

## The World Championships of 1913 to 1923: the Forgotten Majors by Clark Benson

In your readings on the history of tennis have you sometimes encountered the term 'World Champion' and been bewildered by this title? Clearly, this made sense for the first few years of lawn tennis when Wimbledon was the only major tournament, though this would seem to cover only a handful of years, 1877-1880, before the U.S. national championships commenced in 1881 at Newport (see JTCA 10:147). This article explores this term and how it has been given official status at two different time periods since the International Lawn Tennis Federation (ILTF) was organized in 1913 (see JTCA 28:442).

**Today.** World Champion is a term of art applied by the ITF to a person(s) chosen annually. This appellation has been used since 1978 for both men's and women's singles and since 1996 for men's and women's doubles. Today it also includes awards for boys and girls as well as men's and women's wheelchair events.

*Men:* Bjorn Borg dominated in the early years of this prestigious accolade, being named the inaugural men's ITF World Champion in 1978 and following up with two more triumphs. John McEnroe and Ivan Lendl were both honoured three times apiece before Pete Sampras took over in the 1990s with six awards. Roger Federer has since stamped his authority by winning on five occasions.

*Women:* Chris Evert was the first ever women's ITF World Champion in 1978 and went on to be honoured three times in total. Martina Navratilova and Steffi Graf have also been prolific recipients, receiving the accolade six and seven times respectively. More recently, Serena Williams and Justine Henin have both won on multiple occasions. (See [itftennis.com](http://itftennis.com))

In 2013 ITF presented the 2012 awards at the annual World Champions Dinner, which took place in Paris during the Roland Garros fortnight, but the designation is announced at the end of the calendar year. The winners for the singles events for 2013 are the same as those of 2012: Serbia's Novak **Djokovic** and USA's **Serena Williams**, for the third and fourth times respectively.

In his first tennis encyclopedia (1980) Bud Collins includes his own perspective on this status: "The 'world champion' title was a *new honor* to be awarded annually by the ITF for men and women, intended to establish an official No. 1 player for each calendar year, eliminating the confusion caused by diverse and often contradictory sets of unofficial rankings."<sup>1</sup> (Italics added: was it new or just a new honor?)

**The Early Days.** From the beginning of tournament lawn tennis, the term had been, legitimately, appropriated by Wimbledon<sup>2</sup>. However, as the world of tennis began to expand beyond the shores of Great Britain, other nations eventually began to believe that their tournaments deserved some elevated recognition as well.

Likewise, as organized tennis took hold around the world, players and journalists alike applied their own explanations for 'world champion', or some equivalent term. In some cases this was the result of simply winning Wimbledon or by beating all players considered to be the best of the day. For example, Tilden was sometimes referred to as "King of the Courts" or "tennis champion of America and the world in general."<sup>3</sup> On another occasion, Tilden was designated as the "Monarch of the Tennis World" because in winning the 1922 U.S. Nationals he had beaten Gerald Patterson, "holder of the so-called world's championship [Wimbledon two months earlier] in the semi-finals, [and] he can justly lay claim to the

<sup>1</sup> See Collins, Bud; BUD COLLINS' MODERN ENCYCLOPEDIA OF TENNIS; (New York; Doubleday; 1980) at 189.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps, due to tradition and its premier status amongst tournaments, in the minds of many fans, and players, winning Wimbledon still is the equivalent of being World Champion. Accord, see Hawk, Philip B. OFF THE RACKET: *Tennis Highlights and Lowdowns*; (New York; American Lawn Tennis, 1937) at 56: "the recognized Championship of the World"

<sup>3</sup> See Brown, Gene; THE COMPLETE BOOK OF TENNIS: *A New York Times Scrapbook History*; (New York; Arno; 1980) at 15: NYT September 7, 1920.

highest position the game affords.”<sup>4</sup> Another example is “[o]n the hard courts of the St. Cloud Tennis Club Mrs. Molly Bjurstedt Mallory challenged Suzanne Lenglen today for the championship of the world.”<sup>5</sup>

**Wimbledon Gets a Twin.** The irony found in the previous quotations is that the latter two tend to comport with reality. From 1913 to 1923 the term ‘world champion’ did actually mean something specific and its use was sanctioned by tennis organizers. The story of how this happened relates to the American lawyer and Swiss resident C. Duane Williams. Williams, the father of R.N. ‘Dick’ Williams, was quite active on the tennis scene of the 1900s and was instrumental in the organization of the ILTF. Tragically, the elder Williams did not survive the trip across the Atlantic on the Titanic in April 1912.

A paraphrase of the French version of this story follows:

*Williams, who knew all the players and followed their efforts with interest, gave them such sage advice that many called him ‘father’. Given the rapid progress accomplished in recent years by the players on the continent, he saw advantages to having a tournament of the champions of each country on the same type of court surface as they were used to at home. The idea was to grant the Championships of Grass Courts to Wimbledon because only England possesses a climate wet enough and to have the Championships of Clay Courts on the continent.*

*Williams, a great admirer of the French player and a friend of France, submitted his proposal to the Union des Sociétés Françaises de Sports Athlétiques (USFSA) which received it with enthusiasm. All the great nations gave their approval and the USFSA found a large Parisian club to undertake the event. The Stade Francais in the park of Saint Cloud was chosen. Nothing was spared for the comfort of players and spectators.*<sup>6</sup>

According to several accounts the event was thus offered as a hard-court twin, perhaps rival, to Wimbledon whereby players from the continent, accustomed to hard courts<sup>7</sup>, could excel. One writer about the period summarizes it as follows: “In the summer of 1911, Dick Williams’ father wrote to Henri Wallet [French tennis organizer] and offered a challenge cup for a world’s championship on hard courts. Wallet accepted and with the approval of the governing bodies of other nations the championships were held at Paris in the spring of 1912. As a result of this the international federation was organized in March, 1913 with Wallet as its first president.”<sup>8</sup>

The initial event was held in June 1912 on the outskirts of Paris and open to players from any nation. The winners of the 1912 events were German Otto Froitzheim and Frenchwoman Marguerite Broquedis, medalists at the 1908 and 1912 Olympics, respectively.

**The Official World Titles.** The ILTF was founded the next year and it seems clear that the success of this 1912 hard-court event (with a crowd of a thousand in attendance) helped to some degree. In 1913, the nascent ILTF thus established three world titles as the major championships of the day: on grass (awarded to Great Britain<sup>9</sup>), on hard courts (initially awarded to France through



**Figure 1.**  
**Marguerite Broquedis**

<sup>4</sup> See Brown: COMPLETE BOOK OF TENNIS at 23: NYT September 17, 1922

<sup>5</sup> See Brown: COMPLETE BOOK OF TENNIS at 17: NYT June 6, 1921.

<sup>6</sup> See Delamarre, Gilles; ROLAND GARROS: *Le Livre Du Tournoi Du Centenaire* by (Paris; Editions du May FFT; 1991) at 31 et seq. It appears that the club may have been simply known as the Club de Stade Francais. All translations by the Editor.

<sup>7</sup> While today we think of hard court as generally meaning concrete or asphalt, the term was originally used to simply make a distinction from grass: asphalt, sand, dirt, or clay, would have qualified as a hard court surface. The first event was simply billed as the Championnats du Monde de Tennis, or World Tennis Championships, without any reference to clay.

<sup>8</sup> See Potter, E.C., Jr.; KINGS OF THE COURT; (New York; Scribner’s; 1936) at 125. Note also that the ITF now considers the first few presidents to be simply chairmen (see JTCA 28:442). Accord, see Gillmeister, Heiner; TENNIS A CULTURAL HISTORY. (New York; NY University Press; 1978) at 192.

<sup>9</sup> In fact, about this time Wimbledon was sometimes referred to as the ‘British Turf Court Championship’.

1916), and in covered courts.

In this manner, Wimbledon gained legitimacy for its title while its main rival for the Davis Cup, the United States, having declined to join the new federation, was not given equal status. Whether America declined because of this, because Duane Williams had died, or some other reason is still the subject of debate<sup>10</sup>. The official Hard Court events would eventually be held six times from 1913 to 1923 (all of them near Paris except for the 1922 event that was held in Belgium) with no events being held for five years due to the Great War). Six covered court events would likewise be held from 1913 to 1923 except for five years due to the War.

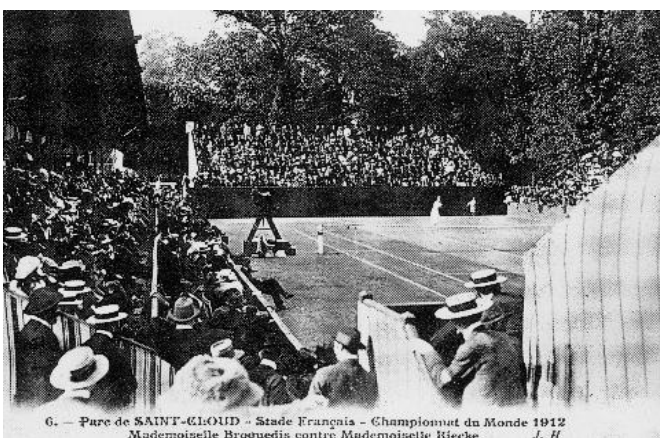
Thus, being a world champion was an official status for a period of about a dozen years and several well-known players achieved this status by winning one of these tournaments, the majors of that period. The title of the official Hard Court event, having been given to France, was billed as the *Championnats du Monde de lawn-tennis sur terre battue*, or, World Clay Court Lawn Tennis Championships<sup>11</sup>.

**World Champions.** Over the eleven-year time span the World Champions included:

The winners of the seven singles events of the World Grass Court Championships (Wimbledon): Men: New Zealander *Tony Wilding* (1913); Australian Norman Brookes (1914); none held (1915-18); Australian Gerald Patterson (1919); American Bill Tilden (1920 and 1921); Australian Gerald Patterson (again 1922); and American Bill Johnston (1923). Women: Brit Dorothea Lambert Chambers (1913 and 1914); none held (1915-18); and Frenchwoman Suzanne Lenglen (1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, and 1923).

The winners of the six singles events of the World Hard Court Championships (WHC): Men: New Zealander *Tony Wilding* (1913 and 1914); none held (1915-19); Frenchman William Laurentz (1920); American Bill Tilden (1921); Frenchman Henri Cochet (1922); and American Bill Johnston (1923). Women: German Miekien Rieck (1913); Frenchwoman Suzanne Lenglen (1914); none held (1915-19); Brit Dorothy Holman (1920); and Suzanne Lenglen again (1921, 1922, and 1923).

The winners of the six singles events of the World Covered Court Championships (WCC): Men: New Zealander *Tony Wilding* (1913); none held (1914-18); Frenchman Andre Gobert (1919); Brit Gordon Lowe (1920); Frenchman William Laurentz (1921); and Frenchman Henri Cochet (1922 and 1923). Women: Brit Helen Aitchison Leisk (1913); none held (1914-18); Brit Dorothy Holman (1919); Brit Geraldine Ramsey Beamish (1920); Dane Elsebeth Brehm Jorgensen (1921); Frenchwoman Germaine Regnier Golding (1922); and Brit Kathleen McKane Godfree (1923).



**Figure 2. 1912 Hard Court Women's Singles at St. Cloud**

**Abolition.** Nevertheless, the ILTF revised their definitions in March of 1923 when it "formally abolished the present world championships, including those decided heretofore at the Wimbledon tournament in England, thus leaving the way open for the U.S.L.T.A. to become an active member of the Federation. It was at this time that organized tennis recognized four national championships--those of England, France, the United States and Australia..."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> See Barrett, John; WIMBLEDON: THE OFFICIAL HISTORY OF THE CHAMPIONSHIPS; (London; Collins/Willow; 2001) at 21.

<sup>11</sup> See the back cover of JTCA 27 for a poster for the 1923 event and the front cover of this issue for the 1912 and 1921 events.

<sup>12</sup> See Brown: COMPLETE BOOK OF TENNIS at 24; NYT March 17, 1923. Presumably the effective date was set in the future as the WCC for 1923 had already been held in February and the WHC for 1923, scheduled for May, were also held. Wimbledon, (the WGC) of course, was held though it is unclear to the author how this affected the designation of the title.

One writer provided another perspective: that the "International Federation ...abolished the somewhat provocative titles of World's Championships and substituted a recognition or sanction of the original titles, the arrogance of which is only implied."<sup>13</sup> Another indicated that the main objection heard from the U.S. was that "only one world championship existed which deserved that name: the Davis Cup, inaugurated in 1900."<sup>14</sup>

Along the same lines: While there was no reference found in the first USLTA encyclopedia of 1971, a reference was located in the first Bud Collins' encyclopedia of 1980: "The reluctance of the U.S. to join the ILTF was occasioned by the allocation of various 'World Championship' titles. ... When these grandiose titles were abolished soon after World War I, the U.S. found its way clear to become a member of the ILTF."<sup>15</sup>

The impact on the four recipient nations to replace the 'world championships' with 'official championships' was simple in a general sense: each became a major nation of the federation with enhanced voting power and each now operated a major event. This didn't affect Great Britain all that much, aside from the lack of the actual term of 'world championship' but there were other impacts. Australia gained status and increased visibility as two previous decades of its men's tournaments were retroactively transformed to major status; France gained by converting to an international event, but also lost records for WHC & WCC events won by Lenglen and the Musketeers from the record books by the their abolition. As for the U.S., it gained by joining the federation without having to sacrifice the stature of the Davis Cup, having been a finalist for 14 of the 17 Cups held through 1923.

Several other changes also occurred about this time. In 1922 the Australasian championships added an event for women's singles. In 1923 Australasia split into Australia and New Zealand for tennis. In 1924 the Olympics were held outside Paris at the Stade de Tennis de Colombes. Perhaps it was the exposure and excitement resulting from these Olympics<sup>16</sup> that affected the French officials but, regardless, for 1925 the French championships finally welcomed international players. Through a series of events over several years the major tournaments of the day were transformed from the previous three type/surface events (1913-1923) to the four national events we know today.

**Changes in Personal Records.** A recap of the three world titles indicates that **Tony Wilding** (*italicized in the above listings and on the cover*) won all three events in 1913 and thus would conceivably be the only player to be legitimately entitled to the unadorned term of 'World Champion' during the years of 1913-1923 (though the other winners could still be denominated as such with a modifier). In a sense, this was the equivalent of achieving what would later become known as the Grand Slam of Tennis because all three of the major tournaments sanctioned by the world governing body were won by one player and all in one calendar year. Wilding was also the only player to win all three events regardless of the calendar as it appears that neither Tilden nor Lenglen played in the Covered Court events.

Also of interest here is that by using the 1913-1923 ILTF events as the major tournaments of the day the count of majors would increase for several players, i.e., the winners of the Hard Court and Covered Court events, notably **Suzanne Lenglen**, whose total would increase by four singles events and six doubles events (with a singles and a doubles win in 1914 a few weeks after her 15th birthday). It would also mean that **Bill Tilden**, runner-up at two of the international French championships held after the transformation (in 1927 and 1930), actually did win a clay-court championship in France (in 1921).

The increase of one for Tilden would move him from 21 and tied at 4th with Todd Woodbridge, to 22 and thus tied at 3rd with Frank Sedgman. The increase of ten for Lenglen would move her from 21

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<sup>13</sup> See Hillyard, G.W.; FORTY YEARS OF FIRST CLASS LAWN TENNIS; (London; Williams & Norgate; 1924. New York; American Lawn Tennis; 1924) at 52

<sup>14</sup> See Gillmeister, TENNIS A CULTURAL HISTORY at 192.

<sup>15</sup> See Collins, MODERN ENCYCLOPEDIA OF TENNIS at 14.

<sup>16</sup> Despite the fact that the U.S. won the highest number of medals at six: all five gold medals plus one silver; the French were the next in line with three silver and one bronze; third in line was Great Britain with one silver and two bronze. Italy and the Netherlands were tied at one bronze each. All four of the musketeers won a medal: Cochet, a silver in singles; Brugnon and Cochet, a silver in doubles; Borotra and Lacoste, a bronze in doubles; Julie "Diddie" Vlasto, a silver in singles. Of course, it was also these Olympics that created friction amongst tennis organizers.

and tied for 11th with Chris Evert, and Darlene Hard, to 31 and thus tied at 7th with Helen Wills Moody (whose record was recently surpassed by Serena Williams in 2013 with 32 majors).

From this perspective, it could also be argued that in 1921 **Tilden** won what would become the Grand Slam of Tennis by winning the WHC at St. Cloud in June, Wimbledon in July, and the U.S. Nationals in September. But, what of the Australian? Travel commitment aside, there were perceptual problems with the Aussie in the early years. Tilden's characterization of the majors in 1927, which was: "all three of the major championships—the French at St. Cloud, the English at Wimbledon and the American at Forest Hills"<sup>17</sup>, illustrates one of the reasons why it was not until 1924, the year after becoming a major, that the Aussie even had a fixed date<sup>18</sup> and that more than one-half of the round of 64 actually had matches down-under. It may also indicate why Tilden, among others, didn't feel it worth the effort to spend months on board ship for the Australian title while he and others did devote that much time doing so for the Davis Cup<sup>19</sup>.

In addition, several other players who are in the top 50 in the rankings of majors would move upwards. Three of the Four Musketeers, all except the youngest (Lacoste), had several wins in both of the forgotten majors. **Borotra**, currently at 18 would gain 3; **Cochet** at 15 would gain 4; **Brugnon** at 12 would gain 1. Further down the list, **Wilding**, currently at 11 would gain 3. On the woman's side: **Kitty McKane**, the runner-up to Suzanne Lenglen in the new international French event of 1925, who currently does not even make the overall ranking cutoff with 8 majors, would increase by 6 to 14 moving her up considerably.

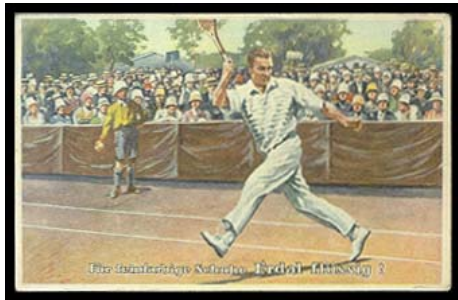


Figure 3. German Otto Froitzheim

Regardless, simply including the 1913-1923 WHC events as the precursor to the French would mean that Tilden was the first male player to win more than two of the modern, i.e., national major singles titles in a year, in 1921. Previously, winning two majors in a year had occurred only two times by men: in 1903 when Laurie Doherty won Wimbledon and the U. S. Nationals and, as noted above, in 1913 when Tony Wilding won both Wimbledon and the Hard Court Championship. For women, this distinction would be unaffected as Helen Wills was the first to win three in 1928. However, it would have moved forward Suzanne Lenglen's win of two majors to 1921, repeated in 1922, 1923, and 'officially', in 1925.

**The Record Books.** Today's record books include neither the Hard Court nor the Covered Court Championships in the designation of the major tournaments. Instead, they reinforce the choice of the ILTF in 1923 to abolish the preexisting world titles and to designate the majors from that time onward. Thus, the Hard Court Championships are entirely excluded from the category of major tournaments<sup>20</sup>.

Today's records for the French Championships usually begin with the 1925 event when it was transformed from a championship amongst French clubs to an international championship open to players of any nation<sup>21</sup>. (In 1924 there was a French club event but both the WHC and WCC had been abolished after 1923.) Because the WHC ran parallel to the French national events it is logical to consider

<sup>17</sup> See Tilden, William T.; MATCH PLAY AND THE SPIN OF THE BALL, (London; Methuen; 1928) at 123.

<sup>18</sup> For most of the previous years it had been held in October, November, or December. In 1907 it appears to have been held the same week as the US Nationals in August.

<sup>19</sup> For the 1920 Cup events, the US team left San Francisco November 15 and arrived in Auckland December 3 for the events to commence on December 28. Tilden, of course, had to travel to and from the West Coast as well. (See ALT Nov.15, 2910, p.499.)

<sup>20</sup> In reality, they did not entirely disappear off the face of the earth. In 1924 the Hard Court Championships of Great Britain were commenced at Bournemouth.

<sup>21</sup> Of course, not all players of all French championships had been French. In fact, a Brit won the inaugural event in 1891 for men's singles: H. Briggs. Note also that the poster for the 1925 event designates this as the "grande quinzaine internationale" event which would indicate it as the 15th international event. This modifier is unclear. It does not appear to modify the term international but the event which made Paris its permanent home in 1910, though alternating between venues therein.

the national events as the precursor to the post-1925 French events. However, by such a choice a relevant, and more comparable, series of events is forgotten. It is just as logical to assume that the French became an international event because of the WHC. While there may now be some question as to the success of the Covered Court events in comparison to the Hard Court events, the fact of the matter is simple: these were the major events of the day. Thus it seems that, at the very least, it is the winners of the WHC that should be included as the real predecessor of the French before 1925 as the WHC were the preeminent international clay-court events of that era.

Therefore, a question arises: why do the record books begin with the 1925 French championships as the predecessor to today's French Open instead of using the World Hard Court Championships for the period of 1913 to 1923? After all, all but one of the events was held in France<sup>22</sup> and sponsored by French entities, including the French Federation of Lawn Tennis (FFLT). In reality this is not an atypical situation as compilers of reference volumes of all types tend to live in an historical vacuum, simply bringing forward what has been compiled previously.

**Contemporaneous Observations.** It appears that French tennis fans at the time appreciated the difference between the world championships and the national championships. Another paraphrase of the French in the Delamarre Roland Garros book follows: "Suzanne Lenglen, beaten by Marguerite Broquedis [in the French championships] is not champion of France in 1914, but, paradoxically, is the World Champion. The responsibilities of the World Champion are greater and it seems to me that the real champion is the child prodigy Suzanne Lenglen."<sup>23</sup>

A similar perspective of the importance of the Hard Court Championships can be found in other writings. The prolific A. Wallis Myers, writing in 1921 of the 1914 U.S. Nationals, stated that the English visitor "missed that element of informality, the atmosphere of spontaneity, almost of improvisation, which make Wimbledon and St. Cloud [the home of the WHC] so attractive."<sup>24</sup> Myers also indicates that the "French zest is unquenchable and the foundation of a hard-court Wimbledon at St. Cloud in 1912 [i.e., the initial unofficial event] was a monument to the progressive spirit animating France. The centre court at the Stade Francais is a model, almost a slavish model, of our own centre court."<sup>25</sup>

Scholar Heiner Gillmeister is another who mentions the WHC when he writes of the career of Otto Froitzheim: "Froitzheim in Bad Hamburg beat a champion greater than Ritchie, Anthony Wilding, and among his [Froitzheim's] many triumphs which followed were the Olympic silver medal in 1908, the world championship on hard courts in Paris in 1912, and his five-set match against the Australian 'Wizard' Norman Brookes in the all comers' final of Wimbledon in 1914."<sup>26</sup>

Tennis journalist Gianni Clerici also makes mention of the WHC in his description of the career of Tony Wilding. "Wilding was at the height of his powers at that time. He had won four Wimbledon in a row, from 1910 to 1913, and had also taken the World Clay Court Championship in Paris [1913], a tournament that had been organized to celebrate the founding of the ILTF."<sup>27</sup>

What do the early tennis encyclopedias indicate? No references were found in the first modern tennis encyclopedia (see JTCA 27:428), from Maurice Brady in 1958, on the WHC or on the WCC. Both this and the subsequent 1969 edition include the following language in the entries for the Championships of France: "From 1925 entries have been accepted from all countries. Held on the State Roland Garros, at Auteuil, this championship is regarded as the leading hard-court event."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> The 1922 WHC were held 160 miles away from Paris in Brussels, Belgium.

<sup>23</sup> See Delamarre, ROLAND GARROS at 31 et seq.

<sup>24</sup> See Myers, A. Wallis; TWENTY YEARS OF LAWN TENNIS; (London; Methuen; 1921) at 109.

<sup>25</sup> See Myers, TWENTY YEARS at 57. He also states here about the court at St. Cloud: "I confess that the yellowy brown colour, so baneful to the eyes in the strong glare of midsummer sun, draws my preference instinctively to the green turf of Wimbledon, so placid to look upon, a cushion for the feet compared with this rock-like plane."

<sup>26</sup> See Gillmeister, TENNIS A CULTURAL HISTORY at 303.

<sup>27</sup> See Clerici, Gianni; THE ULTIMATE TENNIS BOOK: 500 Years of the Sport; (Chicago; Follett; 1975) at 100.

<sup>28</sup> See Brady, Maurice; THE ENCYCLOPEDIAE OF LAWN TENNIS; (London; Robert Hale; 1958) at 47. Accord, Brady, Maurice; LAWN TENNIS ENCYCLOPEDIA; (South Brunswick, N.J.; A.S. Barnes; 1969)

No reference was found in the first USLTA encyclopedia of 1971, though a reference was located in the first Bud Collins' encyclopedia of 1980 which related to the abolition of the tournaments and has been quoted above<sup>29</sup>. Robertson's 1974 encyclopedia offers an earlier but similar perspective to Collins but adds that "[o]nly the Hard Court tournament justified itself and it is noteworthy that Mlle Lenglen won the women's singles four times out of its seven years, including 1914. But the Covered Court event never rose above European status."<sup>30</sup>

**Revision.** If future compilers opt to modify the record books to focus on the early years of the ILTF's major events by treating the WHC as the precursor to today's French Open, there are still other questions related to the time frame of interest: 1) how to handle the initial, yet unofficial, 1912 hard-court event; and 2) how to handle the 1924 Olympics, both of which were held near Paris on clay courts.

The 1912 events, won by Frotizheim and Broquedis, predate the federation but were clearly the precursor of the WHC. The ILTF events were abolished in 1923 but the 1924 Olympics were clay-court events held outside Paris at Columbes at the Stade Olympique, though considerably outside, at substandard and incomplete facilities. The 1924 tennis events were a complete sweep for the Americans. The singles events were won by Vinnie Richards and Helen Wills; the doubles events by Richards and Francis Hunter and Wills and Hazel Wightman; and the mixed doubles by Wightman and R.N. Williams.

There are several choices for compilers who want to revise records for this period. The easiest choices are to either exclude or include both the 1912 and 1924 events. On the other hand, it is also possible to argue for inclusion of only one of them, take your choice. Both events were open to international players and both were the best of five (men) and three sets (women). While the draws for the initial years do not appear to be very large<sup>31</sup>, the draw for the 1924 Olympics saw a large entry in both singles events. However, for the 1912 event (as was true for the 1913 event) there was no women's doubles event. The countervailing perspective as to the 1924 Olympic events is that today they are separate events so it seems odd to consider them as majors though in 1924 they were substitutes. Of course, before and after the 1924 events this was part of the entire debate and there were no official tennis medals at the Olympics until the 1988 events in Seoul.

**Summary.** Based upon this research it seems clear that there are good reasons to include the ILTF World Championships as early major events and the WHC as the precursor to the modern French Open. While the inclusion of the WHC in any list of majors is the compiler's choice, perhaps it is time for tennis historians to consider this as more than a footnote. Some progress has been made. Indeed, such revision has been offered in several locations on the world wide web, including the wikipedia Tennis Project<sup>32</sup>; the Tennis Forum and a French web site which appears to be some of the few sources with the information on the WHC and WCC<sup>33</sup>.

From the author's perspective, the inclusion of these events in the record books, regardless of the time frame chosen, i.e., a) 1912; b) 1913-1923; and/or c) 1924; would be a welcome addition to the history of lawn tennis as it would focus on the first decade of internationally organized tennis. It would also provide more recognition to one of the 'lost' champions of lawn tennis, **Anthony Wilding**, one of several players taken by the Great War of 1914-1919; while adding even more lustre to the impressive records of several great players, notably **Bill Tilden** and **Suzanne Lenglen**.

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<sup>29</sup> See USLTA [Staff]; USLTA OFFICIAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF TENNIS; (New York; Harper; 1971). See Collins' MODERN ENCYCLOPEDIA at 14.

<sup>30</sup> See Robertson, Max; THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF TENNIS: 100 Years of Great Players and Events; (New York; Viking; 1974) at 33. Robertson also points out that one impact of the ILTF world championships was the commencement of women's doubles and mixed doubles at Wimbledon in 1913. Note the language about the WHC being held for seven years, though it was only officially held for six years: this seems to indicate his perspective that the 1912 event was simply the first of the series.

<sup>31</sup> See <http://www.tennisforum.com/showthread.php?t=431903> and [tt.tennis-warehouse.com/showthread.php?t=341635](http://tt.tennis-warehouse.com/showthread.php?t=341635)

<sup>32</sup> See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject\\_Tennis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Tennis) and [www.theconcisehistoryoftennis.com](http://www.theconcisehistoryoftennis.com)

<sup>33</sup> See <http://bmarcore.perso.neuf.fr/tennis/avant14/E-champ.html> and <http://www.terrebatue.org/en/>