



GRSA INTERNATIONAL ATW MAGAZINE

ARYNA THE FIRST IN 20 YEARS



JANNIK SINNER
TAKES CONTROL OF
AND WINS THE AO

GRSA COMPETITION
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AVAILABLE ONLINE

♪ **AND NOW, THE
END IS NEAR.** ♪

Is Rafa facing the final curtain?



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A dynamic photograph of a person's legs running, wearing black Wilson Rush Pro Extra Duty sneakers with bright yellow accents. The background is a blurred outdoor setting. The entire image is framed by a yellow border with a pattern of small white plus signs.

Wilson

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Section 2 - GRSA INTERNATIONAL

GRSA Managers are all over the world, we let you know which events they will be at so you can pick their brains or even arrange a workshop. Richard Parnell has a very interesting Stringer Solution.

Section 3 - Squash

It's time for the UnSquashable DSP, and what a pattern, Nick Down takes us through this interesting set-up.

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Section 5 - Pickleball

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It's been a busy start to the season, some names have stood out above the rest, we take a quick peek at who.

GRSA *members have a number of benefits, some appear here in the magazine and online, check out our community.*

Nadal's Way

The return of Rafa was a greatly anticipated, there was so much hype about it and quite rightly so. The legend that is Rafa Nadal is always a crowd drawer and his appearance in Brisbane was to be his first since the 2023 Australian Open as he was out for nearly a full calendar year while dealing his hip flexor injury.

Even though the baton has been passed on to Novak with Rafa sitting two majors behind Djokovic in the title race, this seemed to be far from Rafa's mind as all he seemed to be intent on was getting back on court, showing that he's still around and plans to stay around, but will his body let him stay around the slam scene for much longer?

He openly admitted that during the process of recovery, the thoughts of if he should retire or not were always present, he said "it's only human for those thoughts to be there", but he also reiterated that he still has the desire and determination to be on the biggest stage, that's why he has worked so hard to return.

Even last year before Roland Garros he was already showing signs of hanging up his professional playing career at the end of 2024, that was before he'd even gotten half way through his treatment.

Years of top level tennis will always take its toll, but it seems that the relentless dedication, un-wavable commitment, and obvious commitment to his passion, has reached the point where he has to seriously consider continuing.



You can never doubt Rafa's will to do his best, methodical in his preparations, routines and planning, he really is the example so many players look to and aspire to be like, for this reason, it's probably even more of an emotional journey for him, knowing the whole world is watching to see what happens and if he'll try and push to the very end or call it a day.



Rafa is a sensible professional, he's not a chancer, he knows that if he were to put himself really on the line, it could cost him dearly so that's why so many news agencies and entities are sharing the prospect of him retiring. It's huge news and for a very good reason, one of the greats could well be on the verge of saying farewell to the biggest stage in the racket sports world, we all hope that he continues to play, but more importantly, he continues to influence the tennis world and do it his wayyyyyyyyyy.

IN OTHER RAFA NEWS

Rafael Nadal now has a new role in the world of tennis. The Spaniard revealed that he has joined forces with the Saudi Tennis Federation to boost the popularity of tennis in the kingdom.

Nadal announced the news on his social media platforms, posting a video of the partnership launch. In the video, young tennis players in Saudi Arabia are surprised by Nadal's appearance on the court. "My goal is to promote tennis," Nadal said. "To build the infrastructure to support the development of players."

"To give them the opportunity to practice the sport in the best way possible," he added.

Nadal also wrote a statement, explaining his choice to support tennis in Saudi Arabia. "Saudi Arabia is a country that is growing and progressing in every aspect and I'm thrilled to be part of that," the statement said. "I play tennis because I love the game. But besides playing I want to help the sport expand across the world and in Saudi there is a lot of potential."

Nadal's role in the federation involves spreading the love of tennis in the country and exploring the possibility of establishing a Rafa Nadal Tennis Academy, which currently exists only in his hometown of Manacor, Spain.

The move is generating mixed emotions for multiple reasons, it also seems like the timing of his announcement fits in nicely with his withdrawal from the Australian Open, with recent changes in the sporting world and people going to and then leaving Saudi Arabia, it's of no surprise that there are doubts as to the reasons Nadal has chosen this role.



QUALIES, QUALIES AND MORE QUALIES

Some interesting names were out early doors in the AO, it was a tough start for some of the seeded players and Argentinian players seemed to be on the receiving end of early exits. Diego Schwatzman lost to Kudia in qualies, Navone lost in 3 sets to Prizmic and Cerundolo was sent home by Atmane.

But there were quite a few other seeded players to leave early on, names such as Darderi, Paire and Albot were all dismissed relatively easily, all this just on day two and just the men.

There weren't as many early dismissals in the women's group, Šramková lost to unseeded French player Ferro, 3-6, 6-4, 6-1. Home favourite A.Rodionova lost to another French player, L.Jeanjean in two straight sets, that really was unexpected as Arina had been very consistent in her build-up to the AO, but there was quite a lot going on with Arina, you can read about that further into the magazine.

Emiliana Arango was seeded N°9 for this AO, yet K. Sebov dispatched here in a very entertaining match, 6-4, 6-4 was the final result but the 23yr old Colombian Arango will be back for sure as she's shown brilliant tenacity and a great mentality to climb the rankings steadily.



Lucrezia Stefanini was also in the top 20 seeds this time round and was picked against the Dutch unseeded Lesley Pattinama Kerkhove. Look at this match-up on paper and she should have walked it, just through stats, but we know so well that you really can't base a game on stats alone, so much can happen and it did, Kerkhove just took off and made it look easy, 6-3, 6-3.

This is all happening in the qualifying stages with more seeded players being sent home early and this is something we see quite regularly. The assumption that seeded players will walk through the opening stages of a tournament is made far too often and it's not just in tennis that this happens. How many times have you seen a match-up in football and thought "yeah, that's going to be an easy win"?, to then see the David and Goliath outcome because the victory was already gifted to the higher ranked team. Nowadays you'll see it less frequently in certain sports but, is it still happening in tennis?, are some players still underestimating their opponents and falling short in concentration and preparation? 4 unseeded players made it into the quarter finals, that's 50% unseeded players compared to last year's 25%. It's a shame only one made it to the Semis.

Marta Kostyuk



Linda Nosková



Dayana Yastremska



Anna Kalinskaya



PRESS RELEASE

SINNER'S RISE UP THE SLOPE WILL CONTINUE WITH HEAD

The Italian player signs a new long-term contract that will keep him with his racquet manufacturer for several more years

The world's fourth-best male tennis player Jannik Sinner has extended his contract with his racquet maker HEAD with a new multi-year deal.

Sinner, 22, is enjoying the highest ranking of his career after winning three events this year, including his first Masters-1000 title in Toronto, and reaching his first Grand Slam semi-final where he lost an all-HEAD match to Novak Djokovic at Wimbledon.

Sinner was identified early as a great prospect. He won the 2019 ATP NextGen (under-21) title in Milan, and reached the top 100 in the world rankings just 20 months after winning his first ranking points. He really came to the world's attention with his run to the final in Miami in 2021, and won his first Masters-1000 title in Toronto this year, the eighth tour-level title of his career. At the start of 2023 he began working with the Australian coach Darren Cahill, and the results are bearing fruit with breaking into the world's top five.

Ottmar Barbian, executive vice-president of HEAD's racquet sports division, said, "We have a very special relationship with Jannik. The two sports in which he has excelled are central to the HEAD brand, so there's a highly unusual connection between the company and him. We have taken great pride in watching his rise up the rankings, and his first Grand Slam semi-final at Wimbledon this year. We are delighted that he has committed his future to HEAD, and we are excited about the coming peak years of Jannik's career."

Sinner is thought to be the only tennis player to have had a contract with his racquet provider in two sports.

The German-speaking Italian grew up close to HEAD's headquarters, just across the border in the Alto Adige region of northern Italy, also known as South Tyrol. He grew up speaking German at home and Italian at school – and with the area known as a hotbed of skiing, that was his first sport.

Despite starting with tennis at age 7, young Jannik was a champion skier in Italian junior competitions from 8 to 12, and he used HEAD skis. Then at 12 he decided to focus on tennis, and at 13 he left home to train with the respected coach Riccardo Piatti in Bordighera on Italy's coastal border with France. But HEAD stuck with Sinner, switching skis for racquets, and the Italian star has played with HEAD all his life. He currently endorses the HEAD Speed range of racquets.

Sinner was recruited by the 'Team HEAD' programme when he was a junior. The programme allows HEAD's local units to scout and build strong relationships with promising young players, often giving them equipment that they might not otherwise be able to afford.

A Bold Serve for Mental Health: The WTA's Fight Against Online Abuse

In an era where the digital world intertwines seamlessly with the realm of sports, the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) has taken a bold step to combat the rising tide of online abuse faced by tennis players. The recent announcement of the Threat Matrix service, a collaborative effort among tennis governing bodies, seeks to address the pressing issue of online harassment that athletes endure, shedding light on the paramount importance of mental health in the sports community.

The life of a professional athlete, especially in an individual sport like tennis, is undoubtedly one of immense pressure and scrutiny. Beyond the intense physical demands of the game, players find themselves in the unrelenting spotlight of public and online attention. This constant exposure, coupled with the inherent competitiveness of tennis, can take a toll on the mental well-being of athletes, making them vulnerable to the darker side of social media – online abuse and harassment.

GRSA firmly acknowledges the significance of mental health in the sporting world, recognising that the struggles athletes face extend beyond the court. Online abuse not only affects the athletes' psychological well-being but also impacts their performance, motivation, and overall career trajectory.

The introduction of the Threat Matrix service by the WTA and other tennis governing bodies signifies a crucial step in acknowledging and addressing the mental health challenges faced by players. The service, designed to monitor and combat online abuse, aims to create a safer digital space for athletes.

However, as with any new initiative, questions arise regarding the effectiveness and implementation of the Threat Matrix service. While the intentions are undoubtedly noble, it's crucial to analyse how this service will operate in the dynamic and expansive realm of social media. Can an algorithm truly decipher the nuances of online abuse and distinguish it from legitimate criticism? How will the service balance the need for player protection with the preservation of free speech?

In addressing these questions, GRSA emphasises the necessity of a comprehensive and nuanced approach to combatting online abuse. Striking the right balance between safeguarding athletes and allowing for open dialogue and critique is imperative. The Threat Matrix service must not inadvertently suppress legitimate fan engagement or constructive criticism that contributes to the growth and improvement of the sport.

So it would be right in saying that the WTA's initiation of the Threat Matrix service is a commendable stride towards prioritising the mental health of tennis players. While the sports world continues to grapple with the challenges posed by the digital age, it is crucial for governing bodies to take proactive measures to protect athletes from the dark side of online interactions. GRSA applauds these efforts while urging a careful and thoughtful implementation to ensure that the Threat Matrix service becomes a beacon of support for players, fostering a healthier and more sustainable environment both on and off the court.

Aryna Sabalenka Secures Second Consecutive Australian Open Title



In women's tennis, Aryna Sabalenka displayed a spectacular show of skill and determination, claiming her second consecutive Australian Open title with a commanding 6-3, 6-2 victory over Zheng Qinwen in just 76 minutes. This win marked Sabalenka's second Grand Slam victory, fulfilling her prophecy of winning at least two major titles by the age of 25.

Accepting the Daphne Akhurst Memorial Cup from tennis legend Evonne Goolagong, Sabalenka expressed her satisfaction at maintaining Grand Slam consistency. She became the first woman since 2013 to defend an Australian Open victory. Sabalenka's journey to the final showcased her unwavering commitment, reaching the summit without dropping a set.

Despite a brief disruption due to a mid-match protest, Sabalenka maintained her relentless pace, securing crucial breaks and composure throughout. Zheng, the 21-year-old Chinese player, showcased poise in her historic journey to the final.

Sabalenka's power, precision, and mental fortitude proved decisive, signaling her dominance on hard courts and determination to excel on all surfaces. Her improved serve and mental resilience, developed with a biomechanic expert and a shift in self-worth, were evident throughout the tournament.

As Sabalenka holds the trophy aloft, her triumph marks a significant turnaround from her struggles the previous year. Now with a major singles title secured, she sets her sights on reclaiming the No. 1 ranking and expanding her Grand Slam collection.



The Australian Open 2023 will be remembered as the stage where Aryna Sabalenka solidified her status as a force in women's tennis, leaving the tennis world eager to witness her continued journey and further achievements.

Arina Rodionova Expressed Concerns over Australian Open Wildcard Decision

Arina Rodionova raised concerns about Tennis Australia, suggesting that a personal issue may have led to her being denied a wildcard into her home grand slam, despite being the nation's highest-ranked women's player.

Following a straight-sets first-round loss in Australian Open qualifying, Rodionova criticized the governing body, accusing them of causing undue stress on players, including herself, by not being transparent and awarding wildcards sooner.

The 34-year-old, who made a successful comeback from a serious wrist injury to dominate the lower-level ITF Tour in 2023, winning seven titles and climbing from No. 302 to the brink of the top 100, felt her return to Australian No. 1 status was disregarded when Tennis Australia awarded their fifth discretionary wildcard to fellow Russian-born player Daria Saville.

"I have no regrets except that I gave Tennis Australia something to celebrate," Rodionova said after her 6-3, 6-4 loss to lower-ranked Leolia Jeanjean from France. "I believe they are pleased with my result, and that's what upsets me."

Despite being the only Australian to reach the second round at Wimbledon in 2017, Rodionova believes she has been on the outskirts of Tennis Australia's favour for over a decade.

"It started many years ago," said the Victorian. "There were numerous things behind the scenes that make it clear to me that I am not liked. It's not just clear to me; it's clear to every Australian tennis player and everyone. It's not a secret; everyone knows it, and now, by making this decision, they decided to make it public as well."

Rodionova, now at a career-best world No. 105, was ranked No. 112 at the time of the Open main-draw cut-off, while Daria Saville was granted the final discretionary wildcard.

"I don't even understand the reasoning behind it," Rodionova expressed. "I had a fantastic year. I did everything I possibly could to deserve it. They just don't like me, simple as that."



The wildcard denial has not only cost Rodionova at least \$94,000 but also the opportunity for a more significant financial gain had she made a deep run in the Open. However, she insists, “It’s not about the money,” stressing that the situation’s stress affected her performance in general.

“It’s more about the opportunity,” Rodionova emphasised. “I didn’t really have an issue with them not giving it to me. The problem was that they left it for so long, pretending they were looking at the results in Brisbane. I had the best result there [among Australian women], so I don’t think they were looking at that. The decision was probably made before. They didn’t want to give it to me, and they should have announced it way before because it just brought such unnecessary stress to myself.

“It’s disrespectful towards players. They should tell us a month before.”

Even the retiring John Millman, the only Australian this century to beat Roger Federer at a grand slam, was overlooked for a wildcard. Still, he expressed more concern about Rodionova’s situation, stating, “You can’t be Australia’s top-ranked player in female tennis and be overlooked. Not to mention she won 78 matches last year. She’s gone out there and shown an unbelievable appetite for hard work and winning matches, and she’s done it the hard way. I’m a bit baffled – and I won’t be sitting on the fence with that.”



Arina Ivanovna Rodionova
Born 15 December 1989
Carreer High: 105

Believes a sense of
humour “is the
most important
thing above all”

MATS ON RAFA



The recent withdrawal of Rafael Nadal from the Australian Open due to a muscle tear sustained during the Brisbane International has drawn reflections from tennis expert Mats Wilander. Nadal's injury setback occurred during a three-set match against Jordan Thompson in Brisbane, leading to his decision to skip the first Grand Slam of the year.

Wilander expressed sadness over Nadal's withdrawal, acknowledging the unfortunate turn of events. Nadal's return to competitive singles tennis in Brisbane, especially after a year away from the tour, showed promise. Despite his impressive victories against Dominic Thiem and Jason Kubler, concerns arose during his loss to Jordan Thompson, where Nadal appeared to be in discomfort.

The 37-year-old Nadal, a two-time Australian Open champion, has faced numerous career challenges due to injuries, particularly to his knees and feet. Wilander wonders whether this latest setback will impact Nadal's future appearances in Australia, considering the toll on both major and minor muscles in his body.

Reflecting on Nadal's unique career, Wilander highlighted the Spaniard's exceptional achievements, including 22 Grand Slam titles and a record 14 French Open victories. Nadal's passionate and tenacious playing style has left an indelible mark on the sport, inspiring younger players like Carlos Alcaraz and Stefanos Tsitsipas.

As Nadal himself considers 2024 as a potential final year in his illustrious career, Wilander urges appreciation for the "King of Clay." Nadal's impact on the sport, according to Wilander, surpasses even that of Roger Federer or Novak Djokovic, especially in influencing the younger generation through his sportsmanship and unwavering determination.

In celebrating Rafael Nadal, Wilander emphasises the unique qualities that have made him a significant figure in tennis and an inspiration to aspiring players worldwide.



COCO WAS NOT IMPRESSED

Melbourne, Australia (AP) — Coco Gauff expressed dissatisfaction with a USTA social media post intended to highlight American players at the Australian Open, labeling it "awful."

Gauff initially responded to the now-deleted USTA post on her Instagram story, stating, **"Worst thing I've ever seen. Like a caricature artist decided to make (us) all look like hideous looking people. The art style is cool for a cartoon show but not for a hype post. Foul."**

After advancing to the second round with a 6-3, 6-0 victory over Anna Karolina Schmiedlova, the 19-year-old Gauff clarified that her initial comments were intended to be humorous. However, she maintained that the Wild Thornberrys cartoon-style image made all the Americans look bad.

"People thought I was being serious, that I was actually mad with it," she said. **"And I realize TikTok humour is very different than Twitter. I was like, no, I wasn't mad. We looked awful (smiling)."**

Gauff explained that fellow American player Ben Shelton initially posted about the story, and then Jessica Pegula got involved, texting her about it. **"We were just laughing at each person, we were laughing at Sebi (Korda)'s, I think Ben and Sebi had the worst ones"**.

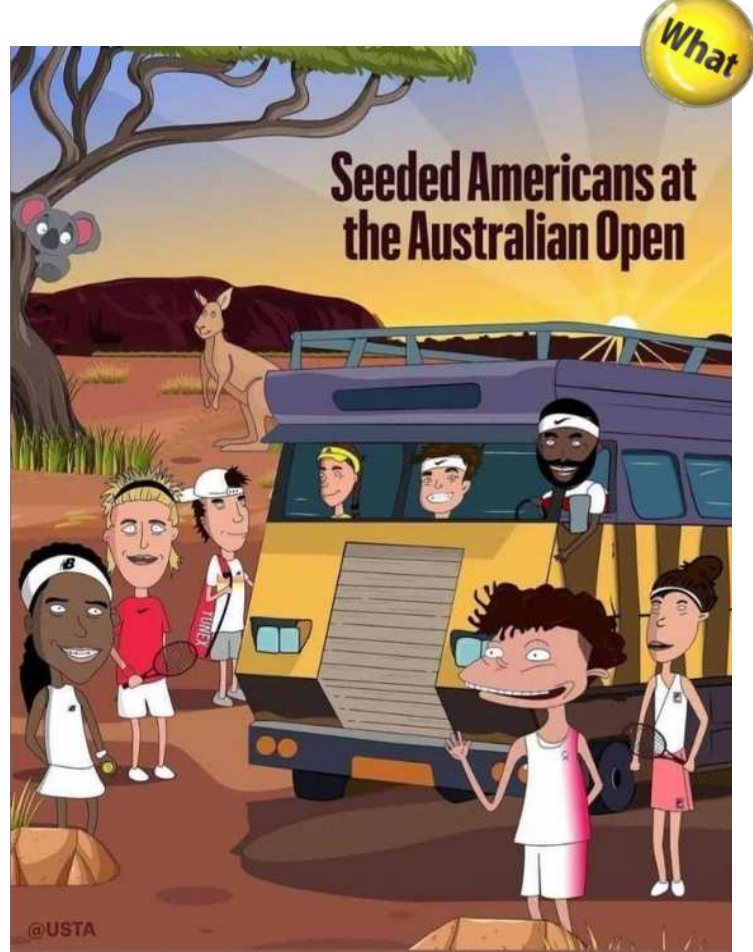
"I know it was from a cartoon, and the artist did great with the cartoon. I just don't know if I want myself drawn as that art style ...but we did not look good at all."

Gauff mentioned that she had spent the entire day on Sunday in her room, giving her ample time to comment on the USTA post.

"I was just bored and commenting and making fun of it, because everybody else was making fun of us, how bad we looked," she said. **"Then, yeah, I saw on Twitter people thought I was serious, but I wasn't. It was all in jokes."**

Despite trying to contact the USTA, Gauff reported receiving no response. **"I did DM the USTA account and I was, like, what was the thought process behind this, as a joke,"** she said. **"They never responded. I got left on read by USTA, which sucks. But, you know, it is what it is."**

DELETED FROM USTA SOCIALS



Sinner's Sensational Triumph: Italian Phenom Ends Djokovic's Dominance at Australian Open

Jannik Sinner's remarkable triumph over Novak Djokovic at the 2024 Australian Open not only marked the end of an era but also signaled the emergence of a potential tennis great. The 22-year-old Italian's composed and strategic victory showcased not only his exceptional skills on the court but also the mental fortitude required to navigate the challenges posed by a formidable opponent.

In a mesmerizing display of skill, Jannik Sinner, the Italian fourth seed, scripted a historic chapter at the 2024 Australian Open by defeating 10-time champion Novak Djokovic in the semifinals, with a 6-1, 6-2, 6-7(6), 6-3 victory.

Sinner approached the high-stakes encounter with a calculated game plan, forcing Djokovic into uncharacteristic errors and denying him any break point opportunities. Despite a third-set tie-break hiccup, where Sinner missed a match point, the Italian showcased resilience, rebounding in the fourth set to secure the milestone win with a dazzling forehand – his 31st winner of the match.

In a match where Sinner dared to challenge the status quo, his victory ended Djokovic's unparalleled 33-match winning streak at Melbourne Park and halted the Serbian's quest for an 11th Australian Open title.

Sinner's journey to his first Grand Slam final, coupled with a scorching run of 19 wins in his last 20 matches, underscores the evolution of his game and the newfound toughness he brings to every encounter.

His elation at beating Novak
for the 3rd time



Reflecting on the challenging match, Sinner acknowledged the tough battle and Djokovic's greatness. "It was a very, very tough match. I started off really well. For two sets, I felt like he was not feeling that great on court, so I just tried to keep pushing," said Sinner in his on-court interview. "I had match point in the third set and missed the forehand, but this is tennis. I just tried to be ready for the next set, which I started off really well. And obviously, the atmosphere was so great to play here."

As the tennis world looks forward to witnessing the Italian phenom continue to compete, there's a sense that Sinner is on the cusp of greatness. His poised demeanor on and off the court, coupled with his relentless pursuit of improvement, hints at a promising future in the sport.

Sinner's triumph not only reshapes the narrative of this Australian Open but sets the stage for what could be the beginning of a remarkable career. Having guaranteed that the men's singles trophy will have a new name, Jannik Sinner's journey to the top seems to be just beginning – a journey that may very well lead to the pinnacle of tennis greatness.

AND THE STORY DIDN'T END THERE!

In a stunning turn of events, Jannik Sinner continued his meteoric rise in the tennis world by heroically securing his first Grand Slam title at the Australian Open. Facing the formidable Daniil Medvedev in a nail-biting championship clash, Sinner demonstrated unwavering resilience and determination that would define his triumph.



The match, a testament to Sinner's indomitable spirit, unfolded in a spellbinding 3-6, 3-6, 6-4, 6-4, 6-3 comeback, lasting three hours and 44 minutes. Sinner's victory not only etched his name in history as the first Italian to capture an Australian Open title but also solidified his status as the youngest man to triumph in Melbourne since Novak Djokovic's breakthrough in 2008.

While Medvedev initially dominated with powerful shots and strategic play, Sinner refused to be overshadowed. Down two sets, he recalibrated his approach, showcasing a remarkable display of skill, determination, and mental fortitude. The Italian maestro strategically dismantled Medvedev's game, turning the tide and seizing control of the match.

Sinner's journey to the title was marked by a remarkable tournament run, winning his first 17 sets and spending considerably less time on court than his opponents. His ability to adapt and thrive under pressure was evident throughout the tournament, culminating in a triumphant display on the championship stage.

The victory over Medvedev not only secured Sinner's status as a Grand Slam champion but also highlighted his growth as a player. Sinner's tenacity, coupled with his strategic brilliance, allowed him to overcome the odds and claim the coveted title on the prestigious courts of Melbourne.



As the confetti fell and the crowd erupted in applause, Jannik Sinner stood tall, a symbol of a new era in tennis. His journey from defeating Djokovic to clinching the Australian Open title is not just a triumph for Sinner but a promising chapter in the sport's history. The Italian phenom's ascent to greatness appears unstoppable, leaving fans and pundits alike eager to witness the continued evolution of Jannik Sinner on the grand stage of world tennis.





PRESS RELEASE

ZVEREV COMMITS TO HEAD FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Alexander Zverev has committed his future to HEAD, agreeing a new contract that will ensure that he plays with a HEAD racquet for the foreseeable future.

The 26-year-old German, currently sixth in the ATP world rankings, signed his contract with the Austria-based sports manufacturer, extending his partnership with the racquet provider he has had throughout his professional career.

Having effectively grown up on the global tennis tour thanks to his brother Mischa – also a HEAD player – turning professional when Alexander was just five, the younger Zverev has played with HEAD since his junior days. In 2019, HEAD launched the Gravity range of racquets, which Zverev helped develop and which he endorses today.

Ottmar Barbian, executive vice-president of HEAD's racquet sports division, said, "We are especially pleased to have secured Alexander's further commitment to HEAD at this time in his career, when he is finally enjoying the fruits of his highly professional dedication to returning to the top of men's tennis after the horrible ankle injury he suffered 16 months ago. We are inspired by the way he has overcome a setback that might have ended the career of less determined players, and we are honoured that he considers our racquets and our professionalism the right fit for his own quest to get to the very top."

Zverev was recruited by the 'Team HEAD' programme when he was a junior in Hamburg. The programme allows HEAD's local units to scout and build strong relationships with promising young players, often giving them equipment that they might not otherwise be able to afford.

Zverev was born in Hamburg and is German of Russian extraction. His father Alexander Sr played top-level tennis in the former Soviet Union, and his brother Mischa was born in Russia, but the family had moved to Germany by the time Alexander was born in 1997.

He was the world's top junior in 2014, when he won the Australian Open boys singles.

He won his first tour-level title at 19, his first Masters-1000 at 20, and the yearend ATP Finals at 21. At 23 he came within two points of winning the US Open, but lost the 2020 final on a fifth-set tiebreak. A year later he won the gold medal at the delayed Tokyo Olympics, and climbed to a career-high ranking of two after reaching the semi-finals at Roland-Garros in 2022.



In the Room

With Richard Parnell

This month's thoughts, in the room, are to do with tour stringing and a stringer's desire to be part of a professional stringing team.

It is quite common for stringers to think that knowing how to string 3 or 4 rackets in an hour means he or she is the ready for the "Big Time". Nothing could be further from the truth!!

While stringing 3 rackets in an hour is probably the minimum requirement for a stringer looking to enter tournament stringing, this would be a very narrow view & focus of the reality of entering a tour team.

I have often seen stringers who can string a racket well in 20 minutes, once they start..... however, they take 10 minutes to study the frame and string before getting started. At this level you should be able to look at a racket & see the necessary skips and tie off options in a glance.

The real requisite for tour stringing is mental strength and the ability to handle stress. This is something that a stringer either possesses or doesn't. By starting off stringing at smaller events, the racket numbers aren't as overwhelming & this means that you can become accustomed to the increasing workload. The larger tournaments are guaranteed to have moments of maximum stress, whether it is through player interaction, pure overwhelming numbers of rackets or other factors.

The ability to handle a stressful situation, interiorize the stress and not add to the stress in the room is the real test of a tour stringer. The other members of the team are also handling the stress and managing to keep a lid on it, you should be able to too.

I have seen situations where a really good stringer couldn't manage the stress levels & made the situation worse and that stringer, unfortunately, had to be dropped from the team. Not because of his work but because of his character.

Not everyone is made for tour stringing and the stresses involved, however, taking the Tour level Certification exams does make sense for a stringer as it can make the difference from their competitors.

If a stringer has the stringing capability and quality to string a racket to tour level and quality that doesn't automatically mean that the stringer has to join a team, he or she can proudly present an advanced stringer certificate anywhere.

Club players can also benefit from the work of a tour certified stringer.

Please send any thoughts to: online@grsa-international.com

Ba part of change, promote positivity, and your expertise will shine brighter!

FUN FACTS

"I told myself to play free. You play the ball. You don't play the opponent. Be free in your head. Be free in your shots. Go for it. The brave will be rewarded here."

Roger Federer

- 1** The Royal Tennis Court located at Hampton Court Palace, London is the world's oldest tennis court and it is still in use. Built between 1526 and 1529, it was Henry VIII's preferred venue to indulge his love of tennis. Legend has it that he was given the news of Queen Anne Boleyn's execution while he was playing tennis on the court. The game played on this court is slightly different from modern tennis, however - the sport is called 'real tennis', and is played indoors.
- 2** As most of us have seen, a proper competitive tennis match lasts for about 2 hours on average, or even more. But did you know that the tennis ball remains in action (i.e., in a state of movement) for only about 20 minutes in a standard 2.5 hours match? Just goes to show just how much actual play time a ball sees.
- 3** If during a point, a player catches the ball or if the ball hits any part of their body before it lands, the player forfeits the point (regardless of the ball's position). In other words, the ball must hit the ground first for the ball to be ruled out before a player can catch it or stop it with his body
- 4** The inaugural Wimbledon Championship started on 9 July 1877 and Gentlemen's Singles was the only event held. It was won by Spencer Gore, an old Harrovian rackets player, from a field of 22. About 200 spectators paid one shilling each to watch the final.
- 5** The shortest ever grand slam final was 34 minutes - in the 1988 French Open final, Steffi Graf demolished Natasha Zvereva 6-0, 6-0 in a completely one-sided match.



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ADOPTAS.ORG

by Alejandro Davidovich Fokina

In a world where countless cats and dogs are abandoned and left to fend for themselves, the tireless efforts of organisations dedicated to their rescue, nurture, and re-homing are invaluable. **Adoptas.org** is one such organization, working diligently in Spain to provide a second chance for these vulnerable animals. We aim to shed light on the remarkable work carried out by **Adoptas.org**, with the involvement and support of renowned tennis player **Alejandro Davidovich Fokina**. Furthermore, it emphasises the urgent need for public support and donations to help save the lives of these deserving animals.

Alejandro Davidovich Fokina: A Champion for Animal Welfare

Beyond his accomplishments on the tennis court, Alejandro Davidovich Fokina demonstrates a profound compassion for animals. His partnership with Adoptas.org exemplifies his commitment to making a difference in the lives of abandoned cats and dogs in Spain. Fokina's involvement serves as a powerful reminder that individuals, regardless of their field, can contribute to animal welfare and promote a more compassionate society.

Adoptas.org: Rescuing, Nurturing, and Re-homing Abandoned Animals

Adoptas.org is an organization at the forefront of animal rescue in Spain, tirelessly working to provide a lifeline to abandoned cats and dogs. Their dedicated team goes to great lengths to rescue animals from precarious situations, providing them with much-needed care, nourishment, and medical attention. Once rescued, the cats and dogs are placed into foster homes or shelters, where they receive nurturing and rehabilitation. Working diligently to find suitable forever homes, matching the animals with caring adoptive families who can provide them with the love, care, and security they deserve. **Adoptas.org**, through their efforts, have saved countless lives.

By supporting **Adoptas.org**, you become an integral part of the rescue mission. Your donations can help fund medical treatments, provide food and shelter, and support the ongoing efforts to find permanent homes for these animals. Together, we can create a compassionate community that values and protects the well-being of all living creatures.



Check out their new-look website, but more importantly, see the animals they are looking after and helping re-home, you might find the one!



GRSA
INTERNATIONAL



Proud to be the

**Official Global Racket
Stringers Certification &
Education Partner**

WITH



UK PTR OFFER A GREAT PACKAGE TO ALL OF THEIR MEMBERS



In 2023, PTR and GRSA joined forces to help provide further education to coaches around the world. Their already extensive portfolio of educational material helps professionals better their skills which in turn, provides another layer of expertise to the service given to their clients.

We all know how important it is to remain competitive in any industry, how keeping up with tendencies, techniques, and new equipment will always set you just that little bit above the rest.

GRSA have a wide range of courses that help experienced stringers improve their skills, but it also provides coaches looking to widen their skills, the opportunity to add another income stream and possibly improve their livelihood.

PTR started this relationship offering a very special HEAD goodie bag to the first 50 US members to sign-up to GRSA's business membership "PTR bundle". Now it's time for the UK to follow suit.

When signing up to the business membership with GRSA, PTR members have access to two online courses, the Online Beginner Course and the Online Certified Pro Stringer Course, but at the same time, the first 50 UK PTR members to sign-up will receive a special goodie bag from Wilson. Even more value to the already great offer by GRSA International and PTR.



Stringer Solutions

with Richard Parnell

TOP
TIP

This month let's look at the machine and its importance in the final outcome of a restring.

Firstly, let's look at "normal" stringing workloads, where a drop weight or a crank machine are perfectly capable of creating a "solid" job. I often hear tour stringers saying that you can't get a tour quality restring out of a drop weight machine, I would have to disagree. This said, the stringer's expertise becomes much more important when using a basic machine as the quality is going to come from the stringer's technique.

In this case, the stringer is actually more important than the machine and the end result depends on the stringer & his or her expertise. Maintaining the quality and consistency is always going to be harder and take longer but is not impossible. Would a drop weight or crank machine have a place in a professional stringing room? No, the time constraints are too severe, and time is of the essence in the tour environment.

A professional quality machine will always make the stringer's life easier, they are designed to be ergonomic and help the stringer in every way. Does this mean that the stringer's expertise is less important on these machines? Yes and no... If you compare two restrings on the same machine, the stringer's technique will differentiate the two, however, if a stringer has bad technique, it doesn't matter how good the machine is, the finished product will always be a problem. A good machine can make a stringer look good but when the finished product is compared, it will always show the deficiencies, the cream always rises to the top.

A professional machine will always be the choice for a tournament environment, but you can also look at the different models of professional machines and debate the qualities of one over the other. Some give a higher DT, some help the stringer's position by tilting, most have height adjustments, and all are aimed at making the stringer's life easier.

To sum up, can a quality restring be attained using a drop weight?, yes. Is it more difficult to attain the quality?, yes. Are multiple factors testing the stringer's expertise?, yes.

Does a professional machine make the whole process easier, **yes!**

Remember – The difference is in the small details!

Any personal tips to help your fellow stringers? Let us know and get them published in the Stringer Solutions part of the GRSA ATW Magazine

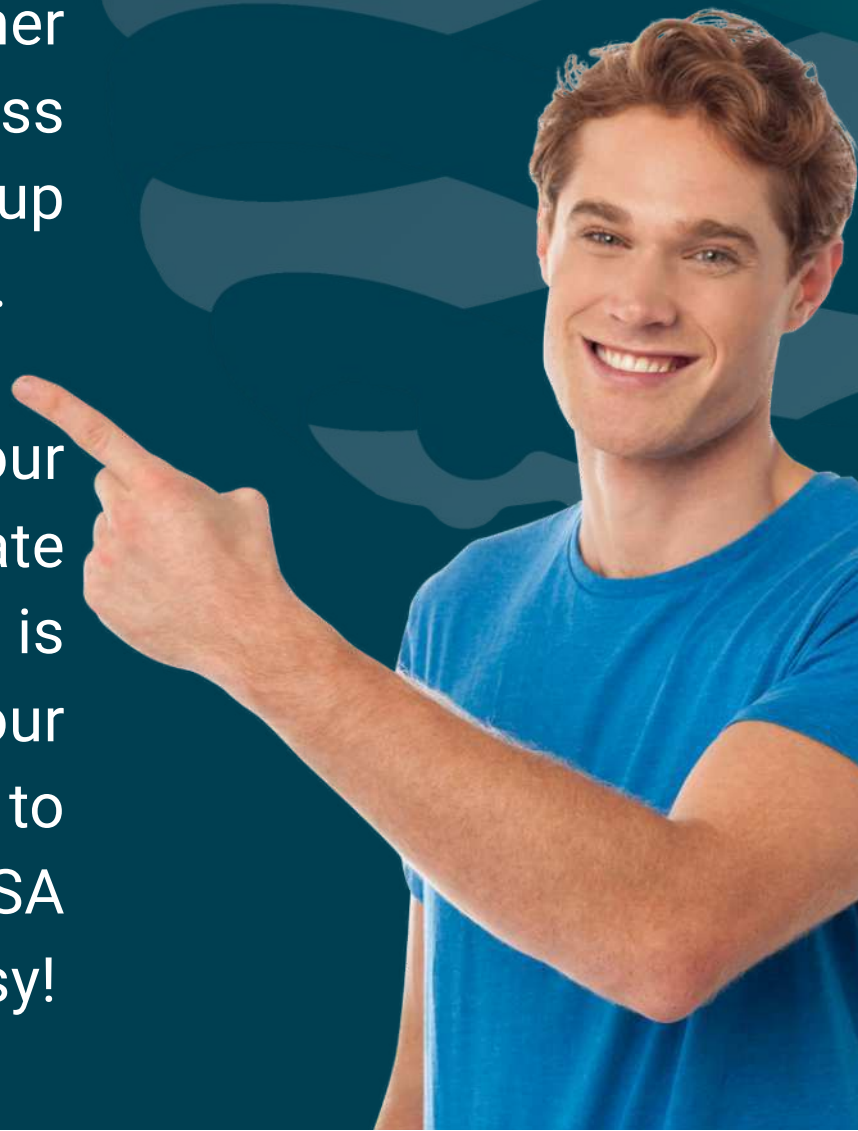
DID YOU KNOW?

GRSA is the only association to recognise all valid certifications and provide the **GRSA** equivalent totally **free of charge!**

Q. What do I need to do to get my GRSA certificate?

A. Join GRSA International, take either the personal or business membership or sign-up for one of the courses.

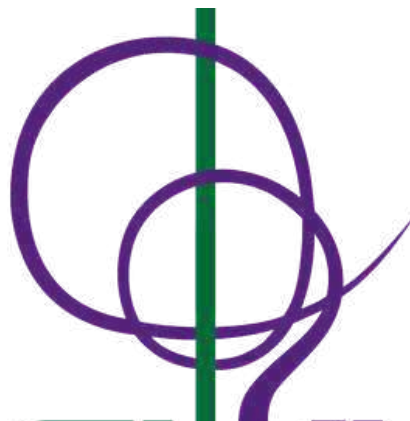
We'll send you your membership certificate and all you need to do is send us a picture of your existing certification to receive the GRSA equivalent, it's that easy!





STRING CLUB.

string-club.com



PARNELLKNOT

designed by stringers for stringers

parnellknot.com



Mauve Sports

MSV is a small, independent, German family business that has successfully established itself in the market as string and grip suppliers in 50 countries worldwide. The company also offers other products such as Tutor tennis ball machines, the MSV MiniSTT String Tension Tester device and the MSV Tennis Pointer as a training tool.



DONNAY RACKETS - EXCLUSIVE TO GERMANY

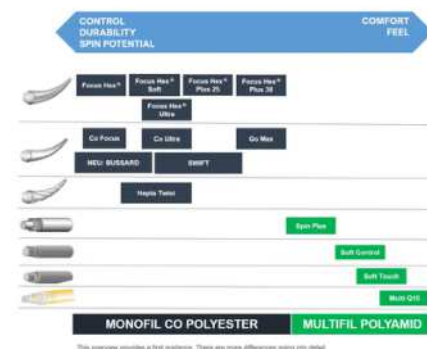
Did you know that MSV are exclusive distributors of Donnay rackets. If you're an avid Donnay user then check out the website to find the best prices on Donnay Rackets, including the Allwood Octa 102 Tennis Racket.

The DONNAY Allwood Octa 102 tennis racket is best suited for all players who need a very high level of arm protection without wanting to sacrifice very good control and manoeuvrability. The flexible frame is very forgiving and supports a sensitive game.

Founded in 2000 by Dr Karl Eberhard and his wife Brigitte Mauve. Carl Philipp Mauve, has been the managing partner since 2014, with the commitment to providing attentive customer service as he feels "this is the key to a successful business".

The goal of this well oiled machine is not only to give exceptional customer service, but to provide quality product without the high-end price tag. So, you won't see famous players plastered over their packaging as they feel this really does not send the right message. You won't see them boasting about making their own strings, they don't, but what they do is make sure they have found the best materials on the market by using independent and recognised institutions that are not paid by the big companies to talk well about their products.

If you're looking for alternatives in strings, grips and accessories, MSV have a wide range of materials on their website. Look out for some great features in the coming months as MSV team up with GRSA.



GRSA MANAGERS WHERE ARE THEY?

If you're looking to say hi to any of our managers, here are some of the events that some of them will be at in the coming months



**Nico
Ionesco**

BNP Paribas masters 1000

Indian Wells, USA

March 4th-17th 2024

Gonet Geneva Open ATP 250

Geneva, Switzerland

May 18th-25th 2024

Omnium Banque Nationale

Masters 1000

Montréal, Canada

August 2nd-11th

team.ca@grsa-international.com

Even though they will be busy at work, drop them a line beforehand and maybe get a chance to ask them for some tips, say hello or even see them at work.

BNP Paribas masters 1000

Indian Wells, USA

Feb 27th - Mar 17th 2024

Gonet Geneva Open ATP 250

Geneva, Switzerland

May 16th-25th 2024

Ladies Open Berlin WTA 500

Berlin, Germany

June 13th-23rd

team.de@grsa-international.com



**Martin
Mann**

GRSA at the Racket Sports Fest in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 20 & 21/1/24

In partnership with Racket Sports Sdn. Bhd, HEAD distributor for Malaysia, our South East Asia manager, Kenneth, conducted an outreach programme to introduce our stringing courses and certification examinations.

Over the course of two days, he conducted stringing demonstrations and shared some best practices in racket stringing to tennis enthusiasts and stringers who graced the event.

The online courses drew the most attention and proved really popular as students can learn at their own pace and are relatively affordable.



If you're looking to further your stringing education, GRSA is the world's leading stringers' association to help you.

DIMAS MENDEZ

GRSA Manager for Puerto Rico & Panamá



After 8 years of living in New York City and working for RPNY Tennis and John McEnroe Academy, and traveling the world stringing on tour, Dimas Mendez, our GRSA International Manager for Puerto Rico & Panamá has started a new adventure in his homeland.

Palmas Athletic Club is a facility located in Humacao, Puerto Rico, 45 minutes from the San Juan Airport and it consists of 2 championship golf courses, a beach club and a 22 court facility. 6 pickleball courts, 2 hard tru courts and 14 hard courts that includes a Center Show court and a Stadium Show Court.



Palmas del Mar has a history of tennis going back to the 1970s. In the past, professional tournaments, Davis Cup ties and exhibitions would take place there. During off season, many players used to choose this as their training grounds in the 90s.

With all that in mind, Dimas, now Director of Rackets Sports, alongside a great team, is working on making Palmas Athletic Club Tennis Center a true international tennis destination. In 2023, they hosted the first ATP Challenger Event where Dimas and GRSA Member Juan Guzman offered the stringing service, this was the comeback tournament for Kei Nishikori and he won it.

This 2024, they started the year strong, hosting the Rafa Nadal Camp, where 15 coaches from Rafa Nadal Academy in Mallorca came to visit and offer the Spanish experience to 80 Junior players and 50 adults from all over Puerto Rico and the USA. The camp was a complete success and the return for 2025 has already been confirmed.



Since one of Dimas's priority is to lift tennis in Puerto Rico, he is working alongside the local school named The Palmas Academy, to offer a junior development program and a high performance program that started this January and already has 32 committed juniors between orange, green and yellow ball, looking to improve their game and compete.

Right now, they are working on building a state of the art tennis pro shop, where they will offer demo rackets from every brand, professional racket stringing and customisation, sale of accessories, tennis clothes and shoes for adults and juniors alike.



PALMAS
ATHLETIC
CLUB

Dimas is also a coach and an advanced tennis player offering on-court racket and stringing consultations for all levels. When asked what his vision is for the future of the club he responds:

"I think that anyone that comes here will fall in love with the place. It is beautiful and you have everything you need around here. The beach is 2 minutes away and the Wyndham Palmas Hotel is around the corner. There is a mall behind the facility and villas for rent throughout the complex. The weather is nice all year and I believe it can be a great off season practice facility for professionals before heading to Australia. We want to resurface the courts with the same materials, we have everything a pro needs. At the same time, Puerto Rico junior players and potential professionals can access these services and conditions without having to leave the island and this is one step towards bringing up the level of tennis".

"Through the equipment advice and the high performance program, we are looking to offer the same level of service you would get in mainland USA."

Puerto Rico is an Island located in the Caribbean that is United States territory since 1898. No passport is needed to travel between Puerto Rico and United States mainland. **Pay us a visit!**



NICK DOWN
Talks

DSP by



Unsquashable Double String Power is the subject of this month's addition to the list of Non-Standard Rackets.

Unsquashable has been around for a long time. You can still get DSP rackets in a few places, but not from Unsquashable itself, because it is discontinued. There are some other models from Unsquashable on the list of non-standard rackets, that are more recent and in the current range.

The DSP models number at least 5 or 6 and are headed up by the DSP4500, which I have used for this article. The number of strings can vary, but this one is 16/19, but there are insufficient holes for knots to opt for 2 pieces of string, so I have a 1 piece example, using Unsquashable Tour-Tec Pro 1.18 string.

The Brand Unsquashable has long been associated with Jahangir Khan, believed by many to have been the greatest player of all time. His run of 555 wins is in the Guinness Book of Records and surpasses all sports. Apparently, he has owned Unsquashable at some point in the past but it is now UK based near Manchester, with Jahangir as an ambassador of the brand.

The DSP4500 starts and finishes the mains at the head, I have designated the left side as the short side. The top two crosses are off the short side and the rest of the crosses are off the long side, starting at the 3rd cross and finishing with a hard weave at the throat.

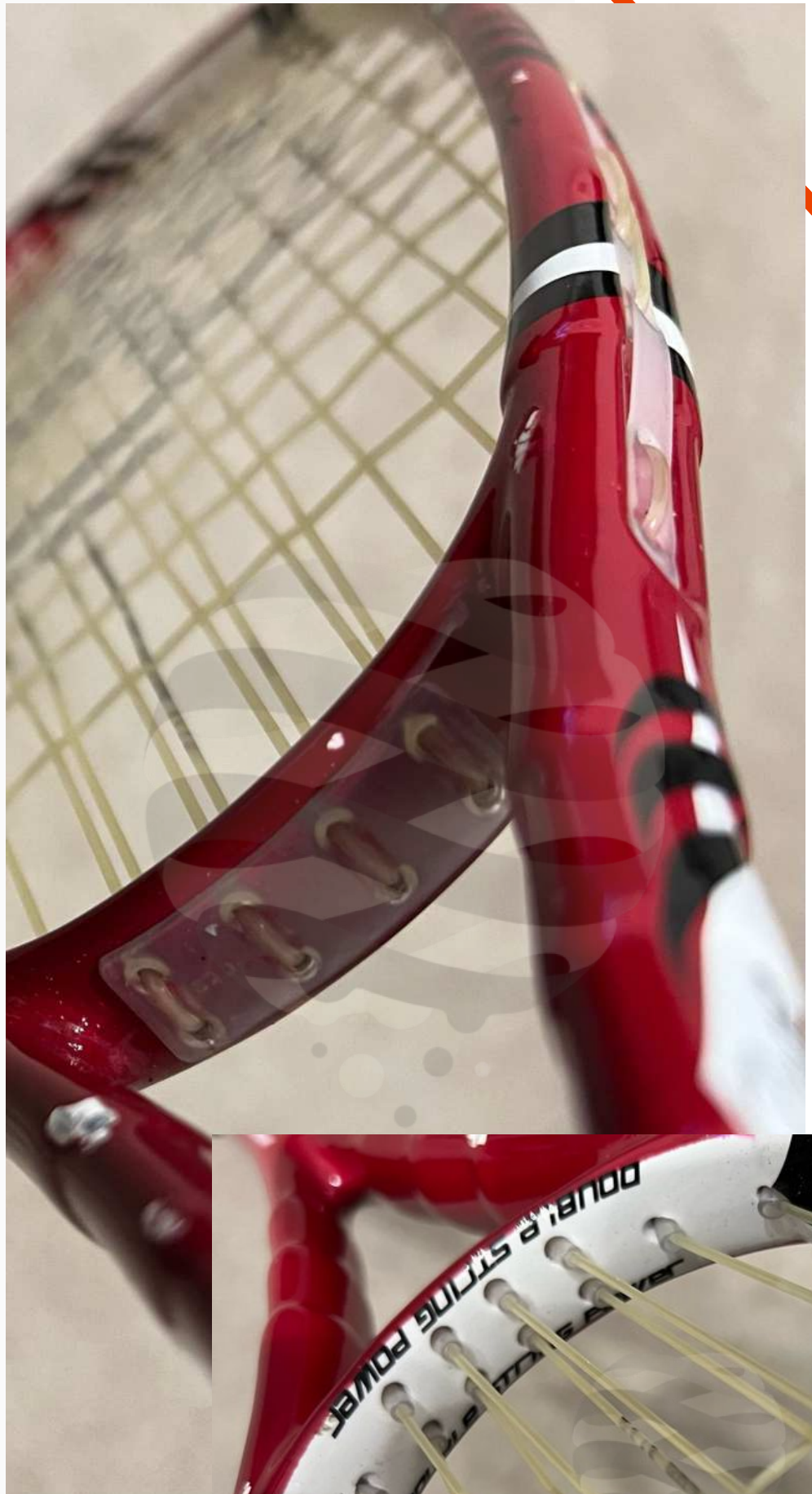


**Nick's
Nugget**

**Keep a sharp tip, all the time,
to assist with threading and
ultimately, getting faster.**

Mains and Crosses:-

LH1 to LT1LOW
LT1LOW to LT1HIGH
LT1HIGH to LH2.
RH1 to RT1HIGH
RT1HIGH to RT1LOW
RT1LOW to RH2
RH2 to RH3
RH3 to RT2HIGH
RT2HIGH to RT2LOW
RT2LOW to RH4.
LH2 to LH3
LH3 to LT2LOW
LT2LOW to LT2HIGH
LT2HIGH to LH4
LH4 to LH5
LH5 to LT3
LT3 to LT4
LT4 to LH6.
RH4 to RH5
RH5 to RT3
RT3 to RT4
RT4 to RH6
RH6 to RH8
RH8 to RT5
RT5 to RT7
RT7 to RH10.
LH6 to LH8
LH8 to LT5
LT5 to LT7
LT7 to LH10
LH10 to LH9
LH9 to RH9
RH9 to RH7
RH7 to LH7
LH7 to LH6 tie off.
RH10 to RH11 (3rd Cross)
A further 16 crosses
Tie-off at LT5.



There must be a hard weave at the throat.

Next Month:

Unsquashable Syn-Tec Pro



The PSA Challenger Tour continues its journey in 2024, as a new generation of talented players strives to ascend the rankings and make a mark throughout the year.

Here, we spotlight five promising young male players, all under 19 years old, poised to break out on the Challenger Tour in the coming 12 months.

****Mohamad Zakaria****

Egyptian prodigy Mohamad Zakaria has already left a lasting impression on the PSA Challenger Tour, securing victory in the recent British Junior Open. Despite being just 16, Zakaria made history as the youngest male winner of a PSA Tour event last October, triumphing in his inaugural 15k event at the Local World LA Open. Following subsequent successes at The Northern Joe Cup and the Aston and Fincher Sutton Coldfield International, he currently boasts three titles with only one loss this season. Hailing from Alexandria's Sporting Club, Zakaria, ranked 82 in the world at the start of 2024, aims to break into the top 50 soon.



****Jonah Bryant****

The reigning British junior champion and runner-up to Zakaria at the British Junior Open, 18-year-old Jonah Bryant concluded 2023 on a high note by clinching his first three PSA Tour titles. Having moved to Birmingham for full-time training with Rob Owen, Bryant, starting 2024 ranked 143 globally, is determined to progress further this year after a remarkable ascent from outside the top 200 the previous year.



****Hamza Khan****

Pakistan's Hamza Khan gained prominence in 2023 by winning the World Junior Championship, ending his country's 37-year wait for such an achievement. The 18-year-old showcased his skills at the London Open in November, reaching his first 20k quarter-final by defeating squash legend James Willstrop. Khan, still in his teens, aims to make a mark on the senior circuit and secure his inaugural PSA Tour title in 2024.



****David Bernet****

Swiss talent David Bernet, also 18, eyes a breakout year in 2024 after reaching his first PSA Tour final in December at the Liechtenstein Open. Despite falling short of a Tour title, Bernet had a successful year with victories at the Italian Junior Open and the German Junior Open. His noteworthy performance in the British Junior Open semi-finals suggests he is poised for success in the early part of 2024.



****Melvil Scianimanico****

France's Melvil Scianimanico demonstrated his potential in the latter part of 2023, participating in Challenger Tour and Green Squash Tour events. Climbing nearly 200 spots in the world rankings, he reached the semi-finals of the World Junior Championship and secured titles at the French National Junior Championships and Dutch Junior Open, along with two Satellite Tour titles. Starting 2024 at No.146 in the world, Scianimanico aims to build on his success in the British Junior Open and make a strong start on the PSA Tour.



INTERESTING TOURNAMENTS TO KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR

18 – 21 Jan - Czech Junior Open - Prague	(Czech Republic)
02 – 04 Feb - Slovenian Junior Open - Ljubljana	(Slovenia)
15 – 18 Feb - French Junior Open - Lille	(France)
22 – 25 Feb - German Junior Open - Hamburg	(Germany)
08 – 10 Mar - Austrian Junior Open - Vienna	(Austria)
15 – 17 Mar - Croatian Junior Open - Zagreb	(Croatia)

SQUASH

Super Nick[®] ZX Micro

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MAINTAINS TENSION

ASHAWAY[®]

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[18 gauge]

ZX
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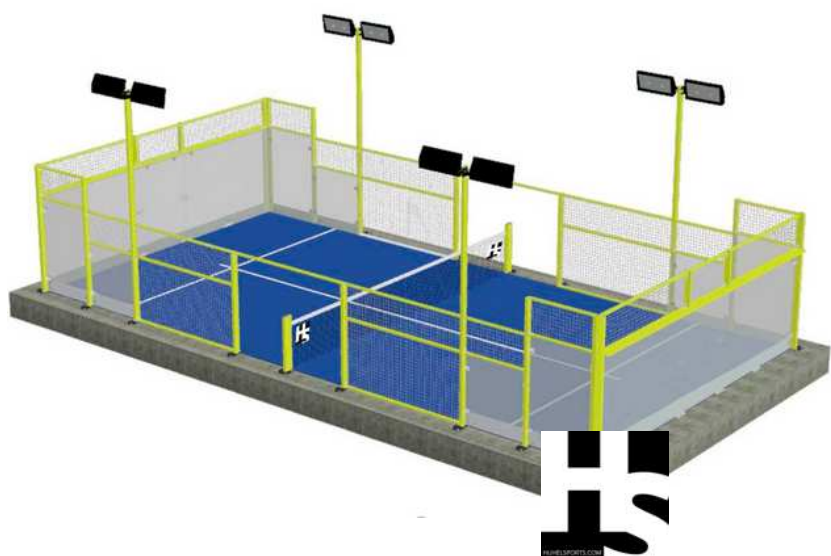
HUHEL SPORTS

HUHEL SPORTS HEAD OFFICE

C/ de la Giralda 18,
Castelldefells
(Barcelona)
Spain



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Tel: (+34) 619 076 978



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Huhel Sports supply the only courts with an aluminum structure that includes a 15-year anti-corrosion guarantee.

We can have immediate availability for basic colours and 20 days for custom colours (longer transport time).

We can customize the courts to the customer's needs. We have ongoing stock and we are aluminum manufacturers with more than 50 years of experience.

In addition, all our courts are certified by the EU as well as all its components.

INDIVIDUAL PANORAMIC COURT

Anchor plates in galvanized steel for then fastening of the structure and glass, measurements of 250x200x15 (8 units), 495x250x15 (4 units) 150x120x15 (8 units)

Structural system of aluminum profiles, dimensions of the pillars 150x45x1.7 (8 units), 106x232x3 (4 units), 90x45x1.7 (8 units)

Top horizontal beam on 281x91 glass bottoms (2 units) Welded mesh 50x50x4mm

Lighting rods integrated into the structure

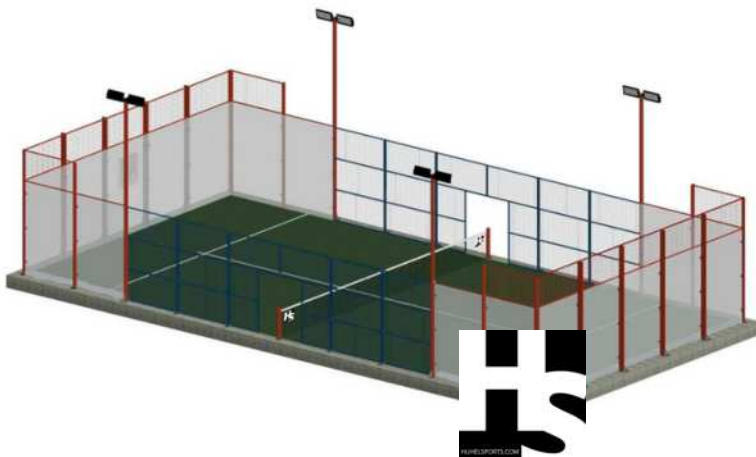


EUROPE COURT

Structural system of aluminum profiles, dimensions of the pillars 1920x45x2 (8 units), 150x45x1.7 (8 units), 115x115x1.7 (4 units), 150x45x1.7 (8 units)

Galvanized steel mounting plates for the securing of the structure and glass, measurements of 300x250x12(8 units), 250x200x12 (8 units), 200x200x12 (4 units) 200x200x12 (8 units)

Structure designed and constructed in accordance with local technical code of building standards



COLISEUM COURT

Anchor plates in galvanized steel for the fastening of the structure and glass, measurements of 450x250x25 (4 units), 200x200x12 (8 units)

Structural system of aluminum profiles, dimensions of the pillars 221x117x3 (4 units) and 150x45x1.7 (8 units)

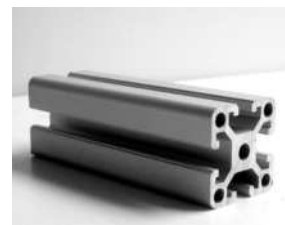
Top horizontal beam in 281x91 glass bottoms (2 units)

Welded mesh 50x50x4mm

M8 stainless steel screws of type A2 for the fastening of glass panels and meshes

Lighting rods integrated into the structure

Structure designed and constructed in accordance with local technical code of building standards



HIGH QUALITY - PERSONALISED ALUMINIUM

HEAD Bids Farewell to World Padel Tour After 11 Successful Years

In a stylish farewell, HEAD concludes its 11-year collaboration with the World Padel Tour (WPT) as the official ball supplier. The HEAD PADEL PRO and the HEAD PADEL PRO S models played a central role in this partnership, offering superior control and durability. Notably, these models are now packaged sustainably as part of the global ReThink campaign.

Mauro Pinaffo, senior product manager of balls at HEAD, expressed immense pride in the fruitful journey shared with the World Padel Tour. Over the years, this collaboration not only delivered exceptional equipment but also played a crucial role in the remarkable growth and global popularity of padel. The culmination of this partnership is marked by the Barcelona Master Finals.

Reflecting on the collaboration's impact, Pinaffo stated, "As we commemorate this final tournament of our collaboration, the Barcelona Master Finals, we reflect on the incredible milestones achieved and the impact we've made on the sport."

During the 11 years of collaboration, the padel ball business experienced exponential growth, witnessing up to a tenfold increase compared to the initial agreement. Particularly noteworthy was the substantial surge in sales between 2020 and 2022, coinciding with the explosion of padel's popularity in many European countries. Today, HEAD stands as the world's best-selling padel ball brand, firmly establishing itself as the market leader and claiming the top spot in sales.

Simon Brenneis, HEAD's global ball and footwear manager, expressed enthusiasm about the thriving evolution of padel during the collaboration with WPT. The company aimed to innovate, enhance player experiences, and promote sustainability throughout this journey. Brenneis proudly noted that HEAD has become the most sold padel ball brand globally, marking a significant achievement in the sport's landscape.



HEAD SPORTS

THE RETURN OF A LEGENDARY PAIRING

Paquito Navarro and Sanyo Gutiérrez are set to rekindle their partnership for the upcoming season, marking a reunion that promises an exciting collaboration. The duo previously played together in 2016 and 2017, securing an impressive eight titles and challenging formidable opponents Fernando Belasteguín and Pablo Lima.

Expressing his enthusiasm on Instagram, Sanyo Gutiérrez shared, "(In) 2024 we will play together again, and I am really happy and grateful that he gave me this chance and that he continues to trust me at almost 40 years of age. I promise work and effort on the physical side."

Relevo, a Spanish newspaper, has now confirmed the return of coach Ramiro Choya to the bench. Choya, who coached the players during their earlier successful collaboration, expressed his joy at the prospect of working with them again.

"I think all three of us have good memories of 2016-2017, and when the possibility of a second term appeared, I didn't hesitate for a moment. I was very happy with them, and I can't find two players that I really want to continue learning from," Choya stated.

Emphasizing the shared goals and positive collaboration, Choya added, "What we want is to be in good health and be competitive regardless of the court or opponent."

As the fourth seeds when the new season kicks off at the end of February, Paquito and Sanyo will benefit from the coaching expertise of both Choya and Jordi Muñoz. Choya revealed that he would be sharing coaching duties with his good friend Jordi Muñoz, highlighting the ease of professional collaboration due to shared values and a common outlook on life.





AMBASSADOR

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Step 2:

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Step 3:

Welcome
YTEX Ambassador!

(Free Wholesale Account)



The pickleball event calendar is filling up, we try to bring a few different options when it comes to competitions, if you'd like more information, use the link in the logo below for more dates & venues.

WPC SERIES - 2024 WPC VIETNAM**EID:** 1392 **PRICE** USD 50**Organizer:** Pickleball Global**EVENT - TOURNAMENT****Starting:** April 03, 2024 to April 07, 2024**City:** Đường Ven Biển, Phước Thuận, Xuyên Mộc, Bà Rịa - Vũng Tàu, Vietnam**Home Club:** Carmelina Beach Resort**Registration Deadline:** March 17, 2024 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 3**Burgholzhausen International Open 2024 (Frankfurt)****EID:** 1337 **PRICE** EUR 40**Organizer:** Norbert Möhring**EVENT - TOURNAMENT****Starting:** March 16, 2024 to March 17, 2024**City:** Friedrichsdorf, Deutschland**Home Club:** Tv 1893 E.v. Burgholzhausen**Registration Deadline:** February 25, 2024 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 3**Nepal International Open Tournament 2024****EID:** 1366 **PRICE** GBP 30**Organizer:** Pickleball Nepal**EVENT - TOURNAMENT****Starting:** March 08, 2024 to March 09, 2024**City:** National Sports Centre Pvt. Ltd., Lalitpur, Nepal**Home Club:** Pickleball Association Of Nepal, Kathmandu**Registration Deadline:** February 01, 2024 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 3**MORE
INFO**

PPA Introduces Junior Tour for Pickleball Enthusiasts Aged 8-16 in 2024

In a significant move to nurture young talent in pickleball, the PPA Tour is launching the Junior PPA in 2024, providing a dedicated space for players aged 8 to 16 to showcase their skills in singles, gender doubles, and co-ed doubles. The initiative aims to encourage aspiring players like Leo Chun, dreaming of an Olympic pickleball gold medal, and those, like 9-year-old Jack Loughridge, aspiring to become professional players.

Junior PPA events will coincide with regular PPA Tour stops, offering a platform for young players to display their talents alongside more experienced competitors. The introduction of a juniors bracket is anticipated to provide an opportunity for youth to compete against peers, fostering skill development without the dominance of larger, stronger adults.

Jack Loughridge, who embraced pickleball at age 7, welcomes the chance to compete against kids his age, expressing excitement about facing good competition and making new friends who share his passion for the sport.

Complementing the Junior Tour, the PPA Tour has launched "Junior PPA Serves," an initiative committed to serving the youth pickleball community and advancing the culture of youth pickleball.

Beyond competition, the Junior Tour emphasizes youth development, offering free clinics and events at each PPA Tour stop for participants aged 8-16. The divisions include singles for boys and girls in age groups 8-12, 13-14, and 15-16, along with doubles divisions for 8-12 and 13-16.

Leo Chun, a 12-year-old player with four years of experience, sees the Junior Tour as an excellent opportunity to practice against skilled peers, stating, "I enjoy playing with and against adults, but this will be a great place for us juniors."

The Junior Tour not only aims to provide a competitive platform but also seeks to connect junior players nationally, fostering new partnerships and friendships. Courtney Loughridge believes it will be instrumental in uniting junior players across the country, allowing them to find new partners and develop lasting connections.



Pickleball's Global Epicenter: APP Chooses The Fort as Permanent HQ and Training Centre

The Association of Pickleball Players (APP) has revealed plans for its official headquarters and training centre, located at The Fort in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Marking a historic milestone, the APP becomes the first pickleball organization to establish a dedicated home, featuring a state-of-the-art facility boasting 43 courts and the world's inaugural pickleball stadium. This move is aimed at enhancing the APP's mission of nurturing talent and promoting pickleball at every level.

Ken Herrmann, Founder of APP, expressed his excitement, stating, "Our new headquarters and training facility provide the Association of Pickleball Players with an incredible opportunity to expand beyond hosting world-class events. The Fort will set the standard for pickleball facilities globally, allowing us to further develop the APP into the leading global pickleball organization. We cannot wait to officially call South Florida—the epicenter of pickleball action—our home."

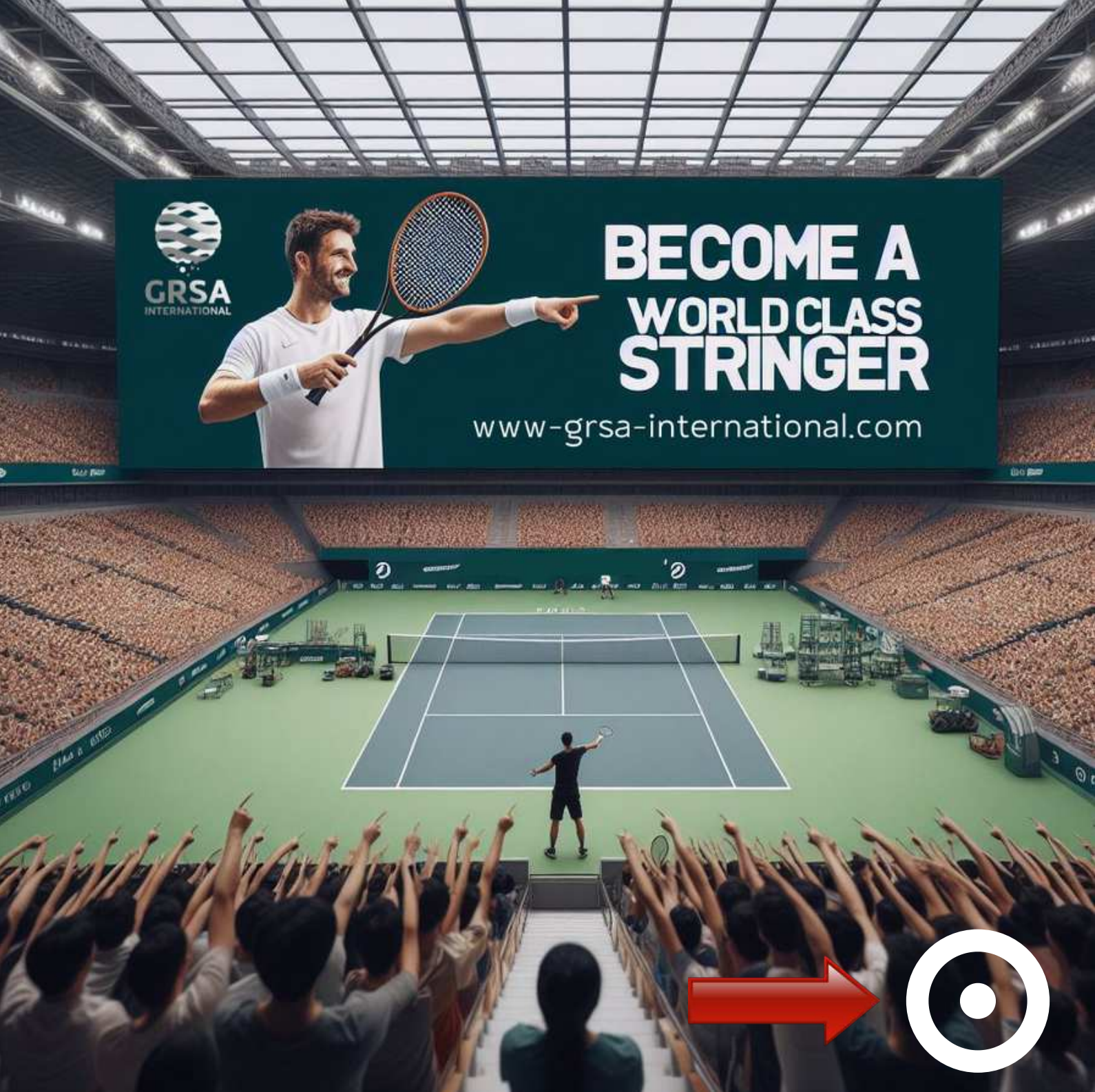
Brad Tuckman and Rich Campillo, Co-Founders of The Fort, envision their establishment not merely as a pickleball club but as a community hub where players discover a home away from home, embracing the essence of South Florida living.

Aligning with the APP was a natural choice, according to Tuckman, as their vision aligns with elevating the game while preserving its inclusive roots. The partnership positions The Fort as the premier pickleball destination, offering a blend of competition and entertainment for players of all levels.

The APP and The Fort share a common vision to support pickleball's growth and talent development. Building on the APP's reputation as the first and original USA Pickleball-sanctioned tour, they plan to provide year-round programming opportunities for players of all ages and skill levels. The APP's growth plans include hosting international tournaments, developing junior players, supporting high-performance touring pros, and serving as the official training home for the APP Next Gen National Team.

The Fort promises an unparalleled pickleball experience, featuring 43 professional courts, the world's first dedicated pickleball stadium, 14 weatherproof courts, and a range of amenities such as a pro shop, locker rooms, fitness recovery centre, and a 4,000 square foot event centre. Its location within the 93-acre Snyder Park, adjacent to the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport, makes it a convenient and accessible destination.

Scheduled to open later this year, The Fort will host the APP's final Major of the 2024 season. Situated in Fort Lauderdale, the APP's new headquarters embeds the organization in one of the strongest pickleball communities globally. The Miami-Fort Lauderdale metropolitan area is the single largest concentration of pickleball players in Florida, representing 20 percent of the state's pickleball-playing population. According to APP's 2023 player participation research, this area is the nation's fourth-largest pickleball market, with 3.1 percent of its population having played the sport in the past twelve months.



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Turmoil in Professional Pickleball: Players' Concerns Amid Merger & Pay Disputes

Professional pickleball players have banded together to express their discontent over recent pay cuts and uncertainties surrounding the sport's future. In a letter obtained by CNBC, the players voiced dissatisfaction with Major League Pickleball (MLP) and the Pro Pickleball Association Tour (PPA Tour).

MLP's proposal for a 40% pay cut on November 28, aimed at ensuring long-term financial viability, has been met with criticism from players who allege lies, threats, and a lack of transparency in the negotiation process. Some players claim to have faced intimidation and feel unfairly treated.

The proposed merger between MLP and the PPA Tour has further complicated matters, with players expressing discomfort about negotiating with PPA Tour CEO Connor Pardoe, whom they initially sought to avoid by choosing MLP. The departure of key figures, including MLP founder Steve Kuhn and Commissioner Brooks Wiley, adds to the uncertainty.

The collective, representing a majority of MLP's approximately 100 players, was formed to address what they consider "immoral, unethical, and arguably illegal negotiation tactics." Funding from an angel investor has enabled them to hire an employment attorney and an antitrust attorney. In a joint statement, MLP and the PPA Tour acknowledge the collaborative efforts of players but emphasize the need for adjustments to ensure the long-term success of professional pickleball.

Recent developments have stalled the anticipated merger. Knighthead Capital Management, a firm linked to MLP's ownership group, offered an alternative investment arrangement, introducing further complications and potential legal challenges.

Player compensation remains a contentious issue, with players pressing MLP executives on the delay in payments. The absence of a completed merger means players are theoretically in default on their contracts. Additionally, concerns arise about player availability for events, as some are not obliged to participate in all MLP events.

The arbitrary deadline of January 31 for the merger adds to the uncertainty. While both parties express optimism about the deal's completion, the prolonged limbo could lead players to seek alternatives for stability.

Lea Jansen's decision to commit to the PPA, citing a more certain existence, exemplifies the growing unease among players. The enticing agreements presented during the talent race, which led many players to make full-time commitments, now face questioning.

Homegrown Woes!

In a surprising turn of events during the Petronas Malaysian Open 2024, Malaysia's men's singles hopeful, Ng Tze Yong, faced a setback that unfortunately curtailed his bid to leave a lasting impact on home turf. This incident unfolded as one of the highlights of the Malaysia Open, bringing unforeseen challenges to the renowned Axiata Arena in Bukit Jalil.

Ranked as the world No. 15 player, Ng Tze Yong's dreams were dashed by a sudden back injury suffered during a potent smash shot in the first round against Japanese player Koki Watanabe. Merely 13 minutes into the match, with the score at 8-12 in favor of Watanabe, Ng made the tough decision to withdraw from the competition.

Recalling the unfortunate moment, Ng explained, "When I performed the smash, my back cramped, and I couldn't move comfortably." Despite unleashing a powerful smash in an attempt to gain an advantage, Ng visibly struggled with pain, ultimately conceding the eighth point to his opponent in response to Watanabe's net shot.



Trailing 7-8, Ng Tze Yong, displaying clear discomfort, sought permission from the referee to receive treatment. After the treatment concluded, he briefly resumed play before ultimately deciding to withdraw while still trailing 8-12. The back injury, a novel experience for Ng, cast a shadow over his aspirations, with the runner-up of the Arctic Open in Finland expressing, "Such injuries are certainly not what a player desires."

At the time of the incident, Ng was uncertain about his participation in the India Open, which unfolded between January 16th and 21st. Despite the setback, he dedicated himself to physical training aimed at enhancing various facets of his fitness, including impulsiveness, explosiveness, aerobic, and anaerobic endurance.



This unexpected turn of events dealt a blow to the Malaysian Open, leaving the tournament without the presence of its homegrown players, as Lee Zii Jia also faced elimination in the first round after a defeat to Chinese representative Lu Guang Zu. The challenges faced by Ng Tze Yong and Lee Zii Jia added an element of unpredictability to the Malaysia Open, underscoring the dynamism inherent in the world of professional badminton.

BWF Malaysia Open 2024: Anthony Sinisuka Ginting tripped up by Lu Guang Zu in 2nd round

Anthony Sinisuka Ginting faced a disappointing exit from the BWF Malaysia Open, succumbing to a straight-set defeat against Lu Guang Zu on Thursday (11 January).

Ginting's journey ended in the second round as his Chinese opponent secured victory with a scoreline of 23-21, 25-23. This marked Ginting's first loss to Lu in their six career meetings.

Initially taking charge with a 12-7 lead in the first game, Ginting found himself gradually losing ground as Lu leveled the score at 15. Despite Ginting having a game point at 20-19, Lu managed to turn the tide, ultimately claiming the set.

The second game witnessed a similar pattern, with the two players trading points back and forth. Ginting had two chances to seize the game, but Lu capitalized on his third game point, concluding the 67-minute contest.

In the women's draw, top seed An Se-young displayed dominance, swiftly dispatching Germany's Yvonne Li with a decisive 21-13, 21-8 victory in just 35 minutes. The contrasting fortunes in the men's and women's brackets added intrigue to the unfolding drama of the Malaysia Open, showcasing the unpredictable nature of badminton competition.

Anthony Sinisuka Ginting

Current World Rank: 4

Highest Rank: 2 (Jan 23)

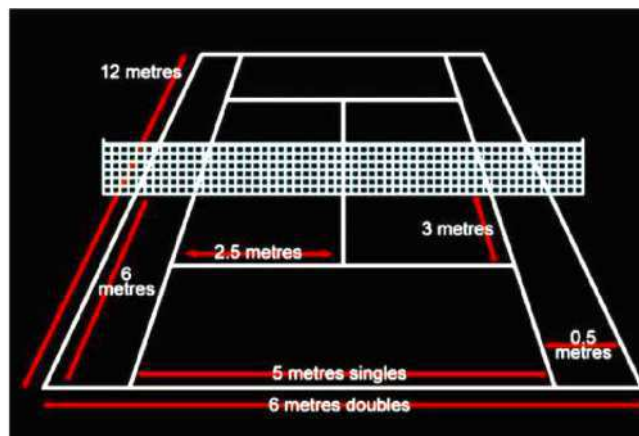


TOUCHTENNIS...NEW?

It would be easy to think that the surfacing of TouchTennis on social media would indicate that this sport is new, but it's not the case, TouchTennis has been around since 2002. Devised by Rashid Ahmad, it was firstly devised to entertain his daughter, it then developed into a very catchy past time for racket sport enthusiasts.

Currently played professionally in only 6 countries, ok, maybe a few more if you count Australia, but with the explosion of Pickleball, could TouchTennis also start to catch-on elsewhere?

These are the dimensions of a TouchTennis court, not too dissimilar to Pickleball court, it allows people who already have a tennis court in their home or business to create ample space for various TouchTennis courts.



Chile, Great Britain, France, Italy, Spain, UAE and United States are all providing places and generating a little bit of a buzz about it but it's up against a giant, with the backing of major players, Pickleball really is making it hard for TouchTennis to make it.

Competitions are being held in Italy, US and around the UK, as they continue to grow in popularity, it's becoming more apparent that TouchTennis could well turn out to be a "quieter" option to pickleball. that said, it just doesn't have the same exposure, backing and worldwide platform as its slightly noisier cousin.

If you're looking to give this very special hobby a try, it's not that openly available as other racket sports but there are clubs that do promote it, these same places are venues for some of the competitions too so keep your eyes open and give it a try, you'll be pleasantly surprised with just how engaging it is and how easy it is to get into the swing of things.





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