

# Cross-country tour brings **Davis Cup** to NOTL

Kevin MacLean  
The Lake Report

The Davis Cup is coming home – to Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The most prestigious trophy in international men's team tennis – which Canada won last fall for the first time ever – will be in town next Thursday afternoon.

And it will be on display near the site where the idea for the Davis Cup was first conceived.

Way back in the 1890s, NOTL was at the epicentre of international tennis competition, including the Canadian Open, hosted on the lawn tennis courts of the Queen's Royal Hotel.

Top players from around the world would converge on NOTL and in 1896 friends suggested to millionaire tennis player Dwight Davis of St. Louis that he sponsor the trophy for what eventually became known worldwide as the Davis Cup.



Rosemary Goodwin with a printout of the first national tennis championship held in NOTL in 1885. The Davis Cup returns to NOTL next Thursday. FILE/EVAN SAUNDERS

The cup was first contested in 1900 and 122 years later, in November of last year, Canada beat Australia to claim its inaugural championship.

And since April, the cup has been on a cross-country tour, culminating in its final stop in Niagara-

on-the-Lake before heading to the National Bank Open tourneys in Toronto and Montreal starting next weekend.

Rosemary Goodwin, a director of the NOTL Tennis Club, has worked for months to arrange the visit. And on Thursday, Aug.

whose property is not far from the site where those lawn tennis matches were played more than a century ago.

Dignitaries, tennis officials and Dancevic, a native of Niagara Falls who now lives in Montreal, will be among those on hand for the day.

For Dancevic, it will be particularly poignant because he spent his formative years in Niagara honing his skills and learning the game.

Goodwin thinks NOTL was the perfect location for the final stop on the cup's tour.

"While so much of our history here is about wars, the Queen's Royal Hotel played a major role in society and witnessed the huge changes that took place during the Victorian years from the 1880s and through to the 1920s," she said in an interview.

The hotel was a real crossroads.

"The tennis players loved coming here. It was the party town, a place where they let their hair down and the Americans and the Canadians formed bonds and friendships," she said.

If not for NOTL, there might never have been a Davis Cup.

Goodwin is also hoping that having the cup in town might spur some people to dig through family archives for photos, documents and memorabilia from that long-ago tennis era in town.

Not a lot of items remain from those years.

Meanwhile, Goodwin teamed up with writer Carol Kurtz, video producer Adrian Thiessen, historian Tady Sackowski and photographer Rene Bertsch to create a video about the story behind the Davis Cup and NOTL's role in its conception.

View the video under Davis Cup Champions Tour on the tennis club's website, [niagaratennisclub.com](http://niagaratennisclub.com).