

# FROM BASEBALL TO TENNIS FOR ZIPAY

Growing up with four brothers, Sue Zipay assumed all girls were athletic and could naturally throw a baseball or serve a tennis ball.

The Massachusetts native utilized those athletic skills to achieve stellar results in both baseball and tennis.



**NANCY  
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Baseball was Sue's first game, and play she did! Her first experience in baseball came with her brothers in her elementary school years and transcended into professional baseball after high school.

More on that later!

Tennis came along later in life for Sue, and she played to state and national singles rankings. Since 1989, Sue and her son Bob have owned and managed Englewood Tennis Club in Englewood.

"When I was young, baseball was the only sport at the time and throwing, catching and fielding all came easily to me, so I was never left out of a game with my brothers and their friends," said Sue. "Later, the natural crouching position playing the infield made the transition to tennis skills come quickly, just like throwing to serving."

Now, back to baseball. Sue not only played neighborhood baseball but was on a professional team that gained enough recognition that a movie, "League of Their Own," was produced in 1992. The movie is a fictional account of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League that was created when Major League Baseball came to a standstill during World War II.

Sue was among those recruited



to play professional baseball in the women's league. She played infield for the Rockford Peaches and made a screen appearance in the movie. In 2012 the movie's 20th year since its release the Library of Congress designated preservation of the Penny Marshall-directed film for the U.S. National Film Registry.

"I still keep in touch with many of the players, although I was one of the youngest and many had played 10 years before I got there," said Sue. "The making of the movie had a huge impact on me, the league and all the women who played. One of the first and most notable phone calls I got at my tennis club was from Billie Jean King. She congratulated me for the movie and for what we all had accomplished so many years ago. Here, I have long admired her for all SHE has done for women in sports!"

When Sue transitioned to tennis from baseball around the age of 35, she dedicated herself to being the best possible after suffering an embarrassing loss in a casual game with neighbors.

Her commitment resulted in state and national rankings, a tennis-teaching career that began in 1973, an assistant tennis club manager and ownership of a tennis specialty shop.

To jumpstart her tennis career, Sue first attended Vic Braden's tennis school in California and

then Jack Barnaby's tennis course at Harvard University. Sue became a USTA-certified tennis umpire and was Massachusetts' first U.S. Racquet Stringers Association-certified racquet stringer.

As a player, Sue achieved a USTA New England No. 4 singles ranking and was No. 2 in doubles in the 40-and-over division. She was No. 22 in the nation in singles in the 40s.

In 1987, Sue relocated with her three kids to Florida and two years later bought Englewood

Tennis Club. Her son Bob, a mechanical engineer by trade, joined his mom in the tennis business.

"Our junior program, especially, is booming and Bob is the reason why," said Sue proudly. "He has built a reputation with high marks for his positive methods in teaching young juniors. We also cater to our senior members by arranging compatible matches so everyone gets to play as much as they want."

Sue is particularly proud of a Team Tennis Junior League that includes over 300 players from Manatee, Sarasota and Charlotte counties. This fall, Sue is offering a High School Varsity League that will include Friday evening play with music, pizza and good competition.

"The league is a good concept and will be good competition for them," said Sue. "Most play tournaments, too, so we hope to get some teams to help provide a good tune-up for the upcoming high school season."

To learn more about what Sue and her son have planned at the Englewood club visit [www.Englewoodtennisclub.com](http://www.Englewoodtennisclub.com).

Nancy Morgan is a member of the Board of Directors of the Youth Tennis Foundation and we support and sponsor, in part, her column.

Thank you, Nancy, for your years of service to the tennis community in Florida

"The more  
you  
give us...



...the more  
we  
give out."

- We created the Junior Tennis Team Program in 1976
- Started the First Collegiate Div. I Men's Event in 2011
- Started first Collegiate Div. I Women's Event in Tampa, Nov. 2-4, 2012 at USF
- Started the First Florida State High School All-Star Event, May 2012
- We have given out thousands of dollars to deserving beginning players every year since 2005



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