



# More than a love match

*Australian tennis royalty Daphne and Trevor Fancutt have coached some 62,000 children at their Fancutts Tennis Centre in Lutwyche, Brisbane, over the past 50 years. Each with impressive player records at international grand slams including playing centre court at Wimbledon – and married 55 years – the Fancutts are still going strong, writes Elissa Lawrence*

doubles on centre court in 1956 in front of the royal box, the same year I was in the mixed doubles semi-final with Trevor (on centre court also).

Trevor and I got married in South Africa in 1957 and moved to Australia in 1958. Our sons – Charlie, Michael and Chris – have all played at Wimbledon. I think we're the only family in the world who've had five members of the one family play in Wimbledon's main draw. Trevor, Michael and I have reached semi-finals or better.

Charlie beat Ivan Lendl, who was the number three seed, in the first round in five sets in 1981. It was the biggest upset for years. We have eight grandchildren including little Daphne who is nearly three. So when I'm dead, I'll be alive. She runs around here with a tennis racket and ball. How gorgeous is that? I still play tennis and I still coach and if I drop dead on the court I'll be happy. Nothing gives me more pleasure than watching little tiny kids playing tennis.

I generally live in the present and the future. When my father was 98 and was talking to a bloke who was 96, he would say: 'You're still a boy, my man, you're still a boy.' You are only as old as you let your mind think.



**TREVOR FANCUTT,** 77: I had seen a picture of Wimbledon in a book and, at 14 or 15 years of age, I decided I wanted to play there. My main way of becoming a player was hitting a ball against a brick toilet wall in the back yard of our house. There wasn't enough space for a tennis racket so I used a wooden bat instead. In

1952, I got to the final of Junior Wimbledon and was also accepted straight into the main draw of the men's. That was a big achievement for me. To get there, I had to work my passage over on a boat. I was a saloon boy on an ocean liner from Cape Town to England.

In 1955, I came back and played singles, doubles and mixed. Then in 1956 was the second dream of my lifetime – to play on centre court at Wimbledon. I played Lew Hoad on centre court. He won the tournament that year but I had a good match with him and we became very good friends. Then I played the doubles and the mixed that year.

Daphne is a very logical and sensible person. She has a very lively attitude. She has such a passion for what she does and it comes from inside. She has a wonderful rapport with people. We're very compatible and I don't think we've had a stand-up fight in all our time. It's very lucky. I take the world as it comes. Daphne gets worked up every now and again but I'm a pacifist and you have to have two people who want to fight.

She's been an unbelievable mother and a great wife and you can't do better than that. I was brought up as an only child. It was a fairly lonely upbringing at times. My mother was a fantastic woman and we had maids who worked for us so I was always able to play cards with them.

My father ended up as the deputy commissioner of police for the whole of South Africa. He was very busy and was out often and we moved around as my dad was transferred a lot. Thinking back, I think my mother was pretty horrified about all the rigmarole of having a baby. I don't think she wanted to have another child. My father would have had other children for sure.

The big dream I had in my life, aside from playing Wimbledon, was to own my own tennis centre. We bought three old courts in 1962 and formed Fancutts Tennis Centre and Coaching Academy. At 4am every morning, I had to bag, water, bag, roll and mark the courts and then every evening as well. On the weekends, I had to do it three times a day. I didn't realise it was going to be a 90-hour work week with the maintenance, coaching, bookwork and stringing rackets. My time was full but it was my dream and I had my tennis courts. I was the happiest man in the world. We are now seeing third-generation pupils coming through. We really couldn't be happier.

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**DAPHNE FANCUTT, AM, 79:** The thing about Trevor and I is that we are total opposites. Everything about our life was opposite yet we still came together. I was brought up the youngest of nine children on a farm in Australia. He was brought up in South Africa, the only child of an English colonel of police.

He was cultured and a gentleman, I was an Australian bush person. I rode a horse to school when I was five years old. My father was a jockey and a racehorse man.

But opposites are sometimes very successful. Trevor and I are the perfect team. We're a formidable force because we're pulling together and not against each other.

We argue about things sometimes. I'm the rebel. I'm the fire. I'm more volatile. Sometimes I jump before I think. But Trevor would never raise his voice – he is a perfect gentleman and always has been. We're still very much in love after 55 years of marriage. It takes a few years to learn this when you are married but you learn to appreciate the other person's point of view and agree to disagree. I respect his opinion and he respects mine.

I met Trevor at London's Heathrow airport. I had played at Wimbledon and I'd been invited to play a tournament in Belfast. It was my first time overseas and I was by myself.

At that stage, both Trevor and I were using a Dunlop racket and the manager of Dunlop said to Trevor: "There's a girl going to Belfast from Australia and she'll probably get lost. Can you look out for her at the airport and look after her?"

So that's where we met. I thought he was charming and he had beautiful, absolutely stunning blue eyes. I thought it was very nice of him to escort me to Belfast but he wasn't a bit interested in me. He was interested in the Irish girls.

My best effort at Wimbledon was the final of the ladies