

# The Wimbledon Championships

Wimbledon is the world's oldest tennis tournament and is thought by many to be the most prestigious. Since 1877 it has been held at the All England Club in Wimbledon, London. It is one of the four Grand Slam tennis tournaments (majors), the others being the French Open, the Australian Open and the US Open. Wimbledon is the only major still played on traditional grass, the game's original surface, which gave the game its original name of 'lawn tennis'.



## Events

The five main events are the gentlemen's singles, ladies' singles, gentlemen's doubles, ladies' doubles and mixed doubles.

There are also four junior events including the boys' and girls' singles and doubles matches.

In addition to this, there are invitation events where some former professionals return to compete. Wheelchair singles and doubles matches also take place.

## Tickets

The majority of centre court tickets are made available by a public ballot where applicants are selected at random by a computer. Due to the popularity of the event, the public ballot has always been oversubscribed. Fans without tickets can queue up overnight to get seats on match day.

## Schedule

In 2017, the championships began and ended in July, making the gap between the tournament and the French Open a little longer. Usually, there is no play on the 'Middle Sunday', however bad weather has sometimes forced play on this day. The middle Sunday is classed as a rest day for the players.

## The Courts

The principal court, Centre Court, was opened in 1922. In 2009, a moving roof was added to this court which can be automatically closed.

The main courts, Centre Court and No. 1 Court, are generally only used for two weeks every year during the championships. The other 17 courts are used for other events hosted by the club.

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## Trophies and Prize Money

The gentlemen's singles champion receives a silver gilt cup which bears the inscription: 'All England Lawn Tennis Club Single Handed Championship of the World.' The women's singles champion receives a sterling silver salver which is decorated with figures from mythology. The winners keep a smaller replica of their trophy.

The prize money for the winners runs into the millions!



## A Few Famous Champions

Martina Navratilova won a record nine Wimbledon singles titles. She often commentates on the women's matches.

Serena Williams, and her sister Venus, have won Wimbledon several times. They have even competed against each other in the singles final. The sisters have also paired up and won the Wimbledon women's

doubles title on a number of occasions.

Pete Sampras won seven singles titles at Wimbledon, all between 1993 and 2000.

Roger Federer won Wimbledon five times in a row between 2003 and 2007, a period where he totally dominated grass court tennis.

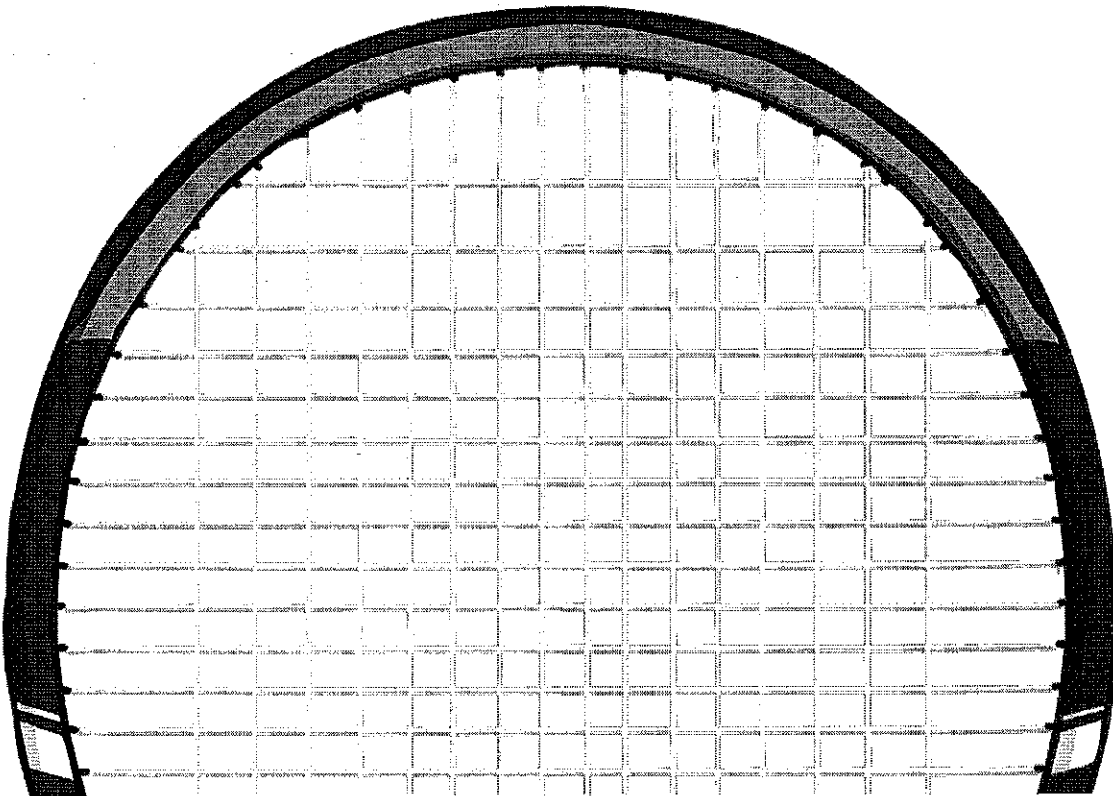
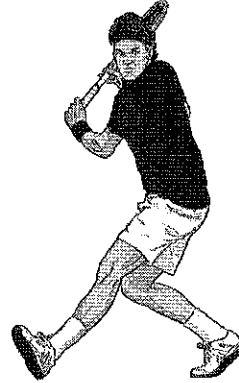
In 2013, Sir Andy Murray won the men's singles title. He was the first British singles winner since 1977 and the first male winner since 1936!



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## Did You Know?

- Wimbledon's Centre Court seats 14,979 people.
- An average of 86,000 ice creams are sold during the championships and 28,000kg of strawberries are consumed.
- A hawk called Rufus flies around the grounds to deter local pigeons.
- The longest ever match played at Wimbledon lasted for over 11 hours!
- During the tournament, 40 miles of string is needed to restring rackets!
- Tennis players' clothing must be all-white, or at least almost all-white.
- Players must bow or curtsy if HRH The Prince of Wales or Her Majesty the Queen is present in the Royal Box at Centre Court.



# Wimbledon

1. List all four Grand Slam tennis tournaments.

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2. Outline the main events at Wimbledon.

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3. Why did Wimbledon start later in 2017?

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4. What is special about 'Middle Sunday'?

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5. How are the main show courts used differently to the other courts throughout the year?

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6. The Williams sisters have played against each other in the Wimbledon women's singles final. How would you have felt if you had been playing against your brother or sister in the Wimbledon finals? If you don't have any brothers or sisters, imagine playing against your best friend.

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7. Which year was the roof added onto Centre Court?

- ☐ 2006
- ☐ 2007
- ☐ 2008
- ☐ 2009

8. Why do you think the winners keep replicas and not the original trophies?

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9. The hawk which flies around the grounds to scare away pigeons is called \_\_\_\_\_

10. What qualities do you think a person needs to become a Wimbledon champion? Explain your choices.

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### Extension activity

Find out who won the men's and ladies singles titles in 2010 and 2015. Which countries did they represent?

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