



# The greatest tennis event in the world

This year, Wimbledon marks its 140th anniversary.

On 3 July, around 600 of the world's greatest tennis players will arrive at Wimbledon in London for the world-famous tennis tournament. For two weeks, players will battle it out to become a Wimbledon champion, a title that every tennis player dreams of winning. Around 500,000 spectators will flock to the courts to watch tennis, and of course, tuck into strawberries and cream – a dessert that is a symbol of Wimbledon.

The tournament isn't just a place where tennis players can shine, it is also steeped in history. This year marks the tournament's 140th anniversary. There are four major tennis tournaments known as Grand Slams: the Australian Open, the French Open, Wimbledon and the US Open, but Wimbledon has been described as "the granddaddy of them all" because it is also the oldest.



## EYES ON THE PRIZE

Wimbledon champions win a share of the £31.6 million prize money. Each singles champion gets around £2.2 million.

## Royal roots

Monks and kings have been playing a version of tennis indoors since the Middle Ages (a period between the 5th and 15th century). It is even rumoured that tennis balls belonging to King Henry VIII were found lodged in the roof of Westminster Hall when it was repaired in the 1920s. In 1873 an Englishman decided to adapt the sport so it could be played outdoors, and the first Wimbledon tournament was held on 9 July 1877. Around 200 spectators watched as Spencer Gore was crowned the first Wimbledon winner.



Henry VIII was a keen sportsman.

## RAINY DAYS

There have only been seven completely rain-free Wimbledons since 1977.



Andy Murray wins in 2016.

**LOUDEST SERVE**  
Tennis players are known for their loud grunts when they hit a ball, and Russia's Maria Sharapova has the loudest. In 2009, her grunt reached 101 decibels, which is as loud as a motorbike.

## Wimbledon in numbers

**54,250**

The average number of tennis balls used during each tournament.



**28 tonnes**

The amount of strawberries eaten during the competition.



**11 hours and 5 minutes**

The duration of the longest match ever played at Wimbledon (it was in 2010).

**147 mph**

The speed of the fastest men's serve.

## The grass is greener...

Wimbledon is the only Grand Slam tournament that has a day off in the middle. This is so that the groundsmen can tend to the grass. Around nine tonnes of grass seed are planted every year. Before the tournament starts, the grass is cut down to eight millimetres, which is the best length to allow a tennis ball to bounce.



## A timeline of Wimbledon

**1877**

The first Wimbledon tournament was held on 9 July 1877. A total of 21 matches were played over five days.



**1884**

Women didn't have their own Wimbledon event until 1884. The youngest woman ever to win the singles event was 15-year-old Charlotte "Lottie" Dod in 1887.

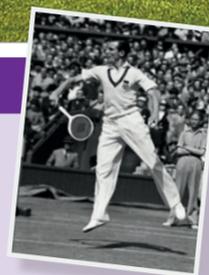
**1926**

In 1926, the Duke of York (who became King George VI) competed in the men's doubles. Unfortunately, he and his partner lost their match.



**1936**

Fred Perry won Wimbledon three times in 1934, 1935 and 1936 and was the last British man to win the tournament until Andy Murray's victory in 2013.



**1977**

The last British woman to win the singles title was Virginia Wade in 1977. She played the final in front of the Queen.



**1990**

US player Martina Navratilova won her ninth Wimbledon singles title at the 1990 Championships. This is more than any other female tennis player has ever won.



**2013**

Andy Murray won his first Wimbledon title, becoming the first British man to win it in 77 years. He beat the then world champion, Novak Djokovic.



## Get involved

Fancy being the next Andy Murray or Serena Williams? Why not get involved in a tennis club near you or take part in junior championships? For more information about tennis clubs, head over to [lta.org.uk](http://lta.org.uk)

