

A Brief History of the Wychwood Tennis Club

1928–2018

(English Version February 24, 2019)

In 1925, a group of residents made a proposition to the Town of Aylmer to buy six lots to build community tennis courts. Also in this year, because the nearest public pump was too far from the tennis courts and considering that it was a necessity for the maintenance of the courts, by petition, the residents of Wychwood asked the city of Aylmer to install a pump and a well on the empty part of the lots occupied by the tennis courts even if they had to pay for these with a special tax.

The Wychwood Tennis Club was established in 1928 by a group of ten residents (Messrs. Raby, Kemp, Bailey, Richard, Dunlevie, Draper, Barnabas, Coulson, Brulé and Lewis) who contributed \$200.00 for the construction of the tennis courts. It should be kept in mind that at that time, Wychwood was a summer colony of thirty to forty families separated from Aylmer by hay fields and pastures (it was not uncommon to meet a wandering cow on Lake Street) and connected to Hull and Ottawa by an electric tram line.

Unfortunately, because of the economic crisis that occurred in 1929, it took only three years for the Club to fall behind in payment of property taxes with the prospect of being put up for sale. Shareholders, many of whom were personally in financial difficulty, could not make additional contributions. The women of the community, however, rose to the occasion and through a series of card games, dances, sales of homemade baked goods, etc., raised the necessary funds and rescued the courts from the tax collector before the property could be sold for non-payment of back taxes.

Once again financially solvent, the courts managed to stay alive during the 1930s. The yearly registration fees were \$10 per family, \$6 for a senior and \$3 for a junior. During those years, the groundskeeper was getting \$1 a day and not paid at all for rainy days.

The courts themselves were originally constructed of shale, which posed many problems both in terms of maintenance and in providing an adequate playing surface. From a maintenance standpoint, they needed more water than the old water pump from the Club could provide, and in dry, windy conditions, the surface blew away in clouds of dust. Another problem was stapling the tapes into rocky substrata which often caused the staples to make a "U" turn after contact with a rock and resurface. From a playing standpoint, the shale's tendency to accumulate under the tapes gave rise to numerous odd bounces, disputed line calls and adverse comments from visiting tennis clubs.

The war years witnessed a revival of the Club, as many servicemen interested in tennis located to Wychwood. This fact also sparked enthusiasm for related activities such as the Wychwood Follies initiated by Club members. In addition, many exhibition games were an opportunity to raise funds for the Red Cross.

The '50s were again a financially difficult period, with enrollment revenues tending to remain relatively stable in the face of ever-increasing operational costs. The problem of lack of funds was partly solved by the construction in 1958 or 1959 of the Wychwood canteen, built with money from a bank loan underwritten by the directors of the Club at that time. The income from renting the canteen to a concessionaire paid the municipal taxes and covered regular maintenance. This also made it possible to resurface the courts with clay, eventually eliminating the much-maligned bands, which were replaced by lime chalk lines.

Although the construction of the canteen largely solved the financial problems besetting the Club, it didn't solve the larger problem of permanent preservation of the property for recreational purposes. To that end, under the chairmanship of Harold Grace, a son-in-law of P.M. Draper, one of the original shareholders, negotiations were initiated to have the Town of Aylmer take control of the courts. Although sympathetic to the cause, the town council was not ready to receive the gift without a clear title. The directors therefore hired a lawyer, Philip Foran,

who patiently unravelled the legal tangle and obtained sign offs from the families of the original shareholders, all of whom had long since died. This process was finally completed around 1974. However, the town requested that the Club continue to provide tennis services as it didn't want to lose this activity nor be in charge of it. Therefore, a clause was added to the donation agreement to allow the Club to use, occupy and enjoy the tennis courts and continue to operate for recreational purposes only (no commercial use). This occurred just in time for the Club to benefit from the renewed interest in tennis and population growth in the sector.

The Town installed lighting on the courts in 1974.

On Saturday, June 17, 1978, the 50th anniversary of the Club was celebrated. For the occasion, a round-robin tournament and picnic were organized. To commemorate the debut of the Wychwood Tennis Club, players dressed up in garb from the 1920s.

In 1979, the Club built the cabin with washrooms, storage and office space with a loan from the City of Aylmer which was repaid in five years between 1980 and 1984. The City was responsible for the installation of municipal services from the street to the cabin. It was turned over to Aylmer for a nominal sum \$1, immediately after construction.

Until 1984, there were three tennis clubs in Aylmer namely: the Wychwood Club, Broad and the Recreational Association of the Jubilee District. Tournaments between clubs were organized.

In 1989 at the Club's request, the City converted the Courts to a hard surface. With the clay, the season began 3 weeks later than hard surface courts and was shortened just as much, without counting the necessary wait time after heavy rain.

The city, knowing that there was a problem with the Broad Courts since the club closure in 1993, approached the Wychwood Tennis Club to manage these courts as well. After much hesitation, the Club finally agreed in 2003 to include the Broad courts in its service offer and manage all six courts. Back then, Broad's courts were constructed of asphalt. The Club therefore asked that they be replaced with an acrylic surface, which was done in 2005.

In the 2000s, the Club noted an aging of its members and a lack of new ones. After some inconclusive attempts to attract juniors, luck came in 2007, with the opportunity to have two instructors associated with a tennis school available to offer courses, which had not been done for a few years. The Club was able to add courses for juniors and adults to its programming. This resulted in an increase from 194 to 309 members between 2006 and 2007, and the number of juniors increased from 63 to 143.

In 2010, the Club changed its logo and created a logo for a more intensive course program called SWAT (Section Wychwood Aylmer Tennis) by the students who requested it in 2009.

To encourage young people to play games in addition to taking classes, in 2010 the Club set up a unique junior ladder league, inspired by an adult pyramid ladder league, used in 1996 by the Club. Initially, the junior ladder league was part of the more intensive junior program and had about twenty players. After a few years, the ladder league was opened up to all junior members, for all levels from 5 year-old beginners to advanced young adults, with more than 140 players in 2018. This junior ladder league encourages participation over competition. Thus young people can practice what they have learned during their lessons in small games adapted to their level. In 2011, an Excel macro had to be written, to help instructors with the management of this junior ladder league, which takes about six hours a week for organizing, not to mention the hours refereeing the games.

In 2012, with Gatineau's new support framework and the Accès-Gatineau cards, the Club abandoned the management of the Broad courts due to requirements stipulated by the city. The Club now only uses the Broad site for junior classes and activities. The Club asked Gatineau to respect its deed of gift for the Wychwood Courts. The city has been able so far, to find a way to allow the Club to continue operating according to its current structure.

In 2014, the Club had to use the Broad and Moussette courts as the Wychwood courts were being re-profiled and the fences replaced. Unfortunately, the particular characteristics of the courts were not taken into account and their drainage now appears to be worse than it was before.

In 2018, a minor modification to the logo was made for the 90th anniversary to add the year of the foundation of the Club, 1928. This year saw the highest number of members ever at 552 of which 54.5% were juniors. The Club has had a dynamic history since 2007 and we have never seen so many young people come to play outside of class time.

- Ref.:
- Historical summary written by Gilbert McElroy in 1978 (former Club president)
 - Minutes town meeting July 20, 1925 Aylmer, QC
 - Letter requesting a pump, July 20, 1925
 - Letter requesting land purchase to construct community tennis courts, July 20, 1925
 - Minutes town meeting, September 12, 1925, Aylmer, QC
 - Minutes town meeting, May 9, 1989, Aylmer, QC
 - Minutes town meeting, May 12, 1969, Deed of Gift, Aylmer, QC
 - Minutes town meeting, construction of cabin, July 9, 1979, Aylmer, QC
 - Minutes town meeting, parking lot, August 7, 1980, Aylmer, QC
 - Minutes town meeting, September 2, 1980
 - Cumulative list of contracts greater than \$25 000, Sept. 2012 to Aug. 2013 and Sept. 2013 to Aug. 2014
 - Cumulative list of contracts for more than \$10 000, Oct. 1998 to Sept. 1999 (Broad)
 - Testimonials of Messrs. Hector Sito, Paul Monty
 - Minutes from the Wychwood Tennis Club general annual meetings

Wychwood		Broad	
1974	Installation of lights \$6000.		
1977	Corporation of - Not for Profit Organization	1977	Request permit to demolish the old building and build a new one
1979	Building construction: - City responsible for the installation of municipal services from Lake Street to the building – cost \$1600 - Building cost \$4000		
1980	Wychwood Park becomes Parc Tourbillon	1980	Repair and enlarge the courts – total cost \$20, 000
1989	Conversion of courts to hard surface- total cost \$46 514.56		
1990	Parking lot	1990	Resurfacing courts - cost \$10 950
1999	Resurfacing - cost \$20 000.	1993	Handover of Aylmer Tennis Club to the town of Aylmer
		2005	Surfacing in acrylic
2009	Installation of alarm system	2009	Installation of alarm system
2014	- Reprofiled of courts - cost \$84 046.73 - changing the fence - cost \$74 791.10	2015	Resurfacing in acrylic

Club Membership Statistics:

	Without Broad								Reprofiling of Wychwood	Without Broad				
	2018		2017		2016		2015		2014		2013		2012	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Junior (<17 years)	301	54.5	283	58	252	54	275	58	193	54	203	52.5	160	51
Adult	251	45.5	208	42	211	46	201	42	167	46	184	47.5	155	49
Total	552		491		463		476		360		387		315	

	With Broad											
	2011		2010		2009		2008		2007		2006	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Junior (<18 years)	231	46	192	45	192	43	222	47	143	46	63	32
Adult	267	54	233	55	256	57	250	53	166	54	131	68
Total	498		425		448		472		309		194	

	With Broad			Without Broad							
	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996	1995
	number	number	number	number	number	number	number	number	number	number	number
Junior										25	
Adult											
Total	213		142	140 (estimated)					171	232	236

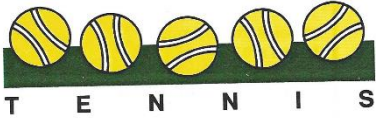
	without Broad										
	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984
	number	number	number	number	number	number	number	number	number	number	number
Junior									15	25	
Adult									110	130	
Total	219	211							130	155	

	without Broad										
	1983	1982	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975	1974	1973
	number	number	number	number	number	number	number	number	number	number	number
Junior											
Adult											
Total			109	153	215	230 (estimated)	254	250 (estimated)			

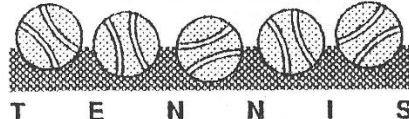
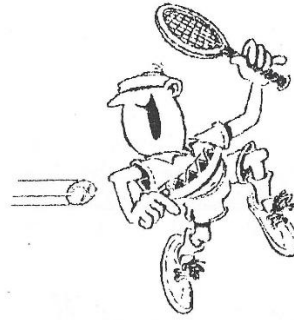
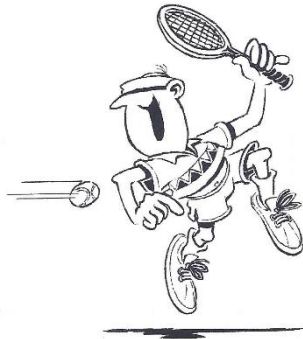
Junior Ladder League Participation Statistics:

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number of Participants	20	55	50	55	84	108	126	138	143

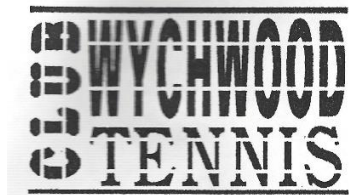
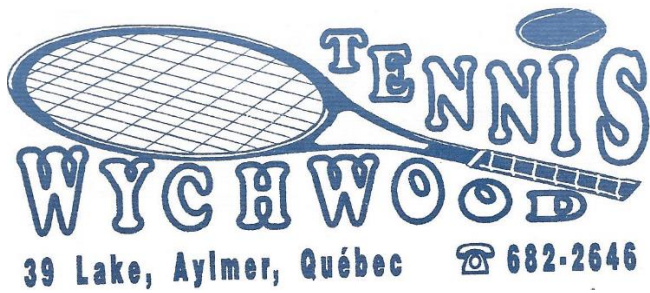
Logos used by the Club:



WYCHWOOD
39 Lake, Aylmer, Québec J9J 4B4
☎ 682-2646



WYCHWOOD
39 Lake, Aylmer, Québec J9J 4B4
☎ 682-2646





Club shirt from 1983–1985, courtesy of Paul Monty



Presidents and Committee Members

2019	President: France Gilbert, Treasurer Sylvie Lefebvre, Denise Comtois, John Cuningham, Richard Martineau, Lucie Chayko, Guy Bélizaire, Richard Trudel, Kathryn O'Neil, Louise Gendron
2018	President: France Gilbert, Treasurer Sylvie Lefebvre, Denise Comtois, Antonia Holden, John Cuningham, Richard Martineau, Lucie Chayko, Guy Bélizaire, Richard Trudel, Kathryn O'Neil, Louise Gendron
2017	President: France Gilbert, Treasurer Sylvie Lefebvre, Denise Comtois, Antonia Holden, John Cuningham, Richard Martineau, Lucie Chayko, Guy Bélizaire, Richard Trudel, Kathryn O'Neil, Louise Gendron
2016	President: France Gilbert, Treasurer Sylvie Lefebvre, Denise Comtois, Antonia Holden, John Cuningham, Richard Martineau, Lucie Chayko, Guy Bélizaire, Richard Trudel
2015	President: France Gilbert, Treasurer Sylvie Lefebvre, Denise Comtois, Antonia Holden, John Cuningham, Richard Martineau, Lucie Chayko, Guy Bélizaire, Richard Trudel
2014	President: France Gilbert, Treasurer Sylvie Lefebvre, Denise Comtois, Antonia Holden, John Cuningham, Richard Martineau, Lucie Chayko
2013	President: France Gilbert, Treasurer Sylvie Lefebvre, Denise Comtois, Antonia Holden, John Cuningham, Richard Martineau, Lucie Chayko
2012	President: France Gilbert, Treasurer Sylvie Lefebvre, Denise Comtois, Antonia Holden, John Cuningham, Richard Martineau, Louis de la Rocq
2011	President: France Gilbert, Treasurer Sylvie Lefebvre, Denise Comtois, Antonia Holden, John Cuningham, Richard Martineau, Rémy Beaulieu
2010	President: France Gilbert, Treasurer Sylvie Lefebvre, Denise Comtois, Antonia Holden, John Cuningham, Richard Martineau, Silvain Bériault
2009	President: France Gilbert, Treasurer Sylvie Lefebvre, Silvain Bériault, Denise Comtois, Antonia Holden, John Cuningham, Rafid Haidar
2008	President: France Gilbert, Treasurer Sylvie Lefebvre, Silvain Bériault, Denise Comtois, Antonia Holden, John Cuningham, Eugene Contreras, Rafid Haidar
2007	President: France Gilbert, Treasurer Sylvie Lefebvre, Mario Bouchard, Xavier-Demers-Bouchard, Liette Éthier, Hélène Wolfe, Silvain Bériault, Denise Comtois
2006	President: Richard Martineau, Treasurer Sylvie Lefebvre, Mario Bouchard, Xavier-Demers-Bouchard, Liette Éthier, Hélène Wolfe, France Gilbert, Antonia Holden, Richard Desjardins
2005	President: Richard Martineau, Treasurer Sylvie Lefebvre, Mario Bouchard, Richard Desjardins, Liette Éthier, France Gilbert, Hélène Wolfe, Richard Desjardins
2004	President: Manon Morency, Richard Martineau, Treasurer Sylvie Lefebvre, Richard Martineau, Rémy Beaulieu, Mario Bouchard, Richard Desjardins, Hélène Wolfe, Liette Éthier
2003	President: Manon Morency, Treasurer Marco Domaschio,, Rémy Beaulieu, Richard Desjardins, Hélène Wolfe, Liette Éthier
2002	President: Manon Morency, Treasurer Marco Domaschio, Rémy Beaulieu, Richard Desjardins, Hélène Wolfe, Liette Éthier, Paul Valin
2001	President Paul Valin, Treasurer Marco Domaschio, Pierre Hamel, Liette Éthier
2000	President: Paul Valin, Treasurer Marco Domaschio, Pierre Hamel, Liette Éthier, Richard Desjardins
1999	President et Treasurer Marco Domaschio, Liette Éthier, Andrée Simard, Michel Cormier, Richard Martineau, Craig Reid, Pierre Hamel, Paul Valin
1998	President: Manon Morency, Treasurer Marco Domaschio, Liette Éthier, Michel Cormier, Richard Martineau, Pierre Hamel, Brigitte Caron
1997	President: Robert Langlois
1996	
1995	President: Francine Ouellette, Treasurer : Jean-Claude Desruisseaux
1994	President: Francine Ouellette, Treasurer : Jean-Claude Desruisseaux
1993	President: Francine Ouellette, Treasurer : Jean-Claude Desruisseaux
1992	President: Francine Ouellette, Treasurer : Jean-Claude Desruisseaux
1991	President: Richard Desjardins, Treasurer : Jean-Claude Desruisseaux
1990	
1989	President: Treasurer: Jean-Claude Desruisseaux
1988	President: Luc Berthelotte, Treasurer: Jean-Claude Desruisseaux
1987	President: Jean Vézina, Treasurer: Jean-Claude Desruisseaux
1986	President: Richard Laliberté ; Nouveau President : Marcel Berthelotte, Treasurer : Jean-Claude Desruisseaux
1985	President: Louis de la Rocq, Vice-President : Gisèle Prieur-Odermat, Treasurer : Richard Laliberté Danièle Boudreau, Paul Monty, Oliva Lorétan, Roland Lorétan, Jacques Séguin

1984	President: Louis de la Rocq, Vice-President : Gisèle Prieur-Odermat, Danièle Boudreau, Paul Monty, Oliva Lorétan, Roland Lorétan
1983	President: Paul-Henri Lapointe, Treasurer : André Villemaire, Louis de la Rocq, Roland Lorétan, Michel Whitmore, Paul Monty
1982	President: Paul-Henri Lapointe, Treasurer : André Villemaire
1981	President: Jean Gendron Treasurer : Daniel Gendron Barry Workman, Christine Sarrazin, Gisèle Odermatt, Louis des Rivières-Gendron, Lise Denault, Don McConnell, Stéphane Eyer, Kevin McConnell, Jacques Séguin, Bernard Valin
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1979	President: Michel Proulx, Treasurer : Paul-Henri Lapointe Barbara McConnell, Lise Gendron, André Treich, Bernard Brodeur, Donald April, Claire Brodeur, Paul Valin, Tommy Richards, Robert Treich, Jacques Séguin, Bernard Valin
1978	President: Jean Auclair, Treasurer : Oscar Eyer Michel Proulx, Liette Proulx, Jacques Séguin, André Treich, George Finney, Waheed Syed, Roger Couture, Don April, Raymond Provencher, Bernard Valin
1977	President: Gilbert McElroy
1976	President: Gilbert McElroy
1975	
1974	
1973	
1972	
1971	
1970	
1969	President: Philius Thibault Director: Donald Bailey