

Topic Page: [Davis Cup](#)

Definition: **Davis Cup** from *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Annual tennis tournament for men's international teams, first held in 1900 after Dwight Filley Davis (1879–1945) donated the trophy.

The Davis Cup was held on a challenge basis up to 1971. Since then it has been organized on an elimination basis, with countries divided into zonal groups, with a promotion and relegation system.

Summary Article: **Davis Cup**

From *Encyclopedia of Sports Management and Marketing*

The Davis Cup is the premier men's team event in the sport of tennis. First contested in 1900, the event allows the best players from the member nations of the International Tennis Federation (ITF) the chance to represent their country in a sport where players usually compete as individuals. The tournament was established by a Harvard University student named Dwight Davis. Davis, who at one time was the second-ranked tennis player in the country, originally intended for the match to be a competition between the United States and Great Britain. Davis commissioned a jeweler, Shreve, Crump & Low, to produce a silver trophy, and then captained the U.S. team to a victory against their British opponents during the first match in Boston. The tournament uses a terminology of its own: for example, the word *rubber* is used for match, and the word *tie* is used for a round of competition.

The United States won the first three Davis Cup matches against Great Britain, and then in 1904, teams from Belgium and France took part for the first time. The cup been contested every year since 1911, except for during World War I and World War II. In 1923, the ITF revised the structure of the competition by dividing the world into two zones— American and European—to accommodate the increasing number of teams taking part.

The four nations that host a Grand Slam event in the sport (Australia, France, Great Britain, and the United States) dominated the competition, winning all events up to 1973. However, it should be noted that in early competitions Australia competed as part of an Australasia team alongside New Zealand. For the first seven decades the Davis Cup was only a competition for amateur players, but changed to become an open event in 1973. Since 1974, a number of other nations have won the trophy, with Croatia becoming the most recent first-time victors, winning the cup in 2005. To date, 12 different nations have won the trophy; the United States holds the record for the most victories, with 32 Davis Cup titles to its name.

Over the years, the structure of the competition has changed in order to accommodate the large number of nations that now enter the competition. The most significant change occurred in 1972 when the traditional challenge round was abolished. Teams now comprise three to four players, and nations face off in a best-of-five rubber encompassing four singles and one doubles match-up over a period of three days. The 16 highest-ranked teams are assigned to the World Group and compete annually for the cup. Nations that do not play in the World Group compete in one of three regional zones (Americas, Asia/Oceania, and Europe/Africa) and the competition takes place over the course of four weekends throughout the year. The ITF determines the host countries for matches before each tournament. Nations in the World Group compete in a four-round elimination tournament and are

seeded based on a ranking system. The losers of the first-round matches move to the World Group playoff round, where they play along with winners from Group I of the regional zones. The winners of this then enter the World Group for the tournament the following year, and the losers play in Group I of their regional zone.

The global financial group BNP Paribas has been the title sponsor of the event since 2002. Other companies involved as partner sponsors include Hugo Boss, Rolex, and Wilson. The Davis Cup partnership program provides each of these companies with tailored benefits enabling them to achieve their marketing and promotional goals year-round and at every Davis Cup tie. The Davis Cup is primarily shown on terrestrial television, so it allows sponsors to reach a wide audience in a number of different markets.

In 1974, South Africa won their first, and to date only, title without even playing in the final. They were due to meet India to contest the cup but the Indian government boycotted the match in protest against South Africa's system of apartheid. In 2009, the Sweden versus Israel match in Malmo was played in an empty stadium because of security concerns following a "Stop the Match" campaign against Israeli attacks on Gaza. Outside of the stadium protesters clashed with police while the two teams competed.

See Also:

America's Cup, International Reach, Ryder Cup, U.S. Open Tennis Tournament, Wimbledon Tennis Tournament.

Further Readings

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