

to develop a volleying technique. Players such as the Renshaws helped to remove fetishes on the game; in the first ten years of its existence long rallies were the approved method of play, and volleying was "hardly cricket, old man". The lowering of the net at the posts in 1882 and the introduction of the felt-covered ball about the same time brought the rules to their modern state. The use of the harder ball led at once to a higher standard of play.

So in ten years lawn tennis developed from a genteel pastime sponsored by croquet clubs to the world's most popular ballgame.

The mecca of modern tennis players, Wimbledon, was originally the ground of the "All England Croquet Club", and has been the scene of many famous duels in the seventy years the championships have been held there. Up till 1906 the men's singles championship was won by a competitor from Great Britain; between then and 1933 the title was won by a home competitor only twice, and the women's title has been won by an overseas player more often than by one from the British Isles.

For several reasons, Great Britain is not the ideal country for lawn tennis. Perhaps the greatest handicap to the game in England is the cricket-playing tradition in the schools and universities, while the weather, notoriously fickle, is also a limiting factor. California, the home of many great players, has a climate which makes tennis possible all the year round. Australian and South African players, too, are fortunate in this respect.

It was an American, Dwight F. Davis who, in 1900, offered a trophy for competition between lawn tennis teams from America and the British Isles. The Davis Cup contest has since been made an international fixture, and thirty-four countries have competed for it. In 1923, to save the time

and expense of travelling teams, the challenging teams were divided into two zones (Europe and America) the winner of each meeting to decide which should challenge the champion country. America has won the cup twelve times, Great Britain (with Ireland) ten times, France six times, and Australasia six times (Australia now enters as an independent team, and has won the cup once).

In no other sport probably is there such a sharp distinction between professionalism and amateurism; lawn tennis has no fixture comparable with the "Gentlemen versus Players" cricket match held annually in England. America is the fortress of professional tennis. In fact, many amateur international champions have migrated to the United States to "turn pro".

Almost everyone in New Zealand is within reasonable distance of a tennis court, which fact is sufficient indication of the popularity of the game there. The Dominion has produced several players of world class, including Captain A. F. Wilding. "Tony" won the championship at Wimbledon four times in succession (from 1910 to 1913), a feat which has not since been equalled.

The sport was flourishing in New Zealand before the war, but there are still many obstacles in the way of its development. The first is the inherited cricket-playing tradition in the schools, which results in a lack of coaching facilities for young players. While winter tennis is not universal, New Zealand players are at least more fortunate with their weather than English enthusiasts. Comparatively few leading overseas players have been seen in the country, and the Dominion's best exponents of the game often suffer from lack of competition. With the expected speed-up of post-war travel, it is hoped that New Zealand will not be considered so "out of the way".