Helen Wills Moody: America’s Tennis Champion

by Martina Williams
Question of the Week
What unique traits does it take to be the first to do something?

High Frequency Words
father  better
student  best

Concept Words
famous  ranked
coach  fashion
championship  retired

Learning Goals
• You must work hard to be the first to do something.
• Helen Wills was a famous tennis player.
• Helen Wills worked hard to become the best player.

by Martina Williams
Helen Wills was born in California in 1905. Helen was a very good painter. But she became famous for tennis. Helen was one of the best tennis players of all!

Helen loved painting and tennis.

One day, a famous tennis player named Hazel saw Helen play. Hazel thought Helen could be a champion. A champion is the best player of a sport.
Hazel became Helen’s coach. She taught Helen how to be a better player. Helen was a good student. She won a tennis championship in California. Helen was 16 years old.

Helen wanted to be even better. She practiced against better players who were men. In 1922, Helen was ranked as the third best woman player in the United States.

**Extend Language**

**Tennis Strokes**

A *backhand* stroke is made when the back of the hand is forward.

A *forehand* stroke is made when the palm of the hand is forward.
Helen Wills Moody won many championships.

In 1923, Helen played in the U.S. championship. She played against the best player in the world. Helen won in only 33 minutes. She surprised everyone!

After that, Helen won almost every match she played. In 1924, she won a gold medal at the Olympics. From 1927 to 1933, she won 180 matches without losing.

Helen Wills Moody’s Major Tennis Championships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tournament</th>
<th>Years Won</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wimbledon Championship</td>
<td>1927 1928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1929 1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1932 1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1935 1938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Championship</td>
<td>1923 1924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1925 1927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1928 1929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Championship</td>
<td>1923 1929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1930 1932</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Helen also changed tennis fashion. Women played in long skirts. It was hard to run in them. Helen started to play in short skirts. Soon other players did too.

In 1938, Helen retired. She stopped playing at 33 years old. Helen was a champion.

---

**Talk About It**

1. How did Hazel help Helen?
2. How did Helen become a tennis champion?

**Write About It**

3. On a separate sheet of paper, write two words that describe Helen. Then write two sentences that explain why these words describe her.

**Extend Language**

The words *friend* and *friendship* are related. Friends share friendship. What word from the story is related to *championship*?

**Illustrations:** Meg Aubrey.

**Photographs**

Every effort has been made to secure permission and provide appropriate credit for photographic material. The publisher deeply regrets any omission and pledges to correct errors called to its attention in subsequent editions.

Unless otherwise acknowledged, all photographs are the property of Pearson Education, Inc.

Photo locators denoted as follows: Top (T), Center (C), Bottom (B), Left (L), Right (R), Background (Bkgd)


Copyright © Pearson Education, Inc., or its affiliates. All Rights Reserved. Printed in the United States of America. This publication is protected by copyright, and permission should be obtained from the publisher prior to any prohibited reproduction, storage in a retrieval system, or transmission in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or likewise. For information regarding permissions, write to Pearson Curriculum Group Rights & Permissions, One Lake Street, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458.

Pearson, Scott Foresman, and Pearson Scott Foresman are trademarks, in the U.S. and/or other countries, of Pearson Education, Inc., or its affiliates.