

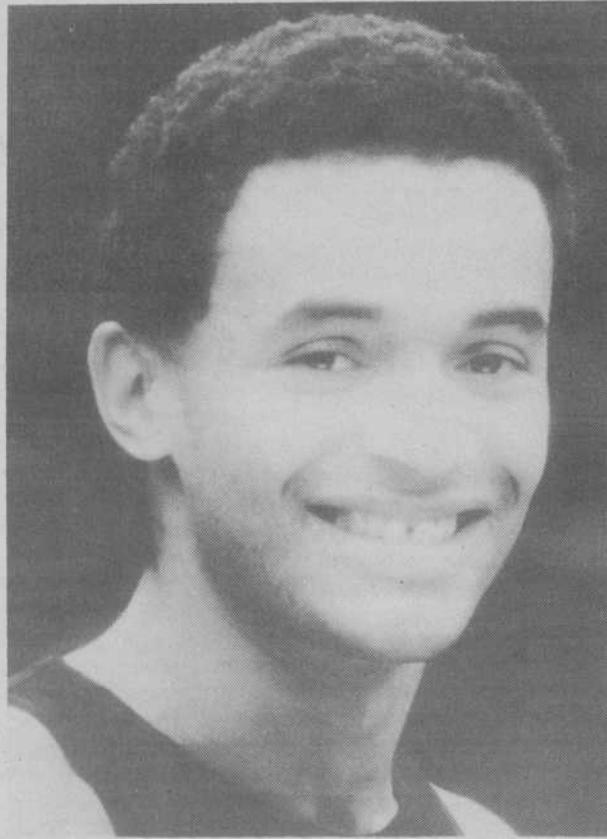
PROFILE

YANNICK NOAH

The dreams of a young man and a nation were fulfilled in story-book fashion in Paris last June when Yannick Noah dominated defending champion Mats Wilander to capture the 1983 French Open title and send an entire country into heartwarming hysteria. Noah's initial Grand Slam title marked the first time in 37 years that a Frenchman had emerged victorious on the red clay of Roland Garros Stadium. The victory-starved French had clearly found their hero in the 23-year-old superstar.

Perfectly proportioned and powerful, the 6-foot-4, 180-pound Noah is generally regarded as one of tennis' most athletic stars—graceful yet gifted with remarkable strength and stamina. His performance on the court over the last few years has thrust him into the limelight; not since Bjorn Borg has a European player created such commotion.

The French Open victory topped an impressive string of triumphs in Noah's 1983 campaign. The previous chapter in the success story produced titles at the Madrid Grand Prix and



Yannick Noah

German Open — the latter featuring a win over Wilander which snapped the Swede's 43-match winning streak—and a quarter-final finish at the U.S. Open. Over a scorching six-week stretch, Noah won three tournaments, and improved his standing in the international computer rankings to a

career-high No. 4.

The emotionally-charged victory at Roland Garros before 17,000 partisan fans and a worldwide television audience squelched any doubts of his ability to excel under pressure. For the world it was a time to take notice. For France, it was a time to revel in the excitement at hand.

A rangy righthander with a reckless and aggressive style, Noah has made a habit of capturing the hearts of his country. He first sent France into a frenzy by leading its Davis Cup team into the finals of the 1982 competition, the first such advance in 50 years. An electrifying win over Czechoslovakia's Lendl boosted the squad into its final-round showdown with the U.S. team.

Foremost among Noah's 1982 highlights was a brilliant performance at the Congoleum Classic in February where he again defeated Lendl, this time smashing the Czech's 45-match winning streak. A tournament triumph at the Mutual

Benefit Open, a win over Borg at Monte Carlo and victories in both the singles and doubles events at Nice topped off a stellar season.

As the first French player ever to rank among the top 10 in the world rankings, Noah is regarded as the savior of tennis in that country. His sporting origins, however, read more like a Hollywood script. Born in Sedan, France, he grew up in Cameroon, a former French colony on the coast of west Africa. At age 10, he took part in an exhibition match against none other than Arthur Ashe, who was properly impressed by this fearless youngster who smacked the ball with the aplomb of a veteran.

Upon his return to Europe, Ashe put in a call to the French Tennis Federation which contacted the youngster's family and arranged for him to move to France and receive professional training. Transferred from the macadam courts of the Cameroon to the red clay of France, Noah blossomed. After winning the French junior championships in 1977 and joining the pro tour a year later at age 18, he won back-to-back tournaments in 1979 and recorded the first of four consecutive round-of-16 U.S. Open finishes. The 1980 campaign found him reaching the final of the Italian Open and scoring a French Open win over Jose-Luis Clerc.

Noah's winning ways and pleasing personality also have helped make him a favorite of the media. He has been the subject of feature stories in *People*, *Sports Illustrated*, *The New York Times* and *Gentleman's Quarterly*; a *Sportstyle* photo essay included him as one of the world's finest physiques. His recent television credits include "Good Morning America" and "Sports Beat."

McENROE, CONNORS, LENDL IN LAS VEGAS FOR UNIQUE TENNIS TOURNAMENT

The three top tennis players in the world — John McEnroe, Jimmy Connors and Ivan Lendl — are competing in the \$1.29 million AT&T Challenge of Champions which ends Saturday at the Thomas and Mack Center.

Joining McEnroe, Connors and Lendl in this unique tournament are four other top male tennis stars: Yannick Noah, Guillermo Vilas,



John McEnroe

Jimmy Arias, and Johan Kriek. The eight-man draw will feature seven of the top 10 players in the world.

The nationally televised (NBC) event is now underway at the new 18,000-seat Thomas and Mack Center. The finals, worth \$200,000 to the winner, will be Saturday, Jan. 5, at 11 a.m. (PST).

The AT&T Challenge of Champions is using a new and different format which is neither elimination nor round-robin. Two brackets of four players are competing in three "best-of-three" set matches against the other players in this bracket. Points are awarded not only for matches won but for sets won in order to assure the highest level of play throughout the five-day tournament. The player with the highest point total in his bracket will advance to the final match. Players with the second-highest point totals in their bracket will play in the consolation final.

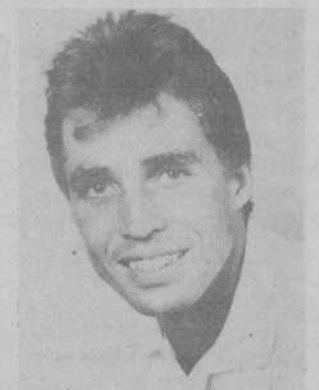
Runner-up money is \$100,000 while the winner of the consolation match will receive

\$50,000 and fourth place \$25,000. An additional incentive to maintain the best play possible is the awarding of \$10,000 to the winner of each match.

McEnroe is the top seed in Group A, followed by Connors, Arias and Kriek. Lendl is the top seed in Group B, followed by Noah and Vilas.

Play started Tuesday, Jan. 1. Wednesday, Jan. 2, thru Friday, Jan. 4, there are two sessions, one at 1 p.m. and the other at 7. The consolation final will be 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 5.

McEnroe is the current Wimbledon and U.S. Open Champion to give him four and three wins respectively while Connors has won Wimbledon twice and the U.S. Open five times. Lendl is the current



Ivan Lendl

French Open champion. Vilas is the only person other than McEnroe and Connors to win the U.S. Open since 1976.

Special Events Productions, Inc. of Los Angeles is producing the AT&T Challenge of Champions.

BOXING

Fight schedule

(c-denotes defending champion)
 Dec. 26 at Atlantic City — Johnnie Bumphus vs. Randy Mitchell, 10, welterweights.
 Dec. 27 at Atlantic City — Bret Summers vs. Derrick McGuire, 10, lightweights.
 Jan. 3 at Atlantic City — Gregg Edelman vs. Arnie Wells, 10, junior welterweights.
 Jan. 5 at Atlantic City — Mark Breland vs. Marion Palmer, 6, welterweights; Virgil Hill vs. John Tyrell, 6, super middleweights.
 Jan. 12 at Atlantic City — Harry Arroyo vs. Terrence All, 15, 16F, lightweights title.
 Jan. 15 at Atlantic City, N.J. — Jeff McCracken vs. Robert Polley, 10, light heavyweights.
 Jan. 18 at Birmingham, England — c-Donald Curry vs. Colin Jones, 15, WBA welterweight title.
 Jan. 20 at Atlantic City — Pernell Whitaker vs. Keith Stevenson, 6, lightweight; Meldrick Taylor vs. Dwight Pratchett, 6, lightweight; Evander Holyfield vs. Eric Winbush, 6, light-heavyweight.
 Jan. 22 at Philadelphia — Vaughn Hooks vs. James Stilt, 10, light heavyweights; Nasir Ali vs. Jeffrey Hill, 12, super middleweights.
 Jan. 24 at Las Vegas — Steve Cruz vs. Tommy Cordova, 10, featherweights.
 Feb. 15 at Reno — c-Livingstone Bramble vs. Ray Mancini, 15, WBA lightweight title.

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