

Wagner lands Texaco prize

THE ITF Women's Circuit started 1996 in the traditional manner with events taking place in the United States, Scandinavia, Spain, Germany and France.

These were quickly followed by the first \$50,000 tournament of the year in Argentina and the start of a five week run of similar level events in Colombia, the United States, Great Britain and the Czech Republic.

The British tournament, the Texaco Challenge, was held at the Hampshire Tennis and Health Club in Eastleigh, Southampton, an elegant setting with ten indoor courts, a well-equipped gym, an indoor swimming pool and a large, comfortable lounge and dining area.

The ITF was represented by Sue Livingston. Siobhan Cullen, Christina Janits and Carole Munn from the Women's Department were also on site for part of the week.

This proved to be an excellent opportunity for Siobhan, Christina and Carole to meet the players and officials, as well as hear their views and opinions on developments within the women's game.

There was no shortage of first class experience to oversee the event, with Wimbledon referee Alan Mills, tournament director Patrick Hughesman and a complement of BTUA officials.

The event attracted a strong field, with top-seeded Virginia Ruano-Pascal from Spain having a smooth ride to the semi-finals, where she met an on-form Isabelle Demongeot, the experienced French player.

In the bottom half of the draw, second seed Nathalie Dechy, who had received a walkover into the quarter-final when her opponent, Maria Strandlund, had to withdraw suffering from flu, put up a tremendous fight in her semi-final against Elena Wagner, eventually losing 6-1, 6-7, 4-6.

The final, watched by some 400 spectators, was an entertaining occasion with Wagner defeating Demongeot 6-3, 4-6, 6-3.

The crowd had a home victory to celebrate in the doubles when Claire Wood and Valda Lake outplayed Laura Golarsa of Italy and Tina Krizan of Slovenia 6-4, 4-6, 6-3.



Picture: ALLSPORT

Germany's Elena Wagner, the Eastleigh winner.

OBITUARY

Sarah Palfrey Danzig

SARAH Palfrey Danzig, the winner of 18 Grand Slam titles - mostly in women's and mixed doubles - died in New York at the end of February at the age of 83.

She will be best remembered for the elegance of her stroke-making and her sportsmanship and generosity, both on and off court. Throughout her career she always played with great flair. Her acute sense of position was one of her great assets. Another was her ability to volley positively on both sides.

Her two victories in the US Championships of 1941 and 1945 were the highlights of her singles career but she shared doubles titles with some of the biggest names in the game from 1932, when she won the US mixed doubles title with Fred Perry, to 1947, when she turned professional.

She also won the US mixed doubles

title with Don Budge in 1937 and in 1941 captured it for a third time with Jack Kramer as her partner.

Her nine victories in the US National Women's doubles championship between 1930 and 1941 were achieved with four different partners, Betty

Nuthall, Alice Marble, Heler Jacobs and Margaret Osborne DuPont. She also won the Wimbledon doubles title with Miss Marble in 1938 and '39.

In the Wightman Cup competition between the United States and Great Britain she played ten times, partnering Helen Wills Moody as well as Alice Marble and Helen Jacobs.

When her playing career ended, Mrs Danzig turned to journalism as a Sports Editor at NBC-TV, and later became an advertising consultant with World Tennis magazine as well as serving on the committees of several charities. She was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame in 1963.