the Virginia Slims brand manager in the summer of 1971, testified about the reduced sanction fees that the USLTA allowed the Virginia Slims Circuit tournaments, and his presence at an ILTF meeting in London in August, 1971, when Gladys proposed her idea to organize an independent governing body for women tennis players. Granville spoke about the meeting he had with USLTA officials during the 1971 U. S. Open, when association president Bob Colwell – after learning had happened at the ILTF meeting – stated that he no longer felt comfortable working with

Gladys. Much of Reardon's cross examination was devoted to the dinner that Granville, Gladys, Walter Elcock, and Edy McGoldrick had at the Sky Club in October, 1972. He asked Granville if Cullman revealed that "Virginia Slims is now and always was going with Gladys." Granville responded that Cullman never made such a statement.⁷⁷

The final witness was incoming USLTA president Walter Elcock, and Leydig and Harris were unable to score any points against him. Elcock explained the procedures for USLTA tournament sanction applications and how the sanction fees are distributed, and then recalled his experiences in dealing with Gladys – reading about her resignation in the newspaper, learning about the formation of the WITF after Edy McGoldrick and Stan Malless returned home from Phoenix, his meeting with tournament directors at LaGuardia Airport and the dinner later that evening at the Sky Club, and his presentation to the players at the tournament in Boca Raton. Elcock patiently responded to every question asked of him, and he readily admitted when he did not know the answer. Harris continued to pose hypothetical situations pertaining to Billie Jean, perhaps hoping to corner Elcock, and each time the response was the same. "I want all women to play in all tournaments and be free to play in all tournaments," he said. "That is the position of the USLTA also. We want everybody to be able to play in sanctioned tournaments."⁷⁸

When it was Reardon's turn to query Elcock, his first question was, "Does the USLTA currently have any of the players, for the 1973 circuit, at least, under contract?" When Elcock responded that the national association did not, Judge Pollock asked, "What about the men? Is that true of the men, too?" Again, Elcock responded that the USLTA had no players under contract.⁷⁹

Elcock then read a lengthy narrative, which summarized the development of open tennis, the arrival of professional tennis promoters such as George MacCall and Lamar Hunt, and how the USLTA and ILTF eventually agreed cooperate with Hunt in the summer of 1972. He also explained the importance of the tournament sanctioning procedure. "Sanctioning indicates that a particular tournament is an approved tournament," he read, "so that it can be considered for ranking purposes, that the rules of the USLTA will be applied and that proper draws will be made. It also insures that there is a central clearing house with regard to tournament schedules and dates." Reardon

asked Elcock if he ever offered to have Gladys' tournaments for 1973 sanctioned by the USLTA. During his dinner with Gladys at the Sky Club, and later at their lunch meeting at Boca Raton, Elcock said that he "asked her to sanction the tournaments, and she said no way ... there was no way that she was going to have her tournaments sanctioned by the USLTA." ⁸⁰

Reardon asked Elcock if he ever threatened to bar Billie Jean or Rosie Casals for life. "I have never threatened to bar any tennis player for life," Elcock insisted. When asked if he was aware that Gladys was planning to start another circuit at the time of her resignation from her USLTA post in August, 1972, Elcock said, "No, because I wouldn't have released her, because she was under contract and I took her at her word that she was getting out of tennis ... that she had to go back to her baby, the magazine, which was rapidly becoming a teenager. I was very regretful when she resigned." ⁸¹

Before Elcock was excused from the stand, George Harris and C. Frederick Leydig had more questions. Harris wanted to know much money the USLTA received from certain competitions, such as the Davis Cup, the Wightman Cup, and the Bonne Bell Cup. He then asked Elcock what he knew about the USLTA Budget and Finance Committee; once again, the seemingly aimless line of questioning irritated Judge Pollock.

THE COURT: What has that got to do with whether a temporary injunction should be granted here?

MR. HARRIS: May I make an argument?

THE COURT: Yes.

MR. HARRIS: The argument is this, your Honor. They have taken our immediacy with the question of Hingham...

THE COURT: What is this?

MR. HARRIS: The immediacy question for April 23rd is a separate factor, your Honor. We want to show that Billie Jean King is being denied the right to play tennis.

THE COURT: What has that got to do with the budget or what they received from the Davis Cup?

MR. HARRIS: Because, your Honor, the fact is they do receive money on these international tournaments, and I expect to show it through this witness.

THE COURT: What has that got to do with whether Mrs. King can play on April 23rd?

MR. HARRIS: Because the argument is that they say this with regard to what happens at Wimbledon.

THE COURT: What has that got to do with whether Billie Jean King can play on April 23rd? You start to tell me something and then you go off in some other direction.

MR. HARRIS: In addition to April 23rd, there are several other tournaments that are going to be held. Wimbledon is generally held in June. Now, the witness has suggested ...

THE COURT: I think that you ought to be more direct and not skirt the issue. Now, put your questions directly so that we can understand them.⁸²

Harris asked Elcock if he told Gladys that the younger players at the meeting in Boca Raton should have their parents or guardians present. "I don't think I used the word 'present,'" Elcock said. "I think I said, 'I think that, from looking at these contracts, they ought to have someone look at them,' that they seemed rather unfair."⁸³ Harris asked Elcock if he knew if there was a player at the meeting in Boca Raton who was sixteen-years old; when Elcock said he did not, Harris asked "Do you know of a player named Kuykendall?"

THE COURT: What about this person, now? Do you think that the girls were taken advantage of at the meeting? Is that your point?

MR. HARRIS: That's my point, your Honor.

THE COURT: We don't have rules when it comes to this kind of admission.

MR. HARRIS: I am trying to set a meeting where there were threats given. That's what I am trying to do. And then there are circumstances that this thing is said ...

THE COURT: Just prove the threats and let's get on with the case. I got here at 9:30 this morning for purpose, as Mr. Doyle indicated, that we would be through by eleven o'clock, and we are going round and round and round the ring-a-rosy.

MR. HARRIS: I have no further questions.⁸⁴

Leydig's last series of questions pertained to Lamar Hunt and the WCT circuit, asking Elcock if the men professionals were under contract and were committed to play in a certain number of tournaments. "Yes, until last July," Elcock responded. "It took about seven or eight months to negotiate ... basically, Mr. Hunt agreed not to sign players to contracts, the players would all be subject to their national associations, he would pay sanction fees and continue to be a promoter of certain tournaments ... the boys who were under contract with Mr. Hunt would receive their (guarantee) money until their contracts expired."⁸⁵

Leydig ended his examination by asking Elcock about the "open-to-all" category of tournaments, which could only be approved by the ITLF and was the only type of tournament that allowed the participation of contract professionals. Elcock said that whether or not the U. S. Open would be an "open-to-all" tournament or only an "open" tournament – which would not include contract professionals – would be discussed at the USLTA annual meeting in Puerto Rico in mid-February. The status of Wimbledon, Elcock said, would be determined by the British national association sometime in the spring.⁸⁶

In the closing argument, Jerome Doyle insisted that the USLTA had "a monopoly in its exercise of granting or denying sanctions ... it's a monopoly of licensing power ... followed up by meting out to players and clubs and promoters the discipline of suspension, expulsion and barring." Since he believed that the USLTA would carry through on the threats that his client testified about, Doyle insisted that "there is no problem about whether or not acts under Section 16 of the Clayton Act have already taken place, and what we seek here is relief from any further actions of the same type." Doyle also urged the court to "issue an injunction enjoining the defendant association from making further threats to players, promoters, sponsors and officials of the nature

made in Boca Raton, Florida, Phoenix, Arizona and LaGuardia, to wit, a reminder to them in the context of this plaintiff's tournament and proposed tournament that her players will be barred if they continue to play for her." ⁸⁷

George Harris, hoping to win a preliminary injunction so that Billie Jean could play in the USLTA tournament in Hingham – even though the dates of that event had already been rescheduled – asserted that “there is a conspiracy ... to prevent professional players from bargaining freely with the member clubs and independent promoters for the highest prizes their services can command.” Harris did not see why the USLTA was so concerned about which tournaments Billie Jean played in. “No harm is going to come to anybody on the defendant's side of the fence,” he argued, “if my client, Billie Jean King, plays in any kind of a tournament ... and they admit there is no harm to them, so why all the threats?” ⁸⁸ Judge Pollock, as he had done with Harris throughout most of the hearing, could not resist interjecting. “Well, you confuse yourself about position,” he said. “They seem to say that they might just as well close up the USLTA if there are no rules. That is their position as I read their papers, so if you don't want to address yourself to their position and to stop short with your own, I think you are wrong. I am not saying that your position is incorrect, but you are not meeting their position.” ⁸⁹

In his closing argument, Roy Reardon argued that Gladys had “unclean hands,” a legal doctrine that dismisses a claim if the plaintiff engaged in unethical practices related to the case. “I was somewhat astonished to find in the records of the plaintiff the Craighill letter,” Reardon said, referring to Donald Dell's law practice partner, “which provided an opinion that ... the plaintiff would be violating her existing contract with the USLTA by setting off on her own and signing up girls and arranging her own tour. I must say that I had no idea that such a document existed at the time the case commenced, but I think it was otherwise evident ... that the very purpose of the plaintiff's activities, almost from the middle of 1972, were to exercise control over ladies' professional tennis, and that in order to effectuate this she engaged the assistance and collaboration of Philip Morris...” ⁹⁰

Reardon also addressed Billie Jean's intervention and desire to play in USLTA sanctioned tournaments during rest weeks on the Virginia Slims Circuit. “The very

foundation of the Women's International Tennis Federation was designed to provide a vehicle under which Mrs. Heldman and the girls who associated with that entity on their own could sanction and promote tennis tournaments throughout the United States and abroad," he said. "I don't think there is any question that she candidly informed all of the girls that Mrs. King, in particular, was acutely aware of the fact that by doing so there could indeed be repercussions as a result of their doing this, and its possible violation of the standing orders or rules of the USLTA ... Mrs. King can come into any tournament of the USLTA she wants to and play it, in effect, your Honor, we are inviting every player who, on a voluntary basis, has agreed and said, 'Yes, I will abide by the USLTA rules and regulations.'" ⁹¹

Judge Pollock told the attorneys that he hoped to make a decision on whether or not to grant Gladys a preliminary injunction within one week's time. "I know how anxious everybody is to get this resolved," he said, "and I will do my utmost to use all the available time between now and Monday, or at least Tuesday, and I would expect to be in a position to reach a conclusion by that time." ⁹²

By the time the court hearing concluded on Thursday, February 1, the Virginia Slims of Washington, D. C. was into its fourth day of competition. Rosie Casals was the number-two seed in the tournament, behind Margaret Court, and before she played her first round match on Thursday evening, she gave George Solomon of the *Washington Post* her opinion of Gladys' lawsuit. "The USLTA has seen our success and wants to come in and take," she said, "but they're not professionals, nor very businesslike. This is our livelihood, and we should control it." ⁹³

Rosie reached Saturday's semifinals easily, where she met third-seeded Kerry Melville. Before they played, Rosie asked head umpire Haig Tufenik to remove linesman Bob Jackson from the match. Earlier in the week, Rosie threw her racquet and said some unpleasant words to Jackson, who later said the barrage was "unwarranted." Tufenik complied with the request, but later told Solomon that Rosie was not satisfied with any linesperson. "After awhile," he said, "you have to wonder about her." Jackson, who was calling lines at a professional tennis tournament for the first time, added that

“this tournament makes me nervous. Several people, officials, said things to me about my calls. If they want to call the lines, let them.”⁹⁴

A full house of 1,700 spectators at the Linden Hill Racquet Club in Bethesda, Maryland watched the semifinals, in which Kerry use the lob as a weapon to counter Rosie’s net rushing tactics. After winning the three-set match in a tiebreak, Kerry said her lobs made Rosie hesitate about coming toward the net, in addition to tiring her. Rosie disagreed, saying that she strained a thigh muscle in the third game of the match. “If I had been one hundred percent,” she insisted, “I think I would have won the match.”⁹⁵

Kerry and Rosie did agree that the lines calls were not very good. When Rosie served to the deuce court, Kerry thought that Bernard Stickney missed several calls. After one non-call, the usually quiet and calm Kerry turned to Stickney and said, “Don’t tell me that was in. You must be going blind or something.”⁹⁶ Rosie felt that a professional tennis tour had no place for untrained linespersons. “Perhaps the officials are drinking too much in the hospitality room before the matches,” she said. “They have a few beers, then come downstairs all sleepy. There’s a lot of money involved in these matches. We expect good officiating. I’m not the only player who feels this way, either ... It’s not our job to get competent linesmen. It’s up to the officials to form their own association. If they want good officials, they’re going to have to start paying people.”⁹⁷

Kerry reached her second final in three weeks, but was no match for Margaret Court, who won 6-1 6-2 in only forty-four minutes on Sunday. After the match, Margaret said her performance during the week was the best she had played so far on the Virginia Slims Circuit. Kerry agreed, telling Mark Asher of the *Washington Post* how challenging it was to play against Margaret, and what it was like to receive one of her overpowering serves. “She’d hit them and they nearly knocked the racquet out of my hand a couple of times,” she said. “Against other players, I would have had time to hit the ball. She puts so much pressure on you. Three times I had sitting volleys and I thought I had to hit the lines. I was trying to go for the lines every time.”⁹⁸

Margaret collected another \$6,000 for the win, her eleventh straight tournament victory. When asked about Billie Jean’s most recent threat to bypass Wimbledon unless equal prize money was given to the women, Margaret suggested that “it would do more

good for the circuit if either Billie Jean or I won Wimbledon. I'd like to win the grand slam. If I won \$100,000 along the way, fine. But money isn't that important to me." Margaret was asked about her inevitable showdown with Billie Jean; they had not played since the Virginia Slims Circuit event in Phoenix six months earlier, and Billie Jean was planning to return to action at the next stop on the circuit, in Miami. "I never worry about who I play," she said, "but I hope she's worried about me." Before she finished the interview, Margaret expressed her appreciation for the volunteer linespersons. "It's easier playing than sitting on the line," she observed. ⁹⁹

The \$30,000 Barnett Bank Classic, originally scheduled to be played at the Tennis Club in Fort Lauderdale until promoter George Liddy decided that he wanted to stage a USLTA circuit event and ensure the appearance of Chris Evert, was played at the exclusive Jockey Club on the north side of Miami. Qualifying rounds were held at the beginning of the week, which included three of the ATA players that Gladys was financially assisting. For Bonnie Logan, Sylvia Hooks and Ann Koger, the Virginia Slims Circuit was a difficult experience. During the circuit's first four tournaments, none of them were able to survive the qualifying phase. Bonnie was the only one to win a match, when Margie Cooper retired after losing the first set in the first qualifying round in Bethesda, Maryland. In her next match, with a chance to earn a spot in the championship flight, Bonnie was easily beaten by teenager Joy Schwikert.

In addition to struggling in competition, the ATA players were sometimes viewed as sideshows by the spectators. Sylvia recalled seeing spectators pointing at her and hearing them say, "See, there she is, that's the one." During the qualifying matches at the Jockey Club, a Confederate flag flew over the court. Billie Jean, who was making her return to singles action in Miami after a three week absence, later said that if she had seen the flag, she would have refused to play.

I said to myself, "My God, is this 1973?" I even took pictures of it to show my friends. ¹⁰⁰

-- Sylvia Hooks, 1973

The tournament in Miami featured a pro-am tournament, in which local players paid to play mixed doubles with the circuit's top stars. Margaret Court, who was still tending to a calf muscle injury that was sustained two weeks earlier in Los Angeles, initially declined to play in the pro-am.

... money did mean a lot to her. She had been a poor girl, so as the money came in and got bigger and bigger, it was very good for her. So one time I asked her to play in the mixed doubles in a Florida tournament, and she said, "Oh, I really can't play the mixed." I said, "Margaret, there's \$1,800 for the winner." She said, "I feel much better. I'll play the mixed." ¹⁰¹

-- Gladys Heldman, 1987

Billie Jean was the top seed in the tournament, even though she had not played in a singles tournament in over four months. She struggled in her opening round match against Betty Ann Hansen, barely getting by with a 6-4 7-6 win. The following night, she won the first set in a tiebreak against Karen Krantzcke, lost the second set, and then held two match points at 5-3. Unable to win that game, Billie Jean had two more match points at 5-4 but still could not close it out. Karen won 7-5 in the third, winning the last four games of the match.

Two days later, Kerry Melville defeated Karen, 6-3 6-1 to reach the singles final against Margaret Court. Unlike their previous three matches, this time Kerry got off to a good start. In cold and windy conditions, she once again used her excellent lob to win the first set 6-4 before Margaret asserted herself to win the second, 6-1. Kerry then reached 5-3 in the third set, only to see Margaret sweep four straight games to win the match – and first prize payday of \$7,000. "I was so surprised when I won the first set," Kerry said after the match. "I thought maybe I had a chance to beat her this time, but then she held me to only one game in the second set. Margaret is always at the top of her game ... she's just a great player." ¹⁰²

After four consecutive tournaments, the Virginia Slims Circuit took a one-week break. Billie Jean, Rosie, Kerry and Francoise played a series of one-set singles

exhibitions at the Seventh Regiment Armory in New York to raise funds for the National and Manhattan Women's Political Caucuses.¹⁰³ Margaret Court would never have participated in such an event; she always contended that she was not a proponent of the women's liberation movement. The irony of Margaret's opinions was not lost on Billie Jean. "Margaret is women's lib in action," Billie Jean amusingly observed. "She goes out and earns the bread while Barry takes care of the kid!"¹⁰⁴

While the matches were being played at the Barnett Banks Classic, a decision was made in Gladys' lawsuit against the USLTA. On Tuesday, February 6, Judge Pollock dismissed the request for a preliminary injunction, writing in his decision that "among the powers entrusted to the District Judge, few must be exercised with as much caution and deliberation as the power to issue a preliminary injunction." In addition to not proving there was any immediate and irreparable harm pending the lawsuit – the key grounds for granting a preliminary injunction – Judge Pollock believed that Gladys was not sincere in her resignation from the USLTA, planning all along to start a rival circuit. Judge Pollock referred to the "clean hands" doctrine as supporting ground for the denial, writing that the evidence "gives substantial indication of violation of fiduciary duties of good faith and fair dealing imposed on plaintiff by her close relationship with USLTA."¹⁰⁵

Billie Jean's request for a preliminary injunction to allow her to play in USLTA events during rest weeks on the Virginia Slims Circuit was also denied, because "this type of injury is not irreparable. Ms. King saw a valuable opportunity in plaintiff's contract and opted for it; she has available to her the chance to win large sums of prize money ... That other tournament opportunities will be lost to her ... does not, on this record, support a preliminary injunction."¹⁰⁶

Judge Pollock indicated that he would monitor future decisions made by the USLTA that might affect the eligibility of Virginia Slims Circuit players. "Reasonable rules are vital to the orderly preservation of tournament tennis," he wrote. "Rules intended to or have the natural effect of defeating competition, on the other hand, cross the line of legality."¹⁰⁷ While the preliminary injunction was denied, Gladys' lawsuit seeking \$175,000 in damages from the USLTA was set to go to trial on March 26, 1973.

Four days later, while USLTA officials were meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico, the association issued a press release expressing its agreement with Judge Pollock's decision.

Walter E. Elcock, President of the USLTA, announced at its 92nd Annual Meeting in Puerto Rico that the USLTA was delighted with the decision rendered by Judge Milton Pollock in New York denying the application by Mrs. Gladys M. Heldman, joined in by Billie Jean King, for an injunction against purported violations of the antitrust laws and acts of unfair competition. Elcock stated that the decision was "in the best interest of tennis and the USLTA's objective to provide women professional tennis players with a tournament circuit in which every qualified player can participate and which offers substantial prize money."

"We didn't bring this lawsuit," Elcock said, "and we tried for months to work out a fair compromise but Mrs. Heldman was adamant that she wanted nothing further to do with the USLTA and wanted to go her own way." Now that the suit has been commenced, Elcock said the USLTA had no choice but to defend the action "vigorously," including "seeking damages against Mrs. Heldman, and perhaps others, for what we believe to have been grossly unfair and unlawful conduct in dealing with the USLTA while she was under contract to us to act as Director of the women's tour. Documentary evidence uncovered at the hearing show that when Mrs. Heldman asked to be released from her contract in August, 1972, purportedly to return to her magazine, she was in fact secretly putting together her own tour for 1973, signing players to unconscionable contracts, contacting promoters and sponsors for her own tour and finally going around telling people that the USLTA's 1973 women's prize money circuit would never materialize. While I regret deeply that Mrs. Heldman has moved tennis from the court to the courthouse, I am pleased at least that her unconscionable activities have at last been brought to light."¹⁰⁸

Elcock was more diplomatic when he spoke with Bud Collins of the *Boston Globe*, saying that "the decision against an injunction attempt favored us totally, but that

doesn't mean we have the attitude of victors. I want to work it out to the satisfaction of both sides so that everyone can be together.”¹⁰⁹ Elcock had invited Roy Reardon, the attorney who was hired by the USLTA, to attend the meeting in San Juan and give a summary of the court case and explain the next legal moves the association would make.

The Virginia Slims Circuit resumed on Monday, February 19 when qualifying matches for the Virginia Slims of Indianapolis were played at the Tarkington Tennis Center, a municipal indoor facility. After taking a break from competitive tennis for nearly two years, Peaches Bartkowicz – one of the original nine players who competed in Houston in 1970 – hoped to make a successful comeback. After she left the tour in August of 1971, Peaches returned home to Michigan to attend Wayne State University. In the two years she was away from the circuit, Peaches saw how much the prize money had increased, and she soon got the desire to play again.

Peaches played her first qualifying match against Ceci Martinez, who also competed on the first Virginia Slims Circuit in 1971. Peaches won the first set easily, 6-1, but halfway through the second set she suddenly got very nervous and barely won it, 6-4. In her next match later that same day, she played Laurie Fleming – a Floridian with a two-handed backhand, who was reminiscent of her best friend and practice partner, Chris Evert. Peaches herself was one of the earliest proponents of the two-handed backhand, and for awhile against Laurie it served her well. After winning the first set 6-4, however, Peaches began to tire, and her younger opponent took the next two sets for the match. Somewhat successful in her first comeback attempt, Peaches planned to play in the following week's qualifying tournament at the Virginia Slims of Detroit.¹¹⁰

Those players who survived two rounds of qualifying on Monday advanced to the preliminary flight, which was played on Tuesday and Wednesday. The biggest surprise on Tuesday was the defeat of Francoise Durr, whose disappointing results in the first five Virginia Slims Circuit events required her to play preliminary matches. Francoise was beaten in three sets by Kathy Kuykendall, a sixteen-year old Floridian who decided to leave USLTA jurisdiction to become the world's youngest tennis professional.¹¹¹

While preliminary matches were being played in Indianapolis on Wednesday, Bobby Riggs walked into the U. S. National Bank in San Diego, California and deposited

a certified check for \$5,000.¹¹² Riggs, the winner of the Wimbledon triple crown in 1939, was the one of the nation's top senior players. In 1971, during the first year of the Virginia Slims Circuit and Billie Jean's highly publicized quest to become the first female athlete to earn \$100,000 in a year, Riggs thought the women players were making too much money. At Forest Hills that year, he hopped over a fence while Billie Jean was practicing and challenged her to a match. Billie Jean declined, believing that the publicity of such a match would not be helpful to the women's fledgling circuit.

Two years later, Riggs was still eager to play the world's number-one ranked women's player. He sent a telegram to Billie Jean when he made the \$5000 deposit, offering her all of the money if she could defeat him in a match. Riggs gave Billie Jean a deadline of midnight on Monday, February 26; if she declined the offer, he planned to issue similar challenges to Margaret Court, Chris Evert, Evonne Goolagong, Rosie Casals and Nancy Richey Gunter, with the first to respond being accepted. "There's a lot of talk about women's lib," Riggs said. "They feel they're worth as much money as the guys, but they can't play a lick if they can't beat a 55-year-old guy. No woman ever lived who could compete with a man on an equal basis – not even a 55-year-old man. She ought to do it for the challenge. Maybe they do deserve more money." Riggs wanted to play a best-of-three set match at the San Diego Country Estates on either March 24 or 25. Former world champion Tony Trabert, the tennis director at the new complex, felt the odds were 60-40 in Riggs' favor. Asked what Riggs would gain by playing such a match, Trabert said, "He'll have so many side bets, he'll make out alright."¹¹³

The championship flight of the Virginia Slims of Indianapolis started on Thursday, February 22 at the newly-built Indiana Convention and Exposition Center, located south of Maryland Street and west of Capitol Avenue. Billie Jean was seeded fourth, behind Margaret, Kerry and Rosie – but that was actually a special consideration for her; since she did not play singles in the first three tournaments and lost in the second round of Miami, she was very low in the circuit's point standings. Billie Jean was taken aback when tour manager Peachy Kellmeyer informed her that she would be demoted to the preliminary flight the following week unless she won the tournament in Indianapolis and accumulated some points.

Karen Krantzcke and Kerry Harris opened Thursday's program at 1:30 pm, and halfway into the first set both players questioned the umpire as music from another exhibition hall began to drift in. It was coming from a band that was practicing in the 500 Ballroom for Governor Otis Bowen's birthday party later that evening. At first, the music was faint, but when drum rolls started to permeate the tennis area, Karen became visibly disturbed. After winning the first set 6-0, Karen lost all of her concentration, and Kerry took the next two sets for the match. "I've never played with a fifty piece band in the background," Karen said in good humor, despite the disappointment of losing. "Whether I could have won without the noise is hypothetical – Kerry was playing under the same circumstances and she obviously played better." ¹¹⁴

The women who were scheduled to play in subsequent matches that day – including Margaret Court, Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals and Kerry Melville – all agreed to play with the music in the background, but tour manager Peachy Kellmeyer and tournament director Bill Colbert decided to cancel the remaining matches and adjust the schedule for the following day. "I think it's indicative of how great these girls are that they agreed to go ahead and play," said Colbert. "But they're professional athletes and they deserve the right to play under better circumstances." ¹¹⁵ Since the players had the evening off, they were all extended an invitation to the governor's birthday party that evening.

After her first round win over Marcie Louie on Friday, Billie Jean told reporters that she had no interest in accepting the challenge from Bobby Riggs. "Two years ago he offered me \$50,000 for the same thing," she said. "Now he's only offering \$5,000 and it just isn't worth my time." Billie Jean said that she did not receive Riggs' telegram until two days after it was reported in the newspapers. "I was getting phone calls from all over the country," she laughed, "and I didn't even know what was going on!" She also explained that Riggs had not consulted her about the date of March 24 for the proposed match, and she had already signed a contract to play an exhibition match in Oklahoma City at that time. In his message to Billie Jean, Riggs said that the women players maintained that their level of play was just as good as the men's tour, and he challenged her to prove it on a tennis court. "Not one of the women on the tour has ever said that we

were better than the men,” Billie Jean insisted. “This isn’t men against women. It’s entertainment! We’ve said over and over again – tennis is every bit as entertaining as men’s tennis and that’s what we’re selling.”¹¹⁶

Billie Jean proved her point that women’s tennis was just as exciting as the men’s when she played Margaret Court in the semifinals on Sunday. Trailing 2-5 in the first set, Billie Jean hit an overpowering overhead smash down the middle of the court; as Margaret tried to get out of the way, she lost her footing and fell backwards. Still holding onto her racquet, she landed on her right hand and injured one of her fingers. Initially stunned, Margaret continued to play in daze, and soon the set became tied at 5-5. She recovered her concentration in time to win the first tiebreak, not losing a point in the process.

The second set was just as close, but Margaret maintained a narrow lead and finally served for the match at 6-5. As she went ahead 40-love – three match points – Billie Jean told herself, “Sweetie, this is it!”¹¹⁷ Winning three straight points to level the game at deuce, Billie Jean eventually broke Margaret’s serve to force another tiebreak. After starting with a double fault, Billie Jean lost only one more point in the tiebreak, winning it 5-2.

The momentum of the match had shifted dramatically, and Billie Jean took a 4-0 lead in the third set. Margaret won three of the next four games, but Billie Jean served for the match at 5-3. On Billie Jean’s second match point, Margaret hit a service return that the linesman called “out” but signaled as if the ball was in. No one was sure what had just happened, and the linesman repeated that the ball was out. “That’s exactly why we need a professional umpires’ association,” Billie Jean said after the match. “The same thing happened to Margaret and me at Forest Hills. The linesman should have called it out louder. It’s a very difficult thing to call lines. It’s tiring to sit out there like that and you get to the point where you can’t see well. There aren’t enough umpires to relieve each other. It was definitely a bad way to win.”¹¹⁸

Billie Jean’s remarkable victory ended Margaret’s 53-match, 12-tournament winning streak, which began on the Dewar Cup Circuit in October, 1972, and continued through the Australian season and the first five tournaments on the Virginia Slims

Circuit. Speaking to reporters after the match, Margaret downplayed her fall in the opening set and said it had nothing to do with the loss. "I had it won at 40-love in the second set, and I knew it," she said. "I just let up, I guess."¹¹⁹ Margaret's finger stiffened as soon as the match was over, and just to make it was not broken, Barry took her to a hospital to have x-rays taken.

The following night, Billie Jean won the singles championship over Rosie, 5-7 6-2 6-4, in front of 1600 spectators. After the first set, both players lost their concentration as several calls were questioned and one of the linesmen fell asleep in his chair. Billie Jean and Rosie threw their racquets down when the chair umpire called a ball out and then reversed his decision. In the third set, Billie Jean fell behind 0-2 as she shook her head in disgust with the poor officiating. She eventually recovered to lead 5-4 and won the match when a drop shot by Rosie ended up in the net.

Billie Jean earned \$6,000 for the singles win and shared \$1,000 with Rosie for winning the doubles over Margaret and Lesley Hunt. At the end of the evening, Billie Jean and Rosie decided they did not want to speak with any reporters, leaving tour manager Peachy Kellymeyer to address the officiating problem. "Sometimes we have to ask the girls to call lines for each other and they hate it," Peachy admitted. "They know how difficult it is and they make mistakes, too. Now both Billie Jean and Rosie have lost their concentration. They're not concentrating on tennis, they're thinking about the lines. They've lost their confidence in the linesmen. It's not only in Indianapolis, this happens all the time. It's just very disappointing for the players."¹²⁰

For the second consecutive year, the Virginia Slims of Indianapolis had disappointing attendance figures. Although a seating capacity for 2400 fans was set up, the stands were never close to full. The first several days of the event conflicted with the Indiana state high school basketball tournament, and thirty-two ticket outlets were lost when American Fletcher National Bank withdrew its sponsorship when Stan Malless convinced the bank to sponsor the U. S. Clay Court Championships instead. Despite the problems, tournament director Bill Colbert was looking forward to staging the event again. "Gladys Heldman and I have already discussed the dates for next year," he said when it was all over.¹²¹

Gladys was not in Indianapolis to watch the final between Billie Jean and Rosie on Monday night. Earlier in the day, she sent out a news release from the *World Tennis* offices in Houston, announcing that her attorneys had filed a request to drop the lawsuit against the USLTA. “I believe, under the circumstances, we have accomplished most of what he had intended by bringing the suit. Unless there is a resumption of the acts we complained about,” she wrote, “there is no necessity of pursuing the suit.”¹²² Gladys indicated in the release that she was confident that the players on the Virginia Slims Circuit would be allowed to compete at the U. S. Open and other major international events.

*The USLTA always had problems with the women ... In fairness to them, I have to admit that the USLTA hadn't done a real service to the girls at the beginning. We didn't come up with adequate prize money or a very good women's schedule. But despite the fact that we had been lax, we didn't want them playing in unsanctioned tournaments. So now I find myself at the end of a lawsuit instigated by Gladys and Billie Jean, saying that I wouldn't let them play and make a living. Well, a preliminary judgment came down in the case and they knew they were going to lose, and I think that's when Gladys dropped the thing.*¹²³

-- Walter Elcock, 1975

*I remember my mother saying the USLTA must have destroyed some documents, because they were talking suspension, but discovery never unearthed any evidence that they did so. She felt badly that she handed over everything ... Apparently she was ripped to shreds on the witness stand, and hated her own lawyer for it. She thought her lawyer was incompetent.*¹²⁴

-- Julie Heldman, 2011

In London, ILTF secretary Basil Reay said he hoped Gladys' decision “would mean peace throughout the tennis world. I am sure the international federation's committee of management will be delighted to hear that Mrs. Heldman has decided to

drop her suit, but at the same time I do not think they will be very surprised.”¹²⁵ The response from the USLTA, however, was not as conciliatory. Edy McGoldrick, in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, for the opening tournament on the USLTA women’s professional circuit, said that Gladys’ assertions were “false” and there was no determination if the Virginia Slims Circuit players would be allowed to compete in the world’s major championships. McGoldrick also indicated that the USLTA planned to make its position known in the coming days.¹²⁶

Two days after Gladys’ attorneys filed a notice of dismissal of the lawsuit, USLTA attorney Roy Reardon asked Judge Pollock to set aside and declare null and void the request. The USLTA wanted to continue with the court case; Reardon argued that the dismissal of it would seriously prejudice the national association by denying it an early trial, the benefit of testimony and exhibits from the preliminary injunction hearing, and the pre-trial discovery which was presented from both sides. Reardon felt that all of this was important because the USLTA planned to file counterclaims against Gladys for breach of contract and violation of her duties while she was the association’s women’s tour director.¹²⁷

*After we prevailed before the Judge, Mrs. Heldman’s counsel decided that they would try to implement what I deem to be a ploy. She sought to discontinue her suit in New York. The reason she did that, I believe, is because we had had such a strong opinion before the Judge, that she was persuaded that in the long run, should the case go to trial, that she would not have the sympathies of the Judge and the resolution of the ultimate issues in the case. So she tried to end the action. And we were faced with the question of whether or not we should prevent her from terminating the action at that point, because it appeared to me that she was trying to get away from this Judge and within a reasonable amount of time we would find ourselves in another jurisdiction before another Judge who would not be bound by the determination of Judge Pollack in New York. So we decided to oppose her attempt to discontinue the action in New York.*¹²⁸

-- Roy Reardon, 1973

After her loss to Billie Jean in Indianapolis, Margaret Court resumed her domination of the circuit at the Virginia Slims of Detroit, played at Cobo Hall. Margaret defeated Peaches Bartkowicz, who won two qualifying matches and two preliminary matches, her doubles partner Lesley Hunt and Rosie Casals to reach the final. In the other semifinal, Kerry Melville lost the first set to Billie Jean before turning the match around and winning 4-6 6-2 6-1. For the fourth time in six tournaments on the 1973 Virginia Slims Circuit, Margaret and Kerry played for a singles championship; once again, Margaret won and collected a \$6,000 first place check.

As fate would have it, during the course of the tournament in Cobo Hall, Margaret and Billie Jean happened to share an elevator ride. Margaret gave Billie Jean some stunning news.

We were in Detroit, playing a tournament, and Margaret and I get into the elevator and she says, "Oh, and by the way, I'm playing Bobby Riggs." I about fainted. "What? Why?" She said, "Well, I'm getting \$10,000." I said, "That's great, but Margaret this is not a tennis match. I mean it's a tennis match, but that's not what it represents." And so as we got out of the elevator, I said, "Margaret, please promise me you're going to win this match. You have to win this match." ¹²⁹

-- Billie Jean King, 2013

Billie Jean was concerned that a loss to Riggs would have far-reaching consequences. With critics attacking the newly-enacted Title IX and companies still treating women as credit liabilities and maternity risks, a Riggs victory would bolster the arguments for those who were opposed to feminism. Furthermore, the loss of the world's best female tennis player to a 55-year-old man would diminish the credibility of the women's tour.

*Margaret didn't see the big picture ... She didn't get it. She just didn't get it.*¹³⁰

-- Billie Jean King, 2005

The match was initially scheduled to be played at the conclusion of the Virginia Slims Circuit, at the San Diego Country Estates in Ramona, California, a luxury housing development located forty miles northeast of San Diego. The winner of the match was to receive \$10,000; half of the money was put up by Riggs, and the other half by the resort. Whether she won or lost, Margaret was assured \$10,000 in television rights from CBS Television.

He kept at Billie Jean and myself, and I thought I could really beat him, so ... and he wasn't all that good. I thought, "Well, I've give it a go." ¹³¹
 -- Margaret Court, 2013

Margaret always found big-time exposure and money appealing. The combination of both proved irresistible. She soon told me she would be playing Riggs in a nationally televised challenge match in California in May and asked me for a specially designed outfit for the occasion. I think Margaret interpreted Riggs' challenge as something personal to her. She was a very self-centered person, and the responsibility she had to the whole cause of women's tennis may not have even occurred to her. ¹³²
 -- Ted Tinling, 1979

During the same week as the Virginia Slims of Detroit, the first tournament on the USLTA Women's Prize Money Circuit opened in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The \$50,000 S&H Green Stamp Classic was promoted by George Liddy and was played on the green clay courts of The Tennis Club. The field included Chris Evert, who was the tournament's top seed and making her professional debut, in addition to Evonne Goolagong, Virginia Wade and Chris' younger sister Jeanne.

Thirty-two women played in the qualifying tournament, competing for eight spots in the main draw. Martina Navratilova, a 16-year-old from Czechoslovakia, won three qualifying matches to earn a berth in the main draw, where she defeated Gail Chanfreau, one of the world's best clay court players. Chris easily won her debut as a professional,

against Michele Gurdal of Belgium, and then reached the final with Marie Neumannova and Wightman Cup teammate Linda Tuero, who defeated Martina in the quarterfinals. In the other half of the draw, Virginia surprised Evonne by constantly attacking net enroute to a 7-6 6-3 semifinal win.

Virginia anticipated trouble in the upcoming final. "She's very good on this surface," Virginia said about Chris. "I think I'm going to get killed." Her fears were realized when Chris raced to a 5-0 lead in the first set. With 3,700 fans watching, Chris dismantled Virginia in 54 minutes with dazzling display of clay court tennis. Whenever Virginia rushed the net, she was passed down the line or lobbed deep; and when she stayed on the baseline Chris blasted crosscourt angles for winners or hit unreachable drop shots. After winning only three games in the match, Virginia said she "felt like a beginner out there ... She has such incredible accuracy, determination and concentration and she hits the ball to good length all the time so you can't take the ball early. She also hides her shots very well. One simply doesn't know where the ball is going. Well, the only way to find out is to play her more."¹³³

During the awards presentation, when S&H Green Stamps marketing vice president Dick Reynolds held a check for \$10,000, Chris stepped up to the microphone and said, "This time, I'm accepting the money."¹³⁴ In addition to the prize money, Chris earned sixty points on the ILTF Commercial Union Gran Prix. It was also a good payday for Virginia; she earned \$6,000 for her runner-up finish, plus \$1,000 for winning the doubles with Gail Chanfreau. With capacity crowds most of the week, the tournament was a financial success for promoter George Liddy; for the USLTA, it was a confirmation that their tour could compete with the Virginia Slims Circuit.

Virginia finally earned her first win over Chris during the following week's USLTA Women's Prize Money Circuit event in Dallas, Texas. In the semifinals of the \$37,000 Maureen Connolly Brinker Memorial Tennis Championships, played indoors at the Brookhaven Country Club, Virginia lost the first set, lost the second and was one game away from defeat in the third. "I was so determined today," Virginia said after the match, "I knew I could not lose." Chris was unable to close out the match when she served for it at 5-3; Virginia won three straight games and held three match points when

she served at 6-5 40-love. Chris fought off the match points, leveled the set at 6-6 and then held to lead 7-6. After Virginia held for 7-7, a critical juncture of the match came when Chris was serving at 30-all. She double faulted to give Virginia a break point, and then she hit a forehand long to lose the game. Given another chance to serve for the match, Virginia did not waste the opportunity; reached 40-love once again and blasted a service down the middle of the court on her first match point. "It's funny how much her game went off when the pressure was on," Virginia observed later. "After all, she wins so many matches very easily. In the future, I'm sure we'll play many times, and she may win a lot, but from now on I don't think I will lose to her again just because it's her." ¹³⁵

As it was in 1972, the championship singles match was televised live on PBS. Virginia broke Evonne's serve to win the first set 6-4, and then she ran away with the match by taking the second set, 6-1. Since the match lasted less than sixty minutes, there was enough time to televise the doubles final, in which Evonne and Janet Young defeated Virginia and Gail Chanfreau, 6-3 6-2. It was a very profitable week for Virginia; her \$12,000 singles winner's check was the largest payday of her career.

After losing in the semifinals and the finals in the first two tournaments on the USLTA Women's Prize Money Circuit, Evonne finally broke into the winner's circle at the \$20,000 U. S. National Indoor Championships, held at the Old Colony Tennis Club in Hingham, Massachusetts. Although Chris Evert was taking the week off, the appearance of two players from the Soviet Union – Olga Morozova and Marina Kroshina – created a considerable amount of interest. Marina lost in the qualifying tournament, but third-seeded Olga reached her allotted spot in the semifinals, losing to Virginia Wade in three sets. In the singles final, Evonne said she "was a little more determined this time" against Virginia, winning 6-4 6-4 and the first prize of \$5,000. In the doubles final, Olga and Marina made tennis history by becoming the first Soviet players to win a title in the United States, defeating Evonne and Janet Young, 6-2 6-4. As amateurs, Olga and Marina were unable to keep any of their prize money winnings on the USLTA Women's Prize Money Circuit, and the money was sent to the Soviet Tennis Federation. ¹³⁶

*Olga and Marina, unlike the others on the USLTA indoor circuit, were accompanied by a ... uh ... watchdog is the way an American would describe the companion or companions of Russian celebrities abroad. In this case, he was Eugen Korbut, tall, genial vice-president of the Russian Federation.*¹³⁷
 -- Bud Collins, 1973

The next two stops on the USLTA Women's Prize Money Circuit were the \$25,000 Akron Open in Ohio, followed by the \$30,000 Lady Gotham Classic in New York City. Before traveling to Akron, Virginia Wade was present at a news conference in New York to promote the upcoming tournament there. She spoke about the differences between the USLTA circuit and the Virginia Slims Circuit, which she played on for a short time in early 1972 before getting suspended for playing in a conflicting event. "This is a nice tour," Virginia said. "Nobody is fighting after three weeks. They are not squabbling over funny little ideals they know nothing about."¹³⁸ Virginia apparently still had hard feelings towards Gladys' circuit; while the two tours were traveling around the United States, four players from the Virginia Slims Circuit – Billie Jean King, Margaret Court, Lesley Hunt and Julie Heldman – were elected to communicate with the USLTA players about forming a women's tennis association that would include all women players. They contacted Gail Chanfreau, who in turn ran the idea past Virginia. After speaking with Virginia, Gail told the Virginia Slims Circuit players that the USLTA group had no interest in meeting with them.¹³⁹

The Akron Open, played in Memorial Hall on the campus of the University of Akron, was held while there was a rest week on the Virginia Slims Circuit. Not wanting to remain idle for a week, Margaret Court wanted to play in the tournament and submitted her entry to the USLTA. The Akron Open was an "open" tournament, which meant amateurs and professionals could play in it, but it was not an "open-to-all" tournament, which was a special category devised by the ILTF that permitted the participation of contract professionals as well. Since Margaret decided to play in unsanctioned tournaments on the Virginia Slims Circuit, according to the USLTA at

least, she was automatically a contract professional. As a result, she was not allowed to play in “open” tournaments, and her entry was not accepted.¹⁴⁰

Chris Evert was seeded second in the tournament, behind Virginia Wade, and played her opening round match against a chubby Czech teenager named Martina Navratilova. With only a few hundred spectators watching, Chris led 4-1 before Martina broke serve three times and served for the first set at 6-5. The aggressive, left-handed Czech got as close at 30-love; Chris then won nine of the next ten points to take the set in a tiebreak. The second set was easier, as Chris broke her opponent’s serve twice enroute to a 7-6 6-3 win. Chris was impressed, however, with Martina and realized that she could be a dangerous opponent if she improved her physical conditioning.¹⁴¹

In her first round match, Evonne Goolagong played Marita Redondo, a senior at Our Lady of Peace High School in San Diego, California and the 1972 U. S. National Junior champion. Marita utilized her blazing forehand to stay even with Evonne until 2-2, and then she won four of the next five games to win the first set, 6-3. With Evonne serving at 2-3, and Marita forged ahead by standing in close and swatting away the Australian’s weak second serves. Evonne broke back in the next game but could not pull ahead; four games later she served to stay in the match at 5-6, and Marita hit another stream of service return winners to finish the biggest win of her young career.

Two rounds later, in the semifinals, Chris and Marita were locked in a two-hour battle. Chris won the first set 7-5, and Marita took the second set 6-4. Marita almost scored an upset two years earlier at the national junior championships, and Chris knew she had to give her opponent a variety of pace and height in order to defuse her potent forehand. With Chris hitting her shots high and down the middle of the court, the rallies got longer and longer. Chris’ patience and consistency paid off, and she won the final set, 6-3.

In other half of the draw, Virginia Wade won the first set of her quarterfinal against Marina Kroshina and then suffered an arm injury while hitting a series of overhead smashes in the ninth game of the second, forcing her to retire from the match one game later. Marina then lost to her doubles partner and close friend Olga Morozova in the semifinals. The following night, Chris won her second tournament as a

professional – and \$6,000 – by breaking Olga’s serve once in each set for a 6-3 6-3 victory. Patti Hogan, the talented yet temperamental American who initially planned to play in the first Virginia Slims tournament in Houston in 1970 but backed out at the last minute, and Sharon Walsh won the doubles title and shared \$1,200.¹⁴²

The \$30,000 Lady Gotham Classic, which opened at the Felt Forum in Madison Square Garden in late March, had the weakest field of the entire USLTA Women’s Prize Money Circuit. Virginia Wade was seeded first but withdrew when her arm injury did not heal (she would not play again until British Hard Court Championships in May), and Evonne Goolagong went to Florida to take a break after playing four consecutive tournaments and prepare for the final three events on circuit. As a result, Chris was the highest seeded player, followed by Olga Morozova and Linda Tuero.

Even though they both reached the semifinals in Akron, Marina Kroshina and Marita Redondo had to play in the qualifying tournament in order to get into the main draw at the Lady Gotham Classic (the qualifying list was determined before the tournament in Akron was concluded). Marina won all three of her matches at the Port Washington Tennis Academy to earn a spot, defeating Marita in three sets in her final match. With the withdrawal of Virginia Wade due to her injury, Marita ultimately gained a spot in the main draw as a “lucky loser.”

Unfortunately for the Soviet delegation, Marina was drawn to play her doubles partner, third-seeded Olga Morozova, in the first round of the main draw. “It’s so infrequent that we come to America,” Marina said, “it’s a shame that we have to play each other in the first round.”¹⁴³ Tournament officials called the situation an “oversight” due to each qualifier’s predetermined place in the draw. The oversight also resulted in the loss of a seeded player – Marina defeated Olga in three sets, only the second time she defeated her friend in the eight times they played.

The absence of three of the circuit’s best players – Virginia Wade, Evonne Goolagong, and Olga Morozova – gave Chris an easy path to the final. She won her first three matches in straight sets, including a 6-2 6-1 drubbing of Marina in the semifinals. In the championship match she faced Katja Ebbinghaus, who had earlier upset fourth-seeded Linda Tuero in quarterfinals and fellow German Helga Masthoff in the semifinals. Vice

President Spiro Agnew was in the crowd of 2,400 spectators to watch Chris defeat Katja 6-0 6-4 to win her third title as a professional and \$8,000. Chris – in the process of completing her senior year in high school – had already accumulated \$26,000 in her first four tournaments as a professional. Earlier in the week, in her opening round match against Sharon Walsh, she unveiled a new lime-colored tennis dress that one cynic described as “money green.” Afterwards, Neil Amdur of the *New York Times* asked Sharon what she thought of Chris’ new dress. “She should get one in solid gold,” Sharon said.¹⁴⁴

The final three tournaments on the USLTA Women’s Prize Money Circuit were played in Florida – Sarasota, Miami Beach, and St. Petersburg – on Har-Tru, or green clay, Chris’ favorite surface. With Virginia Wade still injured and the Soviet contingency of Olga Morozova and Marina Kroshina only committed to play in Hingham, Akron and New York, Chris and Evonne were the top attractions in the remaining USLTA events. The lack of marquee players gave fans the opportunity to become acquainted with lesser-known personalities. “Among the fifty of so girls participating as tour regulars,” wrote circuit publicist Spence Conley in *Tennis USA*, “the most popular with her fellow players is 16-year-old Martina Navratilova. The delightful young Czech has an effervescent personality that mixes well with her discovery of America. If she loves tennis first, she loves American food second. In five weeks on the USLTA tour, she had gained fifteen pounds and even had to purchase some new tennis shorts to replace the old that didn’t seem to fit anymore!”¹⁴⁵

The inaugural Sarasota Open, organized by local businessmen as a fundraiser for the local Boy’s Club, was played at the Bath and Racquet Club in early April. In the singles quarterfinals, Chris and Gail Chanfreau – an Australian who married a Frenchman and moved to Paris, and who was also one of the world’s best clay court players – played evenly to 3-3 in the first set. “I never played Gail before,” Chris said later. “She ran awfully well. The second serve was the weakest part of her game. At times, she didn’t have any pace on it.”¹⁴⁶ Gail was bothered by the heat, and Chris used her drop shot to run her opponent and secure the match, 6-3 6-3. The following day, Chris was tested in

the first set against Patti Hogan before cruising to a 6-4 6-0 win and her fourth final on the USLTA Women's Prize Money Circuit.

In a first round doubles match, 19-year-old Sue Minford of Ireland and California teenager Laurie Tenney were embroiled in a tense encounter with Sarasota's Chris Koutras and Miami's Donna Ganz. As expected, the large crowd cheered enthusiastically for the players from Florida, to the point of applauding when Sue double faulted. Sue took issue with the spectators' partisanship and directed some profanity towards them. After Sue and Laurie won the match, 6-3 1-6 7-6, several spectators reported Sue's outburst to club professional Ken Wagstaff, who did not witness the incident. A four-person tournament committee then voted unanimously to disqualify Sue from the tournament. "I think it was a stupid decision. They should have made it before the match ended," observed Patti Hogan, which would have allowed the players from Florida to advance to the next round. Wagstaff countered that if he had known about the incident when it happened, he would have asked USLTA Women's Prize Money Circuit director Mike Blanchard to default the match immediately. Blanchard said he planned no further disciplinary actions against the players, and he hoped they learned a lesson. "I can't wait to get out of this dive, and I'll never be back here," Sue declared, in addition to calling the tournament officials "senile old men." Her departure from Sarasota did not come soon enough for Wagstaff. "It would have been good for the tournament if she had left earlier," he said. "They are trying to make me look like the scapegoat in this thing."¹⁴⁷

Patti Hogan, who said she admired Sue because "you always know how she stands," was not always a crowd favorite either. A talented but temperamental player, she had a long history of throwing tantrums during matches and receiving warnings of disciplinary actions from tournament committees. She was capable of playing outstanding tennis – she had wins over Margaret Court, Evonne Goolagong and Nancy Richey Gunter – but one bad call from a linesman or one comment from a spectator could send her into a rage. Her unpredictable behavior was attributed to her father who, according to rumors, hit her when she lost in junior tournaments.

In the singles draw at Sarasota, Evonne Goolagong made her way to the final as easily as Chris. She needed only 38 minutes to dispose of Martina Navratilova in the first

round, and then she lost only two games to Northwestern University student Sue Stap. When Evonne faced Helga Masthoff in the semifinals, she knew to expect a challenge; three years earlier, on her first overseas trip, Evonne lost twice to the tall West German in clay court tournaments in Hamburg, West Germany and Kitzbuhel, Austria. “I was just learning then,” Evonne remembered, “and it was the first time I played on clay courts. I didn’t really know what hit me.”¹⁴⁸ Evonne allowed Helga only four games, and for the first time in eight months she would get another chance at Chris.

Nearly 3,000 fans turned out at the Bath and Racquet Club on Sunday, April 8 for the “dream match.” Evonne attempted to play Chris at her own game and rally with her from the baseline. It was good enough to stay even until 3-3 in the first set; after that, Chris pulled away and won six straight games. She continuously ran Evonne from corner to corner, waiting for the short reply that gave her the opening to hit crosscourt placements or unreachable drop shots. Evonne seemed confused about her strategy and attempted to hit winning shots from defensive positions. She was able to salvage two games in the second set, but Chris was always in charge and closed out the match, 6-3 6-2, to earn the \$5,000 first prize.

Chair umpire Flo Blanchard, whose husband Mike was the USLTA Women’s Prize Money Circuit manager, said afterward that Chris was “getting better all the time. It’s like when Mo Connolly played. No one can beat her.” Evonne admitted she was apprehensive during the match. “It was just not me,” she said. “I could never get started. I felt I was on defense all day. She plays the same type of game all the time. I was afraid she’d pass me easily. I wasn’t sure whether I should go in or stay back. I was being more careful against Chris.”¹⁴⁹

Chris admitted that she was surprised by Evonne’s game plan. “I thought she’d come in more,” she said. “Like Evonne says, I play the same. I played pretty well, while Evonne didn’t play too well. It depends on how Evonne plays. If she plays great, she beats me.” Evonne’s coach, Vic Edwards, was disappointed in his pupil’s performance. “Let’s just say she didn’t play her normal game,” he told Alan Lassila of the Sarasota Journal. “Against Chris, she doesn’t attack enough. I don’t know why.”¹⁵⁰

Patti Hogan and Sharon Walsh won the doubles title, a 7-5 6-4 decision over Marie Neumannova and Martina Navratilova. Earlier in the day, before the singles final, Patti had an impressive win over Helga Masthoff, 6-4 6-4, in a third-place playoff. She maintained her composure against a crafty clay court expert, although she could not resist launching a tennis ball over the spectator stands after missing a shot. When Patti lost her semifinal match to Chris on Saturday, she was asked by a reporter how she would approach her third-place playoff against Helga. "Third and fourth place playoffs are like drinking flat root beer," she responded. By defeating Helga and winning the doubles final, Patti earned a total of \$2,250 – the largest payday of her career. During the doubles awards presentation, Patti was amused when tournament official Tucker White presented her with a check, a trophy and an unopened bottle of root beer.¹⁵¹

Evonne hoped to get another chance at Chris the following week, in the \$20,000 Carner Bank Open at Flamingo Park in Miami Beach, Florida. The tournament was promoted by Gardnar Mulloy, a four-time U. S. national doubles champion and the winner of the 1957 Wimbledon doubles title with Budge Patty. Ironically, Mulloy collaborated with Gladys to start World Tennis with Gladys in 1953, a partnership that did not last very long. Twenty years later, Mulloy staged a tournament for the USLTA Women's Prize Money Circuit that rivaled Gladys's Virginia Slims Circuit.

Evonne won her first two matches without losing a game, and then defeated Isabel Fernandez of Colombia in the quarterfinals, 6-1 6-2, and Marijke Schaar of the Netherlands in the semifinals, 6-0 6-2. Chris had a much more difficult time reaching the final, working to get past Marie Neumannova in the quarterfinals, 6-2 7-5, and Helga Masthoff in the semifinals, 7-6 7-6. Determined not to make the same strategic mistake as she did in Sarasota, Evonne refused to rally with Chris from the baseline and came to the net at every opportunity. For awhile it worked, and Evonne won the first set, 6-3. Chris later admitted that the aggressive tactics made her nervous at first, but she soon found her range and Evonne lost her sharpness. Chris' 3-6 6-3 6-2 victory was her fourth consecutive win over Evonne, and it made her \$5,000 richer. Evonne would have one more chance to break her losing streak against Chris, at the following week's Masters

Invitational in St. Petersburg, the final stop on the USLTA Women's Prize Money Circuit.

While Chris was dominating the USLTA tour, Margaret Court continued to win nearly all of her matches on the Virginia Slims Circuit. After taking the title in Detroit, she won the \$30,000 Virginia Slims of Chicago, held indoors at the Lakeshore Racquet Club, with a three-set final round win over Billie Jean King. Serving for the match at 5-4 40-love, Margaret lost her first match point and she remembered what happened in her previous encounter with Billie Jean two weeks earlier. "When I had Billie at three match points and she hit that passing shot right by me, I couldn't help thinking of what happened in Indianapolis in the same situation."¹⁵² Billie Jean was typically critical of her play. "My serve was bad," she said, "and my bread a butter shot, my crosscourt backhand, failed me. Margaret's service was the strongest I've seen in some time and she covered the court so easily."¹⁵³ It would be the last match Billie Jean would play for the next three weeks; two weeks earlier, after winning the Virginia Slims of Indianapolis, she pulled a stomach muscle while playing catch with some ballboys, and the injury had bothered her ever since.

Margaret then won the \$25,000 Virginia Slims of Richmond with a straight set win over unseeded Janet Newberry, a Californian who had eliminated Julie Heldman in the semifinals. After a rest week on the Virginia Slims Circuit – when she wanted to play, but was denied entry into, the USLTA Akron Open – Margaret arrived in Tucson working on another winning streak, this one with thirteen matches and three tournaments.

In the first round of the \$25,000 Virginia Slims Conquistadors, played on the hardcourts of the Tucson Racquet and Swim Club, Margaret defeated a qualifier, Farel Footman, by the scores of 6-1 6-4. In her second match, on a chilly, windy and sometimes drizzly afternoon that resulted in only two hundred fans coming to watch, Margaret comfortably won the first set against South African Laura Roussov. In addition to the unpleasant weather conditions, both players had to contend with the noise coming from motorcycle enthusiasts who drove up and down a dirt path less than sixty yards from the stadium court.¹⁵⁴

Margaret served for the match at 5-4 in the second set, but Laura kept her composure and kept hitting the ball down the middle of the court to crowd her opponent and give her no opportunities for angled placements. She broke Margaret to level the set at 5-all, and then won the tiebreak two games later. At 3-4 in the third set, Laura faced three break points but fought off each one, and she then broke Margaret in the next game for a 5-4 lead. Sitting at courtside during the changeover must have felt like an eternity for Laura, but she came back onto the court and coolly served out the match for the biggest win of her career and the biggest surprise of the Virginia Slims Circuit.

Despite the noise from the motorcycles, Laura said she was “able to concentrate well. I had the feeling I was going to win ... it started in the middle of the third set. When you play someone like Margaret, well, I was hoping I would play well and make a good score against her.” Margaret was disappointed with her performance but gave credit to Laura for playing well. She found it difficult, however, to get motivated. “There was no atmosphere,” she said, “what with the wind and the motorcycles and all. We’ve been playing indoors, before some very large crowds, and one gets used to it, I guess.”¹⁵⁵

Margaret’s loss, and the absence of Billie Jean due to an injury, meant that someone else would finally win a title on the Virginia Slims Circuit. Second-seeded Kerry Melville made the most of the opportunity, losing only three games to Rosie Casals in the semifinals and defeating Nancy Richey Gunter, 6-3 6-4, to win the first prize of \$6,000. “This tournament will help my confidence,” Kerry said after the match, relieved to be in the winner’s circle after losing in four finals. “It was getting demoralizing. It’s difficult to finish second time after time, even if you know you’re playing well.”¹⁵⁶ Although attendance was poor all week due to the cold weather, a capacity crowd of 2,500 was on hand at the Tucson Racquet and Swim Club to watch the singles and doubles finals.

Grace Lichtenstein, a reporter for the *New York Times*, was a visitor at the next stop on the Virginia Slims Circuit, the \$50,000 Max Pax Coffee Classic at The Palestra in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Lichtenstein was in the process of writing a book about professional women’s tennis in 1973; and she planned to visit tournaments on the

Virginia Slims Circuit, the USLTA Women's Prize Money Circuit, in addition to Wimbledon and the U. S. Open, and interview players and tournament officials. To help with her travel expenses, Lichtenstein's editors at the *New York Times* assigned tennis stories to her throughout the year.

At the tournament in Philadelphia, Lichtenstein spoke with tournament promoter Marilyn Fernberger, who had staged professional tennis events since the early 1960s. Two years earlier, when the Virginia Slims Circuit was in its first year, Fernberger included the women professionals along with the world's best male players in her Philadelphia Indoor Championships. This time, only the women were present, and General Foods – through its brand Max Pax Coffee – was the title sponsor, along with additional support from Virginia Slims. “You won't find a slicker promotion than Virginia Slims does anywhere,” Fernberger told Lichtenstein. “But it can't stop with beautiful colored stationery and cigarettes handed out at the door.” Fernberger was not optimistic about the success of her first women's-only tournament. “No sport is totally professional until the gate supports it,” she said, “and so far women's tennis has been totally subsidized. As a divided group, the women don't draw.”¹⁵⁷

Lichtenstein arrived at the Palestra on Friday, April 6, when the quarterfinal singles matches were played. Kerry Harris, who came through the qualifying, eliminated fourth-seeded Nancy Richey Gunter, 6-4 6-4, and Lesley Hunt repeated her result from Indianapolis with another upset over second-seeded Kerry Melville, 6-3 7-6. Third seeded Rosie Casals escaped defeat at the hands of Janet Newberry; after losing the first set, she allowed her opponent only two more games. Margaret Court, not surprisingly, was the only seeded player to have no problems, winning easily against Valerie Ziegenfuss.

That night ... an incident that symbolized women's tennis stayed with me. It had been during the Ziegenfuss-Court match. Val, a powerfully built but feminine twenty-three-year-old with a bit of a ferret face, was getting demolished by Court, who had so dominated the circuit in previous weeks the players were joking about kidnapping her son in order to distract her. After losing the first seven games of

the match, Val managed to eke out a game (her only one of the night, it turned out) when Margaret netted a few easy shots. When the umpire announced “Game, Miss Ziegenfuss,” the crowd applauded loudly. Val looked up at the stands, smiled painfully, and made a self-deprecating curtsy.¹⁵⁸
 -- Grace Lichtenstein, 1973

The Palestra had seating capacity for 8,700 spectators, and Fernberger was “mildly disappointed” that the total attendance for the five-day tournament was 14,000. The largest turnout of the week – nearly 4,000 fans – was for the semifinals on Saturday, and those spectators happened to see Margaret Court play a marathon three-set battle with Rosie Casals before prevailing 6-7 7-6 6-2. “That was the best match on the circuit so far,” Betty Stove told Lichtenstein.¹⁵⁹ The following day, in an anticlimactic final, Margaret needed only thirty-eight minutes to dispose of fellow Aussie Kerry Harris, 6-1 6-0, and collect a paycheck of \$12,000. The fans were at least treated to a three-set doubles final, in which Margaret and Lesley Hunt defeated Betty and Francoise Durr.

The following day – on Monday, April 9 – Margaret, Billie Jean and Gladys held a news conference at the Towne Tennis Club in New York City to announce the Virginia Slims Circuit summer-fall schedule. Gladys arranged eight tournaments, from late July to early October, each with a minimum of \$30,000 in prize money. A ninth tournament, the Virginia Slims Championships in Boca Raton, Florida, culminated the summer-fall circuit and offered an unprecedented \$110,000 in prize money, with \$10,000 provided by Faberge for the doubles competition.¹⁶⁰ At the same time, the USLTA summer circuit would be in progress, with four \$25,000 tournaments for the women and one for \$40,000, scheduled before and after the U. S. Open (Table 12.1)

Table 12.1 – Women’s Prize Money Tournaments – Summer/Fall 1973

* These tournaments include men’s and women’s draws;
prize money listed is for women’s singles and doubles only

Week of:	Virginia Slims Circuit	USLTA Circuit	Other
Jul 9			* Newport, Wales * Gstaad, Switzerland
Jul 16			* Hoylake, England * Baastad, Sweden
Jul 23		Marie O. Clark Memorial Cleveland OH - \$25,000	* Hilversum, Netherlands * Kitzbuhel, Austria
Jul 30	Virginia Slims of Denver Denver CO - \$30,000	Atlantic City Tennis Classic Atlantic City NJ - \$25,000	* Istanbul, Turkey
Aug 6	Commercial Union Bank Nashville TN - \$35,000	* Western Open Chps* Cincinnati OH - \$25,000	
Aug 13	Jersey Shore Classic Allaire NJ - \$30,000	* U. S. Clay Court Chps* Indianapolis IN - \$25,000	
Aug 20	Virginia Slims Grass Chps Newport RI - \$30,000	* Eastern Grass Court Chps. South Orange NJ - \$5,000	* Canadian Open Toronto ON - \$25,000
Aug 27		* U. S. Open New York - \$40,000	
Sep 3		(US Open continues)	
Sep 10	Coca-Cola Women’s Pro St. Louis MO - \$30,000	Four Roses Classic Charlotte NC - \$40,000	
Sep 17	Virginia Slims of Houston Houston TX - \$30,000		
Sep 24	Virginia Slims of Columbus Columbus GA - \$30,000		
Oct 1	Faberge International Phoenix AZ - \$40,000		
Oct 8			
Oct 15	Virginia Slims Chps Boca Raton FL - \$110,000		

Billie Jean told reporters she remembered “when had to beg people three years ago to get together a \$7,500 purse. We played second fiddle on programs to the men. Now people finally realize that we are playing a more entertaining brand of tennis. You never know your true worth until you go it alone. Now, when we arrive in a town, we get star billing. In the old days we often outdrew the men yet received less than half they made in prize money.” Gladys was very pleased with how the Virginia Slims Circuit had

developed in such a short time. “We’ve come a long way in three years,” she said. “Prize money at the first ‘women only’ tournament at Houston in 1970 was a mere \$7,500, but here we have a \$110,000 tournament.” Billie Jean felt that “people are identifying with women’s athletics for the first time. Advertisers have found that we are marketable. I think the 1970s will be the era of women’s sports.”¹⁶¹

Neil Amdur of the *New York Times* attended the news conference luncheon, shortly after he had telephoned USLTA president Walter Elcock in Boston. Elcock revealed that he had spoken to several of the Virginia Slims Circuit players during the tournament in Philadelphia about a possible reconciliation with the USLTA and ILTF. “I think everything is pretty well resolved,” Elcock said. “We had a meeting with their committee last week. We have another meeting tomorrow to put the final touches on everything.” Some of the items that needed to be resolved, according to Elcock, were tournaments sanction and scheduling policies, the players’ contractual commitments to the WITF, and what would happen with Gladys. “I told the Slims girls there’s no way I or the USLTA can work with Gladys,” Elcock told Amdur. “As far as I’m concerned, she can promote a tournament for 1974, just like any promoter. But she can’t promote all the tournaments.” Elcock hoped to hire a full-time women’s tour director for 1974, and he was optimistic about the “great future for women’s tennis. Conceivably, we could have two strong 32-player circuits going for the indoor season, leading to a Grand Prix that would be tremendous for the sport. I hope we can work it out. The girls are anxious to make peace. We are, too.”¹⁶²

Unlike the player meeting in Boca Raton in October of 1972, when the USLTA circuit was not yet finalized, this time Elcock had more ammunition; the success of the 1973 USLTA Women’s Prize Money Circuit proved that the national association was sincere about promoting women’s professional tennis. In addition, several key players on the Virginia Slims Circuit were eager to restore their eligibility to play in ILTF tournaments. Margaret wanted to play in the French Open and Wimbledon in an attempt win another Grand Slam, and when she was denied entry into the USLTA Akron Open during a rest week on the Virginia Slims Circuit, she realized the ramifications of remaining a contract professional under Gladys. Francoise Durr also certainly wanted to

be able to play in the French Open, which might not happen if she were a contract professional.

As the USLTA representative to the ILTF, Elcock had much influence with the world governing body. In dealing with the renegades on the Virginia Slims Circuit, Elcock had an ace up his sleeve; he could request the ILTF to designate the French Open and Wimbledon as “open” tournaments, which would allow the participation of amateurs and professionals who were under the jurisdiction of their national associations and deny the entries of contract professionals. According the ILTF regulations, contract professionals could only participate in tournaments that were designated as “open-to-all.”

At the news conference luncheon in New York, Amdur – who has just spoken on the telephone with Walter Elcock – asked Margaret and Billie Jean about having a tour that combined all the world’s best women players. Margaret, who earned \$60,000 in nine Virginia Slims Circuit tournaments while playing Billie Jean only twice, said she would be happy to risk the easier money from separate circuits. “We’d be better off together,” she insisted. “I think it’s coming. It may be worked out by next year and all the best players can be back in tournaments together. Being divided into two circuits makes it easier. And, of course, Billie Jean has been out with an injury. But, it’s more rewarding to beat the best.”¹⁶³ Billie Jean suggested “if a combined tour could schedule events with \$100,000 purses week after week, then we’d be better off together. But, I also think there’s room for two tours.”¹⁶⁴

Gladys did not give any statements to Amdur about the possibility of the two tours combining, except to say that she felt that the players on the Virginia Slims Circuit were under pressure from the USLTA to vote on whether she would be replaced or retained.¹⁶⁵ After more than two years of fighting with the USLTA, Gladys seemed to be getting tired of the constant battles.

*... after the bad result in federal court, Mom had no strength left to fight again.*¹⁶⁶

-- Julie Heldman, 2011

Margaret, Billie Jean and Gladys were aware that the ILTF would be meeting in Lucerne, Switzerland later in the week, and the eligibility of the Virginia Slims Circuit players for the upcoming major international tournaments, including the French Open and Wimbledon, would be discussed. “Sure, I want to go to the major championships,” Margaret said. “Making money is great, but those are the tournaments anybody wants to win for the love of the game.”¹⁶⁷ Billie Jean, who won the three major championships in 1972, said she hoped to be able to defend her titles. “I just want to play tennis, and not get involved in hassles,” she explained. “I’m planning on playing at Wimbledon. If they rule against us, I’d probably be very tempted to file suit.”¹⁶⁸ Gladys was prepared to respond if the ILTF barred the Virginia Slims Circuit players from the major championships. “I’ll work like hell to fill the vacant spots if we’re kept out,” she promised.¹⁶⁹

Margaret also answered reporters’ questions about her upcoming match with Bobby Riggs. “I haven’t given Mr. Riggs a thought, and I won’t until the tournament at Sea Pines is concluded,” she said, referring to the \$100,000 Family Circle Cup on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina in early May. “I can’t say I’m losing any sleep at the thought of meeting him.” When asked what her strategy for the match might be, she admitted “I’ve no particular plan in mind. I’ll just play my own game. A couple of my friends have played against him recently and can clue me when the time comes.” Although Margaret never considered herself a proponent of the women’s liberation movement, she was aware of how the public was divided along gender lines. “Several men have wished me good luck as we’ve traveled the country,” she said, “so I guess some males are on my side as well.”¹⁷⁰

The following evening, before the championship flight of the \$25,000 Virginia Slims Indoor Championships started at the Boston Harbor Marina in Quincy, Massachusetts, Walter Elcock met with the Virginia Slims Circuit players in the basement of a building on the campus of Boston College. Even though all of the players were contract professionals, by way of playing in unsanctioned tournaments, Elcock hoped to persuade the ILTF officials at a meeting later in the week in Switzerland to reinstate the women as independent professionals – but only if they agreed to cooperate

with the USLTA and no longer be committed to Gladys. The Virginia Slims Circuit and the USLTA Women's Prize Money Circuit would merge, and everyone would be eligible to play in the world's major championships.

At the Virginia Slims Indoor Championships, Margaret and Billie Jean advanced to the finals with straight-set semifinal victories; Margaret got past Rosie Casals, 6-2 6-4, and Billie Jean gave Julie Heldman the worst defeat of her professional career, winning 6-0 6-0. In the final, Billie Jean's lack of service practice due to her stomach muscle injury was apparent as Margaret broke her twice in the first set and once in the second to win 6-2 6-4. "It might have looked easy," Margaret said after the 59 minute match, "but it wasn't. I've been serving much better the last two or three weeks, and a good serve can give you that extra point or two."¹⁷¹

Earlier that day, in Lucerne, Switzerland, the eleven-man ILTF Committee of Management announced that it had decided to give the Virginia Slims Circuit players a deadline of April 30 to promise they would not play in unsanctioned tournaments after May 15. Any players who did not sign the agreement, ILTF president Allan Heyman indicated, would not be able to play in the major international tournaments. "The question was whether to suspend the girls immediately," Heyman said. "In fairness, we thought we should give them a chance to think things over." Heyman explained that any players who did not sign the agreement would be suspended only for the remainder of 1973, and any player who signed the agreement and broke it would be suspended for "a good length of time."¹⁷² Heyman said that the committee's decision was nearly unanimous, but he refused to identify the dissenters.

Gladys, who did not travel to Boston after the news conference luncheon in New York and may have been unaware of the meeting that Elcock had with the players, said she was puzzled by the ILTF decision. "I'm sure there must be a mistake," she reasoned. "Philip Morris, sponsor of the Virginia Slims tournaments, offered last week to pay a fee of \$20,000 for blanket sanction or recognition of all our tournaments. The offer was delivered to them Thursday or Friday in Lucerne. We hoped the offer would end the problem. Who wants a fight like this? Who gets helped by it? Nobody."¹⁷³

Noting that the Virginia Slims Circuit was organized to avoid schedule conflicts with major international tournaments, Gladys could not understand the ILTF directive. “I have a contract with the girls and the Virginia Slims Circuit,” she said. “They are telling the girls to break their contracts with me or get suspended. If this is true and our tourneys are not sanctioned, the girls can’t win unless they stop playing forever. Our only option is that we self destruct, ruining promoters and the circuit and ending all that huge prize money for women.”¹⁷⁴

Gladys disclosed that a meeting among the players would be held on Tuesday, April 17 at the Virginia Slims of Jacksonville, Florida, at which time the ILTF offer would be discussed and voted upon. “Whatever they do is wrong,” she said about the players’ decision. “They will have to break their contract with Virginia Slims, which is legal and binding, or they will be suspended by the ILTF. I feel it is a dreadful thing to do to young players. How eleven men can bar sixty-eight women without allowing one of the women to be present or any player to be present is astonishing.” Gladys seemed to be in denial, assured that all of the women planned to stay with her. “All the European events will be clobbered by this,” she said, assuming that the Virginia Slims Circuit players would prefer to get suspended and banned from the major tournaments. “It will also make a shambles of the Bonne Bell and Wightman Cups. My personal opinion is that most USLTA people would not be in agreement with the Lucerne decision and would think that our offer should be considered to settle everything peacefully.”¹⁷⁵

The ILTF ultimatum was well received by Billie Jean, who said “we are working towards an agreement which will become effective May 15, with the players agreeing to participate only in ILTF sanctioned events. I think this is good. We don’t feel the general public should be deprived of top tennis while we solve our internal problems. What we are striving for is to have all the good players in the world be able to compete in all tournaments, and provide a better quality tennis for the general public.”¹⁷⁶

While the Virginia Slims Circuit staged its next tournament on the clay courts of Deerwood Club in Jacksonville, Florida, the final event on the USLTA Women’s Prize Money Circuit was held two hundred miles away in St. Petersburg. The Masters Invitational – originally scheduled as a Virginia Slims Circuit event sponsored by Barnett

Banks, until Chris Evert decided to join the USLTA circuit – was played at the St. Petersburg Tennis Center for the thirteenth year. Grace Lichtenstein, the *New York Times* reporter who was writing a book about women’s professional tennis, arrived in St. Petersburg to spend a week at the tournament.

*The Slims tour had struck me as something like a Broadway road show company. The USLTA tour was more like summer camp. The St. Petersburg Masters Tennis Championship, the last stop on the eight-week spring circuit, was professional enough in its prize money – \$20,000, with a \$5,000 first prize – but it had an informal, camplike atmosphere about it that was a sharp contrast to the cigarette-samples-and-coffee-can commercialization of the Max-Pax ... The tournament was held in Bartlett Park, a public recreation area set in a middle-class neighborhood of neat lawns, small retirement homes and motels. The first things I noticed when I got there were not the seventeen Har-Tru tennis courts but the shuffleboard alleys, where dozens of old folks, oblivious to the tournament, played for nickel stakes each day. The principal tennis court was surrounded on three sides by rickety wooden stands, the kind they have around the baseball diamonds in Central Park. Directly behind it was a teenagers’ rec hall that blared soul music so loud it looked at if the tennis players were moving to its rhythm ... And the tournament directors thought nothing of announcing “The refreshment stands are now open” right in the middle of an opening-round match.*¹⁷⁷

-- Grace Lichtenstein, 1973

Chris and Evonne were the top two seeds and advanced easily to the singles semifinals. One of the other semifinalists was Martina Navratilova, who made a remarkable recovery against Helga Masthoff, the West German clay court expert. Helga led 6-1 4-1 before Martina won the second set, 7-5, and the third set by the same score to complete a satisfying two-hour marathon. Grace Lichtenstein believed that Martina was the most promising young foreign player on the USLTA Women’s Prize Money Circuit, and she was impressed with her outgoing personality. Lichtenstein also quickly became

acquainted with many of the other players on the circuit, as well as getting a crash-course in the battle between the USLTA and the Virginia Slims Circuit.

*Over gin and tonics, we spent a few hours rehashing tennis politics along with Edy McGoldrick, the USLTA official in charge of women's affairs. At one point I complained that she had told me more than I ever wanted to know about the subject. "But don't you understand?" she asked with a grin. "The politics are more fun than the game!"*¹⁷⁸

-- Grace Lichtenstein, 1973

Chris and Jeanne Evert also reached the doubles semifinals, where they played the more experienced – and more aggressive – team of Patti Hogan and Sharon Walsh. The Evert sisters employed an unusual doubles formation – both of them remained on the baseline and hit passing shots and lobs past their older net rushing opponents. The strategy was often successful, especially against players who were not totally confident and proficient in their overhead and volleying skills. Against Patti and Sharon, the Chris and Jeanne also had the advantage of superior mental toughness.

The Everts, underdogs for a change, were loose and even a little showboaty, with Chris gaily waving a racquet over her head after missing a lob, Jeanne first falling down on point, then jumping up with a "Yay!" after Chris had saved the point. As the Everts drew ahead in the first set, 5-4, Sharon and Patti grew sour. On the final point of the tenth game, Patti double-faulted, Chris blurted "Out" as the ball went by, and Flo Blanchard, in the umpire's chair, followed with her own "Out" call. Hogan, eyes blazing, swiveled toward the chair. "You have a linesman to call it!" she yelled. "I called it out," the older woman answered. "Yeah, after Chris and Jeanne talked you into it!" Flo ignored her, announcing, "Game, and first set to the Everts." Chris and Jeanne whispered together, then giggled as they came to the sidelines ... Sharon laughed pityingly at herself as she started to miss easy shots in the third set, while Patti concentrated on staring

*down spectators who applauded her errors. The Everts were using all their powers of concentration to keep themselves from being distracted by their opponents. But there was no question that like the proper young women they were, Chris and Jeanne were disgusted by the spectacle of those two disheveled creatures spilling their messy emotions all over the court. The Everts took the third set 6-0. At the end, the four barely shook hands at the net, Jeanne muttered, "It's horrible to play those two," and Patti stormed off to the dressing room, leaving a trail of "Mother-fucker" in her wake. I felt as though I had not watched a tennis match, but a group therapy session.*¹⁷⁹

-- Grace Lichtenstein, 1973

In the singles semifinals, Evonne defeated Marita Redondo – the young Californian who won their previous match in Akron, Ohio – in only 39 minutes, winning 6-2 6-1. In her match against Martina Navratilova, Chris had the unusual experience of playing someone on a clay court who attacked the net at every opportunity – not even Evonne, Margaret or Billie Jean was that adventurous. Chris led 5-3 in the first set, but the young left-hander's aggressive tactics leveled the set at 5-all. Chris escaped with a 7-5 6-3 win, and when it was over she knew she had been in a battle.

A standing-room only crowd of 4,500 – the largest ever to watch a women's tennis match in Florida – was at the St. Petersburg Tennis Center to watch the women's singles and doubles final on Sunday, April 22. In their third encounter in as many weeks, this match was the best of the series. Chris won six of the first eight games to take the first set, and then Evonne's game came alive with crisp serves, backhand winners and drop shot placements. She won seven games in a row – the first time anyone had ever taken a 6-0 set from Chris – to lead 1-0 in the third. Suddenly the match swung back to Chris, as she won five consecutive games and raced to 5-1. Evonne was not finished yet; she won ten straight points and fought off a match point in the eighth game of the set to narrow Chris lead to 5-4. Grace Lichtenstein observed that the crowd "went wild with anticipation" of a comeback from Evonne, but Chris calmly served out the match for a satisfying 6-2 0-6 6-4 win. After the check presentations – Chris earned \$5,000 and

Evonne collected \$2,500 – they were given a half-hour’s rest before the doubles final. Chris and Jeanne won their first professional doubles title, defeating Evonne and Janet Young, 6-2 7-6, but could not accept the \$600 first prize because Jeanne was still an amateur. It was, however, a very successful circuit for Chris; she won six singles tournaments, one doubles title, earned \$41,000 and was in the first place in the ILTF Commercial Union Grand Prix bonus pool.

... in the corridor near the locker room I saw at last that even Chris was human. Colette Evert, a friendly, frank woman who enjoyed her daughter’s star status but displayed none of the neurotic egotism of stage mothers, was standing with Chris and Jeanne when Evonne passed by. Seeing her, Colette remarked lightly, “You played a great match, Evonne. Don’t worry, you’ll catch Chrissie one of these days. You’ll probably get her at Wimbledon!” Goolagong, embarrassed, looked at Chris and asked incredulously, “Is this your mother?” Chris said nothing. Her face was ashen. She whirled, cast a withering glance at Mrs. Evert, blurted “Mom!” as if it were a curse, and stalked off. Miss American Pie might look like your basic ingénue, but underneath was an icy competitor’s determination that blew up when someone kidded about the biggest tournament of them all.¹⁸⁰
 -- Grace Lichtenstein, 1973

During the week in St. Petersburg, Edy McGoldrick held a meeting to inform the players that an agreement with the Virginia Slims Circuit was imminent. Once Margaret Court, Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals, Nancy Richey Gunter and the other players signed an agreement with the ILTF, they would be welcomed back into the fold and be allowed to play in the major championships. In return, the \$110,000 Virginia Slims Championships in Boca Raton in October would be open to players from the USLTA circuit. Patti Hogan – the player who was supposed to play in the first Virginia Slims tournament in Houston in September 1970, and who handwrote the contract that the other women signed – was not pleased about the impending compromise. “We got the short end of the stick,” she complained. “They knew they were stepping out of bounds when

they refused to pay sanction fees this year. If I had done that, I would have expected to be suspended.”¹⁸¹

At the Virginia Slims of Jacksonville, played during the same week as the Masters Invitational in St. Petersburg, Wendy Overton scored the biggest win of her career when she defeated Billie Jean in the quarterfinals, 1-6 7-6 7-6. After Billie Jean easily won the first set, she lost her temper as the match became closer. She hurled her racquet onto an adjacent court, and in another instance she hit a ball over the fence onto a golf fairway. The third set tiebreak went to the 4-4 sudden death, simultaneous match point for both players. After she lost, Billie Jean refused to speak to anyone. “I was beginning to wonder if I’d ever get a big win,” Wendy said after the upset.¹⁸²

Wendy lost in the semifinals to Rosie Casals, who hoped to break her losing streak against Margaret Court in the championship match. Rosie got off to a quick start, taking the first set 7-5 before Margaret turned the match around, winning the next two sets 6-3 6-1. After losing the second set, Rosie knew she might have missed her chance. “If you don’t beat Margaret in straight sets,” she said after the match, “you’re in trouble. She’s too strong. This proves once again without question Margaret Court is the greatest in the world and will continue to be as long as she continues to play.”¹⁸³ With another \$6,000 first prize added to her earnings, Margaret had accumulated \$72,850 from playing in twelve Virginia Slims Circuit tournaments – a total of \$81,500 for year, including her wins in Australia in early January.

There was one more rest week scheduled for the Virginia Slims Circuit, followed by the Family Circle Cup at Sea Pines Plantation on Hilton Head Island in South Carolina. Before the players left Jacksonville, they held a meeting to discuss the ILTF ultimatum about returning to the jurisdiction of their respective national associations by May 1. It was determined that four players – Billie Jean, Francoise Durr, Betty Stove and Julie Heldman – would attend a meeting at the Philip Morris offices on Friday, April 27 to discuss the situation with representatives from Virginia Slims and the USLTA.

During the rest week, Billie Jean and Rose played an exhibition at the Dogwood Arts Festival in Knoxville, Tennessee. On Tuesday, April 24, they told a reporter that Chris Evert was to blame for the political war in women’s professional tennis. “Chris

Evert made a name for Chris Evert by beating girls like Billie Jean King,” Rosie said. “We wouldn’t have the problems we now have if Chris had joined our tour.” Not sure how the upcoming negotiations in New York with the USLTA were going to play out, Billie Jean was still skeptical about the national association. “When Chris joined the USLTA women’s tour, along with two or three other top players, the USLTA wanted all of us,” she explained. “I don’t feel any loyalty to the USLTA. The organization has never given me a cent. Why should an amateur organization want to run a pro circuit? It’s just that the USLTA wants to keep everything under its control.”¹⁸⁴

*If it hadn’t been for us, there never would have been a USLTA tour in the first place, with that kind of money. We created women’s tennis, we created the future for Chris Evert. When she signed with the USLTA, she gave us a kick in the mouth.*¹⁸⁵

-- Rosie Casals, 1973

The following day, Margaret Court sent a telegram to the ILTF asking to be reinstated and eligible for sanctioned tournaments. Perhaps she was not confident what was going to happen at the upcoming negotiations in New York, and she wanted the world governing body to know how she stood on the matter. “The news about Margaret is not altogether unexpected,” said Allan Heyman, president of the ILTF. “I know she is very keen to win the grand slam, and I hope this means the other girls will come back, too.”¹⁸⁶

One day before the meeting in New York, Neil Amdur of the *New York Times* spoke with a Philip Morris spokesperson who indicated that a proposal had already been drafted by Virginia Slims and the USLTA, and the players needed to give their final approval. “In tennis, it seems like it takes three to tango. You need the two feuding organizations to get together, and finally the players. Well, it was the players who asked us to intervene in the first place,” the spokesperson said, referring to the player meeting that was held during the Virginia Slims of Jacksonville. “Now they have the chance to start the music in unison again.”¹⁸⁷

Amdur reported that none of the officials were willing to comment on the details of the proposal. "If I had to guess what they would come up with," one of Amdur's sources said, "it would be the remaining Slims tournaments would be sanctioned for this year and USLTA would administer the women's tour for 1974." Amdur disclosed that the proposal was for a two-year period, and that Philip Morris reportedly offered to give \$20,000 to the USLTA to retroactively sanction the first twelve tournaments on the Virginia Slims Circuit that were played from January through April. Lawrence Krieger, Margaret Court's attorney in New York, told Amdur that his client has already agreed to sign the ILTF agreement by May 1 and would not play in any unsanctioned tournaments after May 15. "Margaret has given her word on the grounds that both parties have patched up their differences," Krieger said. "I would hate to think that something would come up now to stand in the way of an agreement."¹⁸⁸

On Friday, April 27, four players – Billie Jean King, Francoise Durr, Betty Stove and Julie Heldman (hastily calling themselves the Women's Professional Tennis Players' Association) – met with Walter Elcock, Edy McGoldrick, Joe Cullman and John Granville at the Philip Morris offices. As previously reported in newspapers, the women on the Virginia Slims Circuit were given a deadline of May 1 to sign an agreement with the ILTF, promising to return to the jurisdiction of their respective national associations. In addition, they had to agree that they would not play in any unsanctioned tournaments after May 15. This would allow them to play in the already-scheduled (and unsanctioned) \$30,000 Toray Sillook tournament, to be played May 9-12 in Tokyo, Japan.¹⁸⁹

The Virginia Slims Circuit players were asked to concede on a number of points. They would be excluded from the ILTF Commercial Union Grand Prix for the remainder of 1973 and therefore ineligible for bonus pool money. They could no longer be contractually bound by any promoter for the entire year of 1974, which effectively ended Gladys' control of women's professional tennis. The \$100,000 Virginia Slims Championships in Boca Raton, Florida in October would be open to USLTA players, which was surely a move to ensure the participation of Chris Evert. All of the tournaments on the summer-fall Virginia Slims Circuit would pay a sanction fee to the

USLTA, and not to Gladys. This resulted in the end of Gladys' tour slush fund, which was used in part to support the three ATA players. Finally, Cullman agreed to give \$20,000 to the USLTA to retroactively sanction the first twelve tournaments on the Virginia Slims Circuit, which would enable the results of those events to be used for national rankings purposes.¹⁹⁰

The USLTA made its own concessions as well. It agreed to let the summer-fall Virginia Slims Circuit and the USLTA summer circuit operate separately through the remainder of 1973; this would allow the Virginia Slims Circuit players to honor their contracts with Gladys. The presence of Julie Heldman at a meeting to negotiate her mother out of the game may have seemed odd, but not when it was later announced that the USLTA agreed to drop its lawsuit against Gladys.

The USLTA offered to guarantee minimum prize money of \$30,000 per tournament for the 1974 circuit, but Billie Jean wanted to have two \$50,000 tournaments per week. A compromise was reached; there would be twenty tournaments scheduled throughout the year – ten chosen by Virginia Slims, and ten chosen by the USLTA – and each would offer minimum prize money of \$50,000, with two additional events that offered \$100,000. Incredibly, the 1974 women's circuit would have more than one million dollars in prize money. News stories reported that one of the players present at the meeting indicated that “we will canvass the players over the weekend and should have a decision early next week.”¹⁹¹

Reached at her home in Houston for a comment, Gladys claimed to have no knowledge of the details of the meeting in New York – highly unlikely, given the fact that her daughter Julie and Joe Cullman were involved in the negotiations. Surely disappointed that she was ousted from running the women's circuit, Gladys gave the impression that the decision would be hers to make. “I'm not sure if I will direct the expanded tour,” she said. “I haven't decided if I can do it.” Despite her insistence that she was unaware of the peace terms, Gladys said the compromise was reached because Margaret Court wanted to play the French Open and Wimbledon in the hopes of winning another grand slam, and because Billie Jean King wanted to limit her tournament schedule in 1974. As if preparing an excuse for why she no longer wanted to be

involved, Gladys reasoned that “you have to have two of the top four girls to have a circuit. If not, what the other girls have is a satellite circuit.”¹⁹² Although Gladys expressed her pleasure that an agreement had been reached, she actually felt betrayed that the Virginia Slims Circuit players agreed to compromise with the USLTA.¹⁹³

The next tournament on the winter-spring Virginia Slims Circuit was the Family Circle Cup at Sea Pines Plantation on Hilton Head Island in South Carolina – originally scheduled to offer \$80,000 in prize money, but Gladys increased the amount to \$100,000 from the money she had been collecting from the other Virginia Slims Circuit tournaments. NBC Television was on location to tape the semifinals and finals, and highlights of those matches were to be telecast several weeks later – the first time a women’s-only tournament was to be shown on national commercial television. Over the first weekend of the tournament, while qualifying matches were being played, the players who attended the meeting in New York explained the details of the proposal to the other women.

None of the Virginia Slims Circuit players could have afforded to decline the compromise. It would have been career suicide for any of them to remain contract professionals under Gladys; they would have been locked out of the major championships, and they would not have been able to play in any of the tournaments on the summer-fall Virginia Slims Circuit, which were going to be sanctioned by the USLTA. In addition, without Billie Jean King, Margaret Court, Chris Evert and Evonne Goolagong, it would have been impossible for Gladys to put together another circuit in 1974.

On Monday, April 30 – the day before the tournament’s championship flight started – Billie Jean announced that the Virginia Slims Circuit players had agreed to the terms of the agreement. “We are delighted that it has been possible to work out this agreement,” she said. “As players, we are glad now to have the opportunity to participate in all of the tournaments.” In a joint statement, Walter Elcock and Joe Cullman were pleased that everything worked out well. “This agreement should benefit everyone involved,” they stated, “and most especially tennis fans the world over who will now have an opportunity to see all the players participating in all of the tournaments.”¹⁹⁴

Billie Jean may have been happy that the war in women's tennis was finally over, but she realized there was much more work to be done. "I'm glad there's peace," she told Boston sportswriter and friend Bud Collins, "but we've still got to stick together and form a strong players' association that all the girls will join; it must be so good that no girl can afford to stay out. I would have missed Wimbledon terribly if we had been banned. That's where it's all at for me now. We just can't give in on the principle of a women's union."¹⁹⁵ Billie Jean's goal was achieved two months later when, on the eve of Wimbledon, she mobilized the women players and finally formed the Women's Tennis Association. In the meantime, the Women's International Tennis Federation – the organization that Gladys formed in the hopes of controlling women's professional tennis throughout the world – was suddenly no longer relevant and quietly faded away.

Postscript

Margaret Court was favored to win the \$100,000 Family Circle Cup at Sea Pines Plantation on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. After easily winning in the first round against Kathy Kuykendall, she faced a tough match against Nancy Richey Gunter in the quarterfinals – especially challenging because the tournament was played on clay, Nancy's favorite surface. Nancy won the first set, 7-5, when she broke Margaret's serve in the eleventh game. Margaret then turned the match around, winning eight of the next nine games to lead 2-0 in the third. Suddenly Margaret was seized with leg cramps, and Nancy won two of the next three games. Margaret was still leading 3-2, but along the way she stopped play frequently to stretch and massage her legs. Chair umpire Mike Blanchard warned Margaret that she must retire from the match if she was unable to continue, and he gave Barry Court permission to come onto the court to massage his wife's legs. On the changeover at 3-2, Barry told Margaret to take off her shoes in order to improve the circulation in her legs. Playing in her socks, Margaret won two more games and then led 40-15 for two match points. Nancy was able to win that game, and the next four, to wrap up a 7-5 1-6 7-5 victory and her first win over Margaret since the 1966 French Championships.

In the other half of the draw, Rosie Casals notched her first win over Billie since the 1971 Virginia Slims Indoor Championships, ending a seventeen-match losing streak. In the championship match, Rosie lost the first set to Nancy, 3-6, but recovered to take the second, 6-1, by constantly hitting drop shots. Nancy served for the match – and the first prize of \$30,000 – at 5-4 and reached 30-love, but a drop shot, an overhead, and a passing shot helped Rosie to level the set. Two games later, with Nancy serving at 5-6 30-all to stay in the match, Rosie won a tense 43-shot rally that gave her match point and brought the crowd of 2,000 to its feet. After she won the match, Rosie was asked during the awards presentation what she planned to do with the record amount of money she had just won. A frequent smoker, Rosie replied, “I’m going to buy a ton of Virginia Slims cigarettes.” Since cigarette advertising was not allowed on television, Rosie’s endorsement of Virginia Slims was edited out when the match was shown on NBC two weeks later.

While Margaret Court remained in the United States to prepare for her match against Bobby Riggs in California, the other Virginia Slims Circuit players then flew to Japan to play in that country’s first women’s professional tennis tournament, a \$30,000 event sponsored by Toray Sillook – the manufacturer of synthetic silk garments – and promoted by Yoshi Aoyama, a former Japanese pop singer. The early round matches were played in four cities – Shizuoka, Osaka, Fukuoka and Kobe – with the semifinals and finals in Tokyo. At the Nihon University Auditorium in Tokyo, Billie Jean defeated Rosie in the semifinals and in the finals, in front of 5,000 spectators, she won a close match against Nancy, 7-6 5-7 6-3 to win the first prize of \$8,400.

On the plane trip back to the United States, there was a short layover in Hawaii. Billie Jean and Rosie raced through the terminal, trying to locate one of the coin-operated television sets to see if they could find out what happened in Margaret’s match with Bobby Riggs. They were dumbfounded when they heard the scores – Riggs had won 6-2 6-1. The players re-boarded for the flight to the mainland, and Billie Jean’s jaw was clenched as she walked down the aisle of the plane to her seat, realizing that she had no choice but to play Riggs.

As soon as she arrived at her home on Hilton Head Island in South Carolina, Billie Jean challenged Riggs to a \$10,000 winner-take-all match. In a telephone news conference on May 15, Billie Jean said she was willing to put up \$5,000 of her own money, and the Hilton Head Racquet Club – where she was the touring professional – agreed to contribute another \$5,000. Riggs would have to put \$10,000 of his own money on the table. Billie Jean's only condition was that the match must be played at her club, and preferable sometime after Wimbledon. "That score was just outrageous," Billie Jean said about Margaret's loss. "I heard that she really played awful. I felt the fans got cheated. People didn't get to see how well women can play." When asked why she did not accept Riggs' challenge in April, Billie Jean explained that "there was no point in the beginning, but now I think there is since Margaret really got waxed. I think I can do a lot better. I think I thrive on pressure more than Margaret does. I feel I've got something to prove now. I think I really owe it to my fans and to women's tennis. I think I can beat him."¹⁹⁶

Riggs was not interested in the offer. "Billie Jean had her chances," he said. "I challenged her first. If Billie Jean wants to put her money where her mouth is, I'll be happy to play her. But I think I've proved my point. I don't intend to put up any more money on my own. Besides, Mrs. Court is a very gracious lady. She didn't play nearly her best against me. I think she should have another chance. Maybe in New York's Madison Square Garden or Forest Hills. I still insist women's tennis is overrated. About twenty-five percent as good as the men."¹⁹⁷

Two days later, Florida tennis promoter George Liddy challenged Riggs to play Chris Evert in Fort Lauderdale on September 23, with \$50,000 going to the winner. Liddy also had a condition; he insisted that "Riggs do the asking, and that it does not appear that Chris is soliciting the match." Chris' father insisted that his daughter "is not challenging him or anything. George Liddy is just putting the match together. But Chris is looking forward to it. When somebody in your hometown is willing to put it on and Riggs is willing to come here, I don't think Chrissie has any choice. Riggs would have his hands full if he thought he could run through Chris easily. Bobby is a friend of mine. I think he was a little bit hesitant about this one. Chris would have home court advantage

and the slower surface clay.” Jimmy Evert said that when he was a young tennis professional, Riggs used to hustle him by spotting giving him three or four games a set and still end up winning, 7-5. If Riggs accepted the challenge, Liddy said the match “might draw as much interest as the Dempsey-Tunney fight.”¹⁹⁸

When Billie Jean’s offer was dismissed by Riggs, another prominent senior player issued a challenge. 70-year old C. Alphonso Smith, a former U. S. Davis Cup team captain, asked Billie Jean to play against 60-year old Gardner Mulloy, the winner of the 1957 Wimbledon doubles title and forty-five national championships. Smith wanted to offer \$20,000 to the winner and \$5,000 to the loser. Larry King, however, rejected the offer, informing Smith in a letter that Billie Jean would not play men or have anything to do with such a match.¹⁹⁹

Billie Jean decided not to defend her title at the French Open, and it was the defeat of another Virginia Slims Circuit star – Nancy Richey Gunter – that created one of the biggest sensations in Paris. In a fourth round match, 16-year old Martina Navratilova attacked the net, hit teasing drop shots and never allowed the veteran Texan to get into a groove. It was the best wins of her young career, and although she lost her next match to Evonne Goolagong, many observers – including Chris Evert – believed that Martina had the potential to become a great player.

For the first time in her career, Chris reached the final of a grand slam tournament after she dismantled Francoise Durr, 6-1 6-0, in the semifinals. Her opponent in the final, Margaret Court, almost did not make it to the championship match. After playing aggressively and establishing a comfortable 4-1 first set lead against Evonne in the semifinals, Margaret suddenly looked nervous and lost the rhythm on her serve. Evonne won two games and the match became close. “A few years ago the sudden reversal might have finished her,” Richards Evans wrote in *World Tennis* about Margaret’s tendency to fall victim to self-doubt, “but Riggs or no Riggs, Margaret is a tougher competitor now and she stayed with Evonne until her confidence returned and then steamed on to victory with some powerful volleys.”²⁰⁰

In the final against Chris, Margaret once again opened with an early lead, forging ahead to 4-1. Chris caught up with her, drilling most of her shots to the Australian’s

backhand corner. Margaret could not win either of the two set points she held at 6-5, and in the ensuing tiebreak she led 5-2 before Chris won five straight points to close it out. In the second set, Margaret missed badly on an overhead smash to let Chris go ahead 5-3. Serving for the championship, Chris showed that she could also be affected by nerves; four consecutive unforced errors let Margaret back into the match. At 4-5 on her own serve, Margaret, remained on the baseline and patiently rallied; Chris got as close as deuce – two points from the title – but a bad bounce and a strong serve gave Margaret the game to level at 5-5. Two games later, they were into another tiebreak, and a backhand pass down the line put Chris ahead 5-4 – once again two points from victory. Margaret bravely won the next two points with volleys that hit the lines, and she won the tiebreak 8-6 when Chris hit a lob past the baseline.²⁰¹

Just as she did in the first set, Margaret raced to a 4-1 lead in the third. Chris won two consecutive games, and then Margaret broke through to give her a 5-3 lead. Suddenly it was Margaret's turn to fold when serving for the match. "The crowd was riveted," Evans wrote, "the agony was becoming acute. Both girls were tired and tense." Margaret ended the drama in the next game, hitting two solid backhand volleys to break Chris for the fourth time in the set and taking the title, 6-7 7-6 6-4 for one of her most satisfying victories.²⁰²

The following week Chris and Evonne made first appearances at the Italian Open in Rome. In the quarterfinals, Chris faced Katja Ebbinghaus – the West German player whom she beat in the finals of the Lady Gotham Classic in New York on the USLTA Women's Prize Money Circuit, followed by a 6-0 6-0 demolition of her a few days later in the first round of the Sarasota Open. This time, Katja played much better and took a 4-1 lead in the first set. Chris had brought only two racquets with her on court, and disaster struck when the strings in both of them broke. She was able to level the first set at 4-all, playing with broken strings, and Katja generously offered one of her own racquets. By the time Chris had lost the first set and held a narrow 3-2 lead in the second, Colette Evert delivered a newly strung racquet to the side of the court. After that, Chris was never in danger and won nine of the next ten games to finish the match.²⁰³

Against Evonne in the final, Chris saw her first set leads of 4-1 and 5-3 evaporate as the Australian came storming back to win a tiebreak. Evonne coasted through the second set without losing a game, snapping a six match losing streak against Chris. It was also only her second win against Chris since their initial encounter at Wimbledon one year earlier. “I love the atmosphere here,” Evonne said about historic Foro Italico stadium, “and I felt so good after the first set I wanted to run even after a point had finished. That was easily the best I’ve played on a clay court.”²⁰⁴

The appearance of Nicola Pietrangeli – the top-ranked men’s player from Yugoslavia – in the Italian Open draw was somewhat controversial. Weeks earlier, the Yugoslavian Tennis Association asked Pietrangeli to play in a Davis Cup match against New Zealand in early May. Pietrangeli responded that he and his doubles partner, Allan Stone of Australia, were on the verge of qualifying for the WCT Doubles Championships in Montreal, held during the same week as the Yugoslavia-New Zealand Davis Cup tie. If he and Stone earned enough points to play in Montreal, Pietrangeli did not want to leave his doubles partner stranded. Pietrangeli gave a conditional answer, saying that he would play in the Davis Cup match only if he and Stone did not qualify for Montreal; the association, however, felt the reply was purposely evasive. Yugoslavian tennis officials were not happy when their team lost to New Zealand while their best player competed in Montreal; afterward, Pietrangeli was suspended for nine months and eventually banned him for life from the Davis Cup team.²⁰⁵

At the end of the French Open, ILTF officials met and decided that Pietrangeli’s suspension would be reduced to one month, meaning that he would not be permitted to play in the Italian Open, the pre-Wimbledon grass court events, and Wimbledon. Nevertheless, Pietrangeli’s entry into the Italian Open was accepted, since Italian officials felt the ILTF decision “had been timed to protect the French Championships while damaging the Italian Open.” The Italian tennis association eventually paid a small fine for its defiance, but a larger problem still remained – Herman David, the chairman of the All-England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club was obligated to abide by the ILTF decision to suspend Pietrangeli.²⁰⁶

*David was a terrific fellow ... You could read the anguish on his face – and I'm sure all this affected his health and contributed to his death a short time later. He had never liked the ILTF, but the All-England Club – Wimbledon – was under the authority of the Lawn Tennis Association of Great Britain, which belonged to the ILTF, and therefore his hands were tied ... as a last resort we tried to obtain an injunction from the British courts ... The judge declared firmly that he had no jurisdiction in the matter, and therefore the ban on Pilic had to stand. And as he departed his chambers, he advised the ATP that since we had brought the case before him, we should pay all the legal costs: \$18,000.*²⁰⁷

-- Jack Kramer, 1979

On the evening of Wednesday, June 20 – one day after the court's decision and five days before the start of Wimbledon – the ATP board of directors discussed Pilic's suspension in a basement suite at The Westbury Hotel in London. After meeting for nearly three hours, ATP president Cliff Drysdale spoke to the thirty reporters who had been waiting on the stairs outside the meeting room. "We did not take this decision lightly," Drysdale read from his notes scribbled on small sheets of paper. "This is the saddest statement I have ever had to make, but we feel we have no choice but to instruct our members to withdraw from the Wimbledon Championships ... We deeply regret that this confrontation should have taken place during Wimbledon."²⁰⁸ On Thursday morning, forty-seven of the ninety-six ATP members assembled and voted unanimously to follow the board's recommendation and withdraw from any tournament that denied Pilic's entry.

All-England Club chairman Herman David was resigned to accept the fate of his tournament. "We will be sorry if some players decide not to play," he announced, "but Wimbledon will go on."²⁰⁹ ILTF president Allan Heyman was more blunt in his observation. "This is now a question of rule by law or by threats," he told Frank Rostron of the *London Daily Express*. "Pilic accepted our jurisdiction in going to appeal. So did the players' association led by Jack Kramer ... We cannot and will not be beaten on this issue. No responsible international organization can allow itself to be affected by threats.

It's a great pity because initially I welcomed the formation of the players' association, believing it would be good for the game. But that cannot be if they are going to react aggressively to any ruling that does not suit them.”²¹⁰

With the top men players absent from Wimbledon, Billie Jean saw a unique opportunity to force the All-England Club into increasing the tournament's prize money for women. The men, even with a depleted field, would still be competing for a total of \$70,500 while the women were offered only \$50,500. “If I could get the backing of the top twelve women players,” Billie Jean told Fred Tupper of the *New York Times*, “I'd be all for pulling out of Wimbledon like the men.” Billie Jean said that she planned to hold a meeting on Friday evening at the Gloucester Hotel in London, during which she hope to convince the women players to demand more prize money at Wimbledon as well as form a women's tennis association. “If we're all united on Friday, “she said, “we could go to the All-England Club to ask for more money. We are in a marvelous bargaining position.”²¹¹

Herman David stated that the men's and women's prize money would not be altered, prompting Françoise Durr to predict that “a lot of players will not play Wimbledon unless there's a redistribution of the prizes.” Not all of the women, however, agreed with Billie Jean and Françoise about the prize money distribution. “I'd be happy to play at Wimbledon even if there was no money,” insisted Evonne Goolagong. Also opposed to a women's boycott were Virginia Wade and Chris Evert. “I've come over here to play tennis,” Chris said, “and that's all I'm interested in.” Patti Hogan believed that “the men are all wrong, and as for the girls wanting more money – aside from the fact that it can't be done – there's no way we could justify this to the public.”²¹²

On the evening of Friday, June 22, forty-five women's players assembled at the Gloucester Hotel. Billie Jean asked Betty Stove to lock the doors of the meeting room. “I want people focused. I don't want people coming in and out in the back,” Billie Jean told Betty. “This is it. They can not want this, and everybody can go home, but right now this is it. It's match point.”²¹³

I kept saying we've got to do this WTA ... you could see that the tennis world with the men as well was changing rapidly, and if we were ever going to have any say, any power, have any control over our destiny we were going to have to keep cooking ... I said to Rosie, "This is my last try for getting the WTA organized. Otherwise, I'm out of here. I'm so exhausted from trying to get this to happen and all of us working so hard ... We had our bylaws already written up so when a majority said "yes" we could sign up and pick a board that day, right after the meeting. We got right into place immediately. We chose officers and had our first quick little meeting. We started, we went for it.

-- Billie Jean King, 1993

Although Billie Jean was not able to convince the women to boycott Wimbledon unless the prize money distribution was changed, the bylaws for the Women's Tennis Association – written in advance by Larry King – were approved, and a board of directors was chosen. Since the game was becoming increasingly international, the bylaws required that there must be a player representative from each continent. Raquel Giscafre of Argentina was selected as the South American representative, South Africans Ilana Kloss and Pat Pretorius were chosen to represent Africa, and Margaret Court and Karen Krantzcke were the player representatives for Australia. Billie Jean was elected president, with Virginia Wade as vice president and Lesley Hunt as assistant vice president. Francoise Durr and Ingrid Bentzer were chosen as secretaries, and Betty Stove, as the treasurer, was responsible for collecting the \$250 annual membership dues from each player who joined. Although Chris Evert and Evonne Goolagong did not attend the meeting, Billie was confident that they would eventually join the WTA.

... we were very political. I hate anything to do with politics, but you know, any port in a storm. For example, we made up a slate with Virginia as vice president (and me as president) where she looked very prominent but didn't have to do anything ... We came out of the meeting at the Gloucester, and we were so

*excited. The press was all there, and I was shouting, "We did it! We did it! We have our Association!"*²¹⁴

-- Billie Jean King, 1982

Three days later, Billie Jean began the defense of her Wimbledon singles title. She won her first two matches easily, and then was forced to three sets in the fourth round by Lesley Hunt. She came close to losing against Kerry Melville in the quarterfinals, as the Australian led 8-7 in the first set and 6-5 in the second. Billie Jean "played so badly for most of the match that she was there for the taking," Linda Timms reported for *World Tennis*. "Her first service failed, her second was vulnerable and her forehand was appalling; again and again she would overhit the baseline by feet, not inches."²¹⁵ Billie Jean eventually won 9-8 8-6, demonstrating a champion's instinct for survival when not playing well.

Billie Jean was still struggling to find her best form when she played Evonne Goolagong in the semifinals, but she played well enough to serve for the match at 6-3 5-4. Evonne's game then came to life as she saved two match points, broke serve to level at 5-5, and won two more games for the set. Billie Jean worked her way to 5-3 in the third, and Evonne dismissed five more match points with outright winners. "She lifted her game by one-hundred percent when it was match point," Billie Jean said later.²¹⁶ Evonne could not fend off the eighth match point, and Billie Jean advanced to her eighth Wimbledon singles final.

Margaret Court's bid for a second grand slam ended in the other semifinal, when she lost to Chris Evert in three sets and was once again a victim of her own nerves – in one game, she served four consecutive double faults. Billie Jean played her best match of the tournament against Chris in the championship match, building a 6-0 2-0 lead before losing a game. Chris' passing shots and lobs began to find their marks in the second set, during stretch winning nine straight points, and she held leads of 4-3 and 5-4. Billie Jean continued to vary her shots – underspin backhands and sidespin forehands – in order to disrupt Chris' rhythm, and she ran out the final three games of the match to complete a

6-0 7-5 victory. Billie Jean also won the women's doubles title with Rosie Casals and the mixed doubles with Owen Davidson for her second Wimbledon triple, her first coming in 1967. The men's singles tournament, weakened by absence of the boycotting ATP members, was won by Jan Kodes of Czechoslovakia over the Soviet Union's Alex Metreveli in straight sets.

Four days after the completion of her Wimbledon sweep, Billie Jean and Bobby Riggs appeared at the Towne Tennis Club on July 11 in New York City to announce they had agreed to play each other in a winner-take-all match for \$100,000 (the contract was actually finalized three weeks earlier, before the start of Wimbledon). The promoter of the match, Jerry Perenchio was the president of Tamden Productions, a company founded by Bud Yorkin and Norman Lear, the producers of the hit television show *All in the Family*. Perenchio promoted the Muhammad Ali-Joe Frazier heavyweight title fight two years earlier, which grossed more than twenty million dollars to become the highest revenue-producing sporting event ever held. "I'm more excited about this than I was about the fight," Perenchio said, analyzing that there were at least three ways for the match to make money. "You could put this in a stadium, where we could get a \$400,000 gate, or you could sell 80,000 theater seats for a closed-circuit TV showing, or you could put it on in prime-time TV hours," he explained. "Hell, if John Wayne or Julie Andrews specials can cost \$750,000 to a network, this should be worth even more."²¹⁷ The match was scheduled to be played sometime after Labor Day and would be awarded to the highest bidder; an offer Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas for \$200,000 had already been declined.

Billie Jean and Riggs hit tennis balls to each other on the outdoor court of the Towne Tennis Club as part of the good-natured news conference. Riggs informed the news media that he took more than four hundred vitamin pills before his match with Margaret Court, and Billie Jean suggested that he had better start taking more of them. "How do you know I won't psyche you out, just as I did to Margaret?" Riggs asked. "I'm not Margaret," Billie Jean responded. "She was doing nothing right. She couldn't handle the pressure." One of the reporters asked Billie Jean what her strategy against Riggs would be, she refused to divulge her game plan, but did reveal she was studying

films of the match with Margaret and that she would just play her own game. “Are you kidding? You double-faulted three straight times at Wimbledon,” Riggs interjected. “I’ve never done that in my life.” Riggs also talked about his determination “to keep our women at home, taking care of the babies – where they belong.” After he defeated Billie Jean, Riggs declared, “women’s lib will be set back twenty years.”²¹⁸

Riggs probably was not pleased when he learned the U. S. Open would be the first major tournament to provide equal prize money for men and women. On July 19, U. S. Open tournament chairman Billy Talbert, along with Rosie Casals and Pam Austin, another Virginia Slims Circuit player, appeared at Club 21 in New York to make the announcement. A total of \$55,000 was to be provided by Bristol-Myers, the company that produced and marketed Ban Equalizer deodorant. Joseph G. Kelnberger, vice president of Bristol-Myers Product Division, said “we feel that the women’s game is equally as exciting and entertaining as the men’s, and we hope that our direct involvement with the 1973 U. S. Open clearly indicates our positive position regarding women in sports.”²¹⁹ Bristol-Myers’ contribution raised the total prize money at the 1973 U. S. Open to \$227,000, with the men’s singles and women’s singles champions receiving \$25,000, the men’s doubles and women’s doubles winners receiving \$4,000, and the mixed doubles champions receiving \$2,000.²²⁰

Only three weeks after their amusing news conference at the Towne Tennis Club in New York, Billie Jean and Bobby Riggs took part in a closed-circuit television broadcast, announcing that ABC Television would telecast the \$100,000 winner-take-all match live from the Houston Astrodome on September 20, during the prime-time hours of 8:00 pm to 10:00 pm. For the announcement, Riggs was in New York studio with executives from ABC and Tandem Productions, and Billie Jean was in a studio in Denver. ABC’s exclusive acquisition of the match was reportedly for \$700,000, and the network outbid competitors CBS and NBC, which offered \$500,000 and \$400,000, respectively. Within hours of finalizing the deal with Tandem Productions, ABC sold all fifteen minutes of commercial advertising – at \$85,000 per minute. Of the nine sponsors, Cadillac Motor Cars purchased five minutes of commercial time. For what Boone

Arledge, president of ABC Sports, called “the classic tennis battle of the sexes,” Billie Jean said she hoped to convince ABC to provide a woman for on-air commentary.²²¹

During the televised announcement, amiable insults were exchanged. Billie Jean said that after beat Riggs, “they’ll have to scrape him off the court.” Riggs said he was proud of his membership in WORMS – the World Organization for the Retention of Male Supremacy – and promised to “put Billie Jean and all other women’s libbers back where they belong, in the kitchen and the bedroom.” Riggs then made a mock offer, saying “Billie Jean, if it’ll make you feel better, I’ll be glad to wear a dress for our match.” Laughing at the thought, Billie Jean showed she could not be distracted. “What you wear is immaterial to me,” she said. “For all I care, you can wear your jock strap.”²²²

In addition to preparing for her upcoming match against Riggs, getting ready to defend her title at the U. S. Open, and developing the fledgling Women’s Tennis Association, Billie Jean was very involved in a new co-ed league concept, called World Team Tennis. The idea began one year earlier, when three Pittsburgh businessmen – Charles Reichblum, John Hillman and William Sutton – incorporated the National Tennis League with the hopes of developing a thirty-two city tennis league that featured co-ed teams and non-traditional scoring. The cost of a franchise was \$250,000, and the NTL officers held meetings with potential owners in Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, Miami and Phoenix.²²³ The NTL failed to materialize, and eventually Fred Barman, a Beverly Hills business management executive, continued to develop the concept with Dennis Murphy, president and general manager of the World Hockey Association Los Angeles Sharks. Barman and Murphy called their version of the league World Team Tennis, and in subsequent meetings included Larry King and Jordan Kaiser, owner of the WHA Chicago Cougars.

An orientation meeting was held in Miami in late April 1973, with representatives from twenty-nine cities listening to the concept of World Team Tennis. Franchises for sixteen cities were sold for \$50,000 each, and the owners were told that the projected budget for their players would be a minimum of \$125,000 – although there was no limit on the amount of money a team could spend for its players’ salaries. All of the owners – most of whom owned franchises in the World Hockey Association or the American

Basketball Association – were wealthy enough to be able to afford high players' salaries, and they were not afraid to invest money into a format that had never been used in tennis before. In addition, since many of the arenas in which the WHA and ABA teams played in were vacant during the summer months, World Team Tennis matches could be played in those venues.²²⁴

One such owner was Dick Butera, a real estate developer who made a fortune with properties on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. Butera's company owned the Hilton Head Racquet Club on Shipyard Plantation, where Billie Jean King was the touring professional and maintained a residence. Butera's brother, Bob, was the president of the Philadelphia Flyers professional hockey team; as a result, Butera decided to purchase a World Team Tennis franchise that would be based in Philadelphia.

On May 22, 1973, at the Ambassador West hotel in Chicago, World Team Tennis announced its official formation and named the sixteen member teams. George MacCall, who was the U. S. Davis Cup captain from 1965 to 1967 and owner of the original National Tennis League from 1967 to 1970, was introduced as the league's commissioner, with a salary of \$80,000 per year. "We are planning to start play next May," MacCall said, "and before we do we want to make sure that nothing will be overlooked in our efforts to give pro tennis major league status."²²⁵

The first WTT player draft was held on August 3, 1973, in the eighth-floor auditorium of the Time-Life building in New York. A few weeks before, Dick Butera outbid four other team owners for the services of Billie Jean King, reportedly for a salary of \$100,000 a year for five years, and John Newcombe had already agreed to play for the Houston team for an annual salary of \$75,000. Players did not enter their names into the draft; the franchise owners were given an extensive list of tennis players, some of whom had not played competitively since the 1950s and 1960s, and the owners took turns selecting players for the right to negotiate with them. Some of the first round draft picks – whether or not they had any intention of playing in the league – included Chris Evert, Margaret Court, Jimmy Connors, and Bjorn Borg, the sensational Swedish teenager who defeated Cliff Richey at the French Open.²²⁶

Neil Amdur of the *New York Times* attended the draft and was amused by the proceedings. “Only a few owners in the room seemed to command a broad knowledge of tennis and foreign players, particularly players who might be available,” Amdur observed. “Several teams drafted players who already had been drafted, and thus lost a choice for that round. Others made choices on the advice of anyone they respected, including newsmen. Only one team, Cleveland, was smart enough to enlist the services of a top player – Pancho Gonzalez – to attend the draft as a consultant.”²²⁷ The owners of the Denver franchise were not aware that Stephanie DeFina Johnson, a former highly-ranked player in the U. S. and a part-time member of the Virginia Slims Circuit, was a teaching professional in their city. When the Denver owners learned about Stephanie’s credentials, they drafted her in the eighth round.

Dr. Leonard Bloom, the San Diego owner who lured Wilt Chamberlain from the NBA Lakers for his ABA team, conducted what Amdur called “one of the most unusual drafts in the history of sports.” It made sense to draft Rod Laver in the opening round, since the Australian owned a home near San Diego. In the second round, Bloom drafted another San Diego resident – 31-year old Karen Susman, the 1962 Wimbledon singles champion who retired in 1964. After selecting Virginia Slims Circuit player Wendy Overton in the third round, Bloom’s next three choices were Eastern Europeans – Ilie Nastase, Jan Kodes, and Alex Metreveli – who were state-controlled and certainly unavailable. Bloom then selected former great Maria Bueno of Brazil, who retired in 1968 with a chronic elbow injury, and Ann Jones, who was enjoying the life of a housewife and mother of two children in Great Britain.²²⁸

Six days later, perhaps sensing that the league was too ambitious, the owners of the Phoenix franchise sold its team – with negotiation rights to Jimmy Connors and Betty Stove – to an interested party in Baltimore for \$250,000. For Billie Jean King, the WTT draft was another milestone – she became the first woman to be named as the player-coach of a professional sports team.

Four weeks later, during the first weekend of the U. S. Open at the West Side Tennis Club, Billie Jean held a news conference to announce that Martin Carmichael had been named as the executive director of the Women’s Tennis Association, which had

grown to ninety members since its founding two months earlier. The 46-year old Martin, a Yale Law School graduate and a New York attorney, was the director of business affairs for CBS Television before becoming a partner in an advertising firm that represented the Professional Golfers Association, the National Hockey League, and the American Basketball Association. Martin expressed his dedication to women's tennis when he told reporters, "If they want to play in water at midnight, I will get them the pool and the lights."²²⁹

Martin was given the job that Billie Jean initially wanted Gladys to take; Gladys, however, was seemingly relieved to be removed from the politics of professional tennis. Grace Lichtenstein, the *New York Times* reporter who was traveling the women's professional circuit and compiling information for a book about life on the tour, met her on the grounds of the West Side Tennis Club and asked about the agreement that the Virginia Slims Circuit players reached with the USLTA earlier in the year. "To say we were blackmailed or ransomed doesn't help the situation," Gladys told Lichtenstein. "Why knock what's been done? It's much better to say a truce has been made. So the USLTA will be running the tour in 1974. It leaves me able to go to the movies at night. Besides, I still have a magazine to run."²³⁰

Billie Jean was one of four women – the others being Margaret Court, Evonne Goolagong, and Chris Evert – who had the best chance of winning the 1973 U. S. Open. She won her first two matches easily enough, and then came up against Julie Heldman on Tuesday, September 4. On the distracting Court 22 – adjacent to the club house and the outdoor dining area – and on a day when the temperature reached 96 degrees, Billie Jean took a 6-3 4-1 lead and was seemingly on her way to a straight-set win. In the sweltering heat and humidity, Billie Jean suddenly became listless on her service and her returns, and Julie used her powerful forehand to win six straight games, giving her a 1-0 lead in the third set.

Realizing that she was on the verge of a stunning upset, Julie's nerves got the best of her and she was unable to hold serve in the second game of third set. Watching from the clubhouse terrace, Gladys was just as anxious as her daughter. "Give me a cigarette, give me a drink, give me some dextrose," she said to the veteran professional Pancho

Segura. “I’ve been telling that kid to get her first serve in since she was eight. Why doesn’t she do it?” Segura told Gladys to “take it easy. You’re not playing.” Gladys looked at Segura and said, “that’s what you think.”²³¹

Julie quickly recovered from her momentary self-doubt to easily win three consecutive games for a 4-1 lead. By then, Billie Jean was hardly able to move and could not get out of her chair after the rest period.

I guess I began to take more than the one-minute rest period you’re allowed on the change of sides. I felt it was better to take some time and try to stay on the court until the end, but Julie was getting really ticked off with me, I guess, from what everybody says. I don’t remember; everything was very foggy. At 4-1 in the third, when we were both near the umpire’s chair, I do remember that Julie said to the umpire, “Sixty seconds. She’s gotta play.” The umpire asked me if I was all right. I said something like, “To be honest, no.” Julie said, “C’mon, what are you doing? Play. Play or get off the court.” That kind of talk. I remember that. I told her I really wasn’t feeling very well, but what I was really trying to tell her was, “Look, dummy, I’m trying to finish this match for you. There’s no way I can win it because I can hardly stand up as it is. Give me my time and we’ll get through whatever games are left.” But Julie was really adamant and I didn’t know what to do. The umpire didn’t say anything, Julie kept shouting, and finally I said, “Julie, if you want it that bad, dammit, you can have it.” And I defaulted. I didn’t want to, but I felt she put me in a position where I didn’t have any choice, and I don’t know why she did that ...²³²

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

Speaking with reporters after the match, Julie insisted she was not disappointed with the way the match ended. “Sure I wanted it,” she said. “I would have kicked her. Seriously, though, a rule’s a rule. Billie’s old enough to play by the rules. She’s been around. So I called her on the rule – a minute to change over. It was hot for me, too. Do I think this was a lousy way to win? Heck, no. I beat her. She had to surrender.

Conditioning is all part of it. I didn't want Billie to die on court. I'm not a mean old woman, but I am a pro who knows the rules.”²³³

Billie Jean did not speak to reporters immediately after the match, going straight to the locker room for a two-hour sleep. Reporters hovered around the players' entrance the entire time, and when Billie Jean emerged, she explained that she “wanted to keep playing, but Julie called me on the rule and I had to quit. I needed more than a minute on the changes to keep going. Do I think I should have gone through the motions for two more games to give Julie a complete score? I couldn't ... generally I like the heat, but I never felt like this before. I just felt like I would black out.”²³⁴

The stunning news created immediate debates. One USLTA umpire felt that Julie should not have been allowed to prod Billie Jean. “She wouldn't have gotten away with that if I'd been in the chair,” he told Bud Collins. “There are extenuating circumstances, judgment – worst weather in decades, the champion deserved consideration. Who wants to win that way?” Another official countered that “the rules say nothing about the weather or the players' status. If you'd allowed Billie Jean more than sixty seconds, Julie would have been within her rights to call the referee and have you removed.”²³⁵ Grace Lichtenstein watched the match and observed “in the discussion that followed, King supporters declared angrily that nobody but Julie, who didn't get along with Billie Jean and was a rat besides, would have demanded the rule enforced against an ailing opponent. Heldman supporters retorted that only one player would have – Billie Jean. King was known to be a lousy, ungracious loser.”²³⁶

Jack Kramer – who witnessed Billie Jean's walkout at his Pacific Southwest tournament in 1971 – called the default “a disgrace. You can't walk out on the paying public.”²³⁷ A London journalist was just as critical, saying “it's like boxing. The champion carries on, whatever. A champion doesn't retire.”²³⁸ Not unexpectedly, Bobby Riggs could not resist taking a jab at Billie Jean. “I think Julie pushed her too hard,” he said. “When you have a sucker on the 17th green, you don't want him to walk off the course.”²³⁹

Tennis historians compared the incident to two other famous defaults at Forest Hills – Suzanne Lenglen's walkout against Molla Mallory in 1921, and Helen Wills'

retirement against Helen Jacobs in 1933. Almost as soon as the match ended, rumors began to spread – Billie Jean lost on purpose in order to have more time to prepare for Riggs, she was so distraught by Riggs’ pre-match boastings that her illness was psychosomatic, she was using her sickness to get out of the Riggs match altogether. In truth, Billie Jean was suffering from a bad reaction to the penicillin she had been taking for a virus and had not eaten on the day of the match; in one week’s time, however, the virus was gone and she felt much better. The editors of *Newsweek*, however, were suddenly skeptical that the Riggs match would actually come off, and they canceled their plans to put Billie Jean on the magazine’s cover. “In Las Vegas,” Grace Lichtenstein wrote, “Jimmy ‘The Greek’ Snyder hung up on his long distance caller and quietly changed the odds on the Riggs-King match from 3 to 2 to 5 to 2. The Bobby boom was blossoming.”²⁴⁰

Julie subsequently lost in the quarterfinals to Helga Masthoff of West Germany, who rarely played in grass court tournaments. Much more comfortable on slow European clay, Helga should have reached the final, since she led Evonne Goolagong in the semifinals, 4-1 in the third, by casually loping into the net and knocking off winning volleys. “I am sure,” said one observer, “that Helga really can’t approve of playing tennis like this.” Just two games away from reaching the final, Helga stopped attacking; given a reprieve, Evonne’s game suddenly blossomed and she coasted to a 6-1 4-6 6-4 victory. “I don’t know why,” Helga said about her decision to retreat to the baseline when so close to victory. “I wasn’t tired. Oh well, I just came over to see what the Open was like. I hadn’t played here in ten years. I didn’t expect to get beyond the second round. I’ve re-packed three times.”²⁴¹

Margaret Court avenged her Wimbledon loss to Chris Evert in the other semifinal, this time by engaging the teenager in long baseline rallies and waiting for the right time to attack. In the championship match, Evonne was leading 4-1 in the first set when a row of chairs for VIP spectators was placed on the edge of court, disrupting her concentration. Margaret won the first set in a tiebreak and appeared to be on the verge of closing out the match at 4-2 in the second; then it was Evonne’s turn to reverse the momentum, sweeping the set 7-5. In the third, Margaret once again established an early lead, reaching 3-0 and

4-1. Spectators waited for Evonne's game to come alive again, but Margaret made sure it did not, finishing the match with a final score of 7-6 5-7 6-2. During the awards presentation, Margaret was given a first-place prize of \$25,000 – the same amount that men's singles champion John Newcombe received – and later told reporters, "I'm not a women's libber. I never asked for equal prize money." Her husband, Barry, did not think his wife unhappy about the situation. "I reckon she'll cash the check," he said.²⁴²

When the Virginia Slims Circuit and the USLTA reached a compromise earlier in the year, it was agreed upon that the two women's tours would remain separate for the remainder of 1973 and merge into one circuit for 1974. Several months later, the agreement was revised, allowing for the merger to take place at the Virginia Slims of Houston in September, played at the Net Set Racquet Club.²⁴³ With the USLTA Women's Prize Money Circuit coming to a conclusion the previous week in Charlotte, Chris Evert and Evonne Goolagong had planned to play in Houston. However, they withdrew before the draw was made, as did Margaret Court, leaving the tournament with Billie Jean as the top seed and Kerry Melville and Rosie Casals as the second and third seeds.²⁴⁴

Incredibly, Billie Jean's match against Bobby Riggs was scheduled during the middle of the Virginia Slims of Houston. She had agreed to play in the tournament before the Riggs match was finalized in late June, and she honored her prior commitment. Billie Jean requested to play her first round and second round matches in the tournament on Monday, September 17, in order to have the next two days to prepare for the Thursday evening match against Riggs. Since the Houston Astros were hosting the Cincinnati Reds on Tuesday and the San Diego Padres on Wednesday, a portable tennis court was installed outside on the Houston Astrodome's asphalt parking lot. In the bubble-covered tennis court, Billie Jean and Riggs practiced with their respective workout partners, and held a news conference on Tuesday before a large group of reporters. Riggs was having an especially good time in the days leading up to the match, giving numerous interviews and taking bets against anyone who wanted to play him with a variety of handicaps. Billie Jean, on the other hand, approached the match professionally – studying tapes of the Court-Riggs match, practicing with teaching professional Pete Collins, and sleeping

until noon on the day of the match so that her body could perform optimally eight hours later.

Four hours before the start of the match on Thursday, Billie Jean walked around the tennis court that was laid out over a wooden basketball floor on the Houston Astrodome infield. She purposely asked to be assigned to the visitor's locker room, since her brother Randy was a relief pitcher for the San Francisco Giants, and she wanted to be near his locker. After an interview with Frank Gifford for ABC Television, she had a practice session with Pete Collins and Dennis van der Meer and then took a shower. By then, spectators had started to arrive, a band was playing, and the lights were turned on brightly for the television cameras – and suddenly the gravity of the situation surfaced. Billie Jean thought about all the work that had gone into establishing the Virginia Slims Circuit, and realized that if she lost, everything the women had worked in the past three years would be ruined. She also sensed that the match would be among the three most important of her career – alongside her first Wimbledon singles title over Maria Bueno in 1966, and her emotional semi-final win against Chris Evert at the 1971 U. S. Open.²⁴⁵

*Everybody else in Houston was having a ball, but that hour before Bobby and I actually stepped on the court was probably the most agonizing one of my life. I had to get away. I knew Virginia Slims was having a party upstairs, and I said to Dick Butera, "Let's go. I've got to get away from this." Well, it was jaw-drop time all the way – in the elevator, in the public restaurant we had to walk through to get to the Slims' suite, and then at the party. Nobody could believe I was there just an hour before the match – and I hate cocktail parties – but I needed something, anything, to get rid of the tension and that awful feeling of loneliness. No luck. At the party, something I'd felt all week in Houston really hit home; a lot of the other women players didn't really think I could win. Some of them had even bet against me, and most of the rest felt I was about to go to the guillotine, or something. And that really hurt me, gave me a lot to think about. I only stayed a few minutes.*²⁴⁶

-- Billie Jean King, 1974

At the Virginia Slims party in the Astro Club suite, Gladys was honored for the work she had done in developing the women's professional circuit. Exactly three years earlier, Gladys and Delores Hornberger organized the first Virginia Slims tennis tournament in Houston with only \$5,000 in prize money. Since then, Billie Jean had become the first female athlete to earn more than \$100,000 in a single year, the women's tour had evolved into a million-dollar operation, and Gladys was eventually negotiated out of women's professional tennis. After the accolades and thanks were given, and after Gladys was told how much she would be missed, everyone went down to the main floor of the Houston Astrodome to watch Billie Jean play Bobby Riggs.

Notes

- ¹ Jay Stuller (“Gladys Heldman: A Few Words with the Architect of Women’s Pro Tennis,” *Women’s Sports*, May 1979, 29) reported that Gladys Heldman sold *World Tennis* to CBS Publications for \$2.25 million. However, during her law suit against the USLTA in early 1973, Heldman testified that she was not permitted to disclose the amount of the magazine’s sale.
- ² Richard Evans, “Gladys Heldman,” >>[www.http://10sballs.com/2013/09/24/gladys-heldman-by-richard-evans/](http://10sballs.com/2013/09/24/gladys-heldman-by-richard-evans/)<< Retrieved on January 7, 2014.
- ³ Margaret Court, quoted in “Mrs. Court Gains Australian Final,” *New York Times* (New York, New York), January 1, 1973.
- ⁴ “Mrs. Court Wins Australian Open,” *New York Times* (New York, New York), January 1, 1973.
- ⁵ Virginia Wade, quoted in “Calls Annoy Miss Wade as Miss Goolagong Wins,” *New York Times* (New York, New York), January 6, 1973.
- ⁶ “Around the World,” *World Tennis*, March 1973, 98.
- ⁷ “1973 Results,” >><http://www.tennisforum.com><< Retrieved on July 16, 2012.
- ⁸ Walter Elcock, “President Elcock Signs In,” *Tennis USA*, February 1973, 6.
- ⁹ Edy McGoldrick, quoted in “The Women Pros: Who, When, Where,” *Tennis*, February 1973, 22.
- ¹⁰ Neil Amdur, “Women’s Pro Head Sues USLTA as Unfair,” *New York Times* (New York, New York), January 10, 1973.
- ¹¹ Neil Amdur, “Women’s Pro Head Sues USLTA as Unfair,” *New York Times* (New York, New York), January 10, 1973.
- ¹² Gladys Heldman, quoted in Lee Masters, “They Want Equal Pay,” *Melbourne Sun-Herald* (Melbourne, Australia), January 21, 1973.
- ¹³ Billie Jean King, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 26, 1973, stenographer’s minutes, 151.
- ¹⁴ Affidavit of Donald R. Davis, January 11, 1973, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York.
- ¹⁵ Affidavit of Ronald W. Bookman, Jr., January 11, 1973, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York.
- ¹⁶ Affidavit of Daniel J. Horan, January 12, 1973, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York.
- ¹⁷ Affidavit of Carl Hutchison, January 12, 1973, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York.

- ¹⁸ Affidavit of John Granville, January 12, 1973, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York.
- ¹⁹ Affidavit of Ellen Merlo, January 12, 1973, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York.
- ²⁰ Affidavit of Gladys M. Heldman, January 13, 1973, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York.
- ²¹ Affidavit of Billie Jean King, January 15, 1973, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York.
- ²² Affidavit of Myles H. Johns, Sr., January 15, 1973, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York.
- ²³ Robert Colwell, quoted in “Bob Colwell Speaks Out,” *Tennis USA*, February 1973, 3.
- ²⁴ “Around the World,” *World Tennis*, March 1973, 97.
- ²⁵ Edy McGoldrick, quoted in “Heard Between Matches,” *Tennis*, April 1973, 90.
- ²⁶ Rosie Casals, interview with the author, January 6, 2012.
- ²⁷ Nancy Richey, email correspondence to the author, April 14, 2013.
- ²⁸ Billie Jean King, quoted in Douglas Robson, “The Doyenne of the Dollar Bill,” *Tennis*, May 2008, 32.
- ²⁹ Basil Reay, quoted in “Women Risking Life Suspension,” *Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney, Australia), January 18, 1973.
- ³⁰ Esca Stephens, quoted in Rod Humphries, “Women’s Lib in Tennis,” *Melbourne Sun-Herald* (Melbourne, Australia), January 21, 1973.
- ³¹ John Young, quoted in Rod Humphries, “Women’s Lib in Tennis,” *Melbourne Sun-Herald* (Melbourne, Australia), January 21, 1973.
- ³² Sir Carl Aavoid, quoted in “Net Gals Warned by British Group,” *Spokane Daily Chronicle* (Spokane, Washington), December 14, 1972.
- ³³ Basil Reay, quoted in “Tennis Unit Postpones Action on Rebels’ Ban,” *Indianapolis News* (Indianapolis, Indiana), January 22, 1973.
- ³⁴ Herman David, quoted in “Tennis Unit Postpones Action on Rebels’ Ban,” *Indianapolis News* (Indianapolis, Indiana), January 22, 1973.
- ³⁵ *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 26, 1973.
- ³⁶ Gladys Heldman, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 26, 1973, stenographer’s minutes, 83.
- ³⁷ *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 26, 1973.
- ³⁸ *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 26, 1973.

³⁹ Gladys Heldman, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 26, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 83.

⁴⁰ *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 26, 1973.

⁴¹ Pip Jones, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 26, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 88.

⁴² Pip Jones, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 26, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 88.

⁴³ Carl Hutchison, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 26, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 134.

⁴⁴ Billie Jean King, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 26, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 151.

⁴⁵ Billie Jean King, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 26, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 151.

⁴⁶ *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 26, 1973.

⁴⁷ Margaret Court, quoted in "Court Beats Gunter Despite Pain," *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles, California), January 28, 1973.

⁴⁸ Billie Jean King, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 29, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 193. Billie Jean King is referring to the telegram that USLTA president Alastair Martin sent during the Virginia Slims Invitation in Houston in September, 1970; it was not a suspension of the players, since the USLTA Disciplinary Committee would have been required to meet and vote on the matter. Martin's telegram was an inquiry and notification that the women who signed the one-dollar contracts with Gladys Heldman and *World Tennis* had automatically become contract professionals and were no longer under USLTA jurisdiction

⁴⁹ Billie Jean King, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 29, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 193.

⁵⁰ Billie Jean King, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 29, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 193. In a 1971 *World Tennis* interview with Gladys Heldman, Billie Jean King referred to the USLTA Disciplinary Committee hearing and said, "We're not going. They'll just end up bawling us out." In this line of questioning, however, Reardon was trying to show that a USLTA suspension was not given until a hearing was held and the player had an opportunity to offer an explanation.

⁵¹ Billie Jean King, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 29, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 193.

⁵² Billie Jean King, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 29, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 193.

⁵³ Billie Jean King, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 29, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 193.

⁵⁴ *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 26, 1973, 228.

⁵⁵ Billie Jean King, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 29, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 228.

⁵⁶ The Maureen Connolly Brinker Women's Tennis Championships were held in Dallas in early 1972. At the time, Heldman was a USLTA official and there were no minimum number of tournaments required to play on the Virginia Slims Circuit.

⁵⁷ Billie Jean King, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 29, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 228.

⁵⁸ Billie Jean King, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 29, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 228.

⁵⁹ *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 29, 1973.

⁶⁰ Billie Jean King, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 29, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 228.

⁶¹ Billie Jean King, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 29, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 228. The exhibition in Knoxville, Tennessee was for a total of \$2,000, which two players would share. The prize money breakdown at the USLTA tournament in Hingham was as follows: winner received \$5,000, finalist received \$2,500, third place received \$1,500 and fourth place received \$1,000. During a rest week on the Virginia Slims Circuit, King would be able to schedule multiple exhibitions if she desired.

⁶² Billie Jean King, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 29, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 228.

⁶³ Gladys Heldman, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 29, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 253.

⁶⁴ Gladys Heldman, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 29, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 253.

⁶⁵ Gladys Heldman, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 29, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 253.

⁶⁶ Gladys Heldman, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 29, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 253.

⁶⁷ Gladys Heldman, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 29, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 253. For the rest of her life, Gladys Heldman propagated the myth that the women who played in Houston in September 1970 were suspended by the USLTA, and she also maintained that the players were suspended several times afterward. In truth, none of the American women on the Virginia Slims Circuit were ever suspended by the USLTA or ILTF. Three Australian players – Judy Dalton, Kerry Melville and Karen Krantzcke – had their entries for the 1972 Australian Open rejected by the Lawn Tennis Association of Australia because they decided to skip the Australian state tournaments in order to travel to San Francisco for the opening event on the 1972 Virginia Slims Circuit. According to LTAA regulations, Australian players who were under jurisdiction of the national association were required to get permission to play in foreign tournaments during the Australian circuit. None of the American players, however, were ever disciplined by the USLTA or ILTF.

⁶⁸ Gladys Heldman, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 29, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 253.

⁶⁹ Gladys Heldman, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 29, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 253.

⁷⁰ *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 30, 1973, 401.

⁷¹ Forrest Hainline, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 30, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 440.

⁷² Forrest Hainline, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 30, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 440.

⁷³ *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 30, 1973, 471.

⁷⁴ *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 30, 1973, 471.

⁷⁵ *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 30, 1973, 471.

⁷⁶ Forrest Hainline, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 30, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 440. An "open" tournament was one in which amateurs and professionals who were under the jurisdiction of their national associations could compete; an "open-to-all" tournament was another type of competition, in which amateurs, professionals and contract professionals could play.

⁷⁷ John Granville, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 30, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 554.

⁷⁸ Walter Elcock, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 31, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 615.

⁷⁹ Walter Elcock, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 31, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 615.

⁸⁰ Walter Elcock, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 31, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 615.

⁸¹ Walter Elcock, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 31, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 615.

⁸² *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 30, 1973, 615.

⁸³ Walter Elcock, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 31, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 615.

⁸⁴ *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 30, 1973, 615.

⁸⁵ Walter Elcock, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 31, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 615.

⁸⁶ Walter Elcock, sworn testimony, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 31, 1973, stenographer's minutes, 615.

⁸⁷ Jerome Doyle, closing argument, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 31, 1973, 816.

⁸⁸ George Harris, closing argument, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 31, 1973, 840.

⁸⁹ *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 31, 1973, 840.

- ⁹⁰ Roy Reardon, closing argument, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 31, 1973, 851.
- ⁹¹ Roy Reardon, closing argument, *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 31, 1973, 851.
- ⁹² *Gladys M. Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association*, 73 Civ. 162, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, January 31, 1973, 868.
- ⁹³ Rosie Casals, quoted in George Solomon, "Casals Invites USLTA Out," *Washington Post* (Washington, D. C.), February 1, 1973.
- ⁹⁴ Haig Tufenk and Bob Jackson, quoted in George Solomon, "Queen Ready for King," *Washington Post* (Washington, D. C.) February 5, 1973.
- ⁹⁵ Rosie Casals, quoted in Mark Asher, "Melville's Lobs Force Casals Off Game," *Washington Post* (Washington, D. C.) February 4, 1973.
- ⁹⁶ Kerry Melville, quoted in Mark Asher, "Melville's Lobs Force Casals Off Game," *Washington Post* (Washington, D. C.) February 4, 1973.
- ⁹⁷ Rosie Casals, quoted in George Solomon, "Queen Ready for King," *Washington Post* (Washington, D. C.) February 5, 1973.
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- ⁹⁹ Margaret Court, quoted in George Solomon, "Queen Ready for King," *Washington Post* (Washington, D. C.) February 5, 1973.
- ¹⁰⁰ Sylvia Hooks, quoted in Grace Lichtenstein, *A Long Way, Baby* (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett Publications, 1974), 199.
- ¹⁰¹ Gladys Heldman, interview with Cynthia Starr, October 28, 1987.
- ¹⁰² Kerry Melville, quoted in Ralph Leo, "Melville Thinks She Can Be Best On Tour," *Chicago Tribune* (Chicago, Illinois), February 13, 1973.
- ¹⁰³ "Women Tennis Stars Play Politics Tonight," *New York Times* (New York, New York), February 13, 1973.
- ¹⁰⁴ Billie Jean King, quoted in Evonne Goolagong and Bud Collins, *Evonne! On The Move* (New York; E. P. Dutton, 1975), 183.
- ¹⁰⁵ "Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association," Federal Supplement, 354 F. Supp. 1241 (1973).
- ¹⁰⁶ "Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association," Federal Supplement, 354 F. Supp. 1241 (1973).
- ¹⁰⁷ "Heldman v. United States Lawn Tennis Association," Federal Supplement, 354 F. Supp. 1241 (1973).
- ¹⁰⁸ "View From the Top," *Tennis USA*, March 1973, 2.
- ¹⁰⁹ Walter Elcock, quoted in Bud Collins, "USLTA President Elcock Seeks Total Peace," *Boston Globe* (Boston, Massachusetts), February 11, 1973.
- ¹¹⁰ Myrta Pulliam, "No. 1 Seeded Woman Fails in Net Trial," *Indianapolis Star* (Indianapolis, Indiana), February 20, 1973.
- ¹¹¹ Myrta Pulliam, "Kathy Kuykenall Spills Françoise Durr," *Indianapolis Star* (Indianapolis, Indiana), February 21, 1973.

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- ¹¹³ Bobby Riggs and Tony Trabert, quoted in “Equality Drive for Women May Get a Test Drive,” *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* (Sarasota, Florida), February 22, 1973.
- ¹¹⁴ Karen Krantzcke, quoted in Myrta Pulliam, “Bowen’s Bandwagon Cuts Tennis String,” *Indianapolis Star* (Indianapolis, Indiana), February 23, 1973.
- ¹¹⁵ Bill Colbert, quoted in Myrta Pulliam, “Bowen’s Bandwagon Cuts Tennis String,” *Indianapolis Star* (Indianapolis, Indiana), February 23, 1973.
- ¹¹⁶ Billie Jean King, quoted in Myrta Pulliam, “Billie Jean Declines Riggs’ \$5000 Offer,” *Indianapolis Star* (Indianapolis, Indiana), February 24, 1973.
- ¹¹⁷ Billie Jean King, quoted in Myrta Pulliam, “Billie Jean Stuns Margaret Court,” *Indianapolis Star* (Indianapolis, Indiana), February 26, 1973.
- ¹¹⁸ Billie Jean King, quoted in Myrta Pulliam, “Billie Jean Stuns Margaret Court,” *Indianapolis Star* (Indianapolis, Indiana), February 26, 1973.
- ¹¹⁹ Margaret Court, quoted in Myrta Pulliam, “Billie Jean Stuns Margaret Court,” *Indianapolis Star* (Indianapolis, Indiana), February 26, 1973.
- ¹²⁰ Peachy Kellmeyer, quoted in Myrta Pulliam, “Billie Jean’s Comeback Catches Rosie in 3-Set Tennis Slugfest,” *Indianapolis Star* (Indianapolis, Indiana), February 27, 1973.
- ¹²¹ Bill Colbert, quoted in “Ladies’ Tennis Draws Few Fans But Will Go On,” *Anderson Daily Bulletin* (Anderson, Indiana), February 27, 1973.
- ¹²² “Tennis Tour Director Decides to Drop Suit,” *Nevada State Journal* (Reno, Nevada), February 27, 1973.
- ¹²³ Walter Elcock, quoted in Mike Lupica, “Crisis Every Deuce,” *World Tennis*, March 1975, 60.
- ¹²⁴ Julie Heldman, email correspondence to the author, March 1, 2011.
- ¹²⁵ Basil Reay, quoted in “Gladys Withdraws Legal Action Against USLTA,” *New Straits Times* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia), March 1, 1973.
- ¹²⁶ “People in Sports,” *New York Times* (New York, New York), February 28, 1973.
- ¹²⁷ “More Legal Volleys in Tennis Dispute with Heldman, King,” *Star-Phoenix* (Saskatoon, Canada), March 1, 1973.
- ¹²⁸ Minutes, USLTA Executive Committee Meeting, New York, New York, September 7, 1973.
- ¹²⁹ *Battle of the Sexes*, directed by James Erskine and Zara Hayes (London: New Black Films, 2013), film.
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- ¹³² Ted Tinling and Rod Humphries, *Love and Faults – Personalities Who Have Changed the History of Tennis in My Lifetime* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1979), 289.
- ¹³³ Virginia Wade, quoted in Spence Conley, “USLTA Women’s Prize Money Circuit Kicks Off at Fort Lauderdale,” *Tennis USA*, April 1973, 12.
- ¹³⁴ Chris Evert, quoted in Spence Conley, “USLTA Women’s Prize Money Circuit Kicks Off at Fort Lauderdale,” *Tennis USA*, April 1973, 12.

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- ¹³⁷ Bud Collins, "My Ad," *World Tennis*, June 1973, 69.
- ¹³⁸ Virginia Wade, quoted in "Virginia Wade Happy With USLTA Tour," *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles, California), March 22, 1973.
- ¹³⁹ "Around the World," *World Tennis*, May 1973, 126.
- ¹⁴⁰ John Dolan, *Women's Tennis, 1968-1984 – The Ultimate Guide* (London: Remous Ltd., 2011), 150.
- ¹⁴¹ John Dolan, *Women's Tennis, 1968-1984 – The Ultimate Guide* (London: Remous Ltd., 2011), 150.
- ¹⁴² John Dolan, *Women's Tennis, 1968-1984 – The Ultimate Guide* (London: Remous Ltd., 2011), 150.
- ¹⁴³ Marina Kroshina, quoted in Neil Amdur, "Olga Morozova Upset By Friend," *New York Times* (New York, New York), March 30, 1973.
- ¹⁴⁴ Sharon Walsh, quoted in Neil Amdur, "Miss Evert Wins at Forum, 6-4, 6-0," *New York Times* (New York, New York), March 29, 1973.
- ¹⁴⁵ Martina Navratilova, quoted in Spence Conley, "The Professionalism of Chrissie," *Tennis USA*, May 1973, 12.
- ¹⁴⁶ Chris Evert, quoted in Mark Cardon, "Fighting Four Seek Tennis Prize," *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* (Sarasota, Florida) April 7, 1973.
- ¹⁴⁷ Patti Hogan and Sue Minford, quoted in Mark Cardon, "Loose Helga Capable of Major Upset," *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* (Sarasota, Florida) April 7, 1973.
- ¹⁴⁸ Evonne Goolagong, quoted in Mark Cardon, "Loose Helga Capable of Major Upset," *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* (Sarasota, Florida) April 7, 1973.
- ¹⁴⁹ Flo Blanchard and Evonne Goolagong, quoted in Alan Lasilla, "Chris Queen of Sarasota Open," *Sarasota Journal* (Sarasota, Florida), April 9, 1973.
- ¹⁵⁰ Chris Evert and Vic Edwards, quoted in Alan Lasilla, "Chris Queen of Sarasota Open," *Sarasota Journal* (Sarasota, Florida), April 9, 1973.
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- ¹⁵⁷ Marilyn Fernberger, quoted in Grace Lichtenstein, *A Long Way, Baby* (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett Publications, 1974), 35.

- ¹⁵⁸ Grace Lichtenstein, *A Long Way, Baby* (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett Publications, 1974), 40.
- ¹⁵⁹ Betty Stove, quoted in Grace Lichtenstein, *A Long Way, Baby* (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett Publications, 1974), 64.
- ¹⁶⁰ "Slims Set Title Event of \$100,000," *Washington Post* (Washington, D. C.), April 10, 1973.
- ¹⁶¹ Billie Jean King, quoted in "Margaret Court Wants Peace With Warring Leagues," *Colorado Springs Gazette-Telegraph* (Colorado Springs, Colorado), April 10, 1973.
- ¹⁶² Walter Elcock, quoted in Neil Amdur, "Tennis Near Peace Pact For Women," *New York Times* (New York, New York), April 10, 1973.
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- ¹⁶⁵ Neil Amdur, "Tennis Near Peace Pact For Women," *New York Times* (New York, New York), April 10, 1973.
- ¹⁶⁶ Julie Heldman, email correspondence to the author, April 4, 2011.
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- ¹⁶⁹ Gladys Heldman, quoted in "Margaret Court's Battle For The Sex," *Daily Review* (Hayward, California), April 10, 1973.
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- ¹⁷¹ Margaret Court, quoted in "Court Captures Tennis Tourney," *Rome News-Tribune* (Rome, Georgia) April 16, 1973.
- ¹⁷² Allan Heyman, quoted in "World Tennis Body Issues Ultimatum to Women Players," *New York Times* (New York, New York), April 16, 1973.
- ¹⁷³ Gladys Heldman, quoted in "Netters Facing Ban," *Spokane Daily Chronicle* (Spokane, Washington), April 16, 1973.
- ¹⁷⁴ Gladys Heldman, quoted in "Court, King Face Suspension," *Newport Daily News* (Newport, Rhode Island), April 16, 1973.
- ¹⁷⁵ Gladys Heldman, quoted in "Virginia Slims Tour Makes Peace Offer," *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* (Sarasota, Florida), April 17, 1973.
- ¹⁷⁶ Billie Jean King, quoted in "Court, King Face Suspension," *Newport Daily News* (Newport, Rhode Island), April 16, 1973.
- ¹⁷⁷ Grace Lichtenstein, *A Long Way, Baby* (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett Publications, 1974), 70.
- ¹⁷⁸ Edy McGoldrick, quoted in Grace Lichtenstein, *A Long Way, Baby* (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett Publications, 1974), 77.
- ¹⁷⁹ Grace Lichtenstein, *A Long Way, Baby* (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett Publications, 1974), 102.

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- ¹⁸¹ Patti Hogan, quoted in Alan Lassila, "Chris Not Champ Yet," *Sarasota Journal* (Sarasota, Florida), April 23, 1973.
- ¹⁸² Wendy Overton, quoted in "Billie Jean Upset at Jacksonville," *Naples Daily News* (Naples, Florida), April 22, 1973.
- ¹⁸³ Rosie Casals, quoted in John Dolan, *Women's Tennis, 1968-1984 – The Ultimate Guide* (London: Remous Ltd., 2011), 153.
- ¹⁸⁴ Rosie Casals, quoted in "Chris Evert is Blamed for Net Problems," *Cumberland News* (Cumberland, Maryland), April 26, 1973.
- ¹⁸⁵ Rosie Casals, quoted in Grace Lichtenstein, *A Long Way, Baby* (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett Publications, 1974), 121.
- ¹⁸⁶ Allan Heyman, quoted in "Aussie Netter Wants Back in ILTF," *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal* (Lubbock, Texas), April 26, 1973.
- ¹⁸⁷ Philip Morris spokesperson, quoted in Neil Amdur, "Peace Near in Women's Tennis," *New York Times* (New York, New York) April 27, 1973.
- ¹⁸⁸ Lawrence Krieger, quoted in Neil Amdur, "Peace Near in Women's Tennis," *New York Times* (New York, New York) April 27, 1973.
- ¹⁸⁹ The Women's Professional Tennis Players' Association might have been something that was formed by the players for the purpose of this meeting. Although news reports listed Billie Jean King as the president and Francoise Durr as the secretary, Larry King does not recall the association being incorporated or having a constitution and bylaws. That would come two months later, when Billie Jean King founded the Women's Tennis Association was founded in London.
- ¹⁹⁰ "USLTA, Virginia Slims Settle Tennis Differences," *Billings Gazette* (Billings, Montana), April 28, 1973.
- ¹⁹¹ "USLTA, Virginia Slims Settle Tennis Differences," *Billings Gazette* (Billings, Montana), April 28, 1973.
- ¹⁹² Gladys Heldman, quoted in "Warring Tennis Factions Ready to Make Peace," *Daily Review* (Hayward, California), April 28, 1973.
- ¹⁹³ Former tour player, email correspondence to the author (name and date withheld).
- ¹⁹⁴ Billie Jean King, quoted in "Tennis Women Reach Truce," *Boca Raton News* (Boca Raton, Florida), May 4, 1973.
- ¹⁹⁵ Billie Jean King, quoted in Bud Collins, "Billie Jean King Evens the Score," *Ms.* July 1973, 39.
- ¹⁹⁶ Billie Jean King, quoted in "Mrs. King Challenges Riggs for \$10,000," *New York Times* (New York, New York), May 15, 1973.
- ¹⁹⁷ Bobby Riggs, quoted in "Billie Jean Serves Challenge to Riggs," *Montreal Gazette* (Montreal, Canada), May 14, 1973.
- ¹⁹⁸ George Liddy, quoted in "Chris Evert to Play Riggs in September," *Sarasota Journal* (Sarasota, Florida), May 18, 1973.
- ¹⁹⁹ "Challenge Rejected," *Palm Beach Post-Times* (Palm Beach, Florida), May 27, 1973.
- ²⁰⁰ Richard Evans, "The Roving Eye," *World Tennis*, August 1973, 34.
- ²⁰¹ Richard Evans, "The Roving Eye," *World Tennis*, August 1973, 34

- ²⁰² Richard Evans, "The Roving Eye," *World Tennis*, August 1973, 34
- ²⁰³ John Dolan, *Women's Tennis, 1968-1984 – The Ultimate Guide* (London: Remous Ltd., 2011), 155.
- ²⁰⁴ Evonne Goolagong, quoted in John Dolan, *Women's Tennis, 1968-1984 – The Ultimate Guide* (London: Remous Ltd., 2011), 155.
- ²⁰⁵ "Around the World," *World Tennis*, August 1973, 105.
- ²⁰⁶ "Around the World," *World Tennis*, August 1973, 105.
- ²⁰⁷ Jack Kramer and Frank Deford, *The Game: My 40 Years in Tennis* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1979), 110.
- ²⁰⁸ Cliff Drysdale, quoted in Richard Evans, "The Roving Eye," *World Tennis*, September 1973, 38.
- ²⁰⁹ Herman David, quoted in Richard Evans, "The Roving Eye," *World Tennis*, September 1973, 38.
- ²¹⁰ Allan Heyman, quoted in "Around the World," *World Tennis*, August 1973, 105.
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CHAPTER 13: EPILOGUES

Billie Jean King

Billie Jean's 6-4 6-3 6-3 win over Bobby Riggs – watched by a record 30,000 spectators at the Houston Astrodome and ninety million viewers on television – catapulted her into the stratosphere of superstardom. She became the sponsor spokesperson for numerous products, made guest appearances on popular television shows such as the *Odd Couple*, and became good friends with musician and singer Elton John. In 1974, she became the first female player-coach of a professional sports team when she led the Philadelphia Freedoms during the inaugural season of World Team Tennis, the league concept that she promoted with her husband, Larry. Although she was upset in the quarterfinals of Wimbledon that year by Olga Morozova of the Soviet Union, Billie Jean rebounded at the U. S. Open with a thrilling three-set final round win over Evonne Goolagong. The following year, Billie Jean defeated Chris Evert and Evonne to win her sixth singles title at Wimbledon, after which she retired from singles play. Billie Jean, with a total of nineteen Wimbledon singles and doubles titles – a record she shared with Elizabeth Ryan – planned to keep playing doubles in the hope of winning a twentieth title at the All England Club.

Named to the U. S. Federation Cup team in 1977 along with Chris Evert and Rosie Casals, Billie Jean was needed to play singles when Chris withdrew from the team due to an injury. Billie Jean's three-set victory against Evonne in the deciding match convinced her to return to singles play. From 1977 through 1980, Billie Jean won seven singles titles, and she had six wins over Martina Navratilova, four wins over Virginia Wade, as well as victories over Hana Mandlikova and Pam Shriver. She teamed with

Martina to win women's doubles titles at the U. S. Open in 1978 and 1980, as well as Wimbledon in 1979 to break Elizabeth Ryan's record.

In the spring of 1981, Billie Jean's private life was exposed to the world when her former hairdresser and assistant, 32-year-old Marilyn Barnett, filed a "palimony" lawsuit against her in a California court. Marilyn alleged that as a result of a seven-year affair, she was entitled to one-half of what Billie Jean earned during that time period, nearly half a million dollars, as well as part-ownership of Billie Jean's beach house in Malibu, California. Partially paralyzed from a fall, Marilyn claimed that Billie Jean and Larry promised her a home and financial help for the rest of her life. The lawsuit was the result of Billie Jean's attempt to end the relationship and have Marilyn moved out of the beach house, which she refused to do. Billie Jean initially denied the accusations, and then eventually admitted that she had an affair that ended years earlier. The case went to trial, and a judge ruled in Billie Jean's favor when it was revealed that Marilyn had threatened to make public a collection of personal letters between the two. Although the case dismissed, Billie Jean lost most of her sponsorships, totaling well over one million dollars.

Billie Jean resumed her playing career in 1982, partly because she had to earn money to pay the lawyers who defended her in court. Seeded twelfth at Wimbledon that year, she upset sixth-seeded Wendy Turnbull in the fourth round and then scored her first career victory over third-seeded Tracy Austin in the quarterfinals, 3-6 6-4 6-2. The win made her the oldest semifinalist in Wimbledon history – at age thirty-eight – since Dorothea Lambert Chambers in 1920. Billie Jean had chances to win the first set against Chris Evert, and perhaps the match, but eventually lost 7-6 2-6 6-3. The following year, Billie Jean reached the Wimbledon semifinals again, upsetting Kathy Jordan and Wendy Turnbull before losing quickly to Andrea Jaeger. As they left Centre Court, Billie Jean turned around for a quick glance – something she had never done before. Billie Jean was actually back on that court one more time, when she and Steve Denton lost in the mixed doubles to Wendy and John Lloyd in straight sets. The last singles match of her career was played in December, a three-set second round loss to Catherine Tanvier at the 1983 Australian Open.

After retiring from the circuit, Billie Jean became the commissioner of World Team Tennis, which expanded to promote recreational leagues throughout the nation. She and Larry divorced in 1987, and Billie Jean began a long-term relationship with Ilana Kloss, a former tour player from South Africa. She coached Martina Navratilova for several years, helping her to win her record-breaking ninth Wimbledon singles title in 1990. Billie Jean coached the U. S. Olympic women's tennis team in 1996, and she served as Federation Cup coach in for several years as well. She was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame in 1987, and in 1990 she was named by *Life* magazine as one of the most important Americans of the 20th Century. An unexpected tribute came a few years earlier, when Billie Jean visited Wendy Overton at her home in Florida. Wendy was one of the players who competed on the first Virginia Slims circuit in 1971, leaving her job at a club in Maryland to start a new career as a full-time professional tennis player.

*I walked into her house, and she has a beautiful home. And she said, "See this? I got this house because of you. Thanks." I don't think anyone has ever thanked me, and I don't expect it. If they did, you could knock me over with a feather.*¹
-- Billie Jean King, 1990

Billie Jean was publicly thanked in 2006 in a grand ceremony, when the USTA named its national tennis center in Flushing Meadows, New York in her honor. In her speech on the stadium court, Billie Jean thanked the many people who helped her over the years, going back to the time when grade school friend Susan Williams invited her to play tennis. She also thanked Gladys Heldman and Joe Cullman, without whom the women's professional tennis circuit would not have materialized. "If they had been alive," Billie Jean said later, "I would have invited them both on the court."² In 2009, U. S. President Barack Obama awarded Billie Jean with the Medal of Freedom, America's highest civilian honor. Three years later, at the age of sixty-nine, Billie Jean indicated that she was not yet done with making changes in the world. "I think I have one more thing to do, one more change left in me," she said.³

Rosie Casals

Rosie Casals' victory at the Coca-Cola Women's Professional International in St. Louis, Missouri in September 1973 was the last professional singles title she would win. She continued to be a major force in doubles, however, for the next ten years. She and longtime doubles partner Billie Jean King won the 1974 U. S. Open, as well as the Virginia Slims Championships at the end of the year. When Billie Jean temporarily retired after winning her fifth Wimbledon singles title in 1975, Rosie played doubles with other partners – including Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova – but did not have any success at the grand slam events with them. That changed in 1980, when Rosie paired with U. S. Open finalist Wendy Turnbull. For the next three years, they were among the best teams in the world, winning the tour finale for three years and the 1982 U. S. Open. In 1988, at the age of thirty-nine, Rosie became the oldest player to win a Virginia Slims series event when Martina Navratilova teamed with her to win the tour stop on Oakland, California.

Since she became a contract professional in 1968, and she was then was at odds with the USLTA during the early years of the Virginia Slims circuit, Rosie had not played on a Wightman Cup or Federation Cup team since 1967. That changed in 1976, when she accepted an invitation to play Federation Cup in 1976 along with Billie Jean and Chris Evert. Days before the competition started in Philadelphia, Chris withdrew due to an injury. Billie Jean – coming out of retirement to play singles again – and Rosie defeated the teams from Israel, Yugoslavia, Switzerland, Netherlands, and Australia with the loss of only one match. Rosie must have enjoyed the experience, since she played Federation Cup five more times, serving as team captain in 1980 and 1981, and she played Wightman Cup from 1976 through 1982, with three of those years as a player-coach.

Rosie played the first year of World Team Tennis in 1974 as a member of the Detroit Loves, and her WTT career continued until 1988, when she was the player coach of the Fresno Sun-Nets. In 1982, Rosie founded Sportswoman Inc., a sports marketing and promotion company. The following year, she started the Legends Tour, a circuit for women who were 30-years-old and over and who had won major titles in doubles or

singles during their careers. Sponsored by Lean Cuisine and Tiger Balm, the Legends Tour had eight events, ranging in prize money from \$30,000 to \$50,000, and featured Rosie, Billie Jean King, Francoise Durr and Nancy Richey. In recent years, Sportswoman Inc. has promoted the Esurance Classic in Mill Valley, California and the Annalee Thurston fundraiser dinner in Palm Springs. Rosie was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame in 1996, and she was honored by California State University-Los Angeles in 2014 when the university's new tennis complex was named the Rosie Casals/Pancho Gonzalez Tennis Center.

Valerie Ziegenfuss

Valerie Ziegenfuss was a regular member of the women's professional tennis circuit until 1979. She played on the Hawaii Leis in the inaugural season of World Team Tennis in 1974, played on the Cleveland Nets and the Boston Lobsters in 1975, and came back for one more season for the Los Angeles Strings in 1977. Valerie was among a handful of professionals to first try the oversize Prince aluminum tennis racquet, which she used in reaching the women's doubles final of the 1976 Family Circle Cup with Kathy Kuykendall. Six months later, she upset number-two seed Virginia Wade in the first round of the Toray Sillook tournament in Japan, and shortly after that she won the women's doubles title at the South African Open with Laura DuPont. Valerie had a remarkable comeback in the first round of the singles draw in South Africa; with fourth-seeded Linky Boshoff leading 4-6 6-0 5-0 40-love, Valerie fought off a total of seven match points and won the match 7-5 in the third set.

At the U. S. Open in 1977, representatives from the Prince Racquet company showed Valerie a prototype of their latest product, an oversized graphite model. Although the racquet was not yet ready to be unveiled to the public, Valerie insisted on using it for her matches at Forest Hills. In the fall of 1977, Valerie was among eight American players – four men and four women – to be named by the USTA to play a series of matches in China, organized by the U. S. State Department. Valerie's oversize racquet created a sensation in China, and she brought six extra frames with her to give away as gifts.

At the beginning of 1978, Valerie's computer ranking of number 80 was not high enough to play on the Avon circuit, which offered weekly \$100,000 tournaments. Instead, she played on the Avon Futures circuit, a series of \$20,000 satellite events. Valerie and Ann Kiyomura, a former Wimbledon doubles champion, won the Avon Futures of Ogden, Utah and were finalists in three other tournaments on the circuit. They also won the doubles title at the \$35,000 Avon Futures Championships in Atlanta, sharing \$3000 for their victory. Valerie had her best singles result of the year at the U. S. Clay Court Championships in Indianapolis, where she defeated Cynthia Doerner and Carrie Meyer. In the quarterfinals, she lost a close match to Jeanne Evert, 6-7 6-1 8-6. At the River Plate Championships in Buenos Aires, Argentina in November, Valerie and Francoise Durr – two of the original Virginia Slims circuit members – won the doubles title over Laura DuPont and Regina Marsikova and shared \$2000.

Valerie returned to the Avon Futures circuit in 1979 and was a doubles finalist four times, once with Bettyann Stuart and three times with Bunny Bruning – each time, sharing \$750 with her partners. At the Avon Futures of Pasadena, California, an interesting match-up occurred in the first round. Valerie defeated 37-year-old Karen Hantze Susman in three sets; twenty years earlier, George Ziegenfuss took his daughter to watch Karen play in a tournament to see if she would be interested in learning to play. At the Avon Futures of Atlanta, Valerie and Laura DuPont won the doubles title over Mary Carillo and Sherry Acker. They earned \$600 apiece and a spot in the following week's \$200,000 Avon Championships of Dallas. Valerie and Laura lost in the first round to the top-seeded team of Chris Evert and Rosie Casals, 6-2 6-4; it was the last match that Valerie would play on the women's professional circuit.

Valerie became a mother in November 1980 with the birth of Allison Bradshaw, and again in February 1982 with the birth of Michael Bradshaw. She was the head teaching professional at Helix South Tennis Club in Spring Valley, California from 1982 to 1995, and her father George co-owned the pro shop with her and helped with instructional clinics. In 1997, Valerie was selected by the USTA to be a national coach and work with the nation's best junior players, which included her daughter. Allison started playing at age six, and she eventually won the national Girls' 18 Doubles title and

became an All-American at Arizona State University. She then had a three year career in professional tennis, highlighted by a third-round showing at the 2001 U. S. Open. During her time as a coach, Valerie also played an occasional senior event, such as the U. S. Open Women's Masters Doubles. She eventually started a new career as a real estate agent in her hometown of San Diego, California. Both of her children live nearby; Allison is the mother of two and teaches tennis at a local club, and Michael served in the U. S. Marine Corps and now works in San Diego.

I am proud of my tennis career, but it was nothing compared to my role as mother and now grandmother. ⁴

-- Valerie Ziegenfuss, 2015

Kristy Pigeon

Kristy Pigeon's last appearance at a grand slam tournament was the 1972 U. S. Open, when she lost a three-set match to Francoise Durr in the second round. She then returned home to California and finished her college education, receiving a Bachelor of Arts in biology and art from Mills College in 1973. She then began working towards a master's degree in biology at the University of California-Berkeley.

I remember Betty Friedan coming to give a lecture. I think a lot of those original true feminists were missing the point by burning bras. In a way, they didn't make nearly as many waves as we tennis players did. We demonstrated that as sportspeople we were as interesting as the men. Our competition was stimulating to watch and we could pull the people in. For me, that's a more powerful way of establishing equality. ⁵

-- Kristy Pigeon, 2010

In 1974, Kristy quit the graduate program at UC Berkeley when she received an offer to play World Team Tennis for the Hawaii Leis. Her team won fourteen matches and lost twenty-nine, finishing in last place in the Western Division.

I'd been in school so long I didn't do my best job. I was tired of living out of a suitcase and not having pets, so I quit pro tennis for good and moved to Idaho – albeit to run Elkhorn Tennis School for eleven years! When I first moved to the Sun Valley area, my goal was to get a dog, a horse and house, in that order, and settle down and enjoy mountain life. With time I acquired eleven horses, and one night when I was putting them away I had a vision. Wouldn't it be cool to be able to take individuals that are wheelchair bound into the back country to see some of the incredibly beautiful mountain and lake scenery in the Sawtooth National Forest? ⁶

-- Kristy Pigeon, 2010

Before she moved to Idaho, Kristy volunteered at the National Center for Equine Assisted Therapy in California. She subsequently became certified through the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association, and several years later she purchased some land in Sun Valley and built a facility. Kristy founded the Sagebrush Equine Training Center for the Handicapped (SETCH) in 1991 and began offering programs; by 2010, four hundred students were riding in the program.

Without a doubt, Sagebrush has been the most rewarding thing I've done. I also met my husband of three years, John Prudden, when he served as a volunteer at Sagebrush. Wildlife enhancement is becoming more of a focus for me as well. I've been working with government agencies and a worldwide non-profit called Ducks Unlimited to re-establish wetland areas on a ranch we own, and I hope to branch out and share what I've learned with other people ... As a young girl, I was enamored with Gussy Moran, so I was just dying to have a pair of Teddy Tinling bloomers when I was playing. My life is a lot different now, but I still have them in my drawer today. ⁷

-- Kristy Pigeon, 2010

Nancy Richey

Although she did not win a tournament on the Virginia Slims circuit in 1973, Nancy Richey reached the finals of the tour finale in Boca Raton, Florida at the end of the year. She lost to Chris Evert in the final – her first loss to Chris after winning their first five matches, dating back to 1969 – and received \$14,000 for her runner-up finish, one of her biggest paydays. Nancy had successful results on the circuit the following year, reaching five semifinals and losing to Billie Jean King in the finals of Akron. She got to the quarterfinals of the 1974 U. S. Open, losing a bitterly-fought match to Julie Heldman, and she would never again advance that far in grand slam event. Nancy also played in the inaugural season of World Team Tennis, playing with her brother Cliff on the Cleveland Nets. Nancy was not happy during her time in the league; there were some squabbles among team members, she got mugged one night in a parking garage, and her favorite Ted Tinling outfit was stolen from the locker room. She did not return to the league the following year, but did come back to play for the Hawaii Leis in 1976 and a brief stint with the Anaheim Oranges in 1978.

In 1975, at age thirty-three, Nancy played Chris Evert in the semifinals of the U. S. Clay Court Championships in Indianapolis and led 7-6 5-0 40-15. Chris staged a remarkable comeback and, while trailing 2-4 in the third set, Nancy was forced to retire from the match with leg cramps. Nancy also let a 4-2 third set lead slip away against Mona Guerrant at the U. S. Open later that summer. She was able to salvage her year by winning the Phoenix Thunderbird Classic in Arizona, defeating Martina Navratilova in the semifinals and Virginia Wade in the final, earning \$10,000 for her victory. It was the last title she would win on the professional circuit.

In 1976, Nancy ended her marriage to Kenneth Gunter and became a born-again Christian. She had good results on the Virginia Slims circuit that year, reaching the semifinals in Houston and Chicago, but she had another disappointing loss at the U. S. Open when she lost to Virginia Ruzici after holding a 5-2 lead in the third set. The following year, Nancy reached the finals of the U. S. Clay Court Championships and lost to Laura DuPont, and she reached the fourth round of the U. S. Open and was eliminated by Chris Evert. A disappointing three-set loss to Lesley Hunt in the first round of the

1978 U. S. Open, played at the newly-opened USTA National Tennis Center in Flushing Meadows, New York, convinced Nancy that it was time to retire from the game.

Nancy was not completely finished with competition, however. In 1979 she won the USTA National Women's 35 Clay Court Championships at the Houston Racquet Club, where the women's professional circuit was born in 1970. She swept through the field, easily dismissing defending champion Judy Alavarez in the final, 6-2 6-1. Later that year, she reached the final of the Women's 35 Singles event at the U. S. Open, losing to Renee Richards, 7-6 6-2. In 1983, Nancy played on the women's senior Legend Tour that Rosie Casals had organized, and in the 1990s she appeared on the Virginia Slims Legends Tour and played in the U. S. Open Women's Doubles Masters event. She was inducted into the Texas Tennis Hall of Fame in 1983 and the International Tennis Hall of Fame in 2003.

When she retired from full-time competition in 1978, Nancy thought she was bored and accepted a teaching position at the San Angelo Country Club. After experiencing the frustration of trying to organize women's doubles leagues, Nancy vowed that she would never again say she was bored. She quit from the club eight months later, and since then has spent her time doing work for her church, caring for her mother and helping her brother, Cliff, promote his book *Acing Depression*.

*I have always been so thankful that I got to see all aspects of the game – amateur as well as professional, and also being a part of forming the whole women's professional scene.*⁸

-- Nancy Richey, 1999

Julie Heldman

Julie Heldman had one of the best years of her tennis career in 1974. She reached the semifinals of the U. S. Open for the first time, losing a close three set match to eventual champion Billie Jean King. Two weeks later, in the semifinals of the Barnett Bank Classic in Orlando, Florida, she defeated Billie Jean by the score of 2-6 6-1 6-4. Julie ended the year with an unofficial world ranking of number eight (according to some

journalists) and her prize money for the year was \$60,000. The highlight of her year – and perhaps her career – was defeating Evonne Goolagong, 6-3 6-1, in the deciding match of the Bonne Bell Cup, a short-lived women’s team competition between the United States and Australia.

Julie retired from the women’s professional tennis circuit the following year, at the age of thirty, due to a shoulder injury. She played her final tournament at the 1975 U. S. Open, losing in the second round to Kazuko Sawamatsu in straight sets. She remained active in tennis by doing television commentary – something she began doing in 1973 – at the U. S. Open, Wimbledon, and World Team Tennis matches until 1977. Julie entered UCLA Law School in 1978, where she was selected editor of the Law Review and was named Outstanding Graduate of the Class of 1981. She married Bernie Weiss in 1981, and then practiced corporate law in Los Angeles for three years. In 1985, Bernie founded and became president of USA Optical Distributors, Inc., a company that imported and sold eyeglass frames, and Julie left her law practice to become the company’s vice president. Two years later, their daughter Amy was born. Julie was inducted into the Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) Women’s Hall of Fame in 1998, the International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame in 2001, and the USTA Eastern Hall of Fame in 2006.

*We were on the cusp, and I had a great time. There was nowhere near the pressure there is today, so you had a chance to grow as a person. I’m glad that I played when I did, with some semblance of another life besides tennis.*⁹

-- Julie Heldman, 1996

Jane “Peaches” Bartkowicz

Peaches quit the tennis circuit in 1971, enrolled at Wayne State University and married David Krot, the son of a Hamtramack, Michigan funeral home director. They had a son, Kevin, in 1973 after Peaches had an unsuccessful comeback attempt on the Virginia Slims circuit. She made another comeback attempt in 1974, playing four Virginia Slims circuit events – in Washington D.C., Fort Lauderdale, Detroit and Chicago

– without winning a match. She played a few matches in the inaugural season of World Team Tennis, for the Cleveland Nets, but quit the team after a contract dispute. She then returned to teaching tennis at the Bloomfield Tennis House in Birmingham, Michigan.

By 1977, Peaches had suffered miscarriages and was divorced. She dropped out of Wayne State University after an old acquaintance agreed to sponsor another comeback. She and her four-year-old son, Kevin, moved to California to begin training, but it soon became apparent that the acquaintance was interested in more than tennis. Peaches remained in California for a short time, working as a receptionist, before returning to Michigan. She remarried in 1978 but was divorced two years later, when said her husband started hitting her. Single again and needing to support her son, Peaches went back to teaching tennis.

In February 1983, Peaches was driving home from visiting her sister when she struck a man on the side of the road in Warren, Michigan. 60-year-old John Skrzypinski, who had stopped to help two women whose car had run out of gas, was standing between the cars. Peaches drove upon the two parked cars and hit the first one, pinning Skrzypinski in between. He died twelve hours later from multiple injuries. According to Warren police, blood-alcohol content was .22 – much higher than the legal limit of .10. She was charged with driving under the influence, and as she awaited her upcoming trial, her first husband filed for custody of Kevin. “He called me a drunk,” she said. “He said I have a drinking problem. He knew that wasn’t true, but he was taking advantage of my bad situation.”¹⁰ Peaches was allowed to retain custody of Kevin, but the experience devastated her.

In a Macomb County courtroom on December 7, 1983, Peaches agreed to a plea agreement, and pleaded “no contest” to a charge of negligent homicide. She was originally charged with involuntary manslaughter, which carried a maximum sentence of fifteen years in prison. Judge Raymond Cashen informed Peaches that her “no contest” plea carried the same consequence as a guilty plea, and that negligent homicide had a maximum penalty of two years in prison. Peaches also has two civil law suits filed against her; one by the heirs of John Skrzypinski, and one by Lisa Jablonksi for injuries

and disfigurement to her left leg. At the sentencing several weeks later, Judge Cashen spared Peaches from any jail time and gave her two years' probation.¹¹

Peaches eventually found a clerical job in a federal courthouse, where she worked until her retirement in 2012. The difficult life she led was brightened that year, when Kevin had a child and she became a grandmother. Although she no longer followed tennis, she was still remembered by many in the sport, and she was inducted into the USTA Midwest Tennis Hall of Fame in 1990, the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame in 2002, and the Polish-America Sports Hall of Fame in 2010.

Kerry Melville Reid

Kerry Melville had a solid record on the 1974 Virginia Slims circuit, getting to four semifinals and three finals. One of those finals was the Family Circle Cup in Hilton Head, South Carolina, where she defeated Evonne Goolagong in the semifinals and then lost in straight sets to Chris Evert, earning \$14,000 for her runnerup finish. Kerry had another win over Evonne in the quarterfinals of Wimbledon, and when Olga Morozova upset both Billie Jean King and Virginia Wade, she had a chance to win the title – if she could get past Chris in the semifinals. Two years earlier, Kerry had beaten Chris on the grass courts at Forest Hills to reach the final. In the meantime, Chris' game had matured and become more powerful, and she lost only five games to Kerry. At the end of the year, Kerry won the singles and doubles titles at the prestigious South African Open.

Like many of her contemporaries, Kerry played World Team Tennis, and in the inaugural season in the summer of 1974 she played for the Boston Lobsters. One of her teammates was Grover "Raz" Reid, the 27-ranked American player who owned a win over Pancho Gonzalez. The two began dating during the season, and by the end of the year they were engaged.

Kerry reached the final of the 1975 Virginia Slims of Washington D. C. with a rare win in the semifinals over Margaret Court, who was returning to the game after the birth of her second child. Kerry and Raz were married in the spring, in his hometown of Greenville, South Carolina. Since Kerry had more earning potential in tennis, Raz gave up his playing career and coached his wife. The arrangement soon paid off, as Kerry

fulfilled a lifelong dream in winning the women's singles title at the 1977 Australian Open, defeating compatriot Dianne Fromholtz in the final.

Always presenting herself as congenial and mild-mannered, Kerry was involved in two controversies during 1977. At the U. S. Open that year, she objected to Billie Jean angrily slamming a ball over the fence during their fourth round match. Kerry quietly asked the umpire if a point penalty was in order, and was told that the WTA decided not to impose such penalties during the tournament. On the changeover, Billie Jean asked what the conversation was about. Kerry refused to discuss the matter, and Billie Jean then vowed to herself that she would not shake hands if she won the match. Billie Jean won the match, did not shake hands to a chorus of boos, and Kerry was livid afterwards. "If she wanted the match that badly, she can have it," Kerry said.¹²

One month later, Renee Richards – the transsexual who won a lawsuit against the USLTA and the WTA to be allowed to play in women's tournaments – was leading Kerry, 7-6 4-1, in the quarterfinals of the Phoenix Thunderbird tournament. Raz came to courtside and told Kerry to quit; she walked off the court and did not speak to the press afterwards. "Kerry will never play Renee again," Raz told reporters.¹³ Kerry and Renee actually did play one more time, in the first round of the 1978 Virginia Slims of Chicago. Under much media attention, Kerry kept her focus and won the match 4-6 7-6 7-6.

Kerry and Wendy Turnbull formed one of the best women's doubles teams in the late 1970s. At Wimbledon in 1978, they fought off a match point in the final to defeat Virginia Ruzici and Mima Jausovec, 4-6 9-8 6-3. Kerry played on the tour until the end of 1979, when a recurring elbow injury became too painful to play full time on the tour anymore. At their home in coastal South Carolina, Raz and Kerry raised two daughters and took up golf. Kerry played in several Legends tour events in the 1980s and 1990s, and she also assisted Raz with his fly fishing equipment business. In 2014, Kerry was inducted into the Australian Tennis Hall of Fame.

Judy Tegart Dalton

After retiring from the women's professional tennis circuit in 1972, Judy Dalton started a berry-growing business with her husband David on their farm outside of

Melbourne, Australia. Judy continued to play tennis, and she competed occasionally throughout the 1970s and 1980s. She reached the quarterfinals of the 1974 Australian Open with wins over Chris O'Neil (who would win the tournament in 1978), Jenny Dimond and Jackie Fayter before losing to Kerry Melville, 6-3 6-4. She reached the second round of Wimbledon in 1975, and played there again in 1976 and 1977. In doubles, Judy and Wendy Gilchrist Paish reached the third round of doubles at Wimbledon in 1978. Judy also often frequently competed in International Tennis Federation (ITF) senior tournaments throughout the 1980s.

Judy was the captain of the Australian Federation Cup team from 1981 through 1984, guiding her team to the final in her final year with a semifinal upset of the United States. She later became president of the Australian Fed Cup Foundation, which helps to provide tennis opportunities for girls throughout Australia. Judy occasionally does tennis commentary for Australian television, and she was inducted into the Australian Tennis Hall of Fame in 2013. After the death of her husband, Judy sold the farm she had lived on for forty years and moved to Melbourne in order to be closer to her two children, Samantha and David.

Gladys Heldman

Gladys Heldman's lawsuit against the USLTA was dropped on February 26, 1973, and nine months later she still had not paid her legal fees. She believed that C. Frederick Leydig was incompetent and was the sole reason why the request for a preliminary injunction was denied.¹⁴ As a result, she was in no rush to send a check to Leydig, and she certainly did not think her former attorney deserved to be paid what he wanted. Since Gladys had stopped communicating with him, Leydig was forced to negotiate with Julius, as he did in a letter dated November 19, 1973.

Dear Julius:

I refer to our earlier conversations relative to the outstanding, unpaid bills for services and out-of-pocket expenses of this firm and of Cahill, Gordon which were incurred by and billed to Mrs. Heldman during the early part of 1973.

Rather than prolong our discussions, I am now prepared, on behalf of the two firms, to reluctantly accept, in compromise of the dispute between us, a check in the amount of Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000) in full payment of her indebtedness to the two firms. You will understand, of course, that of that sum \$12,899.46 is simply reimbursement for money previously paid out by the two firms on her behalf.

It is my understanding, from our last conversation, that the amount of \$30,000.00 referred to above is one which you are prepared to recommend to Mrs. Heldman. We look forward to hearing from you.¹⁵

Sincerely,

C. Frederick Leydig

Having Julius deal with the lawyers allowed Gladys to focus on more pleasant diversions. Shortly before Billie Jean played Bobby Riggs in the fall of 1973, she received a telephone call from several members of the National Women's Political Caucus in New York. They wanted to lend their support to Billie Jean by attending the match at the Astrodome in Houston. Gladys, however, discouraged them from making the trip. "If she wins," Gladys told the women, "is that going to give us thirty women senators? If she loses, is the women's movement dead?"¹⁶ Instead, Gladys offered to organize an event that would "make people aware that fifty-one percent of the population is not being directly represented." Her idea was to stage a forum at which notable female leaders would attend in an effort to raise money for local and national women's political caucuses. Such an effort would also help to encourage more women to run for elected offices.

The forum, called "1974: The Year of the Woman," was scheduled to be held at the Houston Music Theater on March 11, 1974, with ticket prices ranging from one dollar to twenty dollars. Feature speakers included writer and activist Gloria Steinem, Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, and Texas politician Sissy Farenthold. Two weeks before the forum, Jordan sent word that she would not be able to attend. As a result,

Gladys decided to invite Bobby Riggs to appear at the forum to make a two-minute speech, prompting outrage from local feminists. “I’m afraid this is going to turn into a circus,” complained Cila Estrada, chairperson on the Harris County Women’s Political Caucus. “We are not happy to say the least. We had nothing to do with it. It was between the national caucus and Gladys Heldman. We tried to dissuade her. She didn’t listen.”¹⁷ Another women’s leader said that Gladys was “making a joke of the caucus. And we are no joke. Gladys Heldman is no feminist. She’s a businesswoman and a promoter. If I were a businesswoman, maybe I would have done the same thing.” Helen Cassidy, former chairperson of the Texas Women’s Political Caucus, was also bothered by Gladys’ idea. “Frankly, I’m embarrassed,” she said.¹⁸

Gladys, confident in her abilities as an exceptional promoter, was undeterred by the criticism. “They told me I was anti-feminist,” she recalled later. “But I didn’t mind. You have to maintain a sense of humor in business.” Initially the forum had sold only 200 tickets; once it was announced that Riggs was scheduled to appear, 2,000 more tickets were sold in one week’s time. Riggs’ reception at the forum was memorable. “Gloria Steinem thought he was marvelous,” Gladys said, “and Sissy Farenthold told him, ‘If I ever get elected governor of Texas, I’ll put in a tennis court just for you.’”¹⁹

No longer involved with the Virginia Slims Circuit, and no longer in charge of *World Tennis* – CBS Publications moved the magazine’s offices from Houston to New York in late 1974, and Ron Bookman, whom Gladys hired as an associate editor in 1971, was named editor – Gladys had time to devote to other interests. She was placed on the board of directors of the Republic National Bank in Houston by Jerry Finger, the president of the bank and one of Gladys’s neighbors on Timberwilde Lane. At first, Gladys relished the position and used her promotional abilities to market the bank. “We had twelve exhibitions throughout the year,” she recalled. “One was on tennis costumes of the past one hundred years, which I got from the National Lawn Tennis Association, one on black arts, another on rare books and one on the local zoo where we actually brought live zoo animals to the bank.”²⁰ Gladys created conflict, however, when she began to insist that the bank hire more minority employees. When her demands were not met, she resigned from the bank’s board of directors.²¹

Gladys' experiences with the women's political caucuses and the Republic National Bank inspired her to form Gladys Heldman & Associates, which she described as "a research bureau compiling data on women executives throughout the country. We act as consultants in various capacities, even for people wanting to establish tennis clubs." With the assistance of a secretary, Gladys compiled biographical information on every woman executive in the top 2,200 corporations in the country. She also recruited women executives to become clients of hers, and then contacted various corporations in an effort to get the women placed on boards of directors. "The corporations have not been that interested," Gladys told Les Landes of the *Daily Iowan*, while she was visiting the University of Iowa in April of 1975 as a featured speaker at the Businesswomen's Conference. "But we've managed to maintain contact with by telling them that if they do not find someone they want, they pay no fee. Most of the corporations explain that they would rather have people on their boards who are more familiar with their particular companies – as they should. So far we have placed three major clients. This may not seem like a great deal, but to us it's fairly significant."²²

Two months later, charging that "women have been relegated to an inferior position in a male-dominated sports world," Gladys authored a ten-point women's sports Bill of Rights. Ten other women – including softball player Joan Joyce and Wilma Heidi, the president of the National Organization of Women – signed the statement that demanded the equal treatment of women in all areas of sport. The resolution called for equal school and athletic facilities, equal hiring practices in sport positions, equal representation on governing bodies, more women in sport media, and an end to discrimination against women by manufacturers of toys, games and sport equipment. "We are placing our Bill of Rights with the State Department and sending copies to all of the ruling organizations and federations, as well as the media," Gladys said from her home in Houston. "We hope to reach millions in our move to give women a truly equal opportunity in the world of sports."²³

In October of 1975, Gladys was one of the panel members at the three-day International Women's Year Congress at in Cleveland, Ohio, which drew 15,000 attendees to the Cleveland Convention Center. Gladys took part in a panel discussion

entitled “The Female Chief Executive,” and she told the gathering that she had the satisfaction of seeing that it now required seven men to do the work she once did by herself when she was the editor, writer and publisher of *World Tennis*.²⁴

Despite her activities in women’s politics and her consulting firm, Gladys maintained her close connection to tennis. She occasionally wrote instructional articles for *World Tennis*, she edited the 1973 book *Tennis for Women* – which featured chapters written by various stars of the Virginia Slims Circuit – and she collaborated with tennis great Pancho Segura in the writing of *Championship Strategy: How to Play Winning Tennis*.

In the fall of 1975, Jack Kramer – whose refusal to increase the women’s prize money at the Pacific Southwest Open in 1970 motivated Gladys to organize the first Virginia Slims tournament in Houston – resigned his position as Executive Director of the men’s Association of Tennis Professionals. Shortly after he stepped down from the ATP, Kramer was surprised to receive an offer from Gladys.

... one of the first telephone calls I got was from Gladys Heldman.

“Jack,” she said, “we’re going into business together – you and me.”

“What are we going to do, Gladys?” I asked. “Everything,” she said.

“The two of us can do everything in tennis.” And to tell you the truth, I thought about the offer seriously. Gladys and I would have made a helluva team. The only reason I declined was that I was cutting back on tennis business, I just didn’t want all the aggravation. But just for the record, I would like all the ladies in tennis to know that the mother of women’s tennis really wanted to go into business with that guaranteed pig, Kramer.²⁵

-- Jack Kramer, 1979

It was only a matter of time before Gladys resumed her passion for promoting tennis tournaments and providing more opportunities for women players. With an overabundance of women aspiring to compete on the 1974 Virginia Slims Circuit – which featured weekly \$50,000 tournaments but spots for only thirty-two women – the

USTA established a satellite circuit for lower-ranked players. For the inaugural year of 1974, it was called the Mini Circuit and included a dozen \$3000 events. Five of the tournaments on the Mini Circuit were funded by Barnett Banks, a sponsor that Gladys secured for the 1973 Virginia Slims Circuit, and an equal number of events were sponsored by Aztec, a suntan lotion produced by the Dow Chemical Company. Players who reached the semifinals of a Mini Circuit tournament qualified for berths in the following week's Virginia Slims Circuit event.

In 1975, the Mini Circuit was renamed the USTA Women's Satellite Circuit and Barnett Banks sponsored most of the events, with prize money for each increased to \$10,000. At the same time, Gladys collaborated with Carolyn Moody, the Executive Director of the Texas Tennis Association, to establish a minor women's circuit in Texas for those players who were not ranked high enough to gain entry into the USTA Women's Satellite Circuit events. Seven outdoor tournaments, each offering \$1,500 in prize money, were organized throughout the state during the first three months of 1975, with stops in Austin, Houston, Lubbock, McAllen, Amarillo, San Antonio and San Angelo. For each tournament, the local organizer contributed \$500 for the prize money, as did the Women's Tennis Association and John McFarlin, a San Antonio tennis philanthropist. In response to McFarlin's generous \$3,500 donation, the tournament series was named the McFarlin Circuit. Several players who competed on Virginia Slims Circuit during its first few years – including Wendy Gilchrist Paish, Pam Austin and Penny Moor – played on the McFarlin Circuit, and players were housed by host families to help them save on expenses.²⁶

At the end of 1975, the USTA and WTA asked Gladys to coordinate the entire satellite circuit for the following year. It was hoped that Gladys, who still had a considerable number of corporate contacts, could find a national sponsor for the 1976 series of tournaments. She renamed the tour the Futures Circuit, and appeared at a news conference in St. Petersburg, Florida on December 11, 1975, to announce the schedule of ten tournaments, each of which offered \$10,000 in prize money. The inaugural Futures Circuit tournament was to be played in January at the Racquet Club Northeast in St.

Petersburg, with local standout Betsy Nagelsen – a 19-year-old ranked at number 51 in the WTA computer rankings – as the event’s number three seed.²⁷

The 1976 Futures Circuit opened with two tournaments in Florida – at St. Petersburg and Ft. Myers – before taking a four-city swing through Texas. Once again, John McFarlin sponsored the event in San Antonio. The players then returned to Florida for three more tournaments, and the top eight point earners qualified for the circuit’s finale at Hilton Head, South Carolina where the first prize was \$4,000. Many promising young international players – several of whom would go on to win major international titles in the coming years – competed on the circuit, including Mima Jausovec of Yugoslavia, Virginia Ruzici of Romania, Renata Tomanova and Regina Marsikova of Czechoslovakia, Dianne Fromholtz and Wendy Turnbull of Australia, and a number of South Africans: Greer Stevens, Yvonne Vermaak, Ilana Kloss and Linky Boshoff. There were many young Americans, including Jeanne Evert and Marita Redondo, as well as players from the inaugural Virginia Slims Circuit – Tory Fretz, Kathy Harter, and Kris Kemmer –and the Australian veteran Helen Gourlay, who reached the women’s singles final of the French Open in 1971.

Towards the end of the tour, Gladys returned to Florida to promote tournament in Ocala, held at the Fort King Municipal Tennis Center in mid-March. At a news conference on February 17, Gladys spoke about the unpredictability of the Futures Circuit. “After the first sixteen players on the Virginia Slims Circuit, there are fifty or sixty who can beat each other regularly. The unexpected always happens.”²⁸ With forty-seven women competing regularly on the Futures Circuit, Gladys believed that at least four of them would eventually gain permanent places on the Virginia Slims Circuit. She also disclosed that she was looking for national sponsors for the Futures Circuit for 1977, and hoped to offer \$20,000 for each tournament.

One week later, Gladys attended the \$75,000 Virginia Slims of Detroit, played at Cobo Hall, in celebration of the 100th Virginia Slims tournament. 9,821 spectators came out to watch the women’s final, in which Chris Evert won \$15,000 for defeating Rosie Casals, 6-4 6-2. After the match, Chris and Rosie posed for an on-court photograph with Gladys and dress designer Ted Tinling.

The Futures Circuit Championships, held in April at the Palmetto Dunes Resort on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, was the culmination of a successful satellite tour. Isabel Fernandez came through the field of eight women, defeating Laura DuPont in the final, to collect \$4,000 – the biggest paycheck of her career. Only six years earlier, Billie Jean King was ecstatic to earn a similar amount for winning the British Motor Cars Invitation in San Francisco on the inaugural Virginia Slims Circuit. The success of the Futures Circuit was another demonstration of how far women’s tennis had come in such a short time, and much of the success was due to Gladys’ energy and vision. Shortly after the Futures Circuit was completed, she also achieved her goal of finding a national sponsor for the following years.

And then I went to Avon and sold the concept to Avon, so that the next year these tournaments were \$20,000. And then Avon had a contract in which if Virginia Slims ever dropped it, Avon could take over the major circuit. ²⁹

-- Gladys Heldman, 1987

In the summer of 1976, the emergence of Renee Richards transcended the sport of tennis and created sensational headlines across the world. A highly-ranked amateur player in the eastern United States in the 1960s and early 1970s, Richard Raskind was a successful ophthalmologist in New York City with a wife and son. In August of 1975 – after taking hormones for five years – Raskind underwent gender-reassignment surgery and moved to Newport Beach, California to start a new life as Renee Richards. Renee soon resumed playing tennis, and in July of 1976 she entered – and won – a minor women’s tennis tournament in La Jolla, California, defeating Robin Harris in the final. In the meantime, Phyllis Adler – a senior player from Los Angeles – had learned that Renee was the former Richard Raskind. She told the LaJolla tournament committee, and Robin Harris and her parents repeated the story to Bill Carlson, a San Diego television reporter. Carlson was soon calling Renee five times a day. “I realized it would be an insult to his intelligence to deny the truth,” Renee recalled, “so I said, ‘I am who I am. I implore you

to not release this story. I moved 3,000 miles away to get a new identity.’ He replied that I had made myself a public figure by entering the tournament.”³⁰

In late July, Ron Bookman of *World Tennis* placed a telephone call to Renee’s medical office in California, hoping to get a story. Renee responded that she would talk only with Gladys, since they had known each other from their days in New York in the 1960s. Bookman reached Gladys, who was in Denver at the time, and a telephone interview with Renee was immediately arranged.³¹

Over the telephone, Gladys asked Renee the typical questions: when did she first decide to become a woman, what her future tennis plans were, whether or not she would take a chromosome test, whether or not she felt she had an unfair advantage over women in tennis tournaments, and whether or not she had the support of her old friends.

*After the phone conversation, I went out to play doubles, but my mind was not on the ball. In the middle of the first set, I thought the telephone conversation was insufficient. I had never seen Renee; I had only seen Richard. In the middle of the second set, just as I was about to return serve, I wondered if it would be possible to catch a late plane to California. By the end of the second set, I realized I had forty people coming to dinner to my house in Houston the following night. Early in the third set, just before I double-faulted again, I decided to phone Renee to see if she would come to Houston. The National Junior Veterans’ Clay Courts were being played at the Houston Racquet Club, and Renee would have a chance to see many of her old friends – Gene Scott, Barry MacKay, Whitney Reed, Richard Schuette, and many others. When the match was over, I called Renee again. She came to Houston and spent the weekend with us.*³²

-- Gladys Heldman, 1976

During a sit-down interview at Gladys’ house in Houston, Renee talked about the backlash she received after entering the tennis tournament in LaJolla, the response she had from the public, and the reactions of friends in New York and California. Gladys also took Renee to the Houston Racquet Club, where the USLTA National 35 Clay

Courts was being held; Renee had a chance to visit with many of her former competitors from the 1960s and 1970s, and some of them were painfully uncomfortable in her presence.

*During the three days Renee spent in Houston, I took enough notes to fill six tapes. The sorting out of the questions and answers took two weeks.*³³
-- Gladys Heldman, 1976

With her identity made public, Renee decided she wanted to compete at the U. S. Open. The USTA initially had no response, and then decided that all female competitors were required to undergo a chromosome test. The WTA, through Executive Director Jerry Diamond, announced that its players would be urged to boycott any tournament that allowed Renee to participate. Gene Scott, a well-known player and promoter – and a friend of Renee’s – accepted her entry into his Tennis Week Open in Orange, New Jersey, held one week before the U. S. Open. In response, Diamond withdrew the WTA sanction of Scott’s tournament and urged players to withdraw from it, and he hastily organized a competing \$10,000 event at the Westchester Country Club. Twenty-one women ignored the boycott, and Renee reached the semifinals before losing to Californian Lea Antonopolis, 6-7 6-3 6-0.³⁴ Renee had done well in her first significant women’s professional tournament, but the U. S. Open and other major championships remained closed to her, and she was uncertain about her future tennis plans.

Sympathetic to Renee’s plight, Gladys invited her to play in two \$20,000 tournaments that she was staging in Hawaii at the end of the year. The tournaments were part of the Kona Surf and Kauai Surf Tours promoted by Gladys Heldman & Associates, and also included a series of week-long clinics that featured Cliff Richey, Nancy Richey, Kerry Melville, Wendy Overton, Valerie Ziegenfuss and other tennis stars. The tournaments – one held at the Kona Surf Hotel and another at the Kauai Surf Hotel – were sponsored by United Airlines and received approval from the Women’s Tennis Association, which meant that WTA ranking points would be awarded for winning matches. Consistent with Gladys’ affinity for offering competitive opportunities for all

women, each event offered an open qualifying tournament for anyone woman who wanted to enter, with winners earning berths in the thirty-two player main draw. Among the well-known players who committed to the tournaments were former Wimbledon champion Karen Hantze Susman, four players from the inaugural Virginia Slims Circuit – Mary Ann Eisel Beattie, Ceci Martinez, Karen Krantzcke, and Betty Ann Stuart – as well as Renee Richards.

When Jerry Diamond learned that Renee was participating in Gladys' tournaments, he revoked the WTA sanctions – no rankings points would be awarded. The tournaments proceeded without WTA approval, with Renee defeating Kathy Kuykendall in the singles final, 6-1 6-4, and teaming with Bettyann Stuart to take doubles crown over Sue Medmedbasich and Mimi Wikstedt, 6-3 6-2. The following week, Renee was less fortunate, losing in the singles and doubles finals. During the two week tour in Hawaii, the players were polled as to whether they felt Renee should be allowed to play in WTA events. Only eight players felt she should be allowed to play; seventeen others said she should not be allowed to play, and six players abstained.³⁵

By 1977, Gladys was no longer involved with the Avon Futures Circuit. The satellite circuit was firmly established with ten tournaments, a committed sponsor in Avon, \$205,000 in prize money, and Trish Faulkner as a full-time tour director. Gladys continued, however, to help the players whenever she could, housing many of them each time the Virginia Slims Circuit came to Houston. "I would rather come to Houston than any other city, because of Gladys," Elly Vessies of the Netherlands told a local reporter. In the same newspaper article, Gladys looked back with pride on her part in developing the satellite circuit. "No woman twenty years from now can say she could have been a great player but she never got the chance," Gladys said. "Anyone can simply pay twenty-five dollars to enter and if they win they can earn a place in the big money circuit."³⁶

Despite the strides that were made in women's professional tennis, Gladys was disappointed with the WTA's negative reaction to Renee Richards and her desire to compete in tournaments. At a news conference in Port Washington, New York on February 21, 1977, Gladys announced that she had formed another women's professional tennis circuit, one which was independent of the WTA, the Virginia Slims Circuit and the

Avon Futures Circuit. Sponsored by the Lionel Corporation, the company that produced model railroads and other electric toys, the four-tournament circuit was called the Lionel Cup and had total prize money of \$80,000. “The tournaments will be open to any woman who wishes to enter,” Gladys said, who had the assistance of her daughter Julie in organizing the circuit. “We expect to have national champions from at least six different countries, plus ranking U. S. players.”³⁷ The four tournaments were scheduled to be played in March and April in San Antonio, Little Rock, Tallahassee and Port Washington. None of the tournaments, Gladys explained, would conflict with the Virginia Slims Circuit or the Avon Futures Circuit. The tournament in San Antonio, she added, became part of the Lionel Cup Circuit when it was dropped by Avon because of the lack of indoor facilities.

One of the attendees at the news conference asked if Renee Richards would be permitted to play on the Lionel Cup Circuit. “Yes, she is eligible and has entered all four tournaments,” Gladys responded. “She carries a woman’s passport and is admitted to women’s rest rooms. We regard her as a woman.” Gladys explained that any woman who showed up with a tennis racquet and the twenty-five dollar entry fee would be eligible to compete. As she did with the Virginia Slims Circuit years earlier, each tournament was going to have an unlimited number of player competing in a qualifying round, with winners advancing to a preliminary flight and ultimately to a thirty-player championship draw. “The beauty of these tournaments,” Gladys said, “is that no woman will be barred from competing.”³⁸

*I don't prevent anyone from entering my tournaments, so why should I stop Renee? She isn't that good. As far as I'm concerned, she's a super junior veteran player. She would be ranked number one or two in the 35-year-old division but in the open division she would only be ranked between 50 and 60. She has a good serve, but it's been broken. She hits the ball hard, but other women hit it harder ... All I know is that I don't want it on my gravestone that I refused to let Renee Richards play in my tournaments.*³⁹

-- Gladys Heldman, 1977

The first event on the 1977 Lionel Cup Circuit was the McFarlin Cup, played March 14-26 on the outdoor hardcourts of the McFarlin Tennis Center in San Antonio. The tournament got a major boost when Billie Jean King decided to enter the singles and doubles divisions; two years earlier, she retired from singles competition after winning her sixth Wimbledon singles title with a 6-0 6-1 demolition of Evonne Goolagong. As a member of the 1976 U. S. Federation Cup team, Billie Jean was scheduled to play only doubles, but the last minute withdrawal of Chris Evert presented a problem. Billie Jean was needed to play singles, and along with Rosie Casals, they defeated the teams from Israel, Yugoslavia, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Australia to win the title. Winning all of her singles matches in straight sets, including a 7-6 6-4 win over Evonne in the final, convinced Billie Jean that she could still compete with the world's best players.

Although she did not play any Virginia Slims events in 1977, Billie Jean wanted to be given a wild-card spot in the eight-player \$150,000 Virginia Slims Championships in New York by way of a controversial option clause in the Women's Tennis Association contract. The clause allowed wild-card spots for only three players – Billie Jean, Chris Evert, and Evonne Goolagong – in order to protect the Virginia Slims Championships; if any of these top players were injured during the season and did not accumulate enough points to make the top eight spots, she would still have a place in the draw of the circuit's finale if she wanted it. Billie Jean was under the impression that she could be included in the draw, saying “I felt I had done enough through the years for Virginia Slims and women's tennis, that they would exercise the option.”⁴⁰ Virginia Slims brand manager Ellen Merlo disagreed, insisting that she “never told her yes. We only told her she would be the wild card if she played some tournaments. There definitely is a misunderstanding.”⁴¹

Unable to play in the Virginia Slims Championships, Billie Jean decided to play in the opening tournament on the Lionel Cup Circuit in San Antonio during the same week. The WTA refused to sanction any of the four Lionel Cup tournaments due to the participation of Renee Richards, and Billie Jean's entry drew criticisms. “I don't think it was a wise move on Billie's part,” said WTA Executive Director Jerry Diamond, “and I

told her so on the phone. “I was very surprised,” said Betty Stove, one of the eight women who qualified for the Virginia Slims Championships. “I would have thought Billie would be very loyal to women’s tennis. I know she needs the competition, but there are other ways she could have gotten it. I think it’s a sour thing she did.”⁴²

The WTA’s decision to withdraw its sanction angered several of the players in San Antonio. “We pay \$250 just like everybody else,” said Pat Bostrom, “and it seems like the WTA is only providing the top players a tournament,” referring to the elite eight-player Virginia Slims Championships. “The WTA suggested that we boycott all tournaments in which Renee Richards plays, but they gave us no other alternative this week.”⁴³

Upon her arrival in San Antonio, Billie Jean told reporters at a new conference that she entered the event “because it was the only tournament this week. Gladys did organize this tournament and I very much wanted to compete.”⁴⁴ Billie Jean was the top seed in singles, and with Lea Antonopolis the top seeded women’s doubles team. Renee was in Billie Jean’s half of the singles draw, and in anticipation of a semi-final showdown between the two famous players on Saturday, CBS Television had contingency plans for a national broadcast of the match and installed scaffolding for television cameras.

Billie Jean and Lea lost in the women’s doubles quarterfinals to Karen Krantzcke and Kym Ruddell, two tall Australians – Karen at six-foot-one inches tall and Kym at six-foot-three inches. “They were both so big,” Billie Jean laughed, “they blew us off the court.”⁴⁵ Karen played on the inaugural Virginia Slims Circuit in 1971, and after several setbacks that included hypoglycemia and a nagging wrist injury, the 30-year old veteran decided to play on the Lionel Cup Circuit in another attempt at a comeback. Karen was encouraged when she and Kym won the women’s doubles title in San Antonio, and the two were looking forward to doing well at Wimbledon three months later.

In the singles tournament, Billie Jean won her first three matches in straight sets to reach Saturday’s semifinals. Renee, however, did not make it; she lost in Friday’s quarterfinals to third-seeded Marcie Louie, 5-7 7-6 6-2. The television scaffolding came down just as quickly as it was put up, but before it was dismantled, Marcie posed for a

picture on it with a piece of paper declaring the structure as “The Marcie Louie Monument.”⁴⁶

Billie Jean defeated Marcie in the semifinals, 6-2 6-2, and Sunday’s finals were moved from the McFarlin Tennis Center to the indoor courts of the Thousand Oaks Country Club due to rain. The local fire department moved the bleachers to the new location, and Billie completed a successful week with a 6-3 3-6 6-3 victory over Mary Hamm. During the singles final, Billie Jean admonished the chair umpire for repeatedly asking the excited crowd to keep quiet. “Why do you keep saying that?” she asked. “This is the most perfect crowd I’ve ever played in front of.” Billie Jean was pleased with the first stage of her comeback, telling the spectators during the check presentation, “Thank you, San Antonio. You changed my life.”⁴⁷

Renee was also thankful, saying that the Lionel Cup Circuit had caused her to “come out of hibernation.” She reached the singles final of the following week’s tournament in Little Rock, losing to net-rushing teenager Anne Smith of Texas. After the match, Renee said that Anne had the potential to become a champion – indeed, three years later Anne would win the first of her ten Grand Slam doubles titles. “I’m not surprised that I won the tournament or that I beat Renee,” said Anne, an amateur who declined the first prize of \$3,000. “I just pray to the Lord to let me play my best and go out and play my match.”⁴⁸

Another young player, twenty-year old Mary Carillo of New York, won the following week’s Lionel Cup event in Tallahassee, Florida. Mary defeated Renee in the quarterfinals, Karen Krantzcke in the semifinals, and Donna Ganz in the final for her first professional title. Two months later, Mary surprised herself by winning the French Open mixed doubles title with childhood friend and fellow New Yorker John McEnroe.

Karen’s semifinal finish in singles was another encouraging step in her comeback, and she teamed with Kym Ruddell once again to win the doubles championship – their second doubles title in three weeks. After easily beating Helen Gourlay and Rayni Fox, 6-2 6-2, Karen told friends, “I feel like taking a jog. I don’t want to lose my enthusiasm.” As she walked back to the club house to change her clothes, Karen silently collapsed only two hundred yards away from the court. Doctors rushed to her side, and an ambulance

arrived within ten minutes. She was pronounced dead upon arrival at the local hospital. An autopsy revealed that Karen had an enlarged heart, a rarity among professional athletes, and a condition of which she was unaware.⁴⁹

*(I remember) receiving a letter from Karen Krantzcke a week before her death, saying how much she was enjoying life and how she loved playing tennis.*⁵⁰
-- Ted Tinling, 1979

The tennis world was shocked and saddened by Karen's death. "If she'd been sick, or something like that, it might be easier to take," said her doubles partner Kym Ruddell. "But she played a great match. She was full of fun ... full of life. To see someone so fit ... you never know what's around the corner."⁵¹ Gladys and *World Tennis* immediately established the Karen Krantzcke Award Fund in conjunction with the Women's Sports Foundation to financially assist young Australian players on the professional tour. Billie Jean donated her entire earnings of \$3,500 that she would win from the fourth and final Lionel Cup Circuit event in Port Washington, and her generosity prompted a matching contribution from an anonymous donor. Other contributors included ATP Executive Director Bob Briner, Barnett Banks of Florida, the USTA, the tennis community of San Antonio, Donald Dell's law firm in Washington, D. C., and of course Gladys herself. Within a few weeks, the fund exceeded \$10,000.⁵²

Billie Jean King played the fourth and final Lionel Cup Circuit event at Port Washington, New York in mid-April. She drew further criticism from several players for partnering Renee Richards in the women's doubles; Billie Jean, however, said she empathized with Renee's desire to gain personal and professional acceptance. Their first round match, played against Aleida Spex and Patti Shoolman in front of a capacity crowd of 1,100 spectators on a Thursday evening, was one of the highlights of the tournament. After winning in three sets, 6-0 6-7 6-1, Billie Jean acknowledged that "it's been a long time playing doubles with someone I haven't played with before."⁵³

In Saturday's doubles semifinals, against the tough doubles team of Glynis Coles and Kym Ruddell, Renee told Billie Jean she was not feeling well and was not sure if she could complete the match.

(In the semifinals we played Kym Ruddell and) Glynis Coles ... who had been vociferous in her objection to my being allowed to play on the tour. Glynis would never even shake hands ... I was sick, and after the first few games at the changeover I told Billie, "I can't play, I can't even breathe." She said, "Get up, get up, you are fine." After the first set I said, "I am aching all over, I don't think I can play." She said "Get up, get up, you are fine." A few more games and I am almost lying down in my chair. "Billie, I am burning up, I have to quit." She says, "I won Wimbledon with a temperature of 102! Get up, get up." So ... in the second set, I am almost prostrate in my chair, not moving. Billie turns to the crowd, mostly Jewish tennis friends and fans from Long Island, up on her tiptoes, and shouts "This is the last time I am playing with a Jewish American Princess!" I got up, we won the match and the tournament ... Glynis perfunctorily shook my hand. ⁵⁴

-- Renee Richards, 2014

Billie Jean, top-seeded in the singles draw, won all of her matches in straight sets, beating Peanut Louie, Glynis Coles, Mary Carillo, Jane Statton and Caroline Stoll. She won \$3,000 for the singles title and \$500 for winning the doubles with Renee, and she donated all of her winnings to the Karen Krantzcke Award Fund. ⁵⁵

Gladys did not know it at the time, but the Lionel Cup Circuit would last for only one season. She did know, however, that she no longer wanted to work with the WTA, the Virginia Slims Circuit, or the Avon Futures Circuit, probably because she did not appreciate how WTA Executive Director Jerry Diamond refused to sanction any tournaments that Renee Richards played in. "I won't get involved with the WTA again," she said in the summer of 1977, "but I'd like to continue to promote tournaments. I'm a good salesman and I have a good track record, one hundred percent successes." ⁵⁶

That summer, Gladys began writing a suspense novel, *The Harmonetics Investigation*. “It’s about a cult,” she told Bob Lyhne of the *Peninsula Times-Tribune*. “I hope it will make readers think about the American obsession with youth, and the fear of age, disease and death. Those fears make people go in for rejuvenation surgery, for face lifts, breast implants and the like. In our society, so many people seem to seek answers in self-help books, health foods, and a corps of doctors and nurses, all offering some sort of rejuvenation. So my cult, the one I’ve created in the book, attracts members by answering the three great fears – disease, old age and death. Americans refuse to accept any of the three, you know. They’ll have themselves cut to pieces before accepting a disease.” Gladys wrote the novel in three months, working on it eighteen hours a day, seven days a week. Two years later, it was accepted by Crown Publishers. “If it goes big, I’ll write *Son of Harmonetics*,” she said. “If it flops, I’ll just go back to tennis.”⁵⁷

For Gladys, and many others in the tennis world, an era came to an end in early 1978 when Virginia Slims and the women’s professional tennis circuit agreed to end their partnership. At a meeting during the Family Circle Cup at Hilton Head Island in April, the 14-member WTA board of directors – which included Billie Jean King and Rosie Casals – voted unanimously that the Virginia Slims Circuit format of eleven tournaments, leading up to championship playoff, needed to be changed. They wanted special, lucrative four-woman playoffs every third or fourth week of the tour in order to attract media attention; Virginia Slims executives, however, refused to compromise. On April 20, 1978, the discussions came to a stalemate, and Virginia Slims’ sponsorship of women’s tennis was finished. Five days later, Philip Morris issued a news release, announcing the decision.⁵⁸

For eight years, Virginia Slims has believed in the circuit concept as being the most beneficial format to women’s tournament tennis ... It also brings women’s tennis into 12 major markets around the country, allowing more Americans to see women play ... Virginia Slims feels that the WTA may be making a wrong decision in discarding a system that has proved beneficial to the sport. ... a substantial increase in prize money for the first three months of both

1979 and 1980 was offered the WTA ... eleven \$120,000 events each week topped by a \$400,000 Virginia Slims Championship, which would be the largest single purse in the sport. The proposed addition to prize monies and continuity of a successful program evidently did not match the desires of the WTA board. Virginia Slims can only wish the women tennis players success under their new format structure.⁵⁹

Most tennis insiders were surprised at the move. Virginia Slims publicist Pat O'Brien said that everyone at Philip Morris was "in shock." Gladys was also unhappy with the news. "If it is true that Billie Jean and Jerry Diamond and Larry King are trying to get special events for four women, eight women or sixteen women every third week, and only if it's true," said Gladys, "I would like to comment that this is the naughtiest possible thing I have ever heard of. It's destructive to women's tournament tennis and it's the most selfish thing *imaginable*."⁶⁰ The following year, Avon took over as title sponsor of the women's circuit; ironically, the tour format of eleven tournaments culminating with a championship event remained the same.

In the spring of 1979, Gladys gave an interview to Jay Stuller of *Women's Sports* magazine, a publication owned by Billie Jean and Larry King. In "Gladys Heldman: A Few Words with the Architect of Women's Pro Tennis," Gladys told the story of how the women's circuit developed, but in several instances she distorted the actual history. For instance, she stated she "raised \$5,000 in prize money" for the tournament in Houston in 1970 (it was actually Delores Hornberger, president of the Houston Racquet Club Women's Association, who raised the money), she recalled that the USLTA told her she could have a sanction approval for the tournament only if no prize money was offered (this negotiation took place between Delores Hornberger and Stan Malless; since Delores submitted the application for USLTA sanction, she was the one responsible for making decisions regarding the administration of the tournament), she claimed the USLTA was "constantly suspending the women" (none of the American women on the Virginia Slims Circuit were ever suspended; Australians Judy Dalton, Kerry Melville and Karen Krantzcke were given a two-week suspension by their national association in late 1971

for breaking a long-established rule), she recalled the ILTF told her she could not hold the \$100,000 Virginia Slims Championships in Boca Raton in 1972 because none of the men's tournaments offered that much prize money (the USLTA threatened to deny a sanction for the tournament because Gladys had not submitted to the ILTF any of the \$17,500 in Grand Prix bonus point money from the Virginia Slims Circuit).⁶¹

Asked about a recent comment in which she said that WTA Executive Director Jerry Diamond was the worst thing that ever happened to women's tennis, Gladys responded that she didn't "have any involvement with Jerry. He runs his WTA, and as long as the women elect him, that's their choice. Let's just say I don't know why they would rather have a man than a woman. There are women like Ellen Merlo, Peachy Kellmeyer, and quite a few others who could do a very good job as executive director. Jerry is not that knowledgeable about tennis, and I don't like the attitude he's shown over the years towards the lesser players. I think he's oriented too much to the top four, or the top eight, or the top twelve. However, I am sure he feels as negatively towards me as I do towards him. I *know* he feels extremely negatively towards me. It's unimportant." Stuller asked Gladys if she was bitter about being forced out of running the women's professional tour. "No. Well, let's say I felt a certain amount of sadness," she responded. "But you can never be with anything forever. Just because you become involved early, that doesn't give you the right to run it or be involved in it or promote it forever."⁶²

Later that summer, Gladys was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame in Newport, Rhode Island, alongside Australian greats Margaret Court, Frank Sedgman, Jack Crawford, tennis writer Al Laney and the late Rafael Osuna of Mexico. In her acceptance speech, Gladys joked that she was "flattered to be included with such great champions, as I'm only number four in my family."⁶³

By early 1980, Gladys was still working on placing qualified women on corporate boards of directors, a project she called Women on Boards. "It's just something that had to be done," she explained. "There had never been lists kept up to date on the number of women serving on U. S. corporations. We change the list daily. When a woman was elected to a board or dropped off, we knew about it." Gladys recalled when she started

the project in 1974, only ten percent of the nation's top 100 corporations had women on their boards. Four years later, the figure was close to sixty percent. "I didn't start this project to make money," she said. "I did it because it needed to be done. If a company hired us to find a qualified woman, we'd accept a fee for that." According to Gladys, she was able to place thirty women on corporate boards between 1974 and 1978; she stopped keeping statistics after that to concentrate on writing her novel, *The Harmonetics Investigation*. "I'd like to turn it over to someone else now," she confessed, "because writing has become such a passion with me." ⁶⁴

To commemorate the ten-year anniversary of the first Virginia Slims tournament in Houston in 1970, a reunion was held in New York during the WTA annual awards dinner in September, 1980. Gladys, Joe Cullman, and six of the Original Nine – Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals, Nancy Richey, Peaches Bartkowicz, Valerie Ziegenfuss and Julie Heldman – gathered for an evening of anecdotes from Ted Tinling. "It seems like only yesterday," Valerie said. "And it's funny, each of us, except Julie, are still involved with tennis. It's hard to kick the habit, you know?" ⁶⁵

In 1982, with Julius retired from the Shell Oil Company, the Heldmans sold their house on Timberwilde Lane in Houston and moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico. On their new property, they constructed an indoor tennis court that was sunken into the ground to comply with local building codes.

Though the adobe exterior made it look like just another local mud hut, it was air-conditioned elegant within, the viewer's gallery lined with photos of the game's greats, many of whom had played there. Friends from across the globe visited and played in the daily games on that court where laughter and ribbing were paramount. They were amused and amazed that Gladys, applying herself as she always did to such things as the magazine business, plotting the future of women's tennis, and learning Japanese, had – after sixty years of playing – added a respectable volley to her repertoire. Ticked to present this new look to her pals, she gave an Italianate shrug, as though it were nothing, saying "Gotta keep improving. Everybody improves here." She told a frequent participating hacker,

*the late English Duke of Bedford, “Even you’ve improved – from ghastly to abysmal.”*⁶⁶

-- *Bud Collins, 2003*

*My mother was the happiest ever in Santa Fe, maintaining an extremely active social life, learning to have true friendships, and playing tennis six days a week. She continued to hard charge through life, but with more fun ... she was still improving her tennis. Earlier in her life she was afraid of going to net, but under the tutelage of Claudia Monteiro, she started serving better and improving her volley. Six days a week she played happily and well.*⁶⁷

-- *Julie Heldman, 2010*

Gladys was surely pleased to see Virginia Slims return as the title sponsor of the women’s professional circuit in 1983. One year later, however, a special seven-page advertisement in the February 1984 issue of *Tennis Magazine* promoting the upcoming Virginia Slims Championships infuriated her. At the end of the advertising insert in story entitled “They’ve Come a Long Way” – presumably written by someone at Philip Morris – Billie Jean, and not Gladys, was given credit for getting Virginia Slims as the sponsor of the women’s circuit.

With publisher Gladys Heldman, King approached the Virginia Slims people, owners of that rare gem of a slogan, words that captured the public mood of the time, that would propel an entire nation into action, that would rise above the realm of hucksterism into mythology.⁶⁸

Upon reading the advertisement – paid for by Virginia Slims – Gladys made a flurry of telephone calls to executives at Philip Morris. Unable to reach most of them, she fired off a letter on her Gladys Heldman & Associates letterhead.

February 7, 1984

To: George Weissman
Joseph F. Cullman 3rd
Ellen Merlo
Ted Tinling

For 3 ½ years I sweated and fought to formulate and to keep together a strong women's pro circuit. As you know, it was a great financial drain on me, and I took an inordinate amount of abuse from the USLTA. In early 1973, three Virginia Slims tournaments bowed out because of USLTA threats and pressure, and I was faced with the choice of going to court or tamely giving up the Circuit.

While Virginia Slims and Philip Morris remained quietly in a neutral corner (as interested bystanders, one might say), I was further abused by USLTA lawyers and a Federal court judge. I thought those were the worst four days of my life, but they weren't. The worst came two weeks ago when I saw the full-page Virginia Slims advertisement crediting Billie Jean King with founding the Women's Pro Circuit.

At first I believed (as I was told by Ellen Merlo) that no one at Virginia Slims ever saw the copy for the advertisement. However, if that were the case, Virginia Slims and Philip Morris could demand from the publisher of Tennis Magazine that the correct story be carried out immediately in a full-page story. The publisher would have no choice but to agree. Ted Tinling told me twice over the phone that he was writing the article, and that it was to be an article (not a letter). Yesterday I was told by Ellen that the Philip Morris people had decided in favor of a letter.

My children and my husband have seen the Virginia Slims advertisement. So have the players and fans who were reading World Tennis regularly in the early 1970s. I don't know what they think of your loyalty, gratitude or friendship. As for a million other readers who are new to the game, they now "know" who

was the inspiration and creator of the most successful sports sponsorship ever – Billie Jean King.

Yesterday I tried to call all four of you. Ted was in England, and I did speak to Ellen. George and Joe did not return my call. That hurt deeply, too.

I never asked for the credit or a pat on the back for my efforts. However, I am stunned by your giving credit to a third party, then deciding to negotiate for a “letter” only for compensation.

It was a low blow unworthy of a company with an honorable reputation. Your lack of action will live in my memory forever.⁶⁹

Gladys M. Heldman

Gladys threatened to file a lawsuit against me – and against Joe Cullman as well. I told her that I had nothing to do with the advertisement.⁷⁰
-- Billie Jean King, 2014

Tinling’s letter appeared in the April 1984 issue of *Tennis Magazine*, and it was apparent that the author collaborated with Gladys in composing it.

I find the article in your February advertising section about the Virginia Slims Championships gives the misleading impression that it was Billie Jean King, rather than Gladys Heldman, whose initiation and resourcefulness resulted in Virginia Slims’ involvement in women’s tennis.

I think it is essential, particularly bearing in mind the importance of *Tennis Magazine*, that two corrections be made in your article. First, that the women’s independent circuit owes its association with Virginia Slims essentially and entirely to Mrs. Heldman’s friendship with Joseph Cullman, then the chairman and chief executive officer of Philip Morris. Secondly, that it was Mrs. Heldman alone who suggested the tour to Cullman, and as you state, that “with publisher Gladys Heldman, King approached the Virginia Slims people.”

Mrs. Heldman played a further significant role by contributing more than \$100,000 of her personal money to ensure the success of the project in its initial stages.⁷¹

Ted Tinling
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Tinling's assertion that Gladys contributed "more than \$100,000 of her personal money to ensure the success of the project in its initial stages" is not true. She did loan \$900 to Darlene Hard, Valerie Ziegenfuss and Stephanie DeFina for their travel expenses when they played at the Embassy British Indoor Championships in London in November, 1970, hoping to get reimbursed later from a proposed tour slush fund. "If no slush fund ever develops," she wrote in a letter to the players at the time, "this will be my contribution to the group."⁷² Other than that, whenever Gladys needed more money for the circuit she needed only to call Joe Cullman.

Gladys was still bitter about the *Tennis Magazine* advertisement, and the perceived indifference of Virginia Slims and Philip Morris, two years later when she wrote an article for *World Tennis* entitled "The Birth of Women's Lob." Gladys' article was part of a special advertising section – paid for by Virginia Slims – that previewed the upcoming Virginia Slims Championships at Madison Square Garden in New York City in November, 1986. For Gladys, it was her opportunity to set the record straight and correct the errors from the 1984 *Tennis Magazine* advertisement. However, as she did in the 1979 *Women's Sports* interview, Gladys presented an inaccurate history of the development of the women's professional tennis circuit, many of the "facts" in the story were exaggerated or fabricated.⁷³

In the article, Gladys claimed the photograph of the women holding up the dollar bills "made the front page of sports sections around the world" (the photograph appeared only in the *Houston Post*), she wrote that the women were subsequently suspended and could not play "in any events other than the four designated open tournaments. For the other 48 weeks, they would be grounded" (the women were never suspended, they were

eligible to enter any open tournament they wished, and there were many more than just four open tournaments each year for the women), she maintained that “during the course of the year the women players were suspended and reinstated on three different occasions” (this is simply not true), and she insisted once again that the USLTA threatened to suspend all the women who competed at the \$100,000 Virginia Slims Championships in 1972 because the prize money exceeded anything the men were playing for at the time (the USLTA told Gladys that the Boca Raton tournament would not receive a sanction unless she submitted to the ILTF the \$17,500 in Grand Prix bonus pool money that she was withholding; she immediately paid the money to the ILTF and the tournament was subsequently sanctioned). At no point in the article did Gladys mention Billie Jean King.⁷⁴

At the Virginia Slims Championships that fall, another reunion of the Original Nine was held. All nine players attended, but Gladys decided to remain in Santa Fe. She had become estranged from Joe Cullman ever since the Virginia Slims advertisement was published in *Tennis Magazine* in February 1984, and she most likely did not want to have an awkward encounter with him.

Gladys further propagated her interpretation of tennis history during a series of interviews with Cynthia Starr in 1987. Starr was co-authoring a book with Billie Jean, entitled *We Have Come a Long Way*. Gladys told Starr that she “gave away about \$30,000 to help players. I kept five black players on the circuit one year. They weren’t good enough, really ... so I just kept them going on the qualifying. And then I added money to tournaments when I couldn’t get enough money from other places. I guess total there I put \$20,000 into Boca Raton. That was the first \$100,000 tournament, and I put \$10,000 into Family Circle to make that \$100,000. And then I picked up all the expenses of everything else that our staff did.”⁷⁵ In truth, Virginia Slims sponsored the tournament in Boca Raton, and the three – not five – black players who were on the Virginia Slims Circuit in 1973 were supported by a slush fund that materialized when Gladys collected ten percent of each player’s prize money that year. Funds from the slush fund also helped to make the prize money at the 1973 Family Circle Cup reach the \$100,000 mark.⁷⁶

Gladys also told Starr how she felt about the tennis officials with whom she fought so many battles. “I can be friendly with Jack Kramer now. I can have dinner with him. There’s no problem. We get along ... I have made friends with Alastair Martin. I see him in Santa Fe whenever he comes here. I’m very friendly with his daughter and other USTA presidents. I can get along with them, even though we had our fights. Those fights were just differences of opinion ... I think I was much angrier at two people in the USTA, Walter Elcock and Stan Malless – but not the other USTA officials. I felt strong enough to handle them, and they were strong enough to take what I gave them. It was just a good, old-fashioned fight. But I felt Elcock and Malless were quite naughty and hit below the belt. So I have never been able to, or wanted to, make friends with them.”⁷⁷

Although she was not present at the Original Nine reunion in New York in 1986, Gladys did attend a reunion that was held in conjunction with the Virginia Slims of Houston in the spring of 1989 – probably because Joe Cullman was not there. Eight of the nine players were in Houston for the occasion, and this time the only absentee was Gladys’ daughter, Julie. Other Virginia Slims Circuit personnel who were on hand for the festivities included chair umpire Lee Jackson, Ted Tinling and Ellen Merlo, in addition to Francoise Durr – not one of the Original Nine, but a participant on the inaugural Virginia Slims Circuit in 1971. Gladys spoke with Charles Garder of the *Houston Chronicle* about the development of the women’s circuit and how she was forced out. “The USLTA went to the women and said, ‘We’ll make peace.’ But the terms were that I was out,” she said. “That was fine with me. It was the end of the war. It was silly to have two sides fighting.” Gladys also gave one of her characteristic exaggerations when she told Carder that she “had been through a lawsuit that cost me about \$100,000, and I couldn’t have been more happy to be out of all the fights and hassles.”⁷⁸

At the end of the year, Gladys wrote a guest editorial for *World Tennis* that criticized the current crop of women’s professional tennis players. In “A Sorority Gone Sour,” which appeared in the November 1989 issue, she lamented that so many young players lacked a sense of commitment and appreciation for the game’s history.

Today's players no longer give free clinics or play pro-ams gratis, or attend the promoter's or sponsor's reception (a handful excepted), or give interviews except at allotted times, or fly in early at no charge for pre-tournament promotions.

In addition, the current group of players, with the exception of veterans Chris Evert and Sharon Walsh-Pete and an occasional interested tennisist such as Elise Burgin, has no awareness or knowledge of the early days of women's pro tennis. There is far more rivalry and much less camaraderie among today's young pros.

The youngest and best of today's crop are a different ilk. They are self-centered to the point of disregarding any segment of the game that does not relate to their own gain. During the Virginia Slims of Houston in April, there was a fundraiser to benefit Literacy Volunteers of America, Virginia Slims' national charity. The Original Eight showed up, as did Evert, Burgin and 21-year-old Katrina Adams. There was no other player in evidence. During the next two days, the original members competed in a special doubles event. When Billie Jean and Rosie were on court, only two current Virginia Slims players were watching. Billie Jean would never have missed the opportunity to watch Maureen Connolly, and Maureen would have given anything to watch the great Helen Wills. Today's players have no desire to see their illustrious predecessors. It's a me-me-me syndrome that can only work to the detriment of the game.

The original members and their immediate successors were great competitors, but they were also great givers. Today's players are takers. They've got a long way to go, baby.⁷⁹

Two years later, in the summer of 1991, the final issue of *World Tennis* was published. In an attempt to compete with *Tennis* magazine and its greater circulation, Family Media Publications decided to overhaul *World Tennis* with a new name and a new look. "Next month's issue," *World Tennis* editor Steve Flink wrote in the August 1991 issue, "will mark the debut of *Tennis Illustrated* ... (it) will be a decidedly larger

magazine (20 percent larger in terms of page size) with higher quality paper, larger and more dynamic photography, and featuring a sparkling design by Art Director Wendy Talve Reingold. The graphic elements of *Tennis Illustrated* will represent a striking departure from *World Tennis*; our commitment to the highest journalistic standards will not.” Gladys was outwardly pleased with the change. “When I started the magazine,” she said, “it was written by and for the players. But I feel strongly that a magazine has to change with the times. Every ten years there should be a re-evaluation of where the magazine is headed. Changes are necessary, and I feel very positive about the new direction and the new name.”⁸⁰ The gamble did not pay off; readers did not embrace *Tennis Illustrated*, and one year after its first appearance the new magazine ceased publication.

By the end of 1991, Gladys’ other significant contribution to tennis – the relationship between Virginia Slims cigarettes and the women’s professional circuit – began a gradual decline. The Virginia Slims Championships, held at Madison Square Garden in New York City in November, was the scene of anti-smoking demonstrations by SmokeFree Educational Services. “Why are these women pushing cigarettes?” demanded one protester. After one of her matches, Martina Navratilova acknowledged that the Virginia Slims sponsorship “has been a problem for women, and we are trying to address it the best way we can. But at the same time, you have to have some loyalty to the people who brought you to where you are today. And Virginia Slims was there when no one else gave a damn about women’s tennis. Obviously, sports and cigarettes don’t go together, but we are here because of them ... My answer was always that I don’t tell people to start smoking. I just tell them if they smoke, they might as well smoke Virginia Slims, which is probably not a good answer but that has been my answer for years.”⁸¹

Joe Cherner, who founded SmokeFree Education Services in New York City in 1988 with \$100,000 of his own money, planned to stage another protest during the 1992 Virginia Slims Championships. “Virginia Slims is not the right sponsor for a sport that epitomizes good health in women,” Cherner said several days before the tournament. “We like tennis. We just think women’s tennis needs a new sponsor ... Women’s tennis has more than repaid its debt. Philip Morris has addicted millions of young girls and

made billions of dollars off its association with women's tennis. If Philip Morris liked women at all, it wouldn't be sponsoring women's tennis." Despite the fact that Virginia Slims no longer distributed samples of its cigarettes at tournaments, the "Ginny Girl" logo was changed to have the figure holding a tennis ball instead of a cigarette, and the company never asked any players to use or endorse its cigarettes, Cherner was adamant; a new sponsor needed to be found.⁸²

Gladys was not convinced by the anti-smoking protesters' arguments. "Cigarettes are legal," she reasoned. "How about alcohol? How about Nieman Marcus selling fur coats or hospitals polluting our waters with waste? Where do you stop? As long as it's legal, I don't have a problem with the sponsorship. People will say you can't have DuPont sponsoring tennis because they manufacture ammunition. I don't approve of ammunition, but I would accept their sponsorship."⁸³

Public reaction began to have an affect on Virginia Slims' sponsorship of women's tennis. Cherner insisted that his organization was instrumental in getting Virginia Slims to withdraw its sponsorship of the tour event in Oakland, California in early 1992. According to Cherner, one of the tournament's other major sponsors, the 7Up soft-drink company, removed its financial support after receiving a barrage of complaints for associating with Philip Morris.⁸⁴

By the early 1990s, Virginia Slims was no longer the title sponsor of the women's professional tennis circuit. Kraft General Foods – at the time a subsidiary of Philip Morris – was tour's main sponsor from 1989 through 1993. During this time, Virginia Slims was the title sponsor of select tournaments, and the number of those events began to decline from year to year. In 1991, Virginia Slims sponsored twelve tournaments on the Kraft WTA Tour; the following year, the cigarette brand was the sponsor of eight tournaments, and in 1993 it was the sponsor of only six tournaments. Kraft General Foods did not renew its title sponsorship of the tour at the end of 1993, and the WTA Tour had no main sponsor for 1994 and 1995 – although Virginia Slims sponsored the year-end tour championships in New York City for final time in 1994. In early 1996, the Corel Corporation, a Canadian computer software company, became the tour's title sponsor at the cost of \$4 million per year. Virginia Slims, no longer associated with the

WTA Tour, briefly returned to women's tennis in mid-1990s by sponsoring the Virginia Slims Legends Tour, a series of exhibition matches with Billie Jean King, Chris Evert, Martina Navratilova and other retired stars.

Throughout the 1990s, Gladys – still upset about the Virginia Slims advertisement that appeared in the February 1984 issue of *Tennis Magazine*, giving credit to Billie Jean King for starting the Virginia Slims Circuit – continued to keep her distance from Joe Cullman. Despite the estrangement, Gladys sent a \$250 contribution to the International Tennis Hall of Fame, for which Cullman was the Chairman of the Executive Committee. In early January 1991, Cullman sent a typed thank-you letter to Gladys and Julius, on which he wrote, “I repeat that I would like to regain contact with you while I’m still relatively alive, with two very special friends and part of my life! Joe.”⁸⁵

Cullman also sent Gladys a postcard from Montego Bay, Jamaica, with the message, “Dear Gladys, I still love you and all the great moments we had together. Love, Joe.” In October 1998, Cullman futilely invited Gladys and Julius to a party that Philip Morris was hosting during the Corel WTA Tour Championships in New York City. They finally spoke on the telephone in 1999, and the following day Cullman sent Gladys a copy of his self-published autobiography, *I’m a Lucky Guy*.

Dear Gladys:

I was glad to have the chance to talk to you yesterday. I hope I can straighten out something that has gone awry. I am sending you, under separate cover, a copy of my book which states on page 176 the important role you played in the early days of women's tennis and Virginia Slims. I hope I can change your mind. Best regards to you and Julius.⁸⁶

Sincerely,

Joseph F. Cullman 3rd

In his autobiography, Cullman devoted four paragraphs to the contribution that Gladys made in the development of the women's professional tennis circuit. However, nearly thirty years removed from the events in Houston in 1970, Cullman's recollection had several inaccuracies.

Inspired by Gladys Heldman, the founder, editor, and publisher of *World Tennis* magazine, and led by Billie Jean King, the number one woman player in the world at the time, nine women players demanded that the discrepancy between men's and women's tennis prize money be addressed. Kramer refused to consider their demand and told them that they would be subject to suspension by the USLTA and to the loss of their eligibility cards if they did not play in the Pacific Southwest tournament.

The women held their ground and Gladys Heldman offered to run a women's event in Houston, Texas, opposite Kramer's Los Angeles tournament. The women's tournament, held at the Houston Racquet Club, was originally to be called the Houston Invitational, but when Gladys – who was a good friend of mine – told me what was going on and that she was looking for corporate support, I saw a unique opportunity to support women's tennis.

As I've mentioned, Philip Morris had just been the first national sponsor on CBS-TV for the U. S. Championships at Forest Hills. I saw the Houston tournament as a chance to support the women's game and as a unique sponsorship opportunity for Philip Morris. So we put up \$2,500 and had the name of the event changed to the Virginia Slims Invitational. The tournament, which had total prize money of \$7,500, was won by Rosie Casals and marked the birth of the women's professional tennis tour.

The USLTA responded by taking away the eligibility cards of those players who competed in Houston, which meant they could no longer play in USLTA sanctioned events. Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals, and the other players countered by signing contracts with Gladys Heldman – for one dollar. Within a week after the first Virginia Slims Invitational in November 1970, we were able

to announce that Virginia Slims would sponsor eight women's tournaments, each in a sixteen-draw format beginning in January 1971. And the rest is tennis history.⁸⁷

Cullman's recollection of events may have been an attempt to repair his relationship with Gladys. Jack Kramer, of course, never threatened the women with USLTA suspension; he was in no position to do so. According to Bill Cutler, who was the Virginia Slims Assistant Brand Manager at the time, Cullman was out of the country during the time of the tournament in Houston. Cutler recalled that he and his boss, Virginia Slims Brand Manager Stever Korsen, made the decision to provide \$2,500 for the tournament. The contribution, however, did not increase the tournament's prize money, which remained at \$5,000. The Virginia Slims cash sponsorship was helpful in defraying the expenses of bleacher rental, a cocktail party, and combining with ticket sales to meet the prize money goal. The women who played in the tournament were not suspended by the USLTA (Cullman refers to the players' "eligibility cards," a term that is not used in tennis), and they were allowed to play in open-to-all tournaments, all of which (in the United States) were sanctioned by the USLTA. The women signed the one-dollar contract with Gladys one hour before the tournament began in order to circumvent USLTA regulations, not – as Cullman wrote – as a result of a USLTA suspension (which never occurred). By signing the contract with Gladys, the women became contract professionals for the week and thus removed themselves from USLTA jurisdiction (although there was some confusion in the weeks that followed as to whether the women were really considered contract professionals, and Gladys later insisted that they were not). Finally, the tournament was not staged in November 1970 – as Cullman wrote – but in September 1970. Despite the errors, Cullman wanted to give Gladys credit for her role in the tournament.

Three years after receiving the autobiography in the mail, Gladys was invited to Cullman's 90th birthday celebration in New York City in April, 2002. Gladys did not attend, and she did not invite Cullman to a three-day party in Santa Fe later in the year, celebrating her 80th birthday and her 60th wedding anniversary with Julius. Four of the

Original Nine – Billie Jean King, Rosie Casals, Kristy Pigeon and Julie Heldman – were present, along with Owen Williams, Lew and Jenny Hoad, Dennis Ralston, Sharon Walsh-Pete, Beverly Baker Fleitz and many other tennis personalities and friends. Billie Jean, whose relationship with Gladys was strained ever since the threatened lawsuit nearly twenty years earlier, was reticent about attending. Rosie, however, convinced her good friend and former doubles partner to accept the invitation and make the trip to Santa Fe to make amends. Eventually, Billie Jean was glad that Gladys extended the invitation.

It was her way of telling me, 'It was pretty great, wasn't it?' All was forgotten, though she didn't say it that way. We had a great time and it was great closure.

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-- Billie Jean King, 2008

The following year, Gladys and Julius continued to support their adopted city; in early 2003, they donated \$500,000 for the construction of a stadium court at the Rosemarie Shellabarger Tennis Center on the campus of the College of Santa Fe.⁸⁹ It was not the first time they had made a significant contribution to the community; shortly after relocating to New Mexico in the 1980s, they donated \$200,000 to establish the Santa Fe Symphony Orchestra and Chorus.⁹⁰ The tennis center, built in 2003 from a \$5.3 million endowment left to the college by Rosemarie Shellabarger, included twelve indoor and outdoor courts. The gift from Gladys and Julius resulted in the naming of the main court, with seating for one thousand spectators, as the Gladys Heldman Stadium Court.

On June 21, 2003, Gladys and Julius attended a costume party hosted by Eleanor Brenner, a friend in Santa Fe. “She was having a blast,” Brenner said, who remembered that Gladys came dressed as the Arch Duchess of Adelaide. Gladys invited former USTA president Alan Schwartz, who was sitting at her table, to play doubles with her the following day. Although she seemed upbeat at the party, some of Gladys’ friends recalled that she had earlier complained of acid reflux and pain in her shoulder.⁹¹

The following morning, Julius rose out of bed first and asked Gladys what she would like for breakfast. Gladys replied she wanted poached eggs, which Julius thought

was odd since she had never requested poached eggs before. Apparently it was an item that took longer to cook than scrambled or fried eggs, and while Julius was preoccupied in the kitchen, Gladys took the pistol that she kept in the bedside nightstand, placed the gun's barrel to her temple and pulled the trigger.⁹²

Gladys' two daughters, Julie and Carrie, suspected their mother thought she was having a heart attack, and fearing a stay in the hospital, decided to end her life rather than endure what may lie ahead. Carrie recalled that her mother had written a letter to her sometime earlier, insisting that she never wanted to be hospitalized and preferred "to die in bed, looking smashing with lots of makeup to hide the blemishes."⁹³

The tennis world was shocked and saddened by the news, and many of the sport's most influential figures paid tribute. "Without Gladys, there wouldn't be women's professional tennis as we know it," said Billie Jean King. "She was a passionate advocate and driving force behind the start of the Virginia Slims tour, and helped change the face of women's sports. Because of her vision, women's tennis was changed forever."⁹⁴ Although Martina Navratilova never played in one of Gladys' tournaments – she played on the USLTA tour in 1973 and joined the Virginia Slims Circuit in 1974 after the women's tennis war was over – she was nevertheless influenced. "All that stuff happened before I got here," Martina recalled, "but Gladys affected me personally, growing up in Czechoslovakia, through *World Tennis* magazine. It was my main lifeline to what was happening in the world of tennis before I started traveling."⁹⁵ Pam Shriver, another member of the International Tennis Hall of Fame, regretted that "not enough of today's players know the history of the last thirty-three years. Otherwise the WTA tour flag would be at half-mast."⁹⁶ U. S. Representative Tom Udall of New Mexico read a remembrance of Gladys' life and career during a session of the United States Congress on July 27, 2003, calling her "a pioneer of women's professional sports."⁹⁷

*Gladys lived as she wanted to and died as she wanted to.*⁹⁸

-- Julius Heldman, 2008

My mother did stop talking to Joe Cullman, and remained estranged from him when she died. After her death, he reached out to us, sending a lovely letter, establishing a scholarship in her name at Yale, and placing a personal obituary notice in the New York Times. I called his office and didn't manage to speak to him directly, but his secretary was very nice, and appeared to know who I was. We had asked if he wanted to speak at her memorial.⁹⁹

-- Julie Heldman, 2011

Nine months later, on April 30, 2004, Joe Cullman – the man whose company funded the Virginia Slims Circuit, and the man who desperately pleaded with Gladys to restore their relationship – passed away at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City at the age of 94.

Postscript

In the summer of 2010, Judy Dalton was extremely disappointed that the 40th anniversary of the first Virginia Slims tennis tournament was not celebrated and had passed by largely unnoticed. At the following year's Australian Open, Judy complained to WTA senior vice president Peachy Kellmeyer that the oversight was a disgrace. Peachy agreed, and she promised to do something about it. At a meeting of WTA tournament directors later in the year, WTA chief executive officer Stacey Allaster asked if anyone was willing to host an Original Nine reunion. Bob Moran, the tournament director of the Family Circle Cup in Charleston, South Carolina, immediately raised his hand.

The Meredith Corporation, parent company of *Family Circle* magazine, spared no expense in hosting the reunion, held during Easter weekend in early April 2012 and in conjunction with the Family Circle Cup tournament. It was the first time since 1986 that all the members of the Original Nine were reunited. During the course of three days, the pioneers of women's professional tennis were honored at a dinner and an on-court celebration, and each of them was interviewed for a film documentary about the birth of the women's tour and the subsequent match between Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs.

The festivities opened on the evening of Thursday, April 5 on the grounds of the historic Legare Waring House. Stacey Allstar welcomed the Original Nine as the “living legends of women’s tennis.” The WTA named Gladys as the recipient of the Georgina Clark Mother Award, given annually to a mother who had a significant impact on women’s tennis. Julie accepted the award, telling the audience that Gladys was “not a traditional mother. She was unapologetically unconventional. She didn’t cook, she didn’t clean, she didn’t vacuum. She was disinterested in makeup and frilly dresses, and she didn’t pack us off to school. But she was a helluva mentor. She valued success, she stood up for what she believed in, and she took no prisoners.”¹⁰⁰ Gladys would have been flattered by the award, but she also would have been amused; in 1961, she laughingly told a *New York Times* reporter that she was “not the motherly type.”¹⁰¹

The following day, the Original Nine assembled in a suite at the Charleston Place hotel to replicate the dollar bill photograph. A copy of the original photograph was on hand and used as a reference, so that the women could re-enact their exact poses from forty-two years earlier. The original distance and angle of the camera was also repeated, and the result – purposely shot in black and white – was a remarkable reproduction.

Later the evening, the grand ballroom of the Charleston Place was the setting for cocktails, dinner and a program honoring the Original Nine. “I never thought we’d ever see these women in the same room again,” said Chris Evert. “These women paved the way for us to earn money as tennis professionals.” After dinner, Pam Shriver and fellow ESPN reporter Julie Foudy, a former U. S. national soccer player, hosted the celebration. Each of the Original Nine were seated on stage, and behind them sat former Family Circle Cup champions Chris Evert, Martina Navratilova, Tracy Austin, Martina Hingis, Venus Williams and Rennae Stubbs. WTA chief Stacey Allstar made the opening remarks, telling the crowd of 700 that “the Original Nine transcended sport. Not only did you give little girls the dream to play professional tennis, you gave little girls the dream that they could be CEOs of companies.”

The Original Nine shared anecdotes from their playing days, and the more recent players acknowledged the commitment and courage of their predecessors. “It’s great that they’re getting the recognition because they really stuck their necks out,” said Martina

Navratilova. “It’s not hard to have courage,” Valerie Ziegenfuss reflected, “when you have Gladys Heldman, Billie Jean King, and a wonderful product of women’s tennis.” Martina Hingis told the Original Nine that she was “making the money, having a great life, because of you. Thank you very much, that’s all I can say.” Even though several of the women were no longer involved with the game, they all enjoyed reminiscing and some good-natured ribbing of each other. “It feels like forty years has not passed, we were right back where we were, having fun,” Kristy Pigeon said. “There’s a lot of camaraderie in our group, even though we were die-hard competitors in the day.”

On the evening of Saturday, April 7, the Original Nine were honored on the stadium court of the Family Circle Tennis Center, the home of the Family Circle Cup. Pam Shriver introduced the players with a summary of each one’s accomplishments, and a video tribute was displayed on the court’s jumbo screen. Rosie Casals, the winner of the first Family Circle Cup tournament in 1973, was given a special award, and she jokingly thanked Nancy Richey, who was standing next to her, because “I happened to beat Nancy in the final.” Nikki Haley, the governor of South Carolina, paid tribute to the Original Nine, telling them that “as a little girl, I grew up playing tennis seven days a week, and it was all because you wanted power, you wanted strength, you wanted grace – that’s what you saw, and that’s what little girls saw.”

The Original Nine, along with their families and friends, were then escorted to a private sky suite in the Family Circle Stadium to watch an exhibition match with Tracy Austin, Martina Hingis, Rennae Stubbs, Martina Navratilova, John McEnroe and Aaron Krickstein, using the World Team Tennis format –the concept that Billie Jean promoted for forty years. During a break in the exhibition, the stadium court was renamed the Billie Jean King Court. Throughout the evening, many of the Original Nine and their guests passed around one dollar bills for signatures as a way to remember a very special occasion.

At the conclusion of the evening’s program at the Family Circle Tennis Center, the Original Nine and their guests were driven back to the Charleston Place for a private, informal gathering in the suite where the dollar bill photo replication occurred. No longer on a timetable for interviews or programs, everyone finally had some time to

reminisce and catch up on each others' lives before flying home the following morning. The gathering lasted until midnight, and as a final round of goodbye hugs were exchanged, the women talked about the possibility of reuniting again in the future – in 2020, for the fiftieth anniversary of first Virginia Slims tournament. Each member of the Original Nine hoped that someone would organize such an event eight years down the road, and each one of them promised to be there if their fates allowed.

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VITA

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Donn Gobbie started to play tennis on the public courts in Gary, Indiana in 1969 at the age of eleven. He learned how to play the sport by studying the instructional articles in the two most popular magazines of the time, *World Tennis* and *Tennis*. He also borrowed every tennis book from the local public library, and was especially influenced by Billie Jean King's *Tennis to Win*. Although his high school did not have a tennis team, Gobbie was able to secure a college tennis scholarship and eventually became the coach of numerous high school and collegiate teams.

Gobbie earned a Bachelor's degree in English from Indiana University Northwest in 1986, a Master's degree in American Studies from Purdue University in 1992, a Master's degree in Athletic Administration from Indiana University in 1996, and a Doctoral degree in Health and Kinesiology from Purdue University in 2015. Since 1989, Gobbie has taught courses in Sport Management, Sport Marketing, Sport Psychology, History of Sport and Sport in American Society at various colleges and universities.

Gobbie has been very involved in promoting recreational tennis programs, founding the Lakeshore Tennis Association in 2001 and partnering with local park and recreation departments. After working for the United States Badminton Association in the late 1990s as its public relations specialist, Gobbie founded the Intercollegiate Badminton Association as well as the World Professional Badminton League, which features Olympians and national champions from across the world. With a passion for the promotion and development of tennis and badminton, Gobbie plans to stay involved in both sports for many years to come.