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We are family

The amazing Ingebrigtsens and why your younger sibling is better at sport than you

'It is competitive between us in a healthy way. We try to train smart and push each other within the limits. But the psychological rivalry between us is one of the reasons why we are competing for medals every year.'

Filip Ingebrigtsen, one of the three Ingebrigtsen brothers to win gold in the 1500 metres at the European Championships¹

For many parents, it would be an unpalatable test of their allegiances to see their children battle against each other in a public competition. Gjert Ingebrigtsen was used to it; he had spent much of the past 20 years seeing his children race each other. And so, when he settled in to watch the 2018 European Athletics Championships in Berlin, the sight was familiar.

To the rest of the world, though, what they witnessed on the nights of 10 and 11 August was altogether more arresting. In the 1500 metres track race on 10 August, 17-year-old Jakob Ingebrigtsen became the youngest ever athlete to win an event in the European Championships. After he did so, two of his elder brothers, Henrik and Filip, joined him in celebrating on the track at the Olympic Stadium.

In itself, there was nothing unusual about siblings celebrating with the new champion – except that both had just competed against him in the very same race. Filip, who punched the air, had finished only 12th; this was deeply disappointing, for he was the defending champion, after winning gold in the same event two years earlier. Henrik, who draped his arm around Jakob and pointed to him, had come fourth. He, too, knew what winning the 1500 metres gold medal felt like – six years earlier, he had done it himself. Now, all three brothers had won the European title, one of the *marque* events of the European Championships.¹

Jakob and Henrik were celebrating together again just under 24 hours later at the Olympic Stadium. Jakob, remarkably, had won another gold medal – making him the first man in 84 years to win the 1500 and 5000 metres double at the European Championships, and all before he was old enough to be allowed to drive. As Jakob celebrated while holding the Norwegian flag, next to him was Henrik, who had finished the 5000 metres race just 1.7 seconds behind Jakob, to win the silver medal.

Younger ... and better

When his girls Serena and Venus were three and four, Richard Williams hatched a plan: he would give them tennis rackets and train them both, setting them on a path to becoming champions. Even as Venus developed faster in their childhood years, Richard always said that Serena would go on to be the better player.

Richard Williams was right. Both Venus and Serena would become among the finest ever to play the sport. And, as her father had always predicted, Serena would go on to be the best Williams. With 23 singles Grand Slams and 39 Grand Slams in total, she is probably the finest women's player in history.²

This is the little sibling effect in action: younger siblings tend to outperform their older brothers and sisters. If you have a younger sibling, they are probably better at sport than you are.

On average, elite athletes have 1.04 older siblings, while those who are non-elite have only 0.6 older siblings, according to an analysis of Australian and Canadian athletes across 33 different sports.³ In the study, elite athletes – who had reached senior international competition – and non-elite athletes – who had reached junior national or senior domestic level – on average had the same number of siblings overall. What mattered was whether they were younger or older.

Even when two siblings both reach professional level, the younger one retains salient advantages. In Major League Baseball, younger brothers outperform their older brothers.³ Among pairs of brothers that played Test cricket – the five-day format considered the sport's pinnacle – younger brothers have had a more successful career twice as often as elder brothers.³ On average, batters who played Test cricket for England between 2004 and 2019 had 1.2 older siblings, compared with 0.4 for county-level batters.³

Jakob is the fifth of the seven Ingebrigtsen siblings. And so he has been able to mimic the training techniques of his brothers Filip and Henrik, who are seven and nine years his senior. Even these two had the benefits of having an elder sibling – Filip is the second of the siblings, with an elder brother who also ran in his youth, while Henrik is the third born.

'I've been a professional runner since I was eight, nine, 10 years old,' Jakob said after his double triumph in Berlin. 'I've been training, dedicated and following a good structure – the same as my brothers – from an early age.

'It was a little crazy to get this medal, this is huge. But winning a second title in two days is the result of having done this my whole life.' From an early age, Jakob trained with his brothers, matching their intervals from the age of 16 or 17.⁴

While Jakob's victories in Berlin were extraordinary, surpassing his brothers was not. From the age of 15 onwards, Jakob achieved better results than his brothers at the same age in the 800 metres – and, from 16, in the 1500 metres.⁴ Aged 16, he became the youngest ever athlete to break the four-minute mile.

As with the Ingebrigtsen clan, older siblings double as recruiters into a particular sport, with younger siblings often choosing, or being pushed, to play with their older siblings. Remarkably, after the 2019 Rugby World Cup, 46 sets of brothers had played for New Zealand; family ties have underpinned one of the most successful sports teams in history.

A trickle-down effect

'She would always drag me out to run or to kick balls,' Ada Hegerberg, the winner of football's 2018 Ballon d'Or Féminin for the best female player in the world, recalled of her sister Andrine, two years her elder. 'She was a leading figure for me.'

Ada is the youngest of the three children. 'If it hadn't been for my elder brother and older sister, I don't think I would have achieved what I have. I was a "hang-around" in the beginning, but slowly when I got to eight or nine years of age I was dragged into it and I couldn't stop playing football. So they had a huge impact.'

First-borns have to wait for their parents to play with them, or their parents to arrange play-dates; those with elder siblings do not. They are born with someone to play with – and if their elder siblings are ferried around to play sport, they will often be taken along with them, increasing their exposure to regular sport at a younger age.

'Older siblings play an important role in athlete development – they can act as socializing agents, introducing their younger siblings to sport, either through informal play at home, or by parents dragging younger siblings along to their older sibling's sporting commitments,' explained Melissa Hopwood, the co-author of the study into Australian and Canadian athletes. 'The older siblings then act as role models and coaches, teaching their younger siblings the rules and skills of the sport by observation or direct instruction.'

In team sports, younger siblings often play with their elder siblings – just as Ada Hegerberg did. Doing so, Hopwood said, can ‘force the development of more advanced skills at a younger age in order to keep up with their teammates’.

The advantage multiplies in women’s sports. A study of the US national football team – consistently the best country in the world, and the 2019 World Cup winners – found that fewer players in the squad were an only child than the national average. Only 20 per cent of national team players were the eldest sibling, but 74 per cent of players had an older sibling – three-quarters of these older siblings played football. Whether the older siblings were boys or girls made no difference.⁵

In many countries, having at least one elder brother increases a girl’s chances of participating in sport. ‘Older brothers are more likely to be engaged in sport and high levels of informal play, so this may normalize the activity for their younger siblings,’ said Hopwood. ‘For girls with older brothers there is likely going to be a greater physical discrepancy between the two siblings so the girls have to smarten up and toughen up.’ Of the English women’s football squad who reached the semi-final of the 2019 World Cup, 52 per cent had an elder brother, and two-thirds had an elder sibling.⁵ All but one of England’s cricket squad that lifted the Women’s World Cup at Lord’s in 2017 had at least one older brother who played cricket.

Sibling rivalry

The urge to keep up drives younger siblings. ‘Everyone expects I will win and if I don’t it will be a big disappointment,’ Jakob said in a documentary following the Ingebrigtsen family before his professional career began.⁶ ‘My biggest dream is to be better than Henrik. I think when I am about 20 I will beat him.’ He didn’t even need that long.

Siblings develop different motivations and goals based on their birth order. First-borns develop a preference for mastery goals – those based on self-referenced standards of competence. Second-borns are more likely to prefer performance goals, which are based on other-referenced standards of competence. The contrast suggests that, in general, the goals of second-borns are better-suited to a career in

professional sport.⁷ A study comparing three groups of athletes – so-called super-champions, who reached the pinnacle of their sport, champions, and ‘almosts’, who didn’t make it to the top despite promising junior careers – found that a desire to keep up with older siblings was a driving force for many who went on to be leading athletes.⁸

‘You know I was always really very, very, very good,’ recalled Venus Williams, who was born 15 months earlier than Serena. ‘Serena, on the other hand, wasn’t very good at all. She was small, really slim and the racket was way too big for her. Hopeless.’⁹ Serena did not allow herself to be outclassed on the tennis court for long. As their mother recalled, ‘With Serena, everything had to be perfect and she would get frustrated if it wasn’t. She always had to win, no matter if it was a talent show, cards, she had to be the winner.’¹⁰

Some advantages enjoyed by younger siblings derive from how their parents treat them. Parents are notoriously more indulgent of later-born children, letting them go out at a younger age and engage in higher-risk activities.³ Such effects permeate sport, too. Compared to older siblings, younger ones are 40 per cent more likely to play dangerous contact sports than their elder brothers and sisters – so they have more opportunity to make it to the top in these sports.³

In sport, and beyond, younger siblings are more likely to take an unorthodox, less conformist approach, and not feel confined to stick to the rules. First-borns take more conservative career options – earning more money at the start of their careers – and are more supportive of the political status quo. According to analysis done by Frank J. Sulloway,¹¹ later-born children are ‘significantly more likely than first-borns to support radical political changes’. Sulloway has also shown that, remarkably, younger brothers are 10 times more likely than their older brothers to attempt to steal a base in baseball;¹² Jackie Robinson, acclaimed as the ‘father of base stealing’, had four elder siblings.

When competing against older siblings – and their friends – in informal games, younger siblings need cunning to make up for their physical disadvantages. Younger siblings often develop ‘superior perceptual-cognitive skills, more creativity and highly refined technical skills’ than older siblings, Hopwood explained.

As they have had less time to practise, and are less physically developed, younger siblings normally lose in family games. The experiences force children to become adept at dealing with failure, harnessing their competitiveness and mental resilience.

‘They would try to intimidate me,’ AB de Villiers, who was later ranked the number-one batsman in the world in both Test and one-day international cricket, recounted of childhood games with his two elder brothers, who were six and nine years older. ‘My brothers were merciless. They were monsters. There were always a lot of tears – usually mine.’¹³

So perhaps Jakob’s records will last only until his younger brother William – born in 2013 – turns professional. ‘We have another brother who is turning five years old, and soon he can join the team,’ said Henrik, after winning the silver medal in the 5000 metres race at the Olympic Stadium. ‘There are no limits for us.’¹⁴

Learning together

Simply having a sibling at all increases a child’s chances of becoming an elite athlete. Participation rates in sport tend to be higher among children with siblings. Worldwide, elite athletes’ siblings are 2.3 times more likely to play sport regularly;¹⁴ China’s former one-child policy, then, does not seem conducive to producing champions.

‘We are competitors, brothers and good friends,’ Filip has said. ‘We push each other during training.’¹⁵ As with the Ingebrigtsen brothers, siblings can provide companionship, emotional support and drive.

‘It is competitive between us in a healthy way,’ Filip said in Berlin.¹ ‘We try to train smart and push each other within the limits. But the psychological rivalry between us is one of the reasons why we are competing for medals every year.’

In 2017, Henrik recalled, ‘I was injured and had to go through surgery. It was hard to start training for the 2018 season. When I could follow Filip and Jakob on the interval sessions during the spring 2018, I knew I was able to fight for a medal in the 2018 European Championship.’¹⁵

Working with siblings may accelerate learning. Two, or more, people working together to learn a particular task – dyadic learning – is more

conducive to learning new skills.¹⁶ Multiple people learning together leads to greater verbal interaction between learners, and greater motivation and feedback sharing. ‘It’s almost like getting a mirror on your own performance if you can watch someone who’s similarly skilled make mistakes or gradually get better,’ said Nicola Hodges, an expert in skill acquisition from the University of British Columbia. Such an environment benefits all learners, but especially younger siblings – younger children can learn more from their siblings than vice versa. ‘I’ve learned a lot from watching Venus,’ Serena said in 1998. ‘Her results have encouraged me to work harder so that I can do well, too.’¹⁷

It is not only that younger children can learn from their siblings. Parents also learn from how they nurtured their elder children – retaining what worked best, but refining what did not to give their youngest children a better experience. This seems to have been the experience with the Williams sisters. ‘It’s almost like Venus, being the older sister, was the guinea pig on certain shots, and they got the technique better with Serena,’ the former US tennis player Pam Shriver observed of the sisters.² Parents are ‘more familiar with how to navigate the sporting system by the time their second child was involved,’ Hopwood found in her study. ‘They knew the good clubs, the good coaches, the commitment required, so they had a more informed, deliberate experience rather than flying blind.’

‘Both Filip and him have learned from my mistakes,’¹ Henrik said after Jakob’s first gold medal in Berlin. ‘I have made a lot of mistakes!

‘Every year we try to optimize our programme and all of our workouts and Jakob is starting his training with the perfect programmes, more or less ... My father, me and Filip [sic] have spent years optimizing the programme and making it perfect. Hopefully, we will tweak it and make it even better and let us take one gold more each.’

Jamie and Andy: a ‘team family’

Growing up in Dunblane, a town of 9,000 people in central Scotland, Jamie and Andy Murray were a little like the Ingebrigtsens. They would play each other at everything – although, unlike the Ingebrigtsens, it normally involved a ball.

The local tennis club was a minute's walk away. The club was by a park, where the Murrays used to play football with friends, and a golf course. 'We'd just go and play – either together or with friends,' Jamie recalled. 'We'd just go and play and hit balls.' In the height of summer it is light till after 10 o'clock in Dunblane, 'so you could spend the whole day and evening playing sport'.

At home, the boys 'were always making up their own games, and their own scoring systems for all sorts of things', their mother Judy said. They wrestled, making belts out of cardboard and glue – Andy normally played as the Rock – played balloon tennis over the sofa, ping-pong over tables and golf putting competitions in the hall.

At home, Jamie remembered using junior trophies they had won as nets. 'We'd have these tiny rackets and a sponge ball – we would play for hours and just loved it. But that stuff was all teaching us feel and skill without us really noticing.'

While only children are more likely to be dependent on playing with their parents or in formal settings at schools or sports clubs, children with siblings of a similar age generally begin playing informally with other children at a younger age. 'We would always do the same stuff together,' Jamie recalled. The Murrays were an example of what Canadian sociologists have called a 'team family', with sport acting as the backdrop for the development of sibling relationships, creating an environment for practising skills, formal and informal instruction and shared identity and purpose.¹⁸

Informal games help develop movement skills and encourage players to think for themselves.^{19, 20} Informal play exposes players to a far greater number of variables – and, therefore, new situations – than traditional formal training.

It didn't matter what the games were – they were fiercely contested in the Murray household. 'What helped Andy become that sort of uber-competitor was having an older brother who's a bit bigger and a bit stronger than him through most of his formative years,' Judy reflected. 'All he ever wanted to do was to beat Jamie.'

These childhood games shaped the tennis player that Andy became. 'The resilience of Andy is incredible. He has that real bloody-mindedness, Scottishness – so if you tell me I can't do something I will prove to you that I can.'

Success and sacrifice

Many elite athletes have risen from tremendous adversity to the summit. This creates the illusion that sporting talent can rise regardless of family background. Yet, even athletes who have experienced childhood trauma – like the death of a loved one or material hardship – tend to have benefited from crucial familial support.

‘My whole family played a massive part in my life. Without them, you wouldn’t even know me,’ Raheem Sterling, the England and Manchester City footballer, wrote for *The Players’ Tribune*.²¹ At the core of the story of how Sterling became one of the world’s best footballers is a tale of family sacrifice.

When Sterling was two, his father was murdered in Jamaica. His mother moved to London to work and study so she could provide for her children; Sterling remained in Kingston, Jamaica, with his grandmother, and then joined his mother in England aged five.

Sterling’s mother was instrumental in his career development. ‘My mum is a proper warrior. She knows how to make it in this world,’ he wrote. When Sterling was approached to join Arsenal, his mother pushed him to join Queens Park Rangers instead – a far less prestigious club, but one that would give him more game time.

The journey to the club involved three buses. ‘We’d leave at 3:15 and get home at 11 p.m. Every. Single. Day,’ Sterling wrote. His elder sister always accompanied him. ‘Imagine being 17 years old and doing that for your little brother. And I never once heard her say, “No, I don’t want to take him.”’

‘My mum sacrificed her life to get me here. My sister sacrificed her life to get me here.

‘My whole mission was to get a professional contract so that my mother and sister didn’t have to stress anymore. The day that I bought my mum a house, that was probably the happiest I’ve ever been.’

Sterling’s tale illustrates how central family support is to becoming an elite athlete. Children with an overall lack of parental or guardian involvement are less likely to succeed in any domain. The football development consultant Robin Russell observed that virtually every footballer, including those from the most deprived socioeconomic backgrounds, still typically had at least one crucial source of familial stability – at least

one dependable, loving parent or surrogate parent or guardian, such as a grandparent or elder sibling – to help with their journey. So even in football, the most accessible and democratic sport in the world, the role of families is crucial. Positive family attitudes towards playing contribute to children's self-confidence and motivation to continue sport.

Parents need to ensure their children have access to appropriate facilities, opponents and coaches – through formal club structures, playing informally with friends or family, or kicking a ball around with their children themselves. In many sports, such support requires time and money.²²

A big investment

When the Murray brothers started playing tennis, 'there were no coaches in our area, so I started to volunteer a couple of hours a week,' Judy recalled. She eventually became Scotland's national tennis coach in 1995, the year that Andy turned eight and Jamie nine. 'I had a £25,000 salary, and a £90,000 budget for the whole of Scotland, from age seven up through seniors, and that was to pay for courts, extra coaches, fitness training, and competitions.' She started small, with a group of 20 children, including her sons.

'You want to make things happen, you bring all the parents in, because nobody wants things to happen more for their kids than the parents. So, we created a car-share rota, people putting others up overnight. I taught them how to staff matches, how to run tournaments. And as a result of setting up this kind of family feel, everybody was in it together.

'It was like an adventure for them. We'd go off down to England sort of every second weekend in a minibus packed with kids, and they learned to fend for themselves and how to look after each other. Often I'd be driving the minibus, and it was just me and 16 kids – you wouldn't be allowed to do that now, but that was how it was. The older kids had to look after the younger ones. If I was going to do it again, I would do it exactly the same way, because it was fun, and it was normal.'

Judy and other parents ensured that players were exposed continually to new challenges. 'It's very easy in tennis to become a big fish

in a small pond, and as soon as you become a big fish in a small pond you need to get out of the small pond and find a bigger pond. We got used to travelling long distances to find competition.'

As her boys developed – Jamie went to train in Paris, and Andy in Barcelona – so the demands on Judy increased. 'We couldn't afford to pay other people to do things, so I learned all sorts of things, including how to do the tax returns in four different countries. I did a massage course so I could do the "rub-downs" after the matches so we didn't have to pay. There were just loads of things that I had to learn to do, because it was a necessity. It's why so many parents travel with their kids on the tennis circuit – they can't afford to pay anybody else.

'When you play overseas in junior tennis there's no prize money – it's a bit like going on holiday every week. You're paying for the flights or trains and food and the hotels, restrings and the entry fees and the phone calls.

'It requires an awful lot of investment of time and money to grow a young tennis player,' Judy reflected. This isn't only true of tennis. In the USA, a study of the parents of women's youth national football teams found that 63 per cent of mothers volunteered in some role for their child's club, 56 per cent of fathers trained their daughters individually, and 50 per cent volunteered to coach their child's team.²³ The parents and other family members able to help their children in the right ways help to determine who morphs into elite athletes.

The dangers of 'helicopter parenting'

'They hover over and then rescue their children whenever trouble arises. They're forever running lunches, permission slips, band instruments, and homework assignments to school. They're always pulling their children out of jams.'

The child development researchers Foster Cline and Jim Fay first coined the term 'helicopter parenting' to describe parents who are obsessively involved in their children's lives, trying to solve all of their problems and protect them from danger.²⁴

While parental involvement is often crucial for budding athletes, especially in individual sports, it must be the right type of involvement.

By taking responsibility away from children, helicopter parenting appears detrimental to their prospects of becoming elite athletes.

By micro-managing their children's lives, helicopter parents often prevent children from doing much informal play. The more that parents are hyper-engaged with their children, the less their children are likely to do physical activities – particularly unsupervised informal play, explained Ian Janssen, from Queen's University in Canada. So the greater the amount of helicopter parenting, the less informal play that children tend to do.²⁵ Rather than helicopter parenting, 'setting clear boundaries but allowing children freedom and independence within those boundaries are associated with positive outcomes in school and sport development,' explained Nicholas Holt, a specialist in sports development from the University of Alberta.²⁶

Excessive parental pressure and expectations have been linked with higher anxiety, reduced self-esteem and self-confidence in young athletes, and even burnout and dropout. Helicopter parenting is associated with lower engagement in sport and physical activity among North American children.²⁷

Ostensibly, Judy's involvement in her children's embryonic sports careers and her tennis pedigree may have encouraged her to be a helicopter parent. Yet she consciously eschewed helicopter parenting. 'I'm a huge believer in making kids think for themselves.' After they had played a match, and especially when they had struggled, Judy preferred to 'ask questions, rather than telling them what to do', she said.

'For the most part the more you ask them questions about what they think they should do in a match the better – what happened at certain points in the match, what could you have done differently if you played that match tomorrow, what do you want to work on? It was always about trying to understand what they took out of the match.

'It was really important for them to make their own decisions and choices, because if it's their decision they own that decision, they commit to that decision. And of course you jump in as a parent if you see them about to make a massive mistake, but I'm also a big believer in letting kids make mistakes and learning from their mistakes.'

Jamie recalled that his mum 'would always put the emphasis on us to talk about why things hadn't gone our way, or why did this not work, or what was your opponent doing to you that you were

struggling with on that day that you couldn't adapt. Letting us talk rather than just be told "OK, your serve was poor today or your forehand was rubbish, you were hitting everything in the net." The emphasis was on us to take ownership for what we were doing out there, and take responsibility for what happened on the court, because ultimately it's up to us, right?"

As Judy also coached others, she was not solely focused on her children's tennis. 'It helped that I was the national coach and was responsible for loads of kids, which meant I didn't get so caught up in just my own kids, which I think for most parents is what it's like.'

Parenting can reinforce a child's development in sport – but it can also undermine it. 'The whole triangle between the parent, the athlete or the child, and the coach – it has to be a three-way thing,' Judy said. For instance, a coach trying to imbue a child with resilience is undermined 'if the kid is then being spoiled at home and treated like a little princess or prince ... It's really important that the parents understand their role.'

The parents of budding athletes need to support the athlete, manage themselves and their wellbeing, and deal with the wider interactions in youth sport with other parents, coaches and administrators.²⁷ 'Parents need to develop and use effectively a range of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and organisational skills in order to best support their child,' explained Chris Harwood, a sports psychologist from Loughborough University.

Different jobs: parenting and training

Coaches often grumble about the need to create academies for the parents of prodigies, not just the children themselves. At the start of each intake of French football's famous Clairefontaine academy, there is a special address to parents. 'I have a meeting with all of the parents, and I say I do my job, and you do your job,' said Christian Bassila, the director of Clairefontaine. 'What is your job? Just to be parents, to be normal parents. Just stay parents, and it would be perfect.'

Bassila loathes parents who prematurely hype up their children. 'One father called me and said, "I have some journalist who wants to

write an article about my son. Is it possible?" In my head I say "unbelievable". Your son is 14 years old. These parents dream too much. He cannot understand now, but it will have a big impact.'

Some children arrive at Clairefontaine with parents carrying 'everything' for them. With such special treatment 'you don't give them good values', Bassila reflected. 'Just take care of your son like a normal parent. Don't think, "Oh, my son is a very good football player."'

'The parents can be your secret weapon as a coach if you get them on side,' Judy Murray observed. 'They can really help you to develop the child as a professional – bringing a good attitude, being a great competitor, packing their own bag, getting their own snacks at the supermarket – understanding what their sport is about.' Travelling for junior tournaments, Judy readily encounters children who break strings in their rackets. When she tells them to get the racket restrung, they say, "My mum always gets it done for me. I'll call my mum. My mum will know." And I'm like, "It's not your mum's racket, it's your racket.'"

Dave Collins, a sports psychologist, analysed what separated super champions – those with over 50 international caps or five or more world championship medals – from 'almosts', those who excelled at youth level but didn't make it beyond the second division or win any medals as an adult. The parents of 'almosts' seem far more consumed by their child's nascent sporting career.⁸

'Super champs would come home from school at 13, they'd just been training. Mum or Dad would go "How was that? Good. Now go and do your homework,"' Collins said. 'The mums and dads of the "almosts" were on the phone saying, "Why isn't my little soldier playing centre-forward?" "Let's get him some extra this, let's get him some extra that.'"

'I see more helicopter parenting than I've ever seen before,' Judy Murray reflected. 'But it doesn't help you to produce fighters, competitors, warriors on the sports field if the parents are doing everything.'

'You can't try and solve all your kid's problems – you can't protect them from everything. And that's actually bad for their chance of going on to become a top athlete.'

Unusually, the Murray brothers did not just both reach number one in the tennis rankings, they also reached the summit in completely different ways: Andy, a right-handed singles player renowned for his backcourt play, and Jamie, a left-handed doubles player who dominates the net.

‘We’ve got a lefty, a righty, a singles player, a doubles player, one who loves all the flashy stuff around the net and the other one who runs around the baseline, never say die,’ Judy said. ‘They’re completely different, but their game styles reflect their physicality and their personalities. And so they went completely different paths in tennis but they both ended up at the top of the game in different ways.’

‘It would have been much easier if they had gone down the same path,’ she laughed. ‘It shows you the importance of one size doesn’t fit all.’