



CHRISTINE TRUMAN JANES

- Born 16 February 1941 at Loughton in Essex, Christine Truman was the quintessential English heroine and a role model for a whole generation of schoolgirls. Six feet tall, her sporting ways and gentle demeanour made her one of the most popular British players ever.
- She burst into tennis in 1957 at the age of 16, romping through the opening three rounds at her first Wimbledon to meet and trounce the French Champion, Shirley Bloomer, and then beat the second ranked American, Betty Pratt, in a gruelling three-setter to reach the semi-finals. There she lost to the favourite Althea Gibson but she had captured the hearts of the British fans.
- The following year Christine upset Gibson in the Wightman Cup, leading the British team to its first post-war triumph over the United States.
- She won the Italian and French Championships in 1959 to become the first British player to be seeded number one at Wimbledon for 20 years. Caught on an off-day by the Mexican Yola Ramirez in the fourth round, she bounced back to reach the US final and ended the year ranked No 2 in the world while still only 18.
- In 1960 she was a semi-finalist in the Australian Championships, at Wimbledon and the US Championships, and won the Australian doubles with Maria Bueno.
- She also clinched the decisive doubles rubber with Shirley Bloomer Brasher to win the Wightman Cup for Britain again.
- Her big chance came at Wimbledon in 1961 when the two leading players, Bueno and Darlene Hard were both missing. She survived a tough quarterfinal against the new star Margaret Smith and reached the final against a backdrop of patriotic fever where she was favoured to win against her compatriot Angela Mortimer. In an unbearably exciting encounter, Christine was leading 6-4 and 4-3 when she tried to retrieve a shot off the net cord and slipped on the grass, dampened in the rain delay. As she stood up she grabbed the back of her right thigh in pain and, playing on, she never quite regained her form, eventually losing to the steadier Mortimer 4-6 6-4 7-5.
- Still only 20, she never again had a real shot at the top. She was out of tennis for most of 1962 after putting her foot through a rotten floorboard on a court in Jamaica, after which she came back to produce semi-final showings in Paris in 1963 and Wimbledon in 1965.
- She married Gerald Janes in 1967, having continued to play heroic parts in the Wightman Cup over the ensuing years, finally bringing the trophy home again for the third time in eight years after clinching the deciding doubles with her sister Nell in 1968.
- Christine Janes, as she was now known, continued playing domestic tournaments for a few more years between giving birth to four children, including appearances at Wimbledon where, in 1973, she was Martina Navratilova's first opponent there. She finally called a halt to her playing days in 1975 but has remained close to the game since, coaching, writing and commentating on it over the years as well as becoming a popular after dinner speaker.

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