

PUNCHING OUT A TENNIS SLOGAN

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Last year, the New Hampshire Lawn Tennis Association sponsored a slogan contest. Since its inception, the Association's letter-head symbol has been two crossed tennis racquets, and the NHLTA president offered a prize to the member who could serve up the snappiest slogan to go with the logo.

I began bouncing around a few ideas and soon realized what a matchless setup this contest was. With a low overhead I could drive home my point for a net gain.

Immediately from my childhood I recalled the story of the two cats who were watching a tennis match. One turned to the other and said: "You know, my mother's in that racquet." I was having a high strung gut reaction.

Then I had a stroke of good luck. I decided to do some research for my slogan by reading the world's greatest writers of tennis books. I opened the books of Robert W. Service and Miguel Cervantes, W. Somerset Maugham and Lord Byron, Richard Lovelace and Honore de Balzac, Joseph Addison, Ivy Compton Burnet, and Kurt Vonnegut.

And, of course, I read the works of the two greatest authors of all time: Alfred, Lord Tennyson and Tennis E. Williams.

I discovered rich literary gold: Point Counterpoint (the story of Connors vs. Borg), Love Story (Evert vs. anybody), Volley of the Dolls (the Virginia Slims tour), Winterset (indoor tennis), and King Lear (a biography of Ilie Nastase).

I was now ready to write my slogans. Linesmen ready?

1. Shake hands with our racquet
2. We're dedicated to faultless services
3. We deliver a smashing opportunity
4. Our service will improve your service

Apparently the panel of judges reacted like a cross court. They wondered what the deuce I was doing writing these base lines. So, as a backhanded compliment, they declared as the winner my fifth slogan, the one that didn't have any pun in it at all: "The sport for a lifetime in the state for a lifetime", one with an American twist.