

USTA NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

# HALL *of* FAME

MARTY MULLIGAN



**Martin Mulligan arrived in the Bay Area after an extensive career traveling the world playing tennis. The first non-Italian to receive the Golden Racquet Award by the Italian Tennis Federation, Martin has many career highlights, including reaching the Wimbledon final and 72 career titles to his name.**

Martin grew up in Australia, where he started out playing traditional sports like rugby and cricket. An accident which broke his front tooth sidelined him from the sport, so he turned to playing tennis in the winter months and cricket in the summer. He was taught by Australian coaching legend Ross Sherriff, and it was from those early lessons when he began to concentrate on the sport.

“I was playing with kids my own age, and in those days it was a sport and you never knew what kind of success you had and never thought you could make a living from the sport,” Martin said.

He moved quickly through the junior rankings and won singles titles in all of the Australian junior divisions. His

junior career culminated with winning the boys' singles and doubles titles at the 1958 Australian Open, taking home the boys' doubles title with partner Bob Hewitt.

In 1959, Martin joined the Australian Davis Cup team and began traveling overseas for tournaments. It took him two years to make the playing squad, but his patience paid off as the team won the Australian Hardcourt Championships that year.

Martin's professional career kicked off after that, and he stayed in London for some time to practice with British players. He saw professional success as he reached the final of the men's doubles at the Australian Open in 1961.



Arguably Martin's greatest year of play was 1962. He reached the finals of Wimbledon, posting six victories from the opening round of 128, including a quarterfinal win over his former junior doubles partner Bob Hewitt, before falling to fellow Australian Rod Laver in the finals.

Martin earned his first Open victory in the 1963 German Open, and then had a string of successes in the Italian Open, winning the titles in 1963, 1965 and 1967. He also won the Barcelona Open in 1966 and 1967. His success saw him ranked as high as World No. 3 in 1967, arguably his most successful year during which he played 27 tournaments, played 21 singles finals and won 17 singles events.

At that time, Martin reached a juncture in his career where he could pursue tennis more openly in Italy. It was not very common to live abroad in the 1960s, but his successes in Italian tennis and the roots he established there – his

children were born in Italy while he played there – had opened a door for him to play on the Italian Davis Cup team. He accepted, and officially joined the team in 1968.

That led to Martin coaching the Italian Davis Cup team for ten years. He earned a No. 1 ranking in Italy from 1968 through 1971, and his team won the Cup against Chile in 1978. During his time as captain, he was exposed to FILA, a prominent tennis brand that was based in Italy. Founded in 1973, FILA approached Martin to form a professional relationship, asking Martin to help negotiate contracts with players and identify players to sponsor.



Once retiring from tennis, Martin took on player sponsorship as a full-time job with FILA. The relationship grew and

he gained more responsibility until he was ultimately transferred to the United States and based in San Francisco as the Vice President in the U.S. He travels to all Grand Slams and major adult and junior tournaments, scouting players for FILA.

“I really love tennis, and it’s been fortunate for me because I’ve been able to work in the sport I love,” Martin says of his position with FILA.

Martin doesn’t hit the courts as often anymore, but his job allows him to keep up with tennis. He loves the competitiveness and the personal responsibility of the sport, and has had a front-row seat to the changes in the tennis tournament structure and culture over his many years both working and playing.