

BOOK REVIEWS

Richard Evans, *Open Tennis: The First Twenty Years: The Players, the Politics, the Pressures, the Passion and the Great Matches*. Bloomsbury, London, 1988. Illus., index, pp.250. \$34.95

In 1968, for the first time in tennis history, all tournaments were made Open to both amateurs and professionals. The introduction of Open tennis created a major upheaval in the nature and scope of the game. Richard Evans, in his capacity as both tennis journalist and international tennis administrator, has provided a skilful, original and 'highly personalised account of the game's recent history' (p.1). Evans himself admits that 'in no sense is this an official history of the first twenty tumultuous years of... Open Tennis' (p.1). However, his subjectivity is one of the strengths of this book. Evans whose 'loyalties are to the game, not any political faction' (p.1) does not hesitate to give his opinion on any subject relating to tennis politics.

While the book progresses in rough chronological order, the author utilises the players, the politics, the pressures, the passions and the great matches as themes to convey an overview of the major influences which have affected open tennis. Evans deals with political intrigue, power complexes and hypocracies which along with more disinterested action of those with a love for the game characterised much of tennis administration during this period. Even drugs, sex and the effect of the portable 'walkman' upon the tennis circuit receive some attention. Evans concludes by using the success of the 1988 Australian Open at the new tennis centre in Victoria to highlight the rapid growth and future possibilities of Open Tennis throughout Australia and

the world.

The book's journalistic approach, while assisting the flow of both the structure and content, has its problems. At times, Evans presumes the reader knows about a particular incident or understands tennis terminology. Evans also fails to follow through on various subjects and this problem is intensified by his misplaced verbosity.

But, overall, this book provides highly valuable and revealing perspectives on the development of Open Tennis. It is a worthy account from a writer who himself helped create those first twenty years.

Virginia O'Farrell
History
University of New South Wales