

Joseph Johnson, *Grand Slam Australia: The Story of the Australian Open Tennis Championships*. Courtney Books, Victoria, 1985. Appendix, illus., pp.364. \$19.95

Bruce Matthews, *Game, Set and Glory: A History of the Australian Tennis Championships*. Five Mile Press, Victoria, 1985. Illus., index. pp.138. \$19.95.

Ask any of today's tennis fans who Rod Heath and 'Mall' Molesworth were and the chances are you will be met with a quizzical look. In fact, both feature prominently in two books, *Grand Slam Australia* and *Game, Set and Glory*, which deal with the history of the Australian Tennis Championships. Heath became the first winner of the Australasian (as it was then called) Men's Singles Championship in 1905 and 'Mall' Molesworth won the inaugural Women's Championship some 27 years later in 1922. Accordingly, their place in Australian sporting history is guaranteed.

The Australian Championships, it changed its name from Australasian in 1927, is considered one of the four major tournaments which make up the coveted Grand Slam, the others being the French Championships, Wimbledon and the U.S. Open.

Joseph Johnson, in his book aptly entitled *Grand Slam Australia*, focusses on each individual winner of the men's and women's single titles. In so doing he is sometimes guilty of wandering from the focal point. Nevertheless his detailed coverage of the early winners of the women's title provides the tennis enthusiast with much needed information on the pioneers of women's tennis in Australia and proves there was a women's game in existence before Margaret Court (Smith) came to the forefront in the 1960s.

In *Game, Set and Glory* author Bruce Matthews has taken the more conventional approach of dissecting each Championship year by year. As a result he has produced a history that flows more smoothly and is the more readable of the two books. However, in contrast to Johnson he could be accused of not giving enough space to the women and dwelling too long with the men's Championships.

The overall presentation of *Game, Set and Glory* is more polished and professional than *Grand Slam Australia*. The former is lavishly illustrated, contains an index and a set of results from the first tournament up to the 1984 Championships. Johnson's book lacks an index, surely an essential ingredient for a book of this nature, whilst the intermittent appearance of sketches of unidentified tennis players gives the book a 1950s look. He does, however, supply a more detailed list of results. Both books show the venues for all the Championships played since 1905.

It is inevitable that the books repeat many of the stories

associated with the Championships, but often the emphasis is on different aspects of those stories and there are occasions when the basic facts differ. For example Johnson claims Brazilian Maria Bueno had to forfeit the 1965 final to Margaret Court (then Smith) because of a twisted ankle. Bruce Matthews states the forfeit was due to cramp.

A comprehensive history of our national Championships was well overdue and these books largely fill that void.

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