

Tennis Traces City History Back to '95

(This is the sixth of a series of articles on the history of sports in Portland).

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From a single court, located at the residence of H. D. Green, builder of Portland's first water works, the game of lawn tennis developed rapidly in Portland.

Although the first recognized championship tourney was not played until 1899, old newspaper clippings reveal that state titular events were held in 1891. The first recognized men's singles champion was Joe Smith, an all-round performer of the early days of athletics in Portland.

The sport began to flourish about 1895, when several clubs were organized and courts installed in various parts of the community. Among the early clubs were the Seven Oaks, Columbia, Madison Street courts, 22d and Lovejoy Street courts, Hill House courts on 14th street near Madison, and at E 12th and Morrison.

In 1900 there were 20 tennis courts in the city. Today there are 10 times that number, although the sport does not carry the interest that it commanded prior to World War I and during the early '20s until the depression days.

The number of courts operated by clubs in 1900 were Multnomah club, four; Y. M. C. A., two; Waverley club, two, and Irvington club, two. The others were on privately owned property.

Multnomah's first tennis courts were situated on NW Hoyt street between 18th and 19th, and when the present grounds were secured two clay courts were constructed on the south end of the field. Other early-day courts were on the Burrell property at the head of Madison street on 10th street and on the W. K. Scott property on East Broadway.

Indoor tennis also was played during infancy of the game here, courts being lined in the Armory and also at the old Oceanic docks. Nocturnal play was in vogue at the courts at the Green home, gas lights being utilized for the games.

F. H. V. Andrews, who served as chairman of the tennis committee of the Irvington club for many years, paired with Smith to form the doubles championship team of the pre-state-tournament days.

A visit to the Pacific Coast and the Pacific Northwest in 1898 by George Wright, Beals C. Wright, Malcom D. Whitman, tennis champion of the United States; Holcombe Ward and Dwight Davis, who placed the famous international cup in competition, gave the sport a shot in the arm, to use sport parlance. Sponsors of the game sought to have the Easterners participate in a state championship in September but their visit of one day upset the plans.

The following April the Multnomah club affiliated with the United States National Lawn Tennis association and the first tourney was played in September of that year. The Fisk trophy, presented by Maj. E. R. Fisk of the army en-

Other projects were started to increase the calibre of players, but they fell by the wayside because of inability of their creators to carry on in the work.

Installation of courts in city parks has served to stimulate some interest in the game, but on the whole the game has not kept pace with its early growth mainly through lack of leadership.

City-wide championships were originated around 1914 and still are played, but they do not attract the attention nor interest of the players.

In its review of tennis, The Journal presents for the first time a complete list of the winners and runners-up and the scores in all five major events of the state championships.

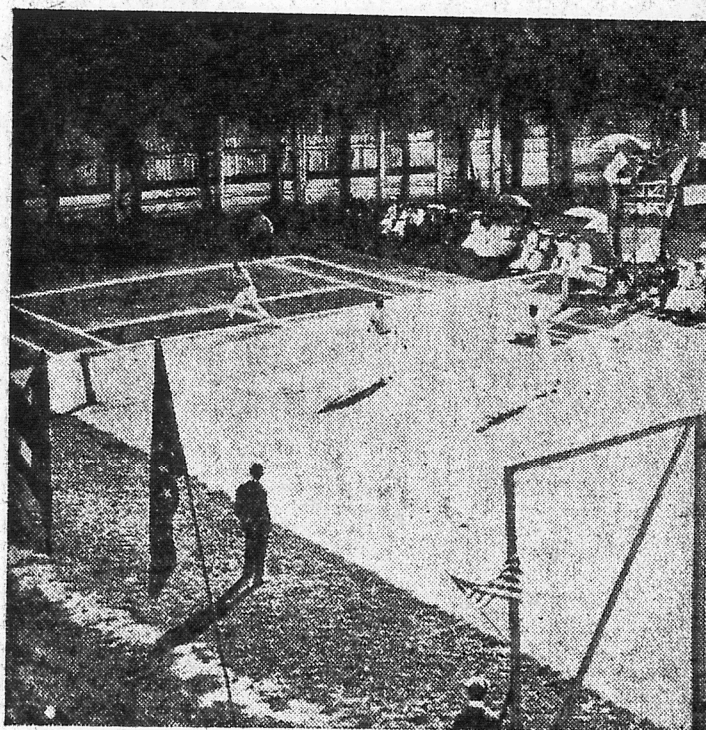


FIRST CHAMPION—W. A. Bethel, former judge advocate in the Department of Columbia Army Engineers, winner of the first state men's tournament singles title.



REAL CAMPAIGNER—Miss Stella Fording, Portland, who participated in finals of more than 20 events of the annual state tennis championship. She annexed one singles title and was on four winning doubles teams.

TOP NOTCH PERFORMER—participants in the early state. From left, back row, Walter James F. Ewing, R. C. Gorril Spokane; F. H. V. Andrews Victoria, B. C.; E. Cave-Brow



FIRST 'M' FIELD doubles court—Scene during the first state on the Multnomah club courts, which were situated at the south

PAST AND PRESENT STATE

Men's Singles

Men's Doubles

Women's Singles

Women's Doubles