

Wimbledon Programme 1986

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Top right: Mats Wilander (Sweden) born in Vaxjo on 22nd August 1964.

The comparison is inevitable. Like his famous countryman Björn Borg, the quiet Swede Mats Wilander had his first major successes on clay. From being the World's best junior in 1981, he shot to stardom the following year by winning the French Open at the precocious age of 17 years 9 months and 6 days – the youngest ever to succeed in Paris. Like Borg, he plays with the same topspin western forehand and the same deadly double-handed backhand. When Mats won the 1983 Australian Open on grass with back-to-back victories over McEnroe and Lendl and then retained the title the following year, he achieved what Björn had done at Wimbledon.

In fact in 1983 Mats was the only man to win Grand Prix titles on all four surfaces – his six clay court wins and one each on grass, cement and indoor carpet gave him the best record that year and lifted him to 4th place in the world rankings.

The crowning moment in 1984 was his victory over Jimmy Connors in the crucial opening rubber of the Davis Cup final in Gothenburg that launched Sweden's spectacular 3-0 winning run. Like Borg in 1975, Mats had shown that he could respond to the responsibilities of team duty. During 1985 his was again the anchorman's role as Sweden retained the historic team trophy with a 3-2 win against the West Germans in Munich.

In tournament play, again like Borg, Mats has found it difficult to motivate himself except on major occasions. His second French title last year, won against

stiff opposition from McEnroe and Lendl brought special satisfaction. It was his first tournament win of a year in which he had only three successes. Yet here he is ranked three in the world, a multi-millionaire and, at 21, in the prime of life. Like Borg he is universally respected for his impeccable behaviour and true sportsmanship.

However, at Wimbledon he has not yet done his talents full justice. In fact he has never proceeded beyond the fourth round.

But if, like Borg, he eventually responds to the magic of the world's most prestigious Championships, then his unquestioned skills could bring him the success that, above all others, he craves.