

Interview Time Log for Larry Nagler
Session 1 (2/10/2020)
Timed Log

[00:00:00.00]

Born in Queens, New York and lives there for ten years before moving to Long Island. Lives in Long Island until coming to the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) at age seventeen. Decides on UCLA after meeting tennis coach JD Morgan.

[00:01:47.08]

Multi-sport athlete during youth. Tennis wasn't popular in New York but begins playing at the age of thirteen after a friend invites him. Continues tennis alongside basketball and several other sports throughout high school.

[00:02:45.12]

Comes to UCLA in [1958] primarily to play tennis but also plays basketball after trying out as a walk-on.

[00:03:25.06]

Plays under Coach John Wooden [from 1958-1959]. Wooden is a "tennis fanatic" who coached high school tennis in Indiana. Wooden encourages Nagler both on the basketball and tennis courts.

[00:04:11.16]

During preseason, he earns respect from the other players on the basketball team after asserting himself in a rigorous three-on-three pickup game and sustaining a "mouth full of blood."

[00:05:06.23]

Makes it onto the freshman team during his first year [1958], and the varsity team during his sophomore year [1959].

[00:05:34.08]

Attempts to split time between both sports until the time demands force him to make a choice. Talks to Coach Wooden, and expresses belief that his future will be in tennis. Wooden assures that he will play, but he won't start [in games] right away. Morgan wants him to focus on tennis, and Wooden encourages him to make whatever decision he thinks is best. Wooden and Morgan maintain a close friendship.

[00:06:37.21]

Drops basketball and chooses tennis [in 1960]. Doesn't lose a single tournament match that season, and wins the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) singles, doubles, and team championship. These achievements along with playing one-on-one basketball with friend and basketball player Walt Hazzard assures him that he's made the right decision.

[00:07:17.19]

Wooden continues to support and follow his tennis career. The two maintain a close friendship throughout Wooden's life.

[00:07:59.11]

JD Morgan-John Wooden stories. Morgan becomes athletic director [in 1963] and is surprised to find Wooden in his office surrounded by paperwork, Morgan encourages Wooden to "take care of the basketball" and allow him to "take care of the money."

[00:09:10.03]

JD is the moving force behind the modernization of UCLA's athletic program. Including the construction of [Edwin W.] Pauley Pavilion [in 1965], Morgan's business acumen as athletic director allows Wooden and other coaches to keep athletics "as pure as it could be," which in part contributes to the success of Wooden's basketball team.

[00:10:28.26]

Wooden possesses unique talents as a coach.

[00:10:50.24]

Relationships with Wooden, Morgan, Hazzard, and Arthur Ashe as well as Rafer Johnson, who is his fraternity brother. Observes Johnson training with [Yang Chuan-kwang] C.K. Yang for the [1960 Olympic] decathlon.

[00:12:05.20]

Daily practice schedule on the tennis team extends from 3:00 pm until sunset. Practicing in the stadium at the base of [Louise] Kerckhoff Hall, which serves as the first tennis stadium. When first arrives at UCLA, tennis courts in the center of orange grove between Westwood Boulevard and Gayley.

[00:13:25.20]

Engages in tennis battles with teammate and doubles partner, Allen Fox. Wins singles championship in 1960, and Fox wins it the next year.

[00:14:02.02]

Becomes team captain in 1961, the year Arthur Ashe and Charlie Pasarell were in the freshmen class. Has awareness of their player profiles before they arrive due to the small size of the tennis world. Only a handful of players thought to have the capacity to make a mark, including Ashe and Pasarell.

[00:15:00.17]

Powerful freshmen class of 1961, including [Arthur] Ashe, [Charlie] Pasarell, Dave Reed, and Dave Sanderlin. This marks the beginning of his relationship with Ashe.

[00:16:07.11]

Graduates in 1962, and plays doubles with Ashe. Invites Ashe to his house, and they make lox and bagels. Engage in dialogue about the Black and Jewish experience, and talk about it while playing. At the time, Nagler is “innocent” about what the world is actually like whereas Ashe is already more aware. Perceives a common thread between respective experiences.

[00:17:48.15]

Plays in the southern circuit while still in college and sees the “Whites Only” signs as the beginning of an awakening, but hasn’t fully grasped the significance.

[00:18:56.18]

Serves as Ashe’s lawyer during early stages of Open Tennis Era [c. 1968]. Ashe blossoms later in civil rights impact, and Nagler observes as Ashe gets arrested in protests and visits South Africa, only agreeing only to play in integrated stands. Origins of this activism evidenced in those early discussions between Ashe and Nagler about race, which opens up the relationship between them.

[00:20:04.19]

Jewish community on campus is not prevalent. Member of Jewish fraternity on campus, which also included Rafer Johnson.

[00:20:59.08]

Merion Cricket Tournament [located in Haverford, which is just outside] Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Stays in residences with families during the tournaments and people make negative comments about the Jews, but in a covert manner. Ashe is someone that everyone wants to meet, but he’s also subject to various prejudices. Enough common understanding between Nagler and Ashe to connect.

[00:23:22.10]

Timeline of education at UCLA: undergrad 1958-1962, law school 1962-1965. Isn't aware of when Dr. Martin Luther King comes to speak at UCLA in 1965.

[00:25:10.06]

Playing international tennis as an amateur before the Open Era. At one point, making more money weekly, \$500, as an amateur tennis player than the best recently-graduated lawyer made monthly at the top firm, \$650. Evolution of the Open Era and the creation of private enterprise competitive circuits, including Jack Kramer's and subsequently Lamar Hunt's tours.

[00:29:01.29]

Lamar Hunt creates his "Handsome Eight" group in 1968. Ashe wins the first U.S. Open, but can't accept prize money because he is still classified as an amateur. Negotiating contract with Lamar Hunt for Ashe, but because Ashe wants to remain eligible for Davis Cup tennis, he doesn't accept.

[00:32:03.28]

Representing the country motivates Ashe's decision to pursue Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) all four years in college and retain amateur status to remain eligible for Davis Cup tennis.

[00:33:02.05]

ROTC and the draft Selective Service. Propriety of being involved in the war. Draft constantly at the back of mind. Ashe graduates as a second lieutenant, begins his service after college, and continues to play tennis during his tenure.

[00:36:16.11]

Doubles partner with Ashe in the US Circuit [c. 1962]. Routines on the circuit. Characterization of tennis players as generally self-involved, but Ashe stands out in having a broader view.

[00:41:35.11]

Reflections on self-awareness then and now.

[00:43:11.25]

Closeness on the tennis team. Living situations for the players. Commutes from home in North Hollywood.

[00:44:35.24]

Owns two motorcycles over time and ultimately sells both to Ashe. Soft motorcycle, [Honda] Dream, with saddlebag for books. Hard motorcycle, [Honda CB77] Super Hawk, that's really fast.

[00:46:57.07]

Rafer Johnson and fraternity.

[00:48:43.10]

Feels blessed to have had the opportunity to be close to Ashe. Loss of Ashe to the country is enormous.

[00:50:27.20]

Important to Ashe to be more than an athlete. Despite initial reluctance [towards activism], Ashe decides that he wants and can do something that leads to a huge impact.

[00:52:01.22]

Ashe doesn't understand the impact he can have [at the time he and Nagler are doubles partners, in 1962] but he's curious and working to find his way gradually.

[00:52:44.28]

Closeness between Ashe takes shape after 1962, so can't speak to Ashe's impact on the rest of the team.

[00:54:05.23]

Thanks.