



SUNDAY MIRROR, July 5, 1964

MARIA – SHE'S BUENO

SAM LEITCH AT WIMBLEDON

Maria Esther Andion Bueno is Queen of Wimbledon again.

At 8st. 10lb., and standing 5ft 5in., she was a slender killer in frilly pants, a ballerina of the Centre Court as she tamed the boom-boom power game of the Australian wonder girl Maggie Smith.

The 24-year-old Brazilian, with the classic strokes, won 6-4, 7-9, 6-3 after ninety minutes of gloriously exciting tennis, easily the supreme climax of the championship fortnight.

This tradition-drenched Centre Court was made for heroines.

How La Bueno, my tip for the title, richly deserved her third imperious crown. She was champion in 1959 and 1960.

So big Marge, the biggest cert Wimbledon has had for years, the No 1 seed, the 6-4 on favourite, went out.

Majestic

She was as much a victim of her own Centre Court nerves as Bueno's majestic passing shots.

But after the final I thought the 21-year-old Australian champion was inclined to exaggerate the failings of her own nervous system.

This did not do justice to the trim and exciting Latin challenger who combines grace and power and artistry. Maria beat Marge fair and square for the fourth time in their eleven clashes.

How the girls produced such scintillating strokes and thrilled the 15,000 crowd in a match which made the machine-like men's final look fourth rate for entertainment value.

My reason for tipping Bueno (that means good in her language) over Smith two weeks ago was the lingering doubt about Maggie's Centre Court jitters.

She was haunted from the first service. Tremors taunted her racket fingers. Never once in the marvellous one and a half hours battle did she look happy.

At 3.35 p.m. Maria Bueno, champion of her native Brazil 10 years ago when she was a fragile 14-year-old, flung her racket high and triumphantly to the Centre Court heavens.

The deadliest of drop volleys had gently cleared the net, defying even the athletic agility of Marge, and the old champion was out and a new one installed.

What crashing applause from the crowd treated to an orgy of excitement, rallies so rich we had long forgotten they existed, and wonderful sporting value.

There were seventeen double faults from the girls (nine from Smith, eight from Bueno), sure testimony to the emotional tension that affected both players.

Twelve games went against service and both players suffered from I considered to be poor line decisions.

But it was the second set that stole the show. After losing the first Smith and her irretrievable volleying swept to a 4-1 lead in the second.

Bueno had to choose between a tiring fight back or quick surrender and putting everything into the final set. She chose to fight.

Back she came to 4-4, on to the ninth game. Quite the most gripping women's tennis tournament my beating heart has had to cope with.

On five successive occasions Maria was within one point of breaking through the big Australian's service. But five times she let Marge off the Latin hook.

In all she failed on seven occasions to drive home the dagger thrust and paid the penalty by losing the set.

In the vital third set, Maggie Smith's nerves twanged and her service let her down completely.

Maria seemed to know the title was hers, that her surgically-precise play would conquer the tennis tigress who, it seemed, would gulp up everything in her path.

The wonder girl was beaten. This is good for sport. What are wonder girls, and wonder boys there for, but to be beaten.

It's Wilson

WOMEN'S SINGLES: M. Bueno (Brazil) b M. Smith (Aus.) 6-4, 7-9, 6-3.

WOMEN'S DOUBLES: M. Smith, L. Turner (Aus.) b B. Moffit, K. Susman (US) 7-5, 6-2.

MEN'S DOUBLES: R. Hewitt, F. Stolle (Aus) bt R> Emerson, K. Fletcher (Aus) 7-5, 11-9, 6-4.

MIXED DOUBLES: F. Stolle, L. Turner bt K. Fletcher, M. Smith (Aus) 6-4, 6-4.

MEN'S PLATE: R. Wilson (GB) bt W. Bowrey (Aus) 6-4, 6-3.

WOMEN'S PLATE: V. Sukova (Cz) bt J. Bricks (US) 0-6, 6-3, 6-3.

Photo caption: Happy Maria Bueno (left) is Queen of Wimbledon once more – unhappy Margaret Smith, last year's champion, just manages to smile.