

ADELAIDE NEWS

By Geoff Roach, Writer

11/22/1979

THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON IN AUSTRALIAN TENNIS

Karen Scott spent only an hour in her office at Melbourne's Kooyong tennis yesterday. By then it was 6 am, the sun was rising and she had to catch a plane to Adelaide. At 10 am she breezed through the first of a series of media encounters. Come noon, she was at Memorial Drive working. Last night she flew to Hobart to perform similar tasks today. She'll be on the same exhausting schedule for a while yet because Karen Scott is, at this time of the year anyway, the most important person in Australian tennis.

She is the tournament organizer for the glittering series of summer spectacles that start with the Theiss Toyoto International Challenge here from December 6-8, followed by the Berri SA Open at Memorial Drive through December 10-16.

Then comes the big one, the \$400,000 Marlboro Australian Open at Kooyong from December 24 to Jan 2 following by the Australian Hardcourt titles in Hobart. So 14 hour days are the norm because she must, she says, imbue everything in which she's involved with her personal touch.

"That's why being a woman is an advantage in this job" she says. "The help I get is fantastic but if you don't nag them you don't know that everything is set up the way you must have it. " Karen is almost certainly the only woman in the world in such a role but she's no stranger to tennis.

Her speech overflows with words like "charisma" and "macho" but there's nothing trendy about their delivery. From her they sound absolutely natural. Her answers are instant, lively and controversial. She's a straight shooter in a sometimes curved business and the media already respects the fact that she doesn't float rumors or play cat-and-mouse. So, finally how hard has it been for an attractive woman to work in what has always been a man's province? "Ninety-five per cent has been super delicious and five per cent has been tough because of .well, chauvinism isn't the right word, the older men particularly have been fantastic, but some people are used to dealing with men. I've learned a lot about the value of thick skin", she says.

Then, with the toss of the tawny mane and a dazzling smile, she's off to organize, to provide that personal touch. To talk to sponsors, caterers, police; organize ticket sales, usherettes, laundry, uniforms; decide who accommodates whom and what soft drinks will be used. And a whole lot more.

It is very obvious that she loves every minute.