

**G**OOD TV drama tends to be thin on the ground at this time of year. But the BBC is always guaranteed to find us some at the All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club. In fact, the Beeb has been televising the tournament for 80 years, and \$0 in colour. With this year's Wimbledon getting under way on Monday, and with more than 150 hours of TV coverage lined up, here's a look at some of the characters likely to keep us entertained in the fortnight ahead.

► **ANDY MURRAY** (GREAT BRITAIN) AGE: 30 RANKING: 1 If our World No. 1 hopes to inspire the next generation of British tennis stars, the signs from his 16-month-old daughter are a little discouraging after he recently tried to give her a mini tennis racket. "She grabbed it, kind of looked at it and just walked over and put it straight in the bin," Andy revealed.



Wimbledon starts on Monday. Mike Ward is your guide to the players to watch

# Game, set and match

## WIMBLEDON

WIMBLEDON 2017, FROM MONDAY, 11.30AM, BBC2 & 1.45PM, BBC1

► **ANGELIQUE KERBER** (GERMANY) AGE: 29 RANKING: 1 She may top the rankings now, but Kerber's tennis has been flaky at times. Unlike her bottle-flipping skills. This is an online trend where people film themselves throwing a full plastic water bottle in the air, getting it to turn full circle so that it magically lands upright. And yes, she excels at it. Sadly, the prize money isn't great.



## WOMEN

▼ **NICK KYRGIOS** (AUSTRALIA) AGE: 22 RANKING: 20 If you miss the days when Wimbledon stars would routinely rant at the umpire or angrily smash their rackets to smithereens, you're bound to love this hot-headed Aussie. Tannums and sulks are Kyrgios's stock in trade. And even when he pulls off one of his spectacular, audacious shots, he insists the reason is: "I don't really like running."



▼ **ROGER FEDERER** (SWITZERLAND) AGE: 35 RANKING: 5 When the injury-plagued ex-No. 1 fell out of the top 10 in November, for the first time in 14 years, we feared his playing days were numbered. To be honest, they probably are. But he's not giving up without a fight. In January, he beat Rafael Nadal to win the Australian Open, his first Grand Slam since 2012.



▼ **BETHANIE MATTEK-SANDS** (USA) AGE: 32 AND **LUCIE SAFAROVA** (CZECH REPUBLIC) AGE: 30 RANKINGS (DOUBLES): 1 & 2 Bethanie (right in picture) and Lucie (left) are currently at the top of their game, but if the world's best women's doubles pair ever tire of tennis, a career in the circus surely beckons. Not only did they celebrate this year's Aussie Open triumph with a nifty on-court dance, but in a video posted online last month they wowed us with some rather impressive ball-juggling.



▼ **VENUS WILLIAMS** (USA) AGE: 37 RANKING: 11 Her sibling Serena, ex-world No. 1, is sitting out this year's tournament – probably wise, as she's seven months pregnant. But big sis Venus can be relied upon to update us with any family news. In a recent interview, she appeared to have accidentally given away the gender of Serena's baby, suggesting it was a girl. Serena insists it's still a secret.



▲ **CAROLINE WOZNIACKI** (DENMARK) AGE: 26 RANKING: 8 Always looking for new and unusual ways to surprise her fans, the former world No. 1 was recently pictured sitting astride a unicorn. An inflatable one, that is. Wearing nothing but a skimpy bikini (Caroline, we mean, not the unicorn). This was during her latest photoshoot for Sports Illustrated magazine's ever-popular swimsuit issue.



▲ **NOVAK DJOKOVIC** (SERBIA) AGE: 30 RANKING: 4 Everyone's favourite Action Man lookalike, Djokovic used to be unstoppable. But not lately, bless him. So before this year's French Open, a tournament he won in 2016, he hired US legend Andre Agassi as his new coach. And how dramatic was the transformation? Er, not very. A sorry Djokovic went out in the quarter-finals, trounced by Austria's Dominic Thiem.

▲ **JUAN MARTIN DEL POTRO** (ARGENTINA) AGE: 28 RANKING: 31 If it's a kind-hearted opponent you're after, Juan is your man – at least if you crack yourself like his recent opponent Nicolas Almagro. When a knee injury forced him to retire mid-game, a distraught Almagro lay on the court sobbing like a baby, prompting del Potro to go across and give the unfortunate soul a consoling cuddle.



▲ **JOHANNA KONTA** (GREAT BRITAIN) AGE: 26 RANKING: 7 One of the British No. 1's toughest clashes this year, a little bizarrely, was with controversial Romanian men's legend Ili "Nasty" Nastase. Overseeing his country's Federations Cup tie against Great Britain in April, Nastase's offensive behaviour, sitting court-side during one of Konta's matches, left the match in limbo and the Brit in tears. He was eventually escorted from the ground.

