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<p>Origin and early years</p>
<p>There has been much dispute over the invention of modern tennis, but th
e officially recognized centennial of 🌻 the game in 1973 commemorated i
ts introduction by Major Walter Clopton Wingfield in 1873.</p>
<p>He published the first book of rules 🌻 that year and took out
a patent on his game in 1874, although historians have concluded that similar ga
mes were 🌻 played earlier and that the first tennis club was establishe
d by the Englishman Harry Gem and several associates in Leamington 🌻 in
1872.</p>
<p>Wingfield's court was of the hourglass shape and may have developed
from badminton.</p>
<p>The hourglass shape, stipulated by Wingfield in 🌻 his booklet
"Sphairistiké, or Lawn Tennis," may have been adopted for patent
reasons since it distinguished the court from ordinary 🌻 rectangular co
urts.</p>
<p>At the time, the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) was the governing body o
f real tennis, whose rules it had 🌻 recently revised.After J.M.</p&g
t;
<p>Heathcote, a distinguished real tennis player, developed a better tenni
s ball of rubber covered with white flannel, the 🌻 MCC in 1875 establis
hed a new, standardized set of rules for tennis.</p>
<p>Meanwhile, the game had spread to the United States 🌻 in the 1
870s.</p>
<p>Mary Outerbridge of New York has been credited with bringing a set of r
ackets and balls to her 🌻 brother, a director of the Staten Island Cric
ket and Baseball Club.</p>
<p>But research has shown that William Appleton of Nahant, Massachusetts,
🌻 may have owned the first lawn tennis set and that his friends James D
wight and Fred R.</p>
<p>Sears popularized the game.</p>
<p>An 🌻 important milestone in the history of tennis was the deci
sion of the All England Croquet Club to set aside one 🌻 of its lawns at
Wimbledon for tennis, which soon proved so popular that the club changed its na
me to the 🌻 All England Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club.</p>
<p>In 1877 the club decided to hold a tennis championship, and a champions
hip subcommittee 🌻 of three was appointed.</p>
<p>It decided on a rectangular court 78 feet (23.</p>) Tj T*□□BT /F1 12 Tf 50 72 Td (<p&gt
<p>They 🌻 adapted the real tennis method of scoring-15, 30, 40, g
ame-and allowed the server one fault (i.e.</p>) Tj T*□□BT /F1 12 Tf 50 28 Td (<p>, two chan
;/p>
<p>These major decisions remain part of the modern rules.</p>