

# Tennis Championships: 1920-2009

## *Sanction sold to Southern Section...er...ATP Tour*

The ATP Tour is now the owner of the sanction that formerly belonged to the Indianapolis Tennis Championships. The announcement came less than a week after the tournament announced the sanction was being sold. At a Friday afternoon press conference, tournament director Kevin Martin said the sale of the local sanction back to the tour was necessary due to the inability to secure a title sponsor for 2010 and beyond, as well as declining ticket sales. Terms of the purchase were not disclosed, and an emotional Martin declined to speculate on where the tournament might wind up. An earlier report that the tournament was heading to Atlanta had been denied by Martin, although an "Historical Timeline" of the tournament distributed to media listed as its final line - "2009: Tournament announces sale to the USTA Southern Section...". When asked, Martin apologized for the "mistake". ATP Tour director of media relations Greg Sharko said he was unaware of any specific timeline to decide where the tournament date might land, but did say it was obviously prudent for a decision to be made by the end of the year. The website TennisReporters.net reported that the USTA Southern Section was initially rebuffed in its attempt to purchase the tournament, but TR.net co-owner Matt Cronin said via email that the Section was to meet with the ATP Tour on Monday to appeal. Since the departure of longtime sponsor Thomson Consumer Electronics and its RCA brand following the 2006 event, the Tennis Championships struggled to maintain adequate sponsorship and attendance. The tournament, initially known as the Western Open, was first held in Indianapolis in 1920. Watch for the winter issue of *Indianapolis Tennis Magazine* - available in mid-January - for more coverage.