

THE NATIONAL JUNIOR AND BOYS' TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Forest Hills of the Midwest

Catherine M. Stowe  
Local History Project  
June, 1978

What do Rod Laver, Arthur Ashe, Cliff Richey, Stan Smith and Jimmy Connors have in common? Besides the fact that they are among the top tennis players of today, they also share the distinction of having been "stars" in the National Junior and Boys Tennis Championships in their youth. Approximately eighty-five hundred boys have played in the Nationals, over the thirty-five years it has been in Kalamazoo. The tournament, along with the sport of tennis, has grown in many ways over the years. The number of players has grown from ninety, in 1943, to close to three hundred in 1977. The tournament's budget has skyrocketed from about \$3000 in 1949 to about \$45,000 in 1975. Tennis, itself, has become a money-making sport, both for the players and the promoters. It rivals golf in the size of the purses offered in tournaments. Of course, no prize money is offered at the Nationals in Kalamazoo, but the experience and prestige derived from the tournament has made it a "stepping stone" into the pro tour. The boys' goal in the past was to be chosen for the Junior Davis Cup Squad and eventually to play in Davis Cup competition. Boys in today's tournaments have the goals of becoming a professional to inspire them. The following dissertation traces the development of the National Junior and Boys Championship from the modest tournament of 1943 to the tremendous display of 1977.

In 1943, the United States Lawn Tennis Association (U.S.L.T.A.) scheduled the National Junior and Boys' Tennis Championships at Kalamazoo College, during the last week of July. The tournament was brought to Kalamazoo, largely through the efforts of Dr. Allen B. Stowe, professor of chemistry and tennis coach at K-College. It had been held at Culver Military Academy until the United States entrance into World War II made its retention impossible. The matches were played on five Grasstex courts on Academy Street, which had been built two years before with the hope of attracting larger tournaments. The Nationals were the first tournament of such stature awarded to Michigan.

There were ninety-two boys entered in the 1943 tournament. The players, their parents and coaches were all housed and fed during the week on the Kalamazoo College campus. Since the campus was quite small, all the facilities were conveniently within walking distance. Recreation was provided for the players after the matches in the form of a picnic and a dance. Spectators could watch the matches free of charge. All expenses were covered by the Kalamazoo Tennis Club, Kalamazoo College and the Chamber of Commerce. Among the spectators were the Navy and Army trainees who were being stationed at Kalamazoo College and Western Michigan University. The Fort Custer military band was also present. The champions the first year at Kalamazoo were Bob Falkenburg in the Junior division and little Herbie Flam in the Boys'. In 1944, Bob Falkenburg had to request a furlough from the Army to

return and defend his title. Both attempts were successful. The tournament had a definite military flavor again, with the trainees and soldier band in the audience and pistol and rifle marksmanship demonstrations as entertainment for the players.

By the end of the third tournament, in 1945, it had become apparent to everyone involved; players, officials and spectators; that a new facility was necessary. The existing courts limited the draw and number of spectators able to attend the tournament. More than this, the location of the courts, next to the New York- Central Railroad tracks was disruptive to the play, due to the noise and soot from the trains. The U.S.L.T.A. offered a five year contract if a new stadium could be furnished. Almost before any building plans for the stadium were announced, the community had raised the \$50,000 needed. The stadium, located at the corner of West Main and Carmel Streets, had nine clay courts and a permanent seating capacity of fifteen hundred.

Another first in 1946 was the charging of admission. The tickets were one dollar and twenty cents for the semi-final and finals matches. The reasoning behind this was that admission fees were charged at other national meets of the same caliber. The tournament had hit the "Big Time" and Kalamazooans were proud to be the hosts. Banners began to appear across West Main Street announcing the tournament, attempting to spur public interest. In 1947, Jimmy Farrell, of Kalamazoo, became the first Michigan boy to reach the semifinals. Usually the California delegation would dominate

the tournament, although the clay courts slowed them up somewhat, since they were used to hard surfaces. During the 1948 tournament, special attention was paid to members of the press and they were entertained at Win Schuler's restaurant in Marshall one meeting. An executive committee meeting of the Western Lawn Tennis Association was held on Friday evening at Kalamazoo College. The annual dance for the players made the society page with three big pictures, showing local girls dancing and chatting with the tennis players.

The weeks between July 24 and August 6, 1949 were designated Tennis Weeks in Kalamazoo. The Western Regional Tournament was held the first week and the National Junior and Boys' Championships the next. A citizen's committee was set up to plan special events which would stimulate public interest. They planned a Father-Son night and an Industrial night during Nationals week. Free tickets were given to the Boy Scouts, Y.M.C.A., the Third Street Community Center and to boys taking tennis lessons at the old courts that summer. In an article in the Kalamazoo Gazette, it was concluded that "tennis can be a money-making venture." Tennis was exciting in 1949, too, as Ham Richardson came close to matching the record which Vinnie Richards had set in 1919, that of winning three consecutive Junior titles. He was unsuccessful, leaving Gil Bogley to become the seventh boy to win the Junior championship two years in a row.

The Nationals of 1950 brought with it the reminder that the five year contract with the U.S.L.T.A. would end with

the tournament. The town and planning committee set out to make it the best tournament ever. Sue Ralston, a girls' tennis champ, was named "Miss Tennis" and served as official hostess during the week. She presided over the opening ceremonies and started things off officially by throwing out the first ball. The Kalamazoo Gazette informed the public that all the great stars, with the exception of Pancho Gonzales, had played in the National Junior and Boys' Championships. The tournament also made the front page of the Gazette the day before it opened, saying it was "one of the most colorful tournaments in the United States." The quality of tennis was exceptionally good, with Ham Richardson returning for another try at the Junior title. He went through the tournament and became the first sixteen year old in recent history to win. His four-set triumph was called "the finest Junior singles match in the history of the tournament" by W. Matson Tobin, chairman of the U.S.L.T.A. Junior Development Program. Both finalists, Richardson and Whitney Reed, received positions on the Junior Davis Cup Squad. The Junior Davis Cup Program sponsored a limited number of Juniors and nineteen year olds in supervised practice and men's tournament competition in order to strengthen the game of future Davis Cup candidates.

The contract between Kalamazoo College and the U.S.L.T.A. was renewed and the draw was the largest ever in 1951, a total of one hundred ninety-six boys were entered in the tournament. The week was full of misfortune, as the rains delayed play, and the round of sixteen on Thursday left

only four of the fifteen seeded Juniors and eight Boys in play. These upsets were the greatest in the Championships' history. In the semi-final round of the Junior division, catastrophe struck again. Bob Perry, #1 seed, dislocated his knee at match point. His opponent, Al Kuhn, seeing that Perry could not move, graciously double-faulted, thus moving Bob Perry into the finals with Ted Rogers. The next day, Ted Rogers became the first champion by default. He protested, wanting to postpone the match, but it was not possible. It is interesting to note that in record books, no mention is made of the default.

The tenth tournament in Kalamazoo was again designated "Tennis Week" at the request of 'Doc' Stowe, the tournament director. Mayor Glenn Allen commended the tournament, calling it "one of the finest things to happen in Kalamazoo", and giving credit to 'Doc' and Kalamazoo College. That year, 1952, the race for the title was wide open, with all but the #4 seed hailing from California. It was noted in a sports column of the Gazette that there were "more candidates for the Junior title than Democrats seeking the Presidential nomination." As an added incentive to the already nerve-wracking competition, the winner of the Junior title would also receive a berth on the U.S. Davis Cup Squad. The threat of rain plagued the week-long tournament, which had recently been expanded from six to seven days to ease the schedule. When the rain did come, every available court in Kalamazoo was put into use, representing a "masterpiece of ingenuity and organization." The tournament had to stay on schedule so as

to not interfere with other commitments for the following week. The Junior Champion of 1952, Jack Frost, collapsed after the final match, with cramps in his stomach and chest due to the tension and the heat. The doubles finals were finished up in the midst of a downpour, with the players slipping and covered with red clay.

The townspeople were beginning to volunteer their time to help in the running of the tournament, as well as its planning. They filled positions as umpires and linesmen, while the younger crowd served as ballboys and grounds crew. Interest had grown to such a high point in 1953, that WKZO radio, in Kalamazoo, decided to broadcast the Junior finals. In 1954, 'Doc' Stowe commented that the tournament could easily be moved to Atlanta, Georgia, where an adequate facility had recently been built. He warned that community support was essential to retention of the contract in 1955. One the outstanding qualities of the Kalamazoo tournament was its folksy atmosphere. This was produced by the individualized treatment of the players and families by the tournament officials and by the genuine interest shown by the townspeople.

The rally cry went out in 1955, in an all out effort to have the contract renewed. The planning committee had loaded the week with promotional gimmicks, such as reduced prices at the two twilight matches and a Photography Day, complete with Miss Michigan. There was a record entry of two hundred thirty-three players and Don Budge, coach of the Junior Davis Cup Squad was scheduled to come to pick new members.

The Kalamazoo Gazette was servicing the Associated Press and sixteen other newspapers. In the midst of all the hub-bub, Esteban Reyes of Mexico captured the Junior title, making him the first foreign entry ever to win the championship. But not the last....

As the entries for the 1956 tournament began to pour in, Kalamazoo seemed to be in for some of the most interesting tennis ever. Ronald Holmberg, a member of the U.S. Davis Cup team for the Canadian match entered, along with the first boy from "Down-Under", Rodney Laver, of Rockhampton, Australia. Another player of interest, especially to the local teenage girls, was Eric H. Nelson, better known as Ricky Nelson of the popular television show, "The Nelsons." Also making his first appearance in Kalamazoo, or in any other major tournament, was the thirteen year old protege of Dr. Walter Johnson, Arthur Ashe, Jr. Ashe had not been permitted to play in any other tournaments because of racial discrimination.

The excitement of Nationals week was intensified by an irate cable from the mayor of Honolulu, scolding the director for slating the Hawaiian entry, Henry Kamakana, as a foreign seed. A cable was returned explaining that 'Doc' Stowe had wanted to give Kamakana a foreign seed as an honor because he was the only player outside the continental United States, in his division, with the ability to warrant a seed. Later, 'Doc' decided to treat him as a U. S. citizen, but placed him in the draw as if he had received the seeding. The mix-up occurred through lack of

communication with the wire service. Mayor Glenn Allen sent a cable also, along with a crate of Kalamazoo celery and an invitation to next year's tournament.

In the semi-final round, the local people again were hopeful of having a Michigan boy win the championship. Ray Senkowski, of Hamtramck, became the first Michigan boy to reach the finals in either division. On the closing day of the tournament, Senkowski made history again, by becoming the first Michigan tennis player to win the Boys' championship. It was a great day for tennis history, August 5, 1956, as Rod Laver became the first Australian and second foreigner to claim the Junior title. One of the most colorful tournaments ever was to be 'Doc' Stowe's last.

The next year, 1957, began with the tragic news of "Doc" Stowe's death, in February, as a result of an auto-pedestrian accident. 'Doc' had been very active in tennis, not only serving as director of the tournament for fourteen years, but as tennis coach of Kalamazoo College and running various classes and tournaments for local children. He served on the executive committee of the Western Lawn Tennis Association as well as the United States Lawn Tennis Association.

In 1953, Dr. Stowe was the first recipient of the Samuel Hardy Award, given for outstanding service in the field of tennis education. In 1956, he was cited by the Kalamazoo Optimists' Club as the "man who had done the most for the youth in the community." For many years he was fondly referred to as "Mr. Tennis." At his funeral, Dr. Weimer

K. Hicks, president of Kalamazoo College paid tribute to him with these words. "Tennis with Dr. Stowe was far more than a sport; it was an educational experience. He placed the development of men far above athletic proficiency. 'Doc' lived for, and with his boys. After a twelve hour day of a National Tournament, he would return to the dorm to supervise the off-court activities of the players. They were his boys and he their counselor and friend." 1

In March of 1957, Dr. Hicks, in an effort to uphold the tennis tradition in Kalamazoo, called on Rolla Anderson, athletic director at the college, to take over the tournament's planning, which was already underway. Rolla had been introduced to the proceedings the year before. He and Ralph Ellis put together a fine affair, complete with a parade and a tennis queen, which was designated "The Dr. Allen B. Stowe Memorial Tournament." The basic format was kept the same, although Anderson built an organization, which divided the different duties into committees.

In the tournament of 1958, there were approximately fifty people working on committees concerning entertainment, publicity, ticket sales and concessions. Thirty others were trained as referees, while some fifty local children made up a squad of ballrunners. Several area businessmen agreed to make up the deficit for the year and possibly for the following year. Concern was expressed by Rolla Anderson, who felt that the skin-tight budget did not do the tournament justice. The cost for each player for the week, in terms of room and board was about fifty dollars, with housing

still in the dorms and meals in the cafeteria. The size of the draw was ever increasing, with two hundred fifty-five entries and some fifty others having been turned down. The maximum number of players able to be in the draw was two hundred forty; one hundred twenty-eight in the Junior division, ninety-six in the Boys division, with eight alternates/in each. A preliminary round was necessary to narrow the field before the first round. Every effort had always been made to enable as many boys as possible to have a chance at tournament play.

In 1958, Earl Buchholz and his younger brother Cliff, were seeded #1 in the Junior and Boys divisions, respectively; an unusual "first" for the tourney. Rain disrupted play on three of the first four days and the efforts to keep on schedule only added an extra burden to the players. The Kalamazoo Gazette commented that the players seemed to be "raising more cries of anguish on the courts this year under the pressure of the late rounds." Two signs of strain; and temper, a tennis "sin"; were shown by Earl Buchholz hitting a ball over the flagpole and Chuck McKinley slamming one over the press box. Earl went on to win the Junior championship, thus claiming the U.S., English and French Junior titles. He was called the finest player since Ham Richardson of 1950. Paul Palmer received the first annual Sportsmanship trophy, which was given in honor of Dr. Allen B. Stowe.

The 1959 National tournament was expected to have one of the strongest fields in the Junior division in a long

time. In both divisions the competition for the title was thrown wide-open, as the age limitations moved the last year's winners into different categories. Martin L. Tressel, chairman of the U.S.L.T.A. Junior Development Program, visited the tournament and commented on the tremendous growth in the Junior program. He said that the budget had increased by twenty times over the past two years. He was attempting to sell tennis to kids at the high school and elementary level, by promoting the value of physical fitness and the lifetime benefits of tennis. The Davis Cup was on display at the tournament and one hundred and fifty townspeople worked on committees. Rolla Anderson was quoted in the Gazette as saying "without their services the tournament could not be run." A huge, new scoreboard was added to the scene, donated by Coca-Cola.

The year 1960 marked the forty-fifth anniversary of the National Junior and Boys' Tennis Championships and the eighteenth year at Kalamazoo College. A smaller, more effective scoreboard had replaced the Coca-Cola monstrosity. The strongest field in years was expected, with five of the top ten Juniors qualified to return. Dennis Ralston would be back to defend his Junior title of the year before. Of the forty-six nationally ranked Juniors, twenty-eight were scheduled to come to Kalamazoo. A preliminary round was again needed to reduce the entry to fit the draw.

Arthur Ashe defeated Bob Siska in the quarter-final round. Afterwards, Siska, still in the doubles competition, was irked at the fans. He withdrew from the tournament and

went home. Dennis Ralston's chances to win the championship for two straight years, were dashed by Bill Lenoir in the semi-final round. Lenoir, who had an unorthodox two-handed forehand and backhand grip, went on to take the title. He met Frank Froehling for the title, their third encounter in the finals round in three weeks. Tom Price, of the U.S.L.T.A., said that they were the best crop of Juniors since Jack Kramer, Ted Schroeder and Vic Seixas were in the Nationals in 1939. Both finals victories were short and sweet; the Junior match taking one hour and five minutes and the Boys match, with Mike Belkin as the victor, lasting just thirty-five minutes.

The National tournament of 1961 saw the increase of admission prices to one dollar for daily admission, one dollar and twenty cents for the quarter- and semi-final round and one dollar and fifty cents for the finals. Despite this, the publicity committee hoped to attract larger crowds, which seemed to have dwindled considerably since the record-breaking dedication crowd of two thousand in 1946. Kalamazoo patrons also helped defray the costs in 1961, recognizing the significance of the tournament as being the only national sports event held annually in town.

Another wide-open tournament began with a preliminary round. The Gazette said that Arthur Ashe, #2 seed in the Juniors, had an "excellent chance of becoming the first member of his race to win a U.S. title." His goal was to win and be named to the Junior Davis Cup Squad. Rain plagued the tournament schedule throughout the week, a

total of five days of rain. The matches could be continued inside Kalamazoo College's Tennis House, although at a much slower pace, as there were only two courts. Of course, the other courts around town were put into play as soon as possible. Some of the players found the transfer from the clay to hard surface presented problems in their playing styles. The rain even caused the doubles finals to be held indoors, the first time any final match had ever been played inside. The singles finals were able to be played out on center court the following day. The seedings proved to be true, as the top seeds in both divisions captured the titles; Charles Pasarell in the Juniors and William Harris in the Boys. Pasarell, although a Puerto Rican citizen, was not a foreign seed as he had stayed with the Buchholz family in order to go to school in the States.

A new age ruling by the U.S.L.T.A. tightened up the divisions in 1962. The Junior division changed from eighteen and under to seventeen to eighteen years of age, while the Boys was redefined as fifteen to sixteen year olds instead of fifteen and under. The campus was busier than in past years, since the quarter system had gone into effect at Kalamazoo College that year. This meant all of the players could not be housed on campus, so several community families opened their homes to the players and their families. The twentieth year in Kalamazoo saw Mike Belkin take the Junior title and Cliff Richey capture the Boys championship and the return of former champion Gil Bogley to present the trophies.

In 1963, an Advanced Tennis Clinic for local players and coaches was scheduled during tournament week. Consolation matches for first round casualties were an added plus, thus giving the boys more of a chance to do what they came to Kalamazoo for, to play tennis. The number one player, Gary Rose, succumbed to the pressure at the top in the third round. Once again, rainy weather caused confusion. The finals round was played under sunny skies, with Cliff Richey becoming the youngest player to win the Junior title and one of the only boys to win back to back titles in the two divisions. The largest audience in thirteen summers, seven hundred strong, turned out for the closing day of the tournament. At the close, a rumor was circulating that the courts would be resurfaced with a fast drying, hard surface before next year.

The new Laykold surface had replaced the clay on all the courts by the week before the tournament was to open. New lights were put up to make night matches possible. The cost of the remodeling was more than twice the amount used eighteen years before to build the stadium. Billboards and banners appeared throughout the city in an effort to increase public interest. Another scheme to familiarize potential spectators with the intricacies of tennis was a week long series of articles in the Gazette, written by George Acker, tennis coach at Kalamazoo College. These efforts apparently paid off in large numbers, as a crowd of sixteen hundred was present for the dedication of the new green and white courts and the first night matches.

The season ticket price had been reduced from five dollars and fifty cents to three dollars and the Monday night ceremonies were free. Rolla Anderson said that despite the wonderful turnout, no more night matches would be played, except in emergencies. There would be matches at noon for box lunch patrons, featuring the seeded players.

A newcomer to the Nationals in 1964 was Stan Smith, who was ranked third in the Junior division. For the third year in a row, the Junior champion had passed up defense of his title to play on the men's circuit. The early rounds took a heavy toll of seeded players, four of them were out after the first round. The matches in the Boys division ran behind because of thirty-five matches which went to three sets. In the round of sixteen, nine players were from California. The audiences for the semi-finals and finals were fairly large, with twelve hundred showing up to watch Stan Smith win the Junior title in straight sets. With his win, he returned the championship to California for the first time in five years. He celebrated his victory by jumping the net to shake hands with his opponent Bill Harris. His first visit to Kalamazoo was also his last time to play in the tournament.

The 1965 tournament was distinctive from previous years in several respects. It was a year of yet another contract renewal and the college and tournament officials were determined to maintain the tourney in Kalamazoo. The matches were to begin on the first Monday in August instead of the last Monday in July. The reason for this was to develop

a Junior tennis circuit, with more playing time in the summer before the Nationals.

Three night programs were on the agenda. The first of these featured seeded players in both divisions and drew a crowd eighteen hundred spectators, despite the facts that a Tiger-White Sox game was on television and the weather became very chilly. The night programs proved to be a huge success, drawing a total of four thousand people for the three nights, even with the coldest weather in tournament history. At a noon time program, some one hundred fifty Kalamazoo Rotarians watched the matches while eating box lunches. The success in drawing the record crowds was largely credited to Jim Orwin, general chairman of the tournament.

The Junior finals match was delayed by rain after the first three games. The match began at 1:30 P.M. and was finished five hours and thirty-five minutes later under the lights, with Bob Lutz emerging triumphant.

The tournament of 1966 had a new look to it, a look which would continue and eventually become a tradition. It was the year of the first exhibition match between members of the U.S. Davis Cup Squad. The three main purposes of the exhibitions were that it was a good promotional device, it brought in extra, and badly needed, income, and it was good entertainment for both the players and the spectators.

The first exhibition featured Dennis Ralston and Clark Graebner, both previous champions in the Nationals at Kalamazoo. Over the next several years, both Arthur Ashe and Jimmy Connors were invited back on two occasions, al-

though each was only able to return once. Ashe had to cancel in 1967 because Vice-President Hubert Humphrey invited him to tour the ghettos of Washington, D.C. Connors had to cancel his second appearance in 1975 because he was nursing an injury. The champion of the crowd drawers was Stan Smith, drawing an audience of over five thousand at his third appearance. The plan for inviting exhibition players expanded to having the previous year's Junior champ return, in addition to the Davis Cup players.

It seems that attempts at scheduling more than one exhibition during the tournament have always been futile. Maybe it would be asking for too much of a good thing. Most of the exhibition players are products of the Nationals, of course, with the exception of 1977's players from the Virginia Slims Tour, Sue Barker and Mariana Simionescu.

The caliber of play at the tournament was improving every year, as the number of tennis players grew larger and each section of the country could become more selective in picking candidates for the Nationals. Bob Wagner, a sportswriter for the Kalamazoo Gazette, mentioned the fact that about ninety percent of the men champions since 1952 were products of the Nationals. In the 1967 tournament, the list of seeded players in the Boys division contained many more future stars. Among these were Dick Stockton (#2), Roscoe Tanner (#4), Jimmy Connors (#5), and Brian Gottfried (#6).

There were ten members of the Junior Davis Cup team entered in the 1968 tournament. That year was an important

year for tennis as a whole. It was in 1968 that the first open tournament was played at Wimbledon, which enabled pros and amateurs to play together in the same tournament. This revelation was not to be felt directly in Kalamazoo, for the Nationals were a strictly amateur competition, but its impact was to change the goals of many of the players in the future.

Meanwhile as the quality of tennis steadily improved, so did the organization and accommodations in Kalamazoo. The number of people working on tournament committees grew from one hundred fifty, in 1966, to over three hundred in 1973, which meant that there were more workers than tennis players! Every year there were more volunteers, people working out of love for the game, receiving very little recognition and absolutely no money. There were new public relations programs, such as, area service clubs having lunch at courtside, ball days for children, similar to cap and bat days at baseball games, and Michigan Day where all children got in free of charge. Gate receipts were at an all time high, with approximately twenty thousand fans attending the 1968 tournament.

The length of the tournament expanded to nine days, in 1970, spreading from Saturday to the following Sunday. This gave the players a little more room to breathe and in the event of a rain-out, the pressure of make-up matches would be greatly reduced. Along with this increase, came an increase in general admission prices; for a season pass from five dollars to ten dollars for adults and three dollars

to seven dollars and fifty cents for children. A box seat section with a canopy and formed plastic seats was added, at a rate of twenty-five dollars for the week, not including the exhibition match. The stadium courts were resurfaced twice more, once in 1970 and again in 1972. Umpire's chairs and courtside scoreboards were added, along with an A-frame building which served as an information center and gift shop.

The 1972 tournament entertained a wide-open battle for the Junior title. Bill Martin, a fifteen year old and 1971 Boys champion was #3 seed, Freddy DeJesus was #2 and Vitas Gerulaitis was #1. Gerulaitis drew the largest galleries when on court with his clowning around. It was said that his "court manners made the establishment cringe." He had played mostly on the men's circuit that summer but had returned for a final try at the Nationals. Gerulaitis was defeated by Patrick DuPre (#4) in the semi-final round and was scheduled to meet Freddy DeJesus in the final round on Sunday. Saturday afternoon, DuPre played in the doubles final and after the loss of the match, he was accidentally hit in the thigh by his partner's racket. The blow, hard enough to crack the racket head, caused a contusion to the thigh muscle and things looked dim for the singles final round. The second default in the history of the tournament was avoided as Patrick DuPre played with his thigh tightly wrapped. He won the title and received his second standing ovation in twenty-four hours.

In 1973, Pepsi-Cola joined the tournament forces through their sponsorship of Stan Smith for the exhibition. There was no blatant commercialism, only a few red, white and blue umbrellas for the umpires' chairs, with the Pepsi logo on them. Tournament director Anderson was very cautious in accepting sponsorship from large corporations, mainly out of fear of losing support from the local patrons.

"Tennis was nearing its peak in popularity across the nation and was shedding its image as a rich man's sport that must be started extremely young to be successful," related Bob Wagner, sportswriter from the Gazette. He used Stan Smith as a primary example, pointing out that Smith did not come from a wealthy background and did not become interested in tennis until high school, where he was already a basketball star.

He did not use young Bill Martin as an example, however. Martin was #1 seed in the 1973 tournament and when he won it, he became the second youngest player to win a Junior title under the new age restrictions. In fact, with his victory in the Junior division, he had won every Junior title in existence and was the top Junior player in the world. He moved on to the men's circuit and returned in defense of his title in 1974, saying he wanted to see if he could play under pressure. Martin had played and beaten several of the U.S. Davis Cup Squad the week before the tournament, but the pressure of being #1 and the defending champion in the Nationals proved to be too much for him, as Bill Maze defeated him in straight sets in the semi-

finals. This was Bill Martin's first loss since 1973. Maze's victory was short-lived as he lost to Ferdi Taygan in the final round before a crowd of twenty-two hundred.

The Nationals of 1975 saw Ferdi Taygan and Bill Martin passing up their last year in the Junior division to turn pro. There was no truly dominant Junior in the field, although Howard Schoenfield was #1 seed and won the title. Larry Gottfried, the younger brother of the 1970 Junior champion, Brian Gottfried, won the Boys title. Both boys returned in 1976, Howard out to defend his title and Larry, now also in the Junior division, out to capture it. Schoenfield had not been playing tennis for six or seven months and had not decided to come until the last minute, making it necessary for another boy from the Southern Californian delegation to stay home to make a place for him. Larry Gottfried met and defeated the weary champ, Howard Schoenfield, in the semi-final round. Gottfried then went to become the second boy to win back to back titles, matching Cliff Richey's achievement of 1963.

Many things have changed over the thirty-five years the tournament has been in Kalamazoo, including the name, which is now officially called the National Boys' 18 and 16 Tennis Championships. One aspect which remains relatively unchanged, however, is the friendly atmosphere of the community. The entertainment and host family programs set Kalamazoo's tournament apart from any other tournament on the Junior circuit. Often the players' mothers travel with them

and generally there is little more for them to do than watch their son's matches and do his laundry. But not in Kalamazoo. There are several parties for the adults associated with the tournament, as well as separate entertainment for the players. These programs and more are run by citizen volunteers.

The community supports the Nationals in ways other than volunteering its services. Many local businesses give financial support to the tournament and often benefit from increased sales during that week. Although in recent years, it has become necessary to accept sponsorship from a few large corporations, such as Pepsi-Cola, an effort has been made to keep commercialization of the tournament at a minimum. Director Rolla Anderson feels that too many big sponsors would tend to reduce public support. He feels that community interest is one of the best features of Kalamazoo, as far as retention of the tournament is concerned. Many other larger metropolitan areas have comparable facilities, but Anderson feels that none has the established organization and support that Kalamazoo has.

The 1977 tournament, which marked the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Nationals in Kalamazoo had changed in its outward appearance from the one of 1943. A casual observer may not have been able to discern any similarities between the two. But the most important element of the tournament has remained relatively unchanged and that is the concern for the boys who are the players. The primary objective remains to provide tournament competition for the young players to aid in their development as athletes.

Past players have often commented on the superior quality of the Nationals in Kalamazoo. One young man stated, at the end of his career as a Junior, that it was "a wonderful event...I'm sorry I can't come back again." But, like many others, Dick Stockton did return, this time as an exhibition player. Kalamazoo is known throughout the tennis world and is part of many players' memories of their youth. As Bob Wagner, of the Gazette, so aptly put it, "the Nationals have put Kalamazoo on the map. Or is it the other way around?"

SOURCES

Kalamazoo Gazette, 1943-1977, from the second week of July through the first week in August.

Western Lawn Tennis Association Bulletin, March, 1957.  
The note on page ten is taken from this.

INTERVIEWS

Mr. Rolla Anderson

Mrs. Harriet Stowe Rosenbaum

Mrs. Dorothea Davis Stowe

Mr. Donald Stowe

Dr. Robert A. Stowe

Mr. Robert Wagner

Mrs. Doris Stowe Weber