

TENNIS

History of Game and Evolution of Equipment as depicted on Postage Stamps

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ABSTRACT: Tennis, on international postal material, displays the history of the game, types of strokes, the evolution of the equipment and presents stamps that honor exceptional players.

TENNIS TERMINOLOGY: "Tennis" is derived from the French word "ténacité" (to have tenacity, to hold, to keep). As tennis was begun, French was the diplomatic language and thus, key words from French remain with the game. The earliest game was played in a castle courtyard and the surface the game is played on today is called a "court." The word "love" (the tennis score of zero or 0) is from the French "l'oeuf" meaning "goose egg." The word "deuce" (used in tennis to mean the score is tied) is similar to a French word "deux" meaning "both" or "the two of them."

HISTORY OF TENNIS: The earliest game resembling tennis was found in the 14th century and was called "jeu de paume," (game of the palm or hand-ball). It was played in castle courtyards in France and England and Henry VIII (1500s) liked the game.



Hungary #B243,4,5 (1965)

It is not clear if this was the actual start of tennis, since it was not until the 16th century that use of a racquet was begun, influenced by the Spanish game of pelota.



Hungary #B246-7-8 (1965)

In the late 19th century, "lawn tennis" evolved, versus "King's tennis or true tennis," which today uses the historic rules, early leather ball and smaller court. In 1873 Englishman Walter Clopton Wingfield applied for a patent for the design of the court and rules. By 1877 they were adopted by the All England Tennis and Cricket Club, home of Wimbledon, which held the first Wimbledon match that year and continues today.



**Wingfield & trophy:
Hungary #B249 (1965)**



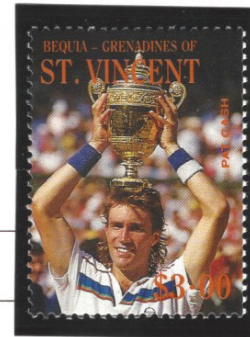
**100th Anniversary of Tennis:
Bermuda #306 (1973)**



The game progressed to Bermuda and in 1874, Mary Ewing Outerbridge brought the game to America, having the first game at Staten Island Cricket and Baseball Club. The same year, on William Appleton's estate in Massachusetts, 4 men: Dr James Dwight, Richard and Fred Sears and Henry Slocum played, further advancing the game in America. In 1900, the Davis Cup was established for an international competition for men. By 1907, men were professional athletes.



**Davis Cup
Hungary #B259 (1965)**



Women did not have a specific series of tournaments, nor were they professionals until 1963 with the women's "Fed Cup." In 1968, the Open Era began with pros and amateurs playing any tournament and with impetus from Billie Jean King in 1973 the WTA (Women's Tennis Association) began. She championed the equalization of tennis prize money between the sexes. She also participated in the re-introduction of tennis to the Olympics (since professional basketball players and Russian gymnasts were paid) with success in 1988. Coincidentally, in 1988, Steffi Graf of Germany won the full "Golden" Grand Slam, winning all four Grand Slams: US, England (Wimbledon), Australia and France, as well as the Olympic gold, the only athlete to achieve those tournaments in one year. Because of this, she also is the most featured tennis player on stamps and deemed one of the best players of all time.



Billie Jean King, USA

**St Vincents #619
(1988)**

Steffi Graf, Germany

Aitutaki #417 (1988)



TENNIS STROKES:



Forehand (Swung at the side of the body)

Philippines #381 (1934)



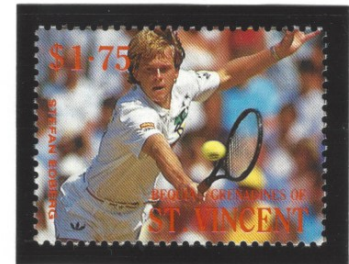
Backhand (Swung across the front of the body)

Argentina #2192e (2002)



2-handed backhand (seen about 1980 as "tennis elbow" is related to the backhand taking wrist extension forces)

St Vincent #263 (1988)



Volley (taken in the air without a bounce;" voler" in French is 'to fly')

St.Vincent #622 (1988)



½ Volley (hit very close to the ground)

Liechtenstein #322 (1958)



Lob (high, deep shot returned like a serve)

Central African Rep # C327 (1988)



Serve /overhead (ball is struck as high as player can reach)

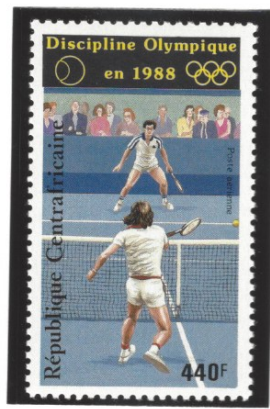
Republique Benin #830 (1996)



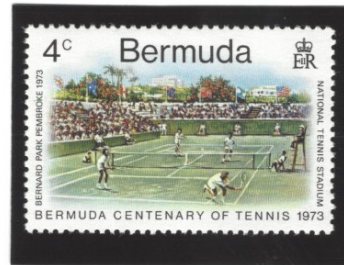
Serve progression

Mexico #C612 (1979)

- **Drop shot** is a soft shot barely clearing the net, often with twisting spin.
- **Ace** is a shot, usually serve, that the receiver is unable to touch.



Singles are played one against another
Central African Rep # C328 (1988)



Doubles are a pair against another pair
Bermuda #304 (1973)



W/C tennis Germany #B931 (2004)



Australia #1847 (2000)

EQUIPMENT EVOLUTION

Tennis Clothes: Men wore long pants into the 1950s when shorts evolved; Women wore long ankle length dresses until the 50s. Gussie Moran was known for her Lace bloomers...when the phrase "all gussied up" came about.



Bermuda #305 (1973)



Australia #2322 (2005)



Australia #2322 (2005)



Paraguay #2405 (1992)

Racquets



Wood racquets until 1970s strung with cat gut. Note white ball.

Haute Volta (Burkina Faso) #143 (1965)



Nylon became popular in the 1960s creating a synthetic gut (control of ball)

Luxembourg #643 (1980)



Metal racquets began in the 1970s with an open throat (faster swing). Note yellow ball.

Israel #726 (1979)

Tennis Balls

Medieval= leather covered wool wrapped co



White rubber balls from 1870s using Goodyear's invention; white til 1970s

Bolivia #353 (1948)



Yellow rubber balls emerged in 1970s, Wimbledon did not use til 1984

USA (2017)



Yellow had better TV visibility

Singapore # 658 (1996)

Court surfaces



Lawn (Wimbledon)

Bermuda (1973)



Clay (French)

Central African Rep # (1988)



Hard (Har-tru, etc)

US Open=acrylic DecoTurf
Australia=acrylic Plexicushion
Rep of Korea (1973)

TENNIS STAMP FACTS:

- **Earliest tennis on stamps:**
 - Philippines #318 (1934), seen above under “Forehand stroke”
 - Russia #656 (1935)
 - Ecuador #C67 (1939)
 - Bolivia # 353 (1948), seen above under “Balls”
- **Number of countries** that depict tennis is **220**.
- **Number of actual stamps featuring tennis** is under **1,000**.
- **Historic tennis scenes on stamps:**
 - Wallis Futuna #611 (1991)
 - Tonga # 676 (1988)
 - Hungary #B243-51 (1965)
 - Bermuda # 304-7 (1973)
 - France #1612 (1978)
- **Firsts:**
 - First tennis stamp: Philippines #314 (1934)
 - First woman tennis player depicted on stamps is 1960: Costa Rica #C307 (1960)
 - First black depicted playing tennis is 1987: Botswana #189. US= Arthur Ashe #3936, (2005), Althea Gibson #4803 (2013) and she was 1st black female in international tennis in 1958-9, winning French Open, Wimbledon and US Open.

FAMOUS PLAYERS—Australia 4410, Gambia, St. Vincent

Women

		
<p>Margaret Smith Court (1942-) 66 GS (24 singles) events, incl more than one Grand slam, 2 mixed dbl) ...most in hx of tennis ---</p> <p>Australia #2125 (2003), Gambia #953a (1990)</p>	<p>Martina Navratilova (1956-) No. 1 in 1982-86= 7 yrs, 5 consec; 18 GS singles, 31 dpls, 10 mixed dpls= greatest # wins of all time (M or F) in open era; best female player from 1975-2005 at age 50; 2x Year GS winner; Wimbledon 9x (record), 6 consecutive (record); 2x Career GS “boxed set”=wins in singles, doubles and mixed doubles...only Doris Hart and Margaret Court have done this. 3 women (Martina, Maureen Connolly, Margaret Court) have won 6 consecutive GS singles tournaments. She and Serena Williams are only players to win 6 consec tournaments without losing a set.</p>	<p>Steffi Graf (1969-)=22 Grand Slam singles; Gold GS 1988 + Oly Gold=only player to have done so; won all GS tournaments 2x each.... only player to have done so.</p> <p>Aitutaki #422 (1988), Central African Rep #884 (1988)</p>

Doubles c partner Pam Shriver won 79 titles, with 20 GS doubles, tying record of partners Louise Brough and Margaret Osborne duPont (of Bellevue, Wilmington DE!); Only player of either sex to win 8 diff tournaments at least 7x
Australia #2125 (2003)

Men

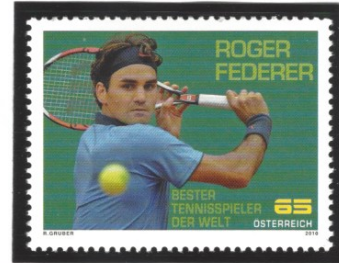


Rod Laver (1938-) Australian. #1 1964-1970 (7 yrs); 200 tournaments; 2nd to win the 4 Grand Slams in one year (1962); Iretired 1979; Intl Hall of Fame 1981

Australia #2127 (2003)

Pancho (Ricardo Alonso) Gonzales (1928-1995) USA.. 14 singles, 2 GS; Intl record = No. 1 for 8 consecutive years...this record continues. Int Hall of Fame 1968;

NO STAMP



Roger Lederer (1981-) Swiss, 20 GS singles (record), #1 for 310 weeks; 100 titles (2nd in open era)

Austria # 2240 (2010), Switz #1266 (2000) , Guinea (2016)

Souvenir Sheets Commemorating Current Players

Boris Becker (1967-), Wimbledon Winner--Sierra Leone 1986 souvenir; St Vincent 1987 with cup



2010 Togo Champions of Tennis

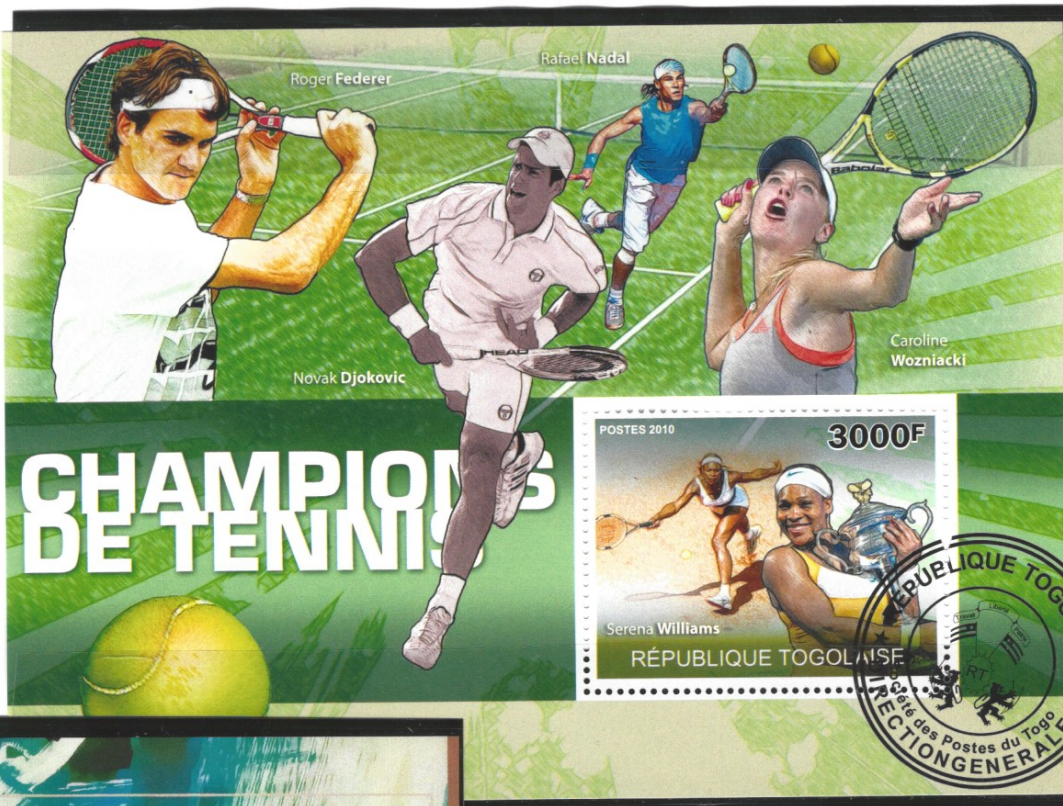
Serena Williams ('87-)

Roger Federer ('81-)

Novak Djokovic ('87-)

Rafael Nadal ('86-)

Caroline Wozniacki ('90-)



**2016 Guinea-Bissau
Champions of Tennis**

Roger Federer ('81-)

Rafael Nadal ('86-)

Stan Wawrinka ('85-)

Andy Murray ('87-)