Antique Lopsided Double Strung Lawn Tennis Racket

F.H. Ayres

Sold

Manfred Schotten Antiques
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REF: 31693

Height: 67.5 cm (26.6")

Width: 20 cm (7.9")

Depth: 3 cm (1.2")

Description

Early F.H. Ayres Lopsided Lawn Tennis Racket.
An early and very rare example of a lop sided (tilt-head or teardrop-shaped) lawn tennis racket by F. H. Ayres of London. This fine lopsided racket, dating to the late 19th century, features an ash wood frame with a convex walnut wedge.
The handle grip is formed from the ash frame incorporating part of the walnut wedge, with applied cedar handle pieces. These are finely grooved for improved grip, and the handle is finished with a leather butt strip. The original leather collar is no longer present and has been replaced with black tape; however, the remainder of the racket retains a strong level of originality.
The head is double-strung with original period thick gut in two contrasting string colours, featuring five rows of trebling at the top and four at the bottom by the wedge. The walnut wedge is stamped on one side:
F. H. AYRES - WARRANTED - LONDON - 12 oz ¾.
Some stringing is broken near the wedge, consistent with age and play. A particularly unusual and noteworthy feature is the presence of a copper protective strip affixed to the top of the frame and secured with small screws, an uncommon early attempt to reinforce the striking surface against wear.
There is a small crack adjacent to the maker's mark, to the left of the name, though this does not detract significantly from the overall condition. Aside from this, the racket remains in very good original condition.
A scarce and historically significant example illustrating the early development of lawn tennis equipment by one of Britain's leading sporting goods manufacturers.

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