

Colour Invades the Tennis Court

By
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AS, I expect, is every other woman-tennis player, I am tired of this quite unnecessary fuss about

shorts. "Unnecessary," because the difference between a very short skirt and well-cut skirt-shorts is so unsensational as to be hardly noticeable! A friend of mine watched one of the women players at Bourne-mouth the other week for a quarter of an hour before she could make out which she was wearing.

Of course, I am talking about cleverly cut, widely-pleated shorts, not the type of scanty panties that make even the slenderest woman look like a very much overgrown schoolboy.

My idea of this season's smartest formal costume for the player with a reasonably slim figure includes a pair of skirt-shorts, cut not briefer than three inches above the knee, and made of white flannel or creaseless linen with—and this is important—two pleats at both back and front to give the correct fullness.

With this goes a sports shirt of fine white woollen material, decorated with the wearer's monogram in some light colour. This fine woollen is very new—and very practical, because it absorbs all moisture from the body and so is tremendously comfortable to wear.

I always have my separate tennis shirts cut very long below the waist, so as to avoid riding up. The belt—in stitched self material—is slotted through the shorts to keep the waist trim.

Another new kit I like for friendly games and country matches, though not, of course, for the centre court at Wimbledon, is in sky blue linen. Orthodox players will be horrified at the idea of colour on the court, but I stick to my innovation, and I think that soon we shall see coloured outfits worn by the best players just as we have already experienced those two unheard-of "revolutions," bare legs and shorts.

This new blue model, for the sake of which I was practically mobbed the other day, again takes the form of widely-pleated skirt-shorts, this time with a V-necked sleeveless bodice cut in one with them. The opening is down one side.

A new "skirt-shorts" dress which I like very much, too, is an all-in-one step-in buttoned right down the centre back.

For very tall or rather "hefty" women, nothing can beat the plain dresses with gored skirts which many

well-known players are wearing this season. They are slim-looking and comfortable, and look well in fine cotton, cotton pique, or creaseless linen. Slender people who prefer skirts to shorts should, to be smart, choose those that are pleated all round.

Dresses should be rather high-waisted, the bodices close-fitting but not tight round the armholes. Careful cutting is needed here, for a loose armhole with a slipping shoulder is just as uncomfortable as a tight one. Like most players, I have a little tab sewn inside all dresses and shirts at the shoulder to keep lingerie straps in place.

You see hardly any blazers among the women tennis stars. Everyone is wearing those little cardigans that are knitted like blouses—pouched over a high-ribbed waistband, and either wrapping over or buttoning down the front. They can have either long or short sleeves. On colder days I wear a short-sleeved one beneath another, in a contrasting colour, with long sleeves. An ordinary cardigan catches the racket handle if you play in it—these do not, and so are splendid for "warming up" on a chilly day.

For coloured accessories the season's favourite is undoubtedly blue, in all its shades from turquoise to navy. Any touch of colour on the dress should match the blouse-cardigan whether it be decorative machine stitching (very good on white frocks) or embroidered initials.

Even if they do choose a coloured "woolly" or even a coloured dress, smart players prefer all-white socks and shoes. Most of the leading tennis stars are again playing without stockings this year. For "beneaths" I like very short alpaca wool panties—whether a skirt or shorts are worn—with a matching vest and, if necessary, a wide brassiere.

A smart player aims at looking as trim after three hard sets as she did when she stepped on to the court, and the great obstacle to this is usually her hair. I always put a fine net over mine, and so do Dorothy Round, Kathleen Stammers, and most of the other players. Sometimes I find a velvet "snood" an effective addition, but an eyeshade keeps the hair in better control.