

STORIES FROM THE ARCHIVES:

The enduring popularity of tennis

The popular sport of tennis descends from a game called “real tennis” or “royal tennis” that probably began in France in the 12th century. It was known as *jeu de paume* (game of the palm) because the ball was struck with the palm of the hand. Racquets were introduced in the 16th century.

Lawn tennis, what we know today as tennis, began in Birmingham, England in the early 1860s. The first Lawn Tennis Championship was held at Wimbledon in 1877.

The popularity of the game arrived in Australia in 1875 when a “real tennis” club was established in Hobart. Five years later Australia’s first tennis tournament was held at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

We can read of a tennis club at PLC Sydney in the first issue of the *Aurora Australis*, published in December 1893.



Tennis court at PLC, 1894



“B” Tennis Team, 1913

Tildesley Shield

The Tildesley Tennis Shield competition was first held in 1918. It is named after Miss Evelyn Mary Tildesley, who was then the Headmistress of Normanhurst School, in Ashfield. She donated a beautiful oak and bronze shield that was to be awarded to the winning independent girls’ school.

It is the most coveted trophy in school tennis because it teaches the girls to play for their school rather than for themselves, its special value lying in the fact that at least 12 girls, with a maximum of 32, according to the number of pupils over 12 years of age, compete for the trophy, thereby giving a



number of the younger girls an opportunity of representing their school which they would not otherwise get until much later.

PLC Sydney first participated in 1920, when twenty girls took part in the competition.



Tildesley Shield tennis players, 1991



Nicole Kriz, Singles Winner, 1999

These are our results:

Year	Singles Winners	Singles Runners Up	Doubles Winners	Doubles Runners Up	Spender Cup (most improved school)
1924				Mary (Molly) Munsie & Phyllis Forsayth	
1925				Jessie Keyes & Vera Stacey	
1929			Valarie Smith & Gwen Smith		
1935				Daphne Johnston & Merrile Higgs	
1936				Daphne Johnston & Merrile Higgs	
1937		Barbara Crago			
1963			Anne Tidmarsh & Kerry Lawson		
1972	Jan Wilton				
1973	Jan Wilton				



1978				Wendy McWilliam & Anne McBurney	
1998		Nicole Kriz			
1999	Nicole Kriz		Michelle Gorzanelli & Amanda Stevenson		
2003		Julia Quan			
2008					PLC Sydney
2012		Angelique Svinos			
2019	Grace Schumacher				

Sources:

Lawn Tennis, F.R. Burrow, Series 27 Box 212

The Tildesley Shield 1918-1988, Jan Milburn and Kelvin Grose

Images from PLC Sydney Archives