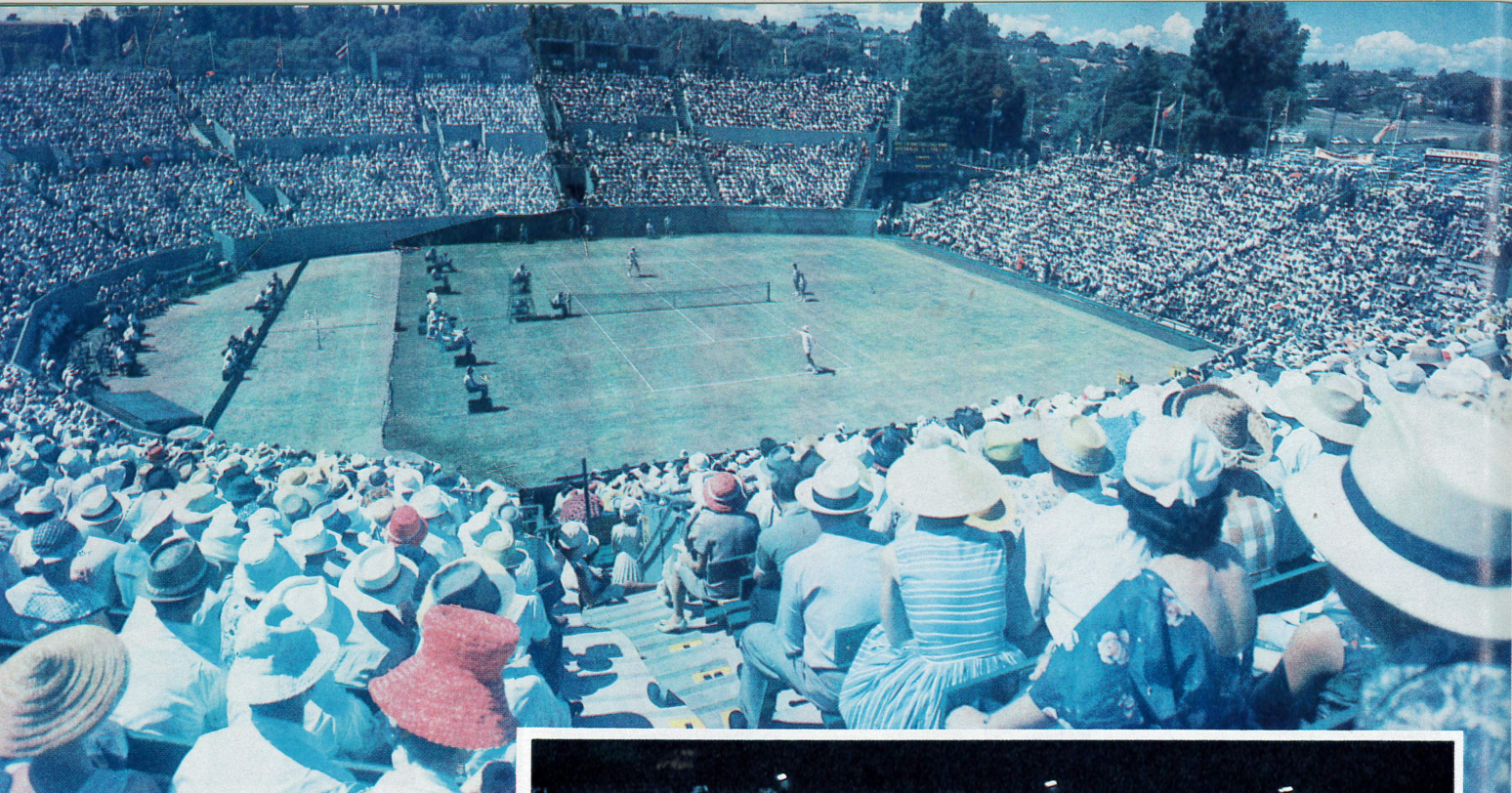




Hallowed turf ... Kooyong, home to many hard-fought Davis Cup Ties.

Old rivalries to surface at Kooyong

JUST as an Ashes cricket tour takes on special significance by comparison to other flannelled show-downs, so too does a tennis battle involving Australia and USA.

Cricketing links between Australia and England date back to the formative international years of the game and the same could be said of Davis Cup matches against the Americans.

Indeed there was a time immediately after World War II when many people considered the Davis Cup was an annual show-down between the two countries to determine tennis superiority.

And there was just cause for ignorance of other teams competing for one of international sport's most sought after prizes.

Between 1946 — when the competition resumed at the close of the war — and 1960 no other country took part in the Challenge



Keen competitors ... USA v Australia at St Petersburg, Florida 1981, USA def Australia 3-2. Rick Leach, Jim Pugh, Michael Chang, Tom Gorman, Neale Fraser, Darren Cahill, John Fitzgerald, Richard Fromberg.

Round, the equivalent to what we now know as the final.

It was a remarkable era and one when the true rivalry between the two nations was forged.

The Americans dominated the first four of those clashes, Australia winning just two of the 20 rubbers contested in those ties.

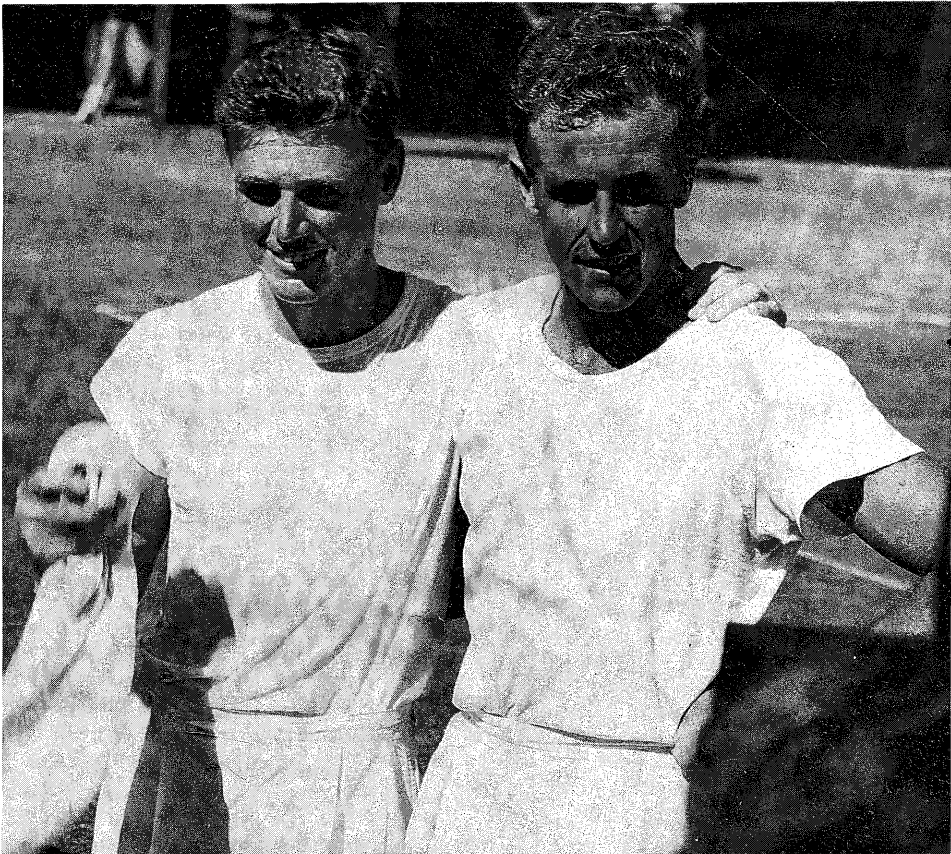
In 1950, however, things changed.

Harry Hopman, who had been captain of the Australian team in 1938 and 1939, before pursuing a career as a sports writer with the Herald in Melbourne, again assumed control.

His arrival as captain coincided with the emergence of an outstanding talent by the name of Frank Sedgman and between them they were able to wrest back the Cup from the strangle-hold of the Americans.

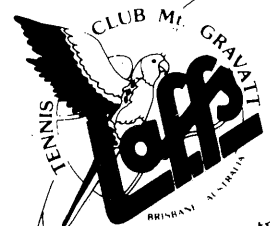
Sedgman and Ken McGregor then ensured the Cup remained in Australia for three years, but after winning the Challenge Round of 1952 announced their intention to turn professional.

Sedgman, who had toured extensively with Hopman, could no longer resist the offerings of the professional world. Although Australian tennis officials had struck up



Stalwarts .. Frank Sedgman and Ken McGregor, a famous duo pictured during the 1951 Australia v USA Challenge Round at White City.

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lucrative business deals with Sedgman it did not compare to the \$100,000 he won in his first year out of amateur ranks.

With Sedgman moving on, Australia embraced another couple of Davis Cup heroes. Teenagers Lew Hoad and Ken Rosewall successfully defending the Davis Cup in 1953, but the Americans won it back in 1954, when Tony Trabert and Vic Seixas out-played the two rising talents from Down Under.

It moved only temporarily out of Australia when Hoad, Rosewall, Rex Hartwig, Mal Anderson, Ashley Cooper and Merv Rose held it in Australia until 1958.

Alex Olmedo, a Peruvian attending University in the States, combined with Barry McKay and Hamilton Richardson for a successful raid in 1958.

But again the Australians rebounded in 1959, Neale Fraser winning both his singles rubbers and the doubles to give his country a 3-2 victory.

Australia won the Cup again in 1960, but the traditional show-down between the Aussies and the Yanks was broken when Italy beat America 3-2 in an interzone final for the right to play the defending champions.

The last time Australia and USA played for the Cup was in St Petersburg, Florida in 1990 when the Australians went into the contest as rank outsiders, but put up a brave fight against the odds.

Tasmanian Richard Fromberg was just starting to make his mark on the world rankings, having collected a couple of titles to move to 24 in the world.

He played in the first rubber against Andre Agassi, a young man who had already shown he was destined for big things, and was undoubtedly one of the great clay court players with his heavily disguised and powerful ground strokes.

Fromberg had Agassi in trouble when he led two sets to one, but could not close out the contest as Agassi gave the Americans a bit of a heart flutter before his five set victory.

Michael Chang then gave the Americans a commanding lead after day one, disposing of Darren Cahill.

The only hope for Australia was for Pat Cash and John Fitzgerald to win the doubles rubber against the highly regarded team of Rick Leach and Jim Pugh, but they could not combat the team work of their opponents and the Cup again belonged to America.

The Australians continued to impress, however, with Cahill and Fromberg each winning reverse singles matches, although Agassi retired in the middle of his match against Cahill with strained stomach muscles.



Winners ... Australia victorious over USA at Melbourne during the 1957 Davis Cup Challenge. (L-R) Barry Mackay, Vic Seixas, Bill Trabert (USA), Harry Hopman, Neale Fraser, Mervyn Rose, Ashley Cooper (Aust).

United States vs. Australia Through the Years

YEAR	WINNER	SCORE	SITE	YEAR	WINNER	SCORE	SITE
1905	U.S.A.	5-0	Queen's Club, England	1949	c U.S.A.	4-1	Forest Hills, New York
1906	U.S.A.	3-2	Newport, Wales	1950	c Australia	4-1	Forest Hills, New York
1907	c Australasia	3-2	Wimbledon, London	1951	c Australia	3-2	Sydney, Australia
1908	c Australasia	3-2	Melbourne, Australia	1952	c Australia	4-1	Adelaide, Australia
1909	c Australasia	5-0	Sydney, Australia	1953	c Australia	3-2	Melbourne, Australia
1911	c Australasia	5-0	Christchurch, New Zealand	1954	c U.S.A.	3-2	Sydney, Australia
1913	U.S.A.	4-1	Forest Hills, New York	1955	c Australia	5-0	Forest Hill, New York
1914	c Australasia	3-2	Forest Hill, New York	1956	c Australia	5-0	Adelaide, Australia
1920	c U.S.A.	5-0	Auckland, New Zealand	1957	c Australia	3-2	Melbourne, Australia
1922	c U.S.A.	4-1	Forest Hills, New York	1958	c U.S.A.	3-2	Brisbane, Australia
1923	c U.S.A.	4-1	Forest Hills, New York	1959	c Australia	3-2	Forest Hills, New York
1924	c U.S.A.	5-0	Philadelphia PA	1963	c U.S.A.	3-2	Adelaide, Australia
1932	U.S.A.	5-0	Philadelphia, PA	1964	c Australia	3-2	Cleveland Heights, OH
1934	U.S.A.	3-2	Wimbledon, London	1968	c U.S.A.	4-1	Adelaide, Australia
1936	Australia	3-2	Philadelphia, PA	1973	c Australia	5-0	Cleveland, OH
1937	U.S.A.	5-0	Forest Hills, New York	1979	U.S.A.	4-1	Sydney, Australia
1938	c U.S.A.	3-2	Philadelphia, PA	1981	U.S.A.	5-0	Portland, Orlando
1939	c Australia	3-2	Haverford, PA	1982	U.S.A.	5-0	Perth, Australia
1946	c U.S.A.	5-0	Melbourne, Australia	1984	U.S.A.	4-1	Portland, Orlando
1947	c U.S.A.	4-1	Forest Hills, New York	1986	Australia	3-1	Brisbane, Australia
1948	c U.S.A.	5-0	Forest Hills, New York	1990	U.S.	3-2	St Petersburg, Florida
					c Cup winner		