

It's Wimbledon

ONCE UPON a time it was possible to look forward to the Wimbledon championships.

That was back in the days when tennis had a number of characters - players who could provide skill, drama and excitement. Players like Jimmy Connors, Bjorn Borg and John McEnroe.

In contrast, nowadays there's Andre Agassi and, er, that's it.

I know that there is nothing worse than a nostalgia freak. More often than not someone who drones on and on about the good old days should be avoided at all costs, unless you're keen on death by boredom.

However, there are always exceptions to this rule. And in the case of Wimbledon I'm with the whingeing old codgers.

During the period which

began with the first grunts of Ilie 'Nasty' Nastase through to the last whine and glare of John McEnroe, Wimbledon fortnight guaranteed you a high quota of talent, tantrums and thrilling five-setters.

It seemed that if you were a player you couldn't get entry to the championship unless you had a gimmick - stupid or otherwise. Who could forget Jimmy Connors' ludicrous haircuts and ankle socks, or Bjorn Borg's refusal to shave until he was out of the contest, resulting in the most out of place fuzzy Swedish bum fluff gradually spreading across his deadly serious face.

Hell, even the women got into the business of being people first and tennis players second. Martina Navratilova had the class to 'come out' and have her lesbian relationship with a married woman spread across the

newspapers of the world.

Compare that to what we get now.

If there's a less charismatic sportsperson in the world than Pete Sampras I've yet to clap eyes on him. You can be sure that if he wasn't a tennis pro Pete would be scratching out a living as an accountant in Ohio, Kansas or some other dull part of the USA.

Or there's Thomas Muster, the Austrian who's got enough sense to avoid Wimbledon, but who's so lacking in class he's prepared to step out with Fergie, the skint and sad Duchess of York.

In the good old, bad old days the tennis set had the verve to form their own rock group. Today's lot have probably got their own croquet group.

Yes, before long we'll be calling it Yawn, not Lawn Tennis.

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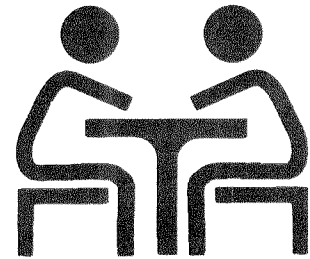
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As Euro '96 draws to a close, a local girls football team celebrates their first success in a national tournament.

Woods girls set for final

by Alan Wood

A GIRLS football team from Wester Hailes won their way through to the Scottish National finals of the Reebok Five's.

The girls play in one of the Woods Youth Centre's five-a-side teams and are the regional winners of the girls under twelve age group.

The tournament has been running at Meadowbank for a few years now and has the backing of top stars such as Ryan Giggs of Manchester United, Jason McAteer of Liverpool, and Ruel Fox of Tottenham Hotspur.

No team from Wester Hailes has ever gone as far in the tournament as the

girls from Woods YC.

There were almost fifty teams from all over Lothian at the event and the girls did really well to win the Edinburgh region.

They will now go on to play in the Scottish National Finals at Meadowbank on 27 July, where they have been drawn against the runners-up of the Cunningham regional tournament.

If they can win the Scottish Finals they will go on to play in the United Kingdom finals at Bolton, England, on 31st August.

Previous winners of the UK tournament have found themselves invited to compete in places like

Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, and Florida, USA, for the world finals of the Reebok Five's.

Coach Mark Brown said: "The girls have done really well. They have given the whole place a lift. The kids are buzzing with excitement about how the team will get on in the Scottish finals." Assistant Coach Liz Wight said: "We are all very proud of the girls. They haven't been together that long and for them to win something as big as this is a bit of a surprise."

But Mark and Liz both stressed that the most important thing was for the girls to enjoy themselves.



"We are all very proud of the girls to win something as big as this is a bit of a surprise"

Liz Wight - Assistant Coach

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