**International Tennis Fellowship Of Rotarians**

Founded in 2004, the International Tennis Fellowship of Rotarians was approved by the Rotary International Board in March 2005. Today, it has close to 2,000 members from around 84 countries across all continents.

Membership of the International Tennis Fellowship of Rotarians is open to all Rotarians, Rotaractors and their partners and is free to join. Rotarians who can no longer play tennis, but love the game are also welcome.

The Fellowship’s objectives are to develop and promote worldwide friendship for Rotarians with a common interest in tennis; bring together Rotarians from around the world for tournaments and fellowship; serve the community and humanity, through tennis; and promote international understanding and peace. Its main activities are to ensure the organisation of the annual World Tennis Championship of Rotarians; organise regional matches and help tennis playing Rotarians to tour each other’s countries, share hospitality and recreation, visit local sites and experience different cultures; arrange social events and visits for Rotarians who can no longer play the game, but who still have a passion for tennis; and create an email list where members can discuss tennis and promote general fellowship.

Enthusiasm for tennis by the Fellowship’s members is a great testament to the game, which has evolved over centuries to become the extremely popular sport of today.

Historians believe that the game's origins lay in 12th century northern France, where a ball was struck with the palm of the hand. Louis X of France was a keen player of this game and became notable as the first person to construct indoor tennis courts in the modern style. The modern game of tennis came about between 1859 and 1865 when a game was developed that combined elements of racquets and the Basque ball game pelota, which was played on a croquet lawn in England. By 1872, the world's first tennis club for lawn tennis was founded at Leamington Spa. However, in 1874, British army officer Walter Clopton Wingfield began experimenting with a different version of lawn tennis, designing, patenting and then marketing a boxed set containing net, poles, rackets, balls and rules for a game called "sticky”. The marketing of this game popularised what was essentially lawn tennis and historians all agree that Wingfield deserves much of the credit for the development of modern tennis. That same year, the world's oldest tennis tournament took place at Leamington Lawn Tennis Club in Birmingham, and became an annual event. Three years later, the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club held its first championships at Wimbledon, in 1877. These first championships heralded significant debate on standardising the rules of tennis. While the establishment of various tennis bodies occurred in different countries, each still had their own rules until the International Tennis Federation was founded in 1913.

For more information on this Fellowship, visit: [itfr.org](http://www.itfr.org/webapp/f?p=109:1)

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