

A girl from Dudley and Wimbledon Tennis Champion

Dorothy Round was born on 13 July 1909 in. She was the youngest of four children born to John Benjamin Round, a building contractor, and his wife Maude Helena. The family lived in Park Road, Dudley. The house was substantial and included a hard tennis court laid down by her grandfather.

Dorothy was interested in sport from an early age and spent much of her leisure time playing tennis with and against her brothers on their court.



Dorothy was also a good student and qualified to attend Dudley Girls High School from the age of 11. It was at this early age that Dorothy had the opportunity to show off her sporting abilities in the school tennis competition.

Dorothy was 16 when she entered her first tennis tournament which was held at , in Wales. In September 1925, she entered the junior championships, and on 7 September 1925 she won the singles junior title, defeating Miss Lily Darby of Smethwick in straight sets. In the same year she won the Worcestershire singles junior title and retained it along with the doubles title in 1926. In September of the same year she competed in the Junior Tennis Championships at Wimbledon, where she got as far as the semi-finals.

The following year (1927), she entered the Worcestershire County Lawn Tennis Tournament, and won three titles; becoming the singles, doubles and mixed

doubles champion.

Dorothy Round entered her first in 1928, after coming through the qualifying event, and was knocked out in the first round by Miss N. Trentham, the score being 6–2, 6–8, 8–6. The following year she suffered from nerves as was defeated in the second round by . In 1929, her picture featured in the "Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News" where she was billed as "a rising player". Dorothy put in some impressive performances at the Wightman Cup trials held at Wimbledon in April 1930, defeating a number of established British players. In the same month, one of the top British male players, "Bunny" Austin called Round "a Bright new star".

In 1930 she made her first tennis trip abroad, to the where she entered the doubles event, partnered by and the mixed doubles event, partnered by Mr . Her participation in the tournament resulted in a number of newspapers

commenting on the possible difficulties caused by her refusal to play on Sunday because of her religious principles and the fact that the finals of the French Championships were played on that day. She reached the semi-finals of the doubles, where the English pair were beaten by the French pair Mathieu and Barbier, 7–5, 7–5. She also reached the third round of the mixed doubles. In this year it was reported that she was being coached by .

During the 1930s, American ruled the courts, with Dorothy Edith Round Little not far behind, staking her claim as the top British female player of her generation. Wimbledon was her playground of choice, and she won five of her six total major championship titles playing on the hallowed grass courts.

At the she reached the quarterfinal stage for the first time after defeating fifth-seeded in the third round and was rewarded with a spot on the British team for the , the annual women's team tennis competition between Great Britain and the United States, which in 1931 was held in August at Forest Hills. She lost her singles match against in three sets after failing to convert any of her seven matchpoints.

Later in the same month, she reached the doubles final of the U.S. National Championships at Forest Hill, where she was partnered by Helen Jacobs. The pair went on to lose to Miss Betty Nuthall and Mrs. Fearnley Whittingstall, the score being 6–2, 6–4.

In 1932 she again reached the Wimbledon singles quarterfinal in which she was decisively beaten by first-seeded and three-time Wimbledon champion , 6–0, 6–1.



In May 1933, Dorothy scored a victory over in the final of the , the score being 3–6, 6–2, 6–3. At the she was seeded no. 2 and after a win against Helen Jacobs in the semi-final, she reached her first final. Wills Moody, now five-time Wimbledon singles title-holder, proved too strong but Dorothy managed to take a set from her, which was the first set Wills Moody lost in a Grand Slam final since 1925.

She proceeded with a tour to the United States where she competed in the and won the singles title at the in Rye, beating compatriot in the final. The result of the match, held on 12 August 1933, was: 6–2, 6–4. Dorothy competed in the 1933 , held in San Francisco, and was a runner-up to in the singles event but won the doubles event partnering .

In February and March 1934, Dorothy travelled with a British team to the Jamaican Tennis Championships. She reached the singles final but was beaten by Helen Jacobs, 6–4, 6–1. In May 1935,

Dorothy retained her British Hard Court Championships single title in , beating in the final.

WIMBLEDON

Dorothy had failed to beat Moody in the 1933 Wimbledon Ladies final, 6-4, 6-8, 6-3, and was seeded number 2 in the 1934 Wimbledon Championships. She went on to win the tournament in 1934, defeating the sixth seeded player, Lolette Payot, in the quarter-finals and the eighth seed, Simonne Mathieu, in the semis, before beating Helen Jacobs in three sets: 6-2, 5-7, 6-3 to take the title. She also won the mixed doubles competition, partnered by the Japanese player, .

In January 1935, Dorothy had her first book on tennis, *Modern Lawn Tennis*, published by George Newnes.

She lost her Wimbledon singles title in the summer of 1935, defeated in the quarter-finals by the Australian, , 6-4, 4-6, 3-6. However, she retained her mixed doubles title in that year, partnered by . The pair beat the Australians, and , the score being 7-5, 4-6, 6-2. In July 1935, it was reported that she had taken a post as a dress designer and sports wear adviser to a firm of outfitters.

Despite being the top seed in the singles of the Wimbledon Championships of summer 1936, She went out at the quarter-final stage, beaten by the German player, . This match generated some controversy, when, during play, Dorothy broke a shoulder strap. When she requested permission to leave court to change, her opponent Sperling replied that she would prefer to

keep on playing in case she got cold whilst waiting Dorothy was forced to carry on with the strap held by a safety pin. Despite the singles loss, she retained her mixed doubles title, again partnered by Fred Perry. The pair defeated and , 7-9, 7-5, 6-4. In July 1936, a "lawn tennis experiment" was staged in the form of a match between Dorothy and a top male player . The match undertaken on "handicap terms" ended even at one set all.

Dorothy won her second Wimbledon title in 1937, defeating Poland's Jadwiga Jedrzejowska in a competitively-played three-set match, 6-2, 2-6, 7-5.

Dorothy won both the 1934 and 1937 Wimbledon titles, becoming the first Englishwoman to do so since in 1926.



AUSTRALIAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

In late 1934, Dorothy Round was part of a British team that sailed to Australasia, arriving at Auckland on 2 November 1934 on board the . After playing matches in New Zealand, the British team moved on to Australia in mid-November, where they were given a reception by the New South Lawn Tennis Association on 19 November 1934.

Dorothy won the , held in , in December 1934 after a two-sets win in the final against . In January 1935, she added the Australian Championships title to her Wimbledon one, beating her British compatriot, Glover, in the three set final, the score being 6–1, 1–6, 6–1. With this victory, Dorothy Round became the first overseas player to win the Australian Championships

WIGHTMAN CUP (USA)

Dorothy played the Wightman Cup for England from 1931 to 1936, and was ranked in the World Top 10 from 1933–1937, reaching the top position in 1934.

In early 1937, Dorothy Round was appointed to the National Advisory Council of Physical Fitness, tasked with improving the fitness of the nation. Dorothy married, civil engineer Dr. Douglas Little in September 1937. The wedding took place at Wesley Methodist Church in Dudley and drew the attention of thousands of local people who wanted to wish the married couple well. There is film of some of the event on YouTube.

Final Wimbledon appearance

Following her marriage and birth of her son in July of the following year, Dorothy took a break from tennis competition. In January 1938, her second instructional book, *Tennis for Girls* was published. In August 1938, she presented a trophy that she, herself, had donated to the winner of the women's singles of the Pwllheli tennis tournament. In December 1938, it was reported that Dorothy was planning a come-back to competitive tennis, although she stated that her participation at Wimbledon would be dependent on the progress she made during the year. She returned to tennis in 1939, appearing at the Herga Club's Tournament in Harrow at the end of March. She won her first tournament after her comeback on 13 April 1939, winning the Tally Ho! club's Easter tournament. Later in the year she reached the fourth round in the singles where she lost in the fourth round to , 6-1, 3-6, 6-2. and the third round of the doubles at Wimbledon. In August 1939, playing as Mrs Little at the Pwllheli Tennis Tournament, she won her own trophy, the Dorothy Round Challenge Cup.

In May 1940, Dorothy won the doubles, partnered by Mrs. S. H. Hammersley, at the Priory Lawn Tennis Tournament held at Edgbaston, Birmingham. In July 1940, she announced that she was planning to go to Canada with her young son and that she was considering turning "pro" and doing some coaching.



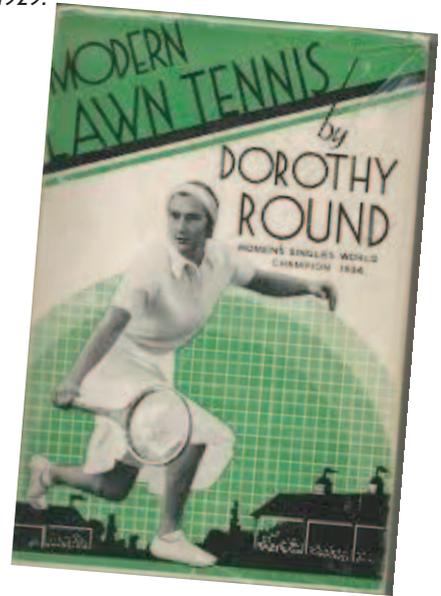
LEFT: Dorothy Round World ranked No. 1, 1934 & Betty Nuttall, ranked World No.4, 1929.

Playing and coaching in North America

In July 1940, Round went to Canada with her two-year old son, Ian, and whilst there she became a professional tennis coach. She also took part in competitions, exhibition matches and raised money for charity in Canada and the USA as well as promote the sale of War Bonds in the U.S. In August 1940, Dorothy won both the singles and doubles (partnered by Mrs Ross Harrington) in the Eastern Canada Championships held at Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Dorothy Round-Little turned professional in 1941, when she accepted a summer coaching position at the Seigniory Tennis Club in Canada. On 19 November of the same year, she appeared in an exhibition match together with Mary Hardwick at Duke University. In February 1942, Round was living on the campus of where she took over the coaching post from , who had decided to carry out civil defence work.

In June 1942, Dorothy appeared with Mary Hardwick, Bobby Riggs and Wayne Sabin in a tennis exhibition held at the Edgemoor Club, Washington D.C. The event was to raise money for the British and American Ambulance Corps. At the event, she was introduced to , founder of the Davis Cup.



Dorothy Round's first book on tennis, published in 1935 by George Newnes.

Her later playing career

In 1944, Dorothy returned to the UK, where she performed exhibition matches and was reinstated as an amateur by the . There was speculation that she would make a return to Wimbledon in 1946, although, according to the contemporary player and sports journalist, , former professionals could not appear at the Wimbledon Championships or at national championships organised under the jurisdiction of the International Lawn Tennis Association. However, Dorothy remained an active tennis player, and after a break in 1946 when she had her second child, a daughter, Patricia. She continued to appear in British tournaments and in June 1947 it was announced that she would be covering the Wimbledon Championships

The Blackcountryman

for the regional paper, the . In August 1947, she appeared at the reaching the final of the singles and winning the doubles and mixed doubles titles. In July 1948, she appeared at the Midlands Counties Championship in Birmingham where she lost the singles final to Barbara Knapp. In September 1949, Round was part of the Worcestershire team playing in the Inter-Counties Hard Court Tournament against a South Wales team. Dorothy reached the third round of the singles in the held in Birmingham, in 1950.

Tennis-linked activities after finishing her playing career

In the 1953 and 1954, Dorothy wrote articles for regional British newspapers, including a regular column named "Dorothy Round on Tennis".

In 1963, Round coached tennis at in Vermont. In the following year, she was coaching tennis at Halesowen Grammar School.

Dorothy Round-Little died on 12 November 1982, aged 74, in Kidderminster. Beloved in her hometown of Dudley, a statue of Little was commissioned for placement in Priory Park, adjacent to the park tennis courts in 2003. The statue is named "The Return of Dorothy Round", sculpted by John McKenna and depicts the champion about to return a serve while posed atop a tennis ball.

She was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame in 1986.



Dorothy Round's second book on tennis, published in 1938.

