

Andre Agassi

American tennis player

Andre Agassi, in full **Andre Kirk Agassi**, (born April 29, 1970, [Las Vegas, Nevada](#), U.S.), American professional [tennis](#) player who won eight Grand Slam titles as well as the “career Grand Slam” for winning each of the four major tennis tournaments—[Wimbledon](#), the [Australian Open](#), the [French Open](#), and the [U.S. Open](#)—at least once.

By age 2 he could serve a tennis ball on a full court. At 13 he was sent to a tennis academy in Bradenton, Florida, run by Nick Bolletieri, who later became his coach. In 1987 Agassi won his first professional tournament. With six tournament wins in 1988, the shaggy-haired right-hander with the powerful forehand began attracting attention. Agassi’s charisma, flashy on-court wardrobe, and good looks made him a media sensation, and the tagline of one of the products he endorsed—“Image is everything”—came to stand as shorthand for the perception of Agassi among some tennis fans. He further annoyed tennis traditionalists by refusing to play at Wimbledon because of the event’s dress code and the grass surfaces of its courts.

Agassi managed to reach three Grand Slam finals between 1990 and 1991 but lost each time (including a defeat at the hands of his rival [Pete Sampras](#) at the 1990 U.S. Open), leaving some to question whether he had the tenacity to win a big match. In 1992 he quieted his doubters when he triumphed over [Goran Ivanisevic](#) of [Croatia](#) at Wimbledon (he had ended his boycott of the tournament the previous year) to take his first Grand Slam title. In 1994, after being dropped by Bolletieri—who questioned Agassi’s dedication to the sport—and falling out of the top 30 in the rankings, he returned with a new coach, Brad Gilbert, and a new, more focused game. He entered the 1994 U.S. Open unseeded; when he won there, it was the first time that an unseeded player had taken the tournament since 1966. Agassi, sporting a shaved head, claimed his third Grand Slam title in 1995 by beating Sampras in the Australian Open final in Agassi’s first participation in that event.

A gold medal in the men’s singles event at the [Olympic Games](#) in [Atlanta](#), Georgia, marked Agassi’s only notable victory in

1996. In 1997 Agassi made headlines with his marriage to actress [Brooke Shields](#), though his tennis continued to suffer because of a recurring wrist injury, and he saw his ranking plummet to 141. The disappointing losses continued through 1998 and early 1999, but they—along with a widely publicized split with Shields in April 1999—failed to shake Agassi’s focus on a comeback as he slowly worked his way back into a top 10 world ranking.

In 1999 Agassi won the French Open to become the fifth men’s player in history to win all four Grand Slam events, and the first to do it on three different surfaces. A title at the U.S. Open in September confirmed that he was back in top form, and he returned to the number one ranking at the end of 1999. Agassi won a second Australian Open in 2000 and a third in 2001. Later that year, he married fellow tennis star [Steffi Graf](#). After recurring wrist problems limited his 2002 season, he captured his fourth Australian Open championship in 2003. He made a surprise run for the 2005 U.S. Open final (a four-set loss to [Roger Federer](#)) and retained a top 10 ranking through early 2006, but mounting injuries and advancing age led to his retirement after the 2006 U.S. Open. However, he remained involved in the sport, and from 2017 to 2018 he coached [Novak Djokovic](#) of [Serbia](#). In 2011 Agassi was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame.

Agassi also was notable for the charitable ventures he undertook, including the founding of the Andre Agassi Foundation (1994) to aid at-risk children. In 2001 he opened the Andre Agassi College Preparatory Academy, a tuition-free [charter school](#) based in Las Vegas that is open to disadvantaged children. His autobiography, *Open*, was published in 2009.