

THE FIFTH SET

Australia and the Davis Cup

a century of international tennis

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TEACHERS NOTES



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For a century, the Davis Cup has been one of the world's greatest tennis competitions. Despite the lure of big money on the professional circuit, the cup continues to stand for sportsmanship, team spirit and national pride. For Australia, it has given us heroes like Norman Brookes, Ken Rosewall, Lew Hoad, Neale Fraser, Rod Laver, John Newcombe and Patrick Rafter. And it has helped define us as a nation, turning a rich person's game into a country's passion.

introduction

THE FIFTH SET is a tennis history of Australia. The video uses film clips and interviews to bring to life the game's past and the personalities who have become icons of Australian sport. Along the way, THE FIFTH SET offers insights into broader social, political and economic issues and more recently, the psychological aspects of playing sport at a world level.

Teachers in a variety of areas at secondary and tertiary levels could use it to illuminate social and cultural changes in Australian society during the last hundred years.

English teachers could show it to students who have few interests outside sport. It offers opportunities for students to write about or depict their favourite tennis star or tournament using a variety of written and artistic genres. SOSE teachers can take up the discussion points where relevant.

Australian History teachers may use it to provide alternative entry points to social changes in the 20th century.

Health and Physical Education teachers may take up issues such as fitness, behaviour at sporting events, parenting and sport, motivation and dealing with stress.

Tennis coaches could use segments to illustrate aspects of the game to young tennis players.

At tertiary level, it provides useful examples for further research for students of Australian History, Cultural Studies, Media Studies and Sport and Recreation.

themes & activities

Here are some of the themes that emerge from the video, with suggested activities for classroom use at secondary level.

It is quite a long video and might be better used in smaller segments, depending on the viewers.

tennis talk: key terms

People who like tennis may assume that others know what they are talking about, but not everyone knows the rules of tennis. There are essential terms you need in order to know what tennis 'nuts' are talking about.

How would you explain the following terms? Grand Slam, serve, volley, the line, placement, tournament, fault.

Add to this list to create a working tennis vocabulary. Think in terms of the court, the personnel, the equipment, the clothing and the rules to help you identify essential tennis talk.

Listen to a tennis commentary on television and radio. Compare these with a written report in a newspaper or magazine. What are the similarities and differences between the language and presentation styles used in the different media?

Produce an 'Understanding Tennis' poster with the terms and the best explanations.

Collect tennis headlines about a recent controversial sporting incident or tennis match or player. Use them to produce a collage that reveals a variety of interpretations of the incident.

Major public and university libraries have newspaper archives in microfiche form. where students could research past tennis incidents mentioned in the video. Current events can be researched on-line.

As an oral history exercise you could interview an older tennis fan to compare a personal recollection of an incident with the facts as stated in the media of the day.

tennis world: key courts & tournaments

Locate all the courts mentioned in the video on a world map to create a map of the Tennis World. Can you explain why tennis is so popular in some countries and not played in others?

What elements/qualities make a 'great' tennis tournament centre?

the Davis Cup

The Davis Cup was donated by a wealthy American, as a trophy for good sportsmanship. John Newcombe says, 'You've got to have country versus country to keep that spirit intact'. Do you agree?

Interview some tennis fans for their responses to this question and compare notes. The first Australian winner used the Cup as a flower bowl. Now it is valued at \$250,000. How do you explain the difference in its value and status over time?



tennis greats: key people

THE FIFTH SET profiles Australian tennis players from the earliest days of competitive tennis

Prepare a profile of your personal favourite tennis player, past or present. (You could check the websites at the end of these notes to help you find more details about players, past and present.) Use this information to prepare one of the following:

a tennis magazine article for young people

an interview for a television news bulletin

an obituary (for an example of this genre consider the media coverage of the death of the great Australian cricketer, Sir Donald Bradman in February 2001.

What questions would you ask? What questions might be inappropriate?

What writing styles are appropriate for these very different purposes?

Prepare a script for a one-minute radio news item on one of the tennis players featured in the video.

Frank Sedgman has a story worth investigating. As a thirteen-year-old he rang the coach of the national Davis Cup team and arranged to try out. It also took him an hour by tram to get to and from practice. Among other things, he was the first Australian player to use the 'serve-volley' style of play in a tournament. He was also the first Australian tennis 'star', featuring on the cover of magazines and receiving wide public attention.

How do young tennis stars get noticed today?

What sacrifices are involved in becoming a professional sports person?

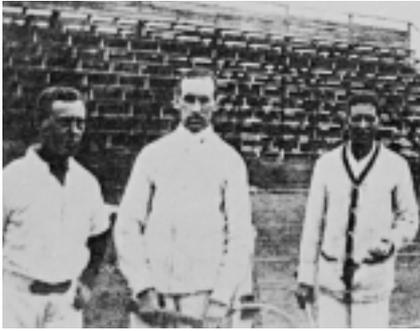
What effect do you think popularity and media attention has on sports stars and their families and relationships? Find evidence from articles and other media to support your opinion.

coaches

The Australian Davis Cup team has only had a few coaches in its entire history. All had their own styles and ways of achieving their goals.

Compare the controlling style of Harry Hopman, for example, with the more relaxed style of John Newcombe, as discussed in the video.

Most people have experienced good and bad sports coaching. Do a Negative Brainstorm to find the qualities of a 'bad' coach. Take five minutes in a group to think of all the ways a coach could make sure that a team would be unhappy and work ineffectively. Now reverse this to find the qualities of a 'good' coach. You could apply the same activity to the players themselves.



Watch some of the many popular films made about sporting teams that were losing until a new coach arrived. Are these realistic or idealistic?

Harry Hopman, the 'Fox', was committed to fitness, as he realised the game was no longer just for amateurs but needed a professional approach. He stressed the three S's: strength, stamina and speed. Was he correct? Has this changed?

tennis techniques

Watch the video carefully to identify the main changes in tennis techniques.

Imagine you are a player from 1905 who can travel forward in time to the Australian Open Championships this year. What would surprise you? What would still be familiar to you? You could include tennis playing techniques such as the two-handed backhand. This was considered very odd at when it was first used.

amateur or professional

'In the early 1900s tennis was a rich person's game.'

How does the video reveal this? What reasons can you suggest for this at that period in Australia's history?

Discuss the issue of sports for the 'rich' or 'elite' groups in society today. Which are 'expensive' sports and which are cheap?

In the 1950s players had to join sporting companies in order to survive. Their pay was 5 shillings a day.

Use newspapers of the day to find out how much this would buy. Find out the current value of this amount.

When the first Australian players joined the Jack Kramer professional touring circuit, it caused a lot of resentment among the public.

Prepare a list of positives and negatives for tennis players thinking about going professional at that time.

Estimate the costs involved in playing tennis for fun or in preparing to play competitive tennis today. Prepare a family budget to take into account a family member with a serious commitment to sport. Make sure you include costs of transport to and from practice and the cost of food for an elite athlete

sportsmanship

There would be no competition without both winners and losers.

Find a story, a poem or a video about winning or losing at sport and share it.

What does it mean to win or lose 'graciously'? Andre Agassi after his win in the 2001 Australian Open was a good example. His opponent was a good example of losing 'gracefully'. What are the personal qualities of a good loser and good winner?



At a low point in the Australian team's participation in the Davis Cup competition, when they had lost to Hungary in 1995, John Newcombe told the Australian team that 'Losing is a test of character. We're not leaving you. Now is when you find out how tall you can stand.'

What did he mean by this? Was this good advice? Add your own best suggestions for dealing with failure or bad luck.

In **THE FIFTH SET**, we see young players on tour in the 1950s having a pillow fight.

Compare good humour and pranks with some of the recent reports of vandalism and poor behaviour by travelling sports teams. Can you think of suggestions for preventing this kind of violent, rude or disruptive behaviour?

Write a report of an alleged sporting incident from one of three points of view: the police attending the incident, the sportsperson involved and the person whose property was damaged or who was injured in the incident. These can be presented to a class "jury" for a decision.

Many of the tennis stars and sporting personalities have interesting nicknames.

Identify some current sports nicknames in tennis or your favourite sport. Do you know or can you discover the stories behind them?

Are nicknames always welcome? Think of some positive and negative aspects of nicknames from your own experience.

sport supporters

Some Australian states have a spectator sports code. What is the basis for this code? Organise a debate on the pros and cons of such a code.

What do you like about public sporting events you have attended? What would you change?

parents & sport

What is the difference between parental support and unreasonable parental pressure? Find some examples of both types of parenting in the tennis world.

As a possible parent of the future, write a letter to your child telling them how you will treat them if they are successful at sport or if they are unsuccessful.

culture & sport

Tennis in the 21st century is a multi-million dollar business. It is also multicultural and more accessible to female players. The following activities may help you to explore cultural issues and their relationship to sport. As with all discussions involving culture, it is important to set

up a respectful atmosphere in which cultural values can be discussed without put-downs.

Locate the birthplaces and family backgrounds of the current world champions. Andre Agassi, for example, has an Iranian background.

You are hosting a sporting group from another country at your school and in your homes:

What should you consider to help them welcome and at home? Think about greetings, protocol, social status, food and drink, religious needs, clothing.

Now consider what they might need to know in order to avoid misunderstandings. What are some dos and don'ts in your school and home that you take for granted but a casual visitor might not know?

Choose a country that you would like to visit. Research the information that you would need as an informed visitor. For example you could fill in the following culture matrix as a checklist to prepare for your visit.

	WHAT TO SAY	BODY LANGUAGE	DO'S	DON'TS
greeting people				
special occasions				
meal times				
sporting events				

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women & sport

The Davis Cup is an all-male competition. Students could trace the participation of women in tennis over the years.

What barriers did they face and what competitions are open to them today? Do Indigenous Australian women face special barriers that need to be overcome in order for them to succeed at the top level in sport?

How have the rewards for women tennis players compared over the years with those for men? Have other professional sports changed in the same way?

Follow the career of a female tennis player you like. What are the highlights and low points? What can you learn from this about the sport and women's place in it?

sport & disability

The Paralympic Games 2000 were a showcase for athletes with disabilities, from all over the world. Their performances were watched by millions of viewers. They are described with words such as 'inspiring' and 'courageous'.

What qualities do they possess over and above an athlete without a physical or intellectual disability?

What qualities do they share?

Do you know a particularly inspiring story about an athlete with a disability?

sport & food

Investigate the ideal diet for a young athlete in training. What are acceptable foods and what are unacceptable? Prepare for a week a diary of what you eat and drink. How does this compare with an athlete's recommended diet? What are the differences?

sport & the media

When John Newcombe was a child, the only live access to Davis Cup matches was listening to the radio.

What role has the media played in the success of major sporting events such as the Davis Cup? What major changes have occurred in media coverage of sports events in the last twenty years? What might the next changes be?

war & sport

The 20th century saw two terrible world wars as well as numerous civil wars. These have meant that many talented tennis players have left their home countries.

What other long-term consequences does war have on a country's sporting life and future?

careers in sport

Sport is a huge industry earning vast amounts of money and employing many people apart from the players.

Identify potential jobs in sport. Here are some to start you off:

Official

Player

Coach

Development officer

Administrator/ manager

Trainer

Search the newspapers and websites for sports-related jobs. Check the qualifications needed for each job and the possibilities for advancement.

Don't forget volunteering. You may know someone who volunteered to help at the Olympics and the Para-Olympics. They weren't paid in money. Discuss what they may have got from this experience.

online resources

Here are few websites to get you started on your cyber-research

<http://www.naa.gov.au/visit-us/education/resources/index.aspx>

This page is the gateway to a variety of detailed teachers notes from the National Archives of Australia on aspects of Australian history, including '1901 and All That: A Federation Resource Kit' and 'Celebrations in our History'. All would provide added background to issues raised in THE FIFTH SET. 'Celebrations' also include sporting events.

<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/health-and-physical-education/rationale>

This website is useful for anyone considering a career in sport. There are a variety of roles available in the sporting world apart from being a player.

<http://www.chdf.org.au>

This site is a useful resource offering links to many other sites relating to health and sport, fitness, health promotion and general information on Australian and international sports.

<http://www.ausport.gov.au/ais>

Check out this site for sporting legend information. This one is Rod Laver's profile. Add to it with information from newspapers.

<http://www.tennis.com.au/>

This will lead you to other tennis links and information on current Australian players

http://www.ausopen.com/en_AU/players/nations/

This site has links to tennis championships in many countries.

<http://www.daviscup.com/en/home.aspx>

This site should help you find out all you need to know about the Davis Cup.

For further information about Film Australia's programs please contact:

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