

## NATIONAL ABORIGINES DAY

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# N.A.D. first tennis tournament a success

By Bruce Wilson, Aborigines Welfare Board welfare officer, who organized the tournament and encouraged 46 to compete.

On Sunday 7th July a tennis tournament was held at White City tennis courts for Aboriginal people living in Sydney. It was held as part of National Aborigines Day celebrations and turned out to be a big success.

It is hoped the tournament will be held again next year and that it will be an even bigger and better event.

Possibly some people didn't enter this year because they did not consider they were good enough players and were scared of White City. But they need not have thought like that. There were some entrants this year who were not Wimbledon material but they entered into the spirit of the tournament and all had an enjoyable day. It was also their participation that made the tournament eventuate.

Success also of the day was in one way due to the publicity the tournament received. Radio 2GB gave it numerous spots over the air and at least two television stations mentioned it during their sporting shows. Entry forms were also sent to Aboriginal people living in Sydney and a great many entries were received through the Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs. In all, 46 people entered either the men's and women's singles or the mixed doubles—some competitors travelling from as far as Penrith and Warragamba to play.

White City is controlled by the N.S.W. Lawn Tennis Association and is where the Davis Cup and all major tennis tournaments are held. In all, there are 33 grass courts and 3 main centre courts on which the Davis Cup matches are held.

The Association was kind enough to allow the competitors to use 13 courts free of charge and also the privilege of running the finals on the 3 centre courts in the afternoon.

Slazengers also were kind enough to donate 5 racquets, a dozen tennis balls and \$25 to purchase prizes for the winners.

Play got under way just after 10 a.m. with everyone eager to defeat his opponent. However there had to be a victor, and one by one those defeated were eliminated. In the early rounds with so many matches being played it was difficult to predict who would be the victor.

In the men's singles however, the second youngest competitor, a lad called Ron Powell, recorded very good wins. Ron, who is at present staying at Kirinari Hostel, is a student at Gymea High School. He improved as the day went on and eventually defeated Mr Charles Perkins in the grand final in a very interesting match.

In the women's singles also there were many keenly fought matches. Finally, two emerged to play against each other in the grand final. They were Barbara Saunders and Mrs Ray Hirst. It was the last match of the day and even though the light was beginning to fade the excitement in the closing stages kept the spectators watching to the end.

For a while it looked like going to three sets, but Barbara was able to hold off a valiant attempt by Mrs Hirst, and won the second set 6-4 after a victorious first set win of 6-2.

In the event that held most interest, the mixed doubles, lack of time prevented a winning couple to be determined. This was unfortunate as it would have been an interesting match between the two grand finalists, Mr and Mrs Hirst versus Mildred Butt and Rodney Powell.

The latter pair had teamed up on the day and it proved to be a worthy partnership.

It was decided that both couples should receive prizes, and with the presentation of the prizes a very happy day was concluded.