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Andre Agassi Says Adieu

By Jonathon Hardcastle

At the start of the 2006 Wimbledon Championships last June, tennis great Andre Agassi announced

that he was retiring from professional tennis. The curtain was about to come down on one of the most successful and popular careers the sport had ever seen, a career that spanned two decades, eight Grand Slam championships and a host of unforgettable moments on the tennis court.

The 36-year-old Agassi said that after Wimbledon, he would play just one more major tournament, the US Open, and then call it quits. The announcement caused shock waves in the world of tennis and almost immediately, tennis players and fans alike started to consider Agassi's place in the pantheon of the sport.

"He'll go down as one of the guys who changed our sport in a lot of ways, not only the way he played the game, but also the way that he conducted himself on and off the court," said 2002 Wimbledon champion and former world number one Lleyton Hewitt. "There are not too many more recognizable people in tennis. The sport probably owes a lot to him."

"His longevity and desire to compete at the highest level have been remarkable. He has brought a huge amount to our sport and will be missed," said Pete Sampras, the seven-time Wimbledon champion whose on-court rivalry with Agassi helped boost tennis' popularity in the 1990s.

"He's a legend," said reigning French Open champion Rafael Nadal

Many forget that he wasn't always held in such high regard. Early in his career, Agassi was known mostly for his image ("Image is Everything," said one of his popular advertising campaigns at the time) rather than the substance in his game. It was a reputation borne from his early days on the professional tour as a kid with the denim shorts, Day-Glo shirts and flowing hair. These days, however, Agassi leaves the tennis scene as a respected elder statesman and with a legacy that is perhaps without precedence.

"I don't think there's one bad thing you can say about the guy," said 2004 Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova. "I mean, that guy is just a champion. It's amazing to still have someone around that's

achieved so much and that's done so much for the sport."

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Andre Agassi Announces Retirement

By Jonathon Hardcastle

Arguably one of the most recognizable figures in the world of professional tennis, player Andre Agassi has announced that he will be retiring from the sport after the 2006 U.S. Open. Currently aged 36, Andre's tennis career has spanned 20 years. His career was a long-lasting one that saw him play on while other players of his age range retired. He was a true master of the sport, held in regards with Pete Sampras and Jim Courier.

Andre's career saw its first speck of glory when he won the Wimbledon tournament in the year of 1992. The odds were stacked against Agassi; many critics felt that due to his method of baseline playing, he wouldn't be able to hold a candle to the other competitors in the event. He proved them wrong, as he would time and time again. One of the major highlights of his career is the fact that he won all four Grand Slams – he was only the fifth man in the history of the sport to do so. Another important thing to note is that Andre has won 8 major titles throughout the course of his career, a highly significant achievement in the unpredictable world of professional tennis.

All that is not to say that his career went perfectly; he was fraught with peril in 1997, bogged down due to injury which saw his ranking drop to a meager #141. As all true athletes, however, he saw this setback as an opportunity to better himself. He went on to play two Challenger events which saw his rank increase.

Many people saw Agassi as a popular figure throughout tennis. Without a doubt, he is one of the most recognizable, and one of the common faces pushed in the tennis world. His free spirit and his undying philanthropy can be seen due to the fact that he's donated literally millions of his earnings over the years to such notable causes as helping underprivileged children in his hometown of Las Vegas. The Andre Agassi Charitable Foundation works towards his goals to this very day.

Andre Agassi Says Adieu

Needless to say, Andre will be missed by tennis players and fans alike. He brought a certain touch of fun and adventure to the game, and he will never be forgotten in the annals of tennis fame.

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