

Billie Jean King Firsts:

- ◆ First woman commissioner in professional sports history (World Team Tennis, 1984)
- ◆ First woman to coach a co-ed team in professional sports (Philadelphia Freedoms, WTT, 1974)
- ◆ First female athlete in any sport to earn more than \$100,000 in a single season (\$117,000, 1971)
- ◆ Only woman to win U.S. singles title on four surfaces (grass, clay, carpet, hard courts)
- ◆ One of six inaugural inductees into the Court of Fame at the USTA National Tennis Center (2003)
- ◆ First woman to have a major sports venue named in her honor (USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center – 2006)

Billie Jean King Factoids

- ◆ Billie Jean King was born Nov. 22, 1943 and grew up in Long Beach, Calif., where her father, Bill, worked for the Long Beach Fire Department and her mother, Betty, was a homemaker.
- ◆ At age 5, while washing dishes, Billie Jean told her mom, “I am going to do something great with my life.”
- ◆ Billie Jean’s brother, Randy Moffitt was a relief pitcher in Major League Baseball for 13 years (pitched with the San Francisco Giants, Houston Astros and Toronto Blue Jays).
- ◆ Billie Jean bought her first tennis racquet – which came complete with maroon strings – at age 11, using money she had saved from odd jobs. The racquet, which cost \$8, was purchased from Brown’s Sporting Goods on Atlantic Avenue in Long Beach.
- ◆ At age 11, Betty picked Billie Jean up from a session of free tennis lessons at Houghton Park in Long Beach and Billie told her “I am going to be No. 1 in the world.” Betty thought that was nice and then reminded Billie Jean she had homework to complete and piano lessons to practice.
- ◆ Playing in a tournament at the Los Angeles Tennis Club in 1955, Billie Jean was barred from posing for a group picture of junior tennis players because she was wearing tennis shorts and not a tennis skirt.
- ◆ King was one of nine players who broke away from the tennis establishment and accepted \$1 contracts from tennis promoter Gladys Heldman in Houston in 1970. The revolt led to the formation of the Virginia Slims Tour and Women’s Tennis Association.
- ◆ King was the first female athlete in any sport to win \$100,000 (1971).
- ◆ In 1973 King lobbied for, and obtained, equal prize money for men and women at the US Open. It would take another 34 years for all four major tournaments to offer equal prize money.
- ◆ Life Magazine named Billie Jean one of the 100 most important Americans of the 20th Century.
- ◆ Elton John wrote his No. 1 hit *Philadelphia Freedom* for Billie Jean.