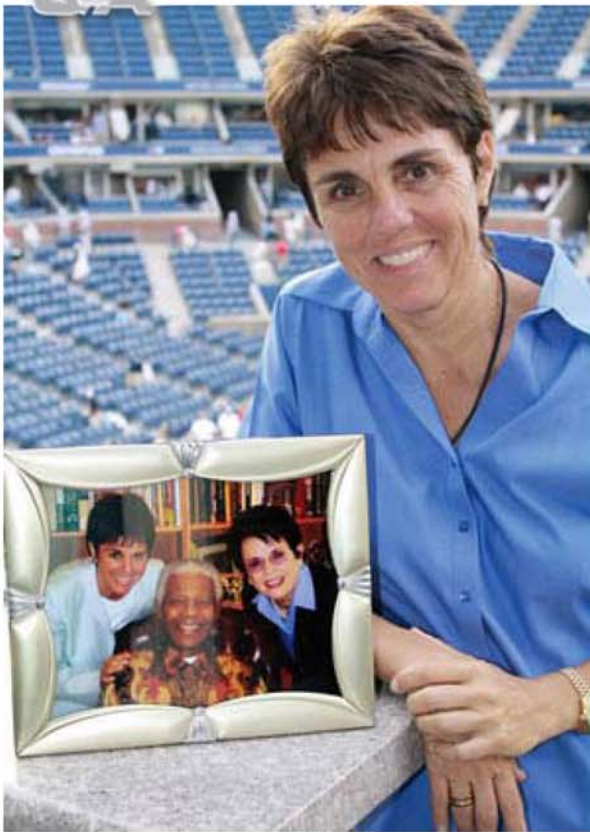


SBJ/October 10-16, 2011/Game Changers

## Game Changers: Ilana Kloss

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GAME CHANGERS  
WOMEN IN SPORTS BUSINESS



ISAAC LEAMER / WTT

Kloss, originally from South Africa, and King met Nelson Mandela in 2008. Both King and Mandela “are an inspiration on how I believe people should lead,” Kloss says.

## Ilana Kloss



**World TeamTennis**  
**CEO and Commissioner**

When Ilana Kloss emerged as a young pro tennis player in the 1970s, she had to be inventive, and not just on the court. A white native of South Africa, apartheid sanctions made competing internationally challenging.

“If I couldn’t get a visa, I had to figure it out,” Kloss said. “That’s why I am a good problem solver.”

Relationships she forged with players, including her now partner Billie Jean King, eased her way. Since 1985, Kloss has worked for King’s brainchild, World TeamTennis, serving in the last decade as its commissioner.

She inherited her marketing skills from her father, a traveling salesman, learning that people who generate revenue always have a job. That’s why she is relentless pushing for WTT.

“If someone says no,” she said, “it means they just don’t have enough information.”

— Daniel Kaplan

**First job:** Selling tournament program books at the South African Open tennis championships at the age of 11.

**What is the best advice you've ever received?:** To be a good listener and stay in the solution.

**In 10 words or less, how would you describe your management style?:** Be part of the team and lead by example.

**Person who had the biggest influence on your career in sports:** Billie Jean King. She created an opportunity for me and hundreds of thousands of others, of both genders, to pursue their dreams in a field where they were passionate and highly skilled.

**The biggest challenge I face working in the sports business is ...:** Being a small, U.S.-based, independently owned business in a global fractured sports environment where you have to compete on so many levels to innovate and move the game forward.

**One attribute I look for when hiring is ...:** Someone who is a problem-solver and can generate revenue.

## WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

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*"In business, everything starts with integrity, and that is very important to Ilana: integrity, honesty and accepting responsibility. She keeps her word. More than anything else, she wants to make a positive difference both in our sport and in the lives of others."*

**Billie Jean King**, World TeamTennis co-founder