

WIMBLEDON 1962

You wouldn't think there were 18,000 people here - but that's the number who walked through the gates for the first day of Wimbledon Fortnight. The place absorbs people like a sponge. Favourite spot for the fashion parade is just outside the Centre Court.

It's a good spot for spotting celebrities, too. There's Mrs. Krishnan, wife of the No.4 seed. And last year's runner-up Chuck McKinley, with his wife.

British star Bobby Wilson, unseeded but not to be underrated, and Australia's Neil Fraser, the No.3 seed. And from South Africa, Marlene Gerson. Of course no Wimbledon would be complete without Jaroslav Drobny.

First day is really men's day, but there are plenty of women players around - Sonia Pachta from Austria - and another South African, Heather Segal.

Princess Marina must have seen more Centre Court games than anyone but the umpires. So now all the fans are here, and the serious business can start.

A cheering kick off for Britain - Bobby Wilson dismissing Jack Frost of America in three straight sets.

And on No.2 Court - Russia's blond Tomas Lejus beats Jacques Brichant of Belgium in four sets.

But the big event of the day is the first match of reigning champion Rod Laver of Australia - against Nareah Kumar of India.

To open the Fortnight on the Centre Court Lave to face with the champion would unnerve most people - but not Kumar. This is the Indian's fourteenth Wimbledon, and he calmly takes Laver's first service game. But after the first set, the champion finds his form.

Still unruffled, the Indian veteran battles on - fighting back even when it's set point against him.

So Rod Laver against a gallant opponent, shows he's lost none of the old magic.

And nor has Wimbledon. No wonder they call it the best five bob's worth in the sporting year.