

A Brief History of the Wychwood Tennis Club

1928–2022

(English Version October 29, 2022)

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.

In 2020, due to COVID-19, the club decided not to hold programming. Thus, not giving any service, we did not take a membership.

- 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 | - Reprofilling of courts - cost \$84 046.73 - changing the fence - cost \$74 791.10 | 2015 | Resurfacing in acrylic |
| | | 2022 | Resurfacing in acrylic |

Club Membership Statistics:

| | Without Broad | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------|---|--------|---|--------|-----|--------|------|--------|------|-------------------------------|---|--------|------|
| | | | | | | | 2022 | | 2021 | | 2020 COVID-19 | | 2019 | |
| | nombre | % | nombre | % | nombre | % | nombre | % | nombre | % | nombre | % | nombre | % |
| Junior (<17 years) | | | | | | | 224 | 48,9 | 239 | 47,7 | Cancellation of the season | | 303 | 56,3 |
| Adult | | | | | | 234 | 51,1 | 262 | 52,3 | 235 | | | 43,7 | |
| Total | | | | | | 458 | | 501 | | 538 | | | | |

| | 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 |

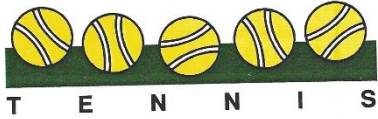
| | without Broad | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | 1994 | 1993 | 1992 | 1991 | 1990 | 1989 | 1988 | 1987 | 1986 | 1985 | 1984 |
| | number | number | number | number | number | number | number | 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) | | | |

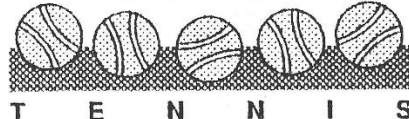
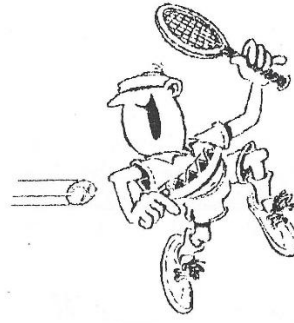
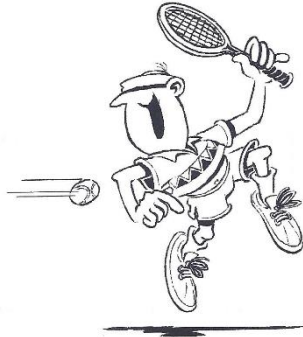
Junior Ladder League Participation Statistics:

| Year | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|------|------|
| Number of Participants | 20 | 55 | 50 | 55 | 84 | 108 | 126 | 138 | 143 | 140 | Cancelled | 88 | 95 |

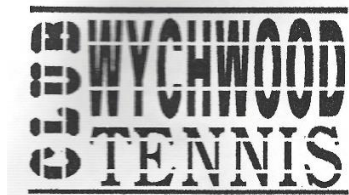
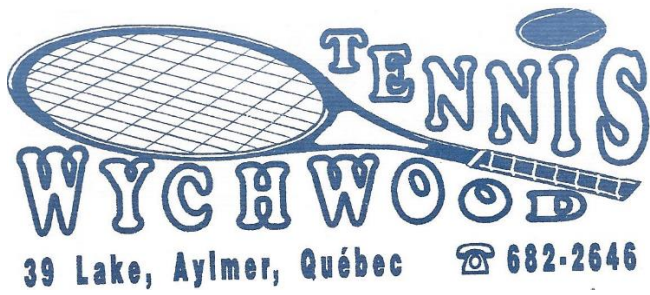
Logos used by the Club:



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

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|------|--|
| 2022 | President: France Gilbert, Treasurer Kathryn O'Neil John Cuningham, Richard Trudel, Louise Gendron, Jean Poitevin, Frédéric Labelle, Éric Tardif |
| 2021 | President: France Gilbert, Treasurer Kathryn O'Neil John Cuningham, Richard Trudel, Louise Gendron, Jonathan Lance, Jean Poitevin, Serge Bériault, Grégoire Meguerditchian |
| 2020 | President: France Gilbert, Treasurer Kathryn O'Neil, John Cuningham, Lucie Chayko, Guy Bélizaire, Richard Trudel, Louise Gendron |
| 2019 | President: France Gilbert, Treasurer Sylvie Lefebvre, Denise Comtois, John Cuningham, Lucie Chayko, Guy Bélizaire, Richard Trudel, Kathryn O'Neil, Louise Gendron |
| 2018 | President: France Gilbert, Treasurer Sylvie Lefebvre, Denise Comtois, Antonia Holden, John Cuningham, Lucie Chayko, Guy Bélizaire, Richard Trudel, Kathryn O'Neil, Louise Gendron |
| 2017 | President: France Gilbert, Treasurer Sylvie Lefebvre, Denise Comtois, Antonia Holden, John Cuningham, 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 |

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| 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 |
| 1980 | President: Lise Gendron Vice-President: Barbara McConnell Treasurer: Margaret Treich Louise Des Rivières- Gendron, Jean Gendron, Paul Lapointe, Don McConnell, Robert Treich, Gisèle Odermatt, Stéphane Eyer, Patrick Brennan, Jacques Séguin, Bernard Valin |
| 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 Michèle 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 | |
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| 1969 | President: Philius Thibault Director: Donald Bailey |