

Tennis Encyclopedia Article

Tennis

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The worldwide popularity of tennis could be attributed to the various stars on the international circuit. Tennis appears to be very glamorous, but it is in fact a grueling game that requires extreme strength and stamina.

Tennis has its roots in many countries. The ancient Greeks played a game called *a la phoeninde* in which one player hits a ball to another player. In France, an indoor game called "royal tennis" was developed around 1050. Native Americans used to play a game called *poona*.

In 1873, Walter C. Wingfield (1833-1912), an English army major stationed in India, combined rules from *poona* with a grass playing field and thus invented tennis as we know it today. He called the game *spharistike*, after *spherique*, the Greek words for "games with balls." The name "tennis" is derived from the French. When players were ready to serve, they would shout " *Tenez!*" ("Hold!") to warn their opponent.

Many years later, a friend of Major Wingfield met Mary Ewing Outerbridge, a young American woman who expressed great enthusiasm in the sport. In 1874, she introduced the game to the United States.