

SPORTS

Cheeky? Duchess of Cambridge says it is worth the wait for the next Wimbledon Championships

June 30, 2020



The Duchess of Cambridge, patron of the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, narrates a new campaign to celebrate Wimbledon even as it is cancelled due to the pandemic. Image credit: Wimbledon

By DIANNA DILWORTH

Wimbledon has cancelled its iconic tennis tournament due to the COVID-19 coronavirus restrictions, marking the first time that the event has been shuttered since World War II. However, Wimbledon organizer All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club is not letting the week get by without marking the occasion.

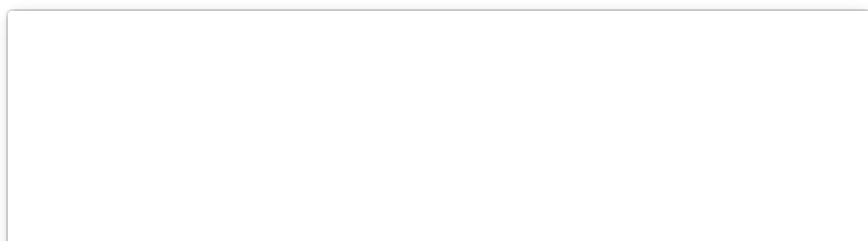
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The club has launched a social media campaign calling on consumers to share their favorite memories of the event to keep it alive virtually with the hashtag #WimbledonRecreated. The **Wish from Wimbledon** effort kicks off with the "Worth the Wait" video that opens on a shot of the empty courts and then cuts to a Rolex clock counting down.

"Three-hundred and fifty days," said Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, who narrates the 85-second video. "Fourteen hours and twelve minutes between the last ball hit and when the next was meant to be. Over the years, your support has shaped this historic event, no matter the time of day, nor the names on the scoreboard, you have always been there, come rain or shine."

The Duchess of Cambridge is patron of the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club. The Duke of Kent, cousin to Queen Elizabeth II, is president.

The Duchess earned the media nickname Waity-Katy for her patience and the long time it took her husband, Prince William, to propose marriage.



[View this post on Instagram](#)

Wimbledon debuts don't come much better One year on, we celebrate
@CocoGauff's incredible 2019 run - swipe to discover
#WimbledonRecreated

A post shared by Wimbledon (@wimbledon) on Jun 29, 2020 at 6:07am P...

Coco Gauff's record debut at Wimbledon debut is celebrated in these videos.

Ball's still in the court

The 134th Wimbledon Championships will now be held in the summer of 2021.

Founded in 1877, "The Championships, Wimbledon" is the oldest tennis tournament in the world, and often considered the most prestigious.

This year's event has been cancelled but the All-England Club is using this campaign to keep the spirit of the event alive by sharing videos of iconic matches from events in the past.

One post shares a series of highlights from a match between Novak Djokovic and Olivier Rochus from Wimbledon in 2010.

Another shows Coco Gauff's record-breaking 2019 debut in which the then-15 year old impressively advanced beyond expectations at Wimbledon.

The creative aims to entertain fans who would normally be following the games with something else to watch to keep the event top of mind.

Wimbledon's move to make the event more accessible to fans online is a strategy to build hope and connection, even when ticket sales are a no-go.

The Duchess of Cambridge's video offers a message of hope to viewers that these games will one day be played again.

The players' videos bring the game's sense of excitement to the forefront in a way to entertain and delight fans around the world who are likely still staying home for the most part.

"Wimbledon is an iconic brand, so it resonates on its own," said Anthony Schaub, founder of The Consultancy Group, Geneva. "But their long-term vision for many decade has been a subtle balance between tradition and innovation. This is part of what makes them unique. It goes from digital platforms to traditional media, sponsorship to hospitality to their ticketing offering. It is complex and very successful.

"With the campaign #WimbledonRecreated, they placed the fans at the center," he said. "Fans are vital for the future of the majors, but also an essential asset for their sponsors. It is also one of the best, only second to onsite activation, way to interact with your audiences and have a direct feedback."

[View this post on Instagram](#)

As first round encounters go, @djokermole vs @olivier_rochus had a bit of everything Swipe left for a taste of the action...

#WimbledonRecreated

A post shared by Wimbledon (@wimbledon) on Jun 29, 2020 at 4:03am P...

The memorable 2010 match between Novak Djokovic and Olivier Rochus is remembered in this year's campaign

Court side luxury

Tennis matches are big occasions in the luxury business as brands such as American Express, Polo Ralph Lauren, Jaguar Land Rover, Lanson Champagne and Rolex use these coveted games to connect their brands with some of the most exclusive sporting events in the world.

This year the only Grand Slam event to take place so far was the Australian Open, which was held in January before coronavirus lockdowns extended much beyond China.

The French Open, which was scheduled to be held in May, was cancelled.

Wimbledon, which would have been held this week, was also cancelled.

The fourth game in the series, the US Open, which takes place at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York, is still scheduled to go on in September.

However, this year, the event will only be televised and the players cannot bring their entourages or fill their VIP boxes with icons from New York society.

Swiss player Roger Federer is known for having celebrities and fashion icons such as *Vogue* editor in chief Anna Wintour in his box.

Even without the boxes and the crowds, if the USTA can pull it off and keep the event going for online and television viewers, this gives luxury brands a chance to spotlight their wares.

However, even this subdued version of the event could still be cancelled if the COVID-19 pandemic is not tamed soon enough.

In the meantime, Wimbledon sends a message of hope from the Duchess of Cambridge.

"Even though it is very difficult to produce content and keep the momentum going when you don't have any sports going on, it is absolutely critical to think creatively and come up with innovative solutions," Mr. Schaub said.

"Your community is, however, still expecting to be entertained," he said. "It takes years to build a community. You can to lose it extremely quickly."

Worth the wait: Narrated by the Duchess of Cambridge

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