The Daily News

25 %
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VOL.,i...NO.I VINTAGE TELEGRAPH.COM PRICE: 1.00 $



CHARLOTTE COOPER: PIONEER IN WOMEN'S TENNIS

Charlotte Cooper was the first ever female Olympic champion. She was born on 22nd September, 1870 in London. She started training at the Ealing Lawn Tennis Club, in London. There she was coached by H. Lawrence, followed by Charles Martin and Harold Mahony who worked on her mental game, as well as the physical side.

Wearing a dress that went down to her ankles in courts, Cooper won her first senior title in 1893 at an English tournament before becoming one of the most successful Wimbledon players in history.

Over a seven-year period, Cooper played in eight consecutive finals in Wimbledon where she would win the title four times.

She would also win the title again in 1908 to become the oldest woman in history to do so. A record that still remains today.

Cooper was also a pioneer in the Olympics where she became the first woman in history to win a gold medal, at Paris 1900.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of Cooper's tennis career was the fact that the majority of her successes were achieved after she was declared completely deaf at the age of 26. The last time she could hear the balls at Wimbledon was the year she first won the title in 1895.

"Not only was she the first Woman to triumph at the Olympics, she was the first with a disability to do so some 60 years before the birth of the Paralympic Games."

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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As for her style of play, a well-known tennis journalist Arthur Wallis once wrote that Cooper's volleying abilities at the time were so great that she could rival most male players on the court.

In her personal life Cooper also managed to balance life as a tennis player with family responsibilities. She married Alfred Sterry in 1901, who later became president of the Lawn Tennis Association, and together they had two children. Their daughter Gwen also became a successful player who represented Great Britain in the Wightman Cup (a team tennis competition for women contested between Great Britain and the United States of America). Until this day, Cooper remains one of only four women to have ever won a Wimbledon title after giving birth.

Cooper died on 10 October 1966 at the age of 96, in Helensburgh, Scotland.



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READING COMPREHENSION

EXERCISE 1

Are the following sentences true or false?

1. Charlotte Cooper's nationality is British. True or False
2. She received only physical training. True or False
3. The first competition she ever won was Wimbledon. True or False
4. She lost in four finals at Wimbledon. True or False
5. She was deaf when she became the oldest woman to win the Wimbledon title. True or False
6. She was the first gold medalist in France 1900. True or False
7. She was more successful before she became deaf. True or False
8. She participated in the first Paralympic Games. True or False
9. According to an expert, she could have competed against men without any disadvantage. True or False
10. She is among the few women who won a Wimbledon title after becoming mothers. True or False

EXERCISE 2

Now, complete the sentences so they are all true. If they are true, just repeat the information from exercise 1.

1. Charlotte Cooper's nationality is _____.
2. She received _____ training.
3. The first competition she ever won was _____.
4. She lost in _____ finals at Wimbledon.
5. She was _____ when she became the oldest woman to win the Wimbledon title.
6. She was the first gold medalist in _____.
7. She was more successful _____ she became deaf.
8. She _____ in the first Paralympic Games.
9. According to an expert, she could have competed against men _____.
10. She is among the few women who won a Wimbledon title _____ becoming mothers.

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