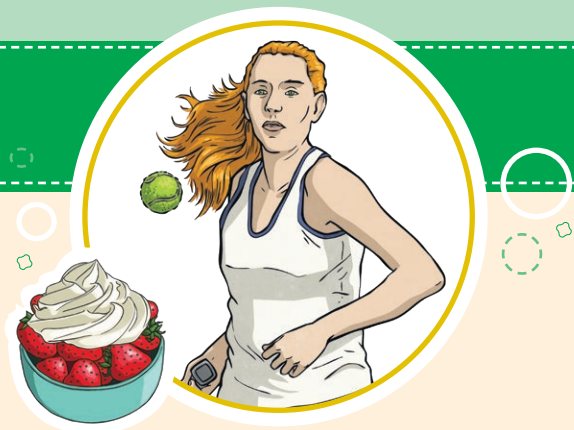


# Wimbledon

Wimbledon is one of four world-famous **professional** tennis competitions called the Grand Slams. The other three are the French Open, the US Open and the Australian Open. Wimbledon is formally called The Championships, Wimbledon. It occurs annually around the end of June and through the first few weeks of July and welcomes players from all over the world.



## History



Commonly referred to as the oldest tennis tournament worldwide, Wimbledon was established in 1877 at the All England Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club in Wimbledon, London. During this first competition, 22 men competed and around 200 people attended the final match. Today, around 128 players participate in Wimbledon and over 50 million people watch various matches on their screens or by attending the competition in person.

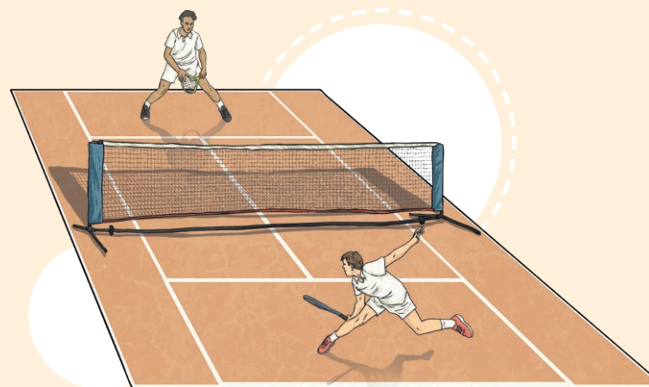
In 1884, the first women's championship took place. Currently, along with the men's and women's **singles** matches, there are men's **doubles**, women's doubles and mixed doubles, alongside wheelchair and junior events.

## The Royal Family



Throughout its history, Wimbledon has had strong ties with the British monarchy. In 1926, the Duke of York (the future King George VI) participated in the competition but lost in his first round. For many years, Prince Edward, the Duke of Kent, was president of the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club and often

presented Wimbledon trophies to the winning players. Queen Elizabeth II was Wimbledon's royal patron for several years until 2016 when HRH Catherine, Princess of Wales, took over the position.



## Prize Money



In 1968, Wimbledon began awarding its winners prize money. Until then, only **amateur** players were allowed to play at Wimbledon. Sometimes, prize money can amount to millions of pounds. For many years, men were awarded more prize money than women. In 2007, Wimbledon began to award equal amounts of prize money to both the men's and women's champions.

## Fun Facts About Wimbledon

### 1. Clothing Requirements

Wimbledon requires all players to wear mostly white clothing. If they do not comply with this rule, referees can ask them to change their clothes.

### 2. Yellow Balls

Initially, only white tennis balls were used at Wimbledon. However, it was discovered that TV viewers couldn't see them so in 1986, the balls were changed to yellow.

### 3. Refrigerated Tennis Balls

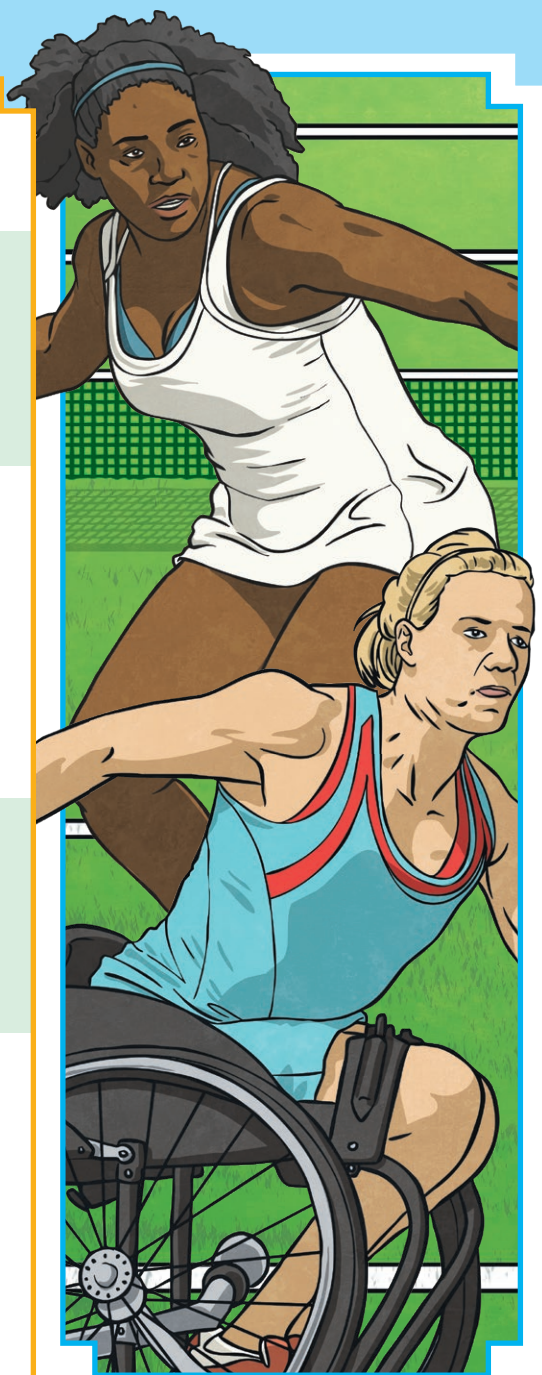
To make sure they are in ideal condition, tennis balls are stored in refrigerators! On average, over 54,000 balls are used during Wimbledon.

### 4. Ball Boys and Girls (BBGs)

BBGs kneel at the side of the court and grab any loose tennis balls that come near them during a game. Surprisingly, BBGs must pass many tests and take part in a challenging training programme to be selected for the job.

### 5. The Longest Match

In 2010, two players had a match that was 11 hours and 5 minutes long!



## Glossary

**amateur:** In sport, an athlete who participates as a hobby and not as a career.

**doubles:** When two tennis players compete as a team.

**professional:** Doing something as a paid job and not just a hobby.

**singles:** When a tennis player competes against another tennis player by themselves.

# Questions

1. How many players currently participate in Wimbledon? Tick one.

- ☐ 22  
☐ 200  
☐ 128  
☐ 50

2. Draw **four** lines to match each number to the correct fact.

The Duke of York...

was Wimbledon's royal patron for many years.

Queen Elizabeth II...

has been Wimbledon's royal patron since 2016.

HRH Catherine, Princess of Wales...

participated in the 1926 Wimbledon competition.

The Duke of Kent...

was president of the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club.

3. What colour were the tennis balls at Wimbledon initially?

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4. Look at the section called **The Royal Family**.

Find and copy one word that means the same as 'took part in'

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5. Fill in the missing words.

Surprisingly, BBGs must pass many tests and take part in a \_\_\_\_\_ training \_\_\_\_\_ to be selected for the job.

6. Look at the section called **The Royal Family**.

What do you think was the author's intention when they used the phrase **strong ties**?  
Explain your answer.

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7. Would you like to become a BBG? Explain your answer.

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8. Summarise what you have learnt about Wimbledon in 25 words or fewer.

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