

Game, set, match: Davis Cup shows NOTL love

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The arrival of the Davis Cup to Niagara-on-the-Lake meant something special to the town's tennis enthusiasts.

For Danny and Marlene McCarthy and Bev Lees, three of the original members of the NOTL Tennis Club since 1970, it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity — thanks to Team Canada's historic victory.

The 231-pound trophy made a stop in NOTL last Thursday during its four-month cross-country tour. People from across town dropped by its visiting spot, a private tennis court, to see it in person.

"I think the whole town should be here," Danny said.

Team Canada won the cup last November for the first time in 122 years in a match against Australia.

To see Canada finally win, and then to see the trophy in NOTL, is something for which the McCarthys have been waiting a long time.

"Tennis is finally getting the recognition it deserves



Frank Dancevic, Team Canada captain and Niagara Falls native, in Niagara-on-the-lake last week with the Davis Cup. Team Canada won the Davis Cup for the first time in 122 years last November. DAVE VAN DE LAAR

in Niagara-on-the-Lake," said Danny.

"It's an amazing accomplishment for us, for tennis in general and Canada for how far we've come over the years," said Frank Dancevic, Team Canada

captain and Niagara Falls native.

The McCarthys said they've loved tennis since they were in their 20s, and remember playing on asphalt courts in NOTL before there was even a club.

The trophy's stop in NOTL was coordinated by Rosemary Goodwin, director of the NOTL Tennis Club, who spent months working with Team Canada and the Davis Cup to schedule its visit to town.

The cup was on display at Sam and Robin Ridesic's private tennis court just steps away from the spot where prestigious lawn tennis competitions were played more than a century ago.

In the 1890s, Queens Royal Hotel was home to some of the most well-known lawn tennis competitions — including the Niagara International and the Canadian National Championships.

"It's hard to imagine that Queens Royal had six lawn tennis courts," said McCarthy.

Niagara-on-the-Lake was a tennis hot spot. The competitions would bring in the top tennis players from around the world to not just compete but to mingle with other players.

In 1896, friends suggested to millionaire Dwight F. Davis that he should sponsor what is known now as the Davis Cup — which he did in 1900 when the first Davis Cup competition took place between the United States and Great Britain.

Dancevic said to be there in Niagara-on-the-Lake with the cup felt like it was meant to be.

He said the history of tennis in NOTL and how the Davis Cup originated "is pretty amazing."

"It's just a wonderful story."