

WIMBLEDON FINALS

Tall, gangling Bob Falkenburg and blonde Australian John Bromwich walk onto the most sacred spot in tennis - Wimbledon's centre court - to give battle in the All-England championship finals. Packed stands watch the ambidexterous Empireman serve to the mercurial American. Falkenburg's much-discussed mannerisms add spice to an already excitement-laden final.

The crowd - not shy in showing their support for the popular Australian player - sense the tension - as the acrobatic Californian gives his best to keep the English title - held by an American since the days of Fred Perry.

Falkenburg's cannon-ball service - his chief asset - finds the Australian ready. Using both hands to advantage, Bromwich gets an early lead, only to squander it again by his erratic methods. This loses him the first set, but he walks away with "set two" 6-nil. "Set three" finds lanky Bob on the grass - stretched out like Joe Louis' opponent. In his own words "he is thinking" - even though the crowd think differently. But the lying down act helps him, for in a banistering attack on the net, he wins four games in a row.

Doing some more thinking on the baseline, the 22 year-old Californian draws ironic applause from the crowd, who are still hopeful of an Australian win. If Falkenburg's strange tactics are paying, the Australian shows no outward sign of it yet.

Querying a line decision (an unheard-of-thing at Wimbledon) Falkenburg finds the net going against him. Bromwich's double handed return upsets his play - but the young Californian has still some reserves left.

Playing superbly, Falkenburg acs his service for the winning match point.

The crowd swallows its disappointment and gives generous applause to the youngest player yet to walk off with the British tennis crown.