

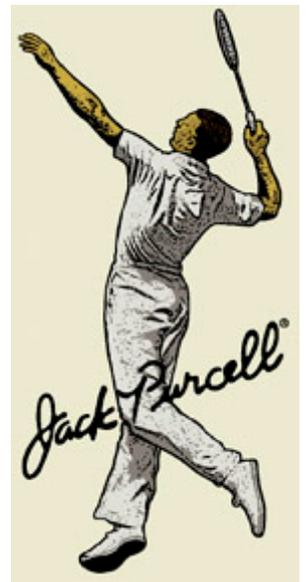
Jack Purcell - Born in Guelph Ontario, Jack Purcell began his badminton career in the 1920s and by 1924 had already garnered numerous championships on the court. By 1927, he had mastered the best in the province and was knocking on the door of the National Championships. He won his first provincial singles championship in 1927 and defended this title for the next 4 years. He also won a doubles and two mixed titles and was a triple champion in 1930.



In 1928 he reached the finals of the Canadian Championships and in 1929, he won the Canadian Singles Championship and then went on in 1930 to retain his title.

When a top team of British stars led by six-time All-England champion J.F. Devlin toured Canada in 1930 Jack defeated the four best British players.

In England, home of the sport, Purcell continued his triumphs, winning the Surrey doubles in 1931. Several years later in 1933, upon turning in his amateur status to play professionally, Purcell became the world champion. In order to provide more protection for the foot, Purcell helped to design the Jack Purcell sneaker originally introduced by the Canadian footwear division of B.F. Goodrich in 1935. It was Jack's connection with the B.F. Goodrich Company, as well as the publication of badminton articles, that led to him being deemed a professional by the Canadian Badminton Association.



Jack challenged Jess Willard of the United States who held the World Professional title and defeated him soundly. For the next 13 years, 1932-1945, Jack held the undisputed position of the world professional title. He defended against all the leading challengers from Great Britain and the United States. Included in the challenges were Frank Devlin of Ireland, Basil Jones of Wales and all the top United States professionals including Noel Radford, Guy Reed and Ken Davidson. A buoyant personality and possessor of one of the most accurate and powerful smashes of all time, Jack was a great showman, a beautiful stylist, and possessor of unmatched stroke deception and accuracy. Extremely popular in his barnstorming tours in the United States and Europe, the U.S. Cosmopolitan and other American magazines paid tribute to this Canadian by referring to him as the Babe Ruth and Bill Tilden of badminton.

Jack Purcell's badminton career began winding down during World War II due to lack of racquets and birds and Purcell retired as an undefeated champion. His post-badminton years were spent in Canadian business circles, where he was a member of the Toronto Stock Exchange. Jack Purcell died in Canada in 1991 at the age of 87.