

Sam Lee: NCAA Champion and Gentleman Player

It was a lucky day for Portland when recent Stanford graduate Sam Lee came to town in 1935. When he arrived, he rented a room at the Multnomah Athletic Club and joined the Irvington Club. He played tennis at both places until he was called into the service in 1942. The next 3½ years he spent in the Army Signal Corps Technical Liaison Division in Europe and ended World War II as a Major.

Despite his wartime duties, Lee had the opportunity to play tennis in Paris, Nice, and London. In 1945, tennis players were scattered around the wartorn world with too few players available to hold that year's Wimbledon tournament. However, Charlie Hare, a former British Cup player and a sergeant in the U.S. Army, organized a special Military Wimbledon and provided Lee his first chance to play at Wimbledon.

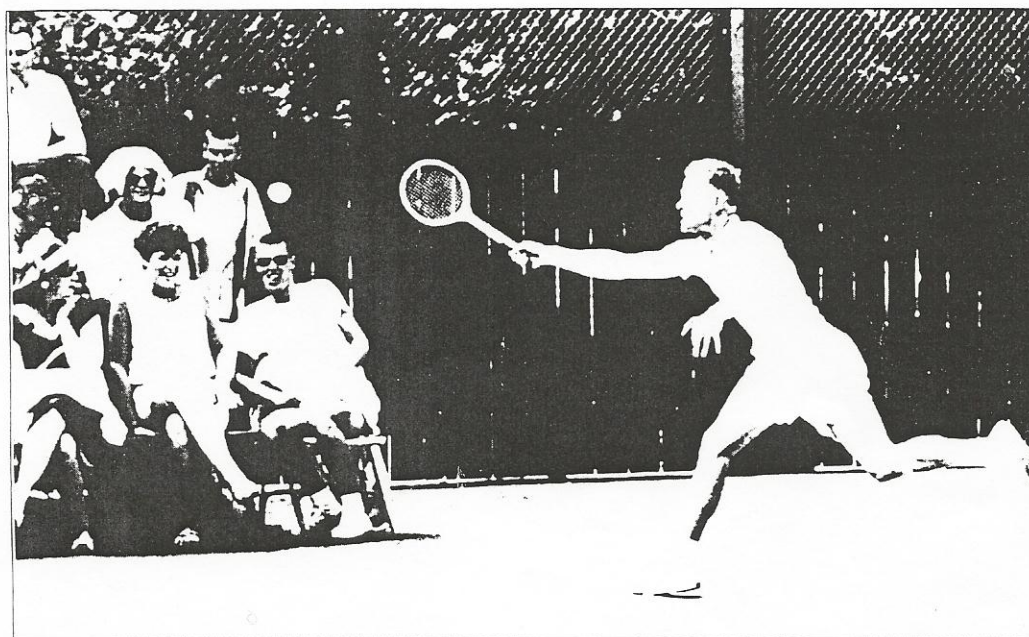
In 1947 and again in 1948, after winning the National Senior Indoor Doubles Championship, the United States Lawn Tennis Association invited Lee and his doubles partner, Emery Neale, to represent

the United States at the Wimbledon Seniors Tournament. Lee recalled the excellent grass courts, the Players' Box right next to the Royal Box, the players' lounge, and the free meals. "There's no place like it," he said. (Besides Lee, Elwood Cooke, Emery Neale, and Doris Popple represented the Irvington Club at Wimbledon.)

Lee learned to play tennis as a child in Berkeley, California by taking a few lessons, playing a lot and watching many great players. "Competition was a good teacher," he said. As a junior, he received high rankings in both the 15-and-Under and 18-and-Under divisions.

As a member of the Stanford tennis team, Lee won the National Intercollegiate (now NCAA) Doubles Championship in 1933 when he was a sophomore. After playing the eastern circuit, he was ranked 9th nationally in doubles.

In Portland his doubles partners included Elwood Cooke, Claude Hockley, Ross Hughes, and Emery Neale, with whom he won six Oregon State Tournament titles.



Sam Lee playing in the Oregon State Tournament in the early 1950s