



# GRSA INTERNATIONAL ATW MAGAZINE

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Rafa Nada bids farewell to professional tennis as a player, Zeynep Sönmez Claims First WTA Title, Viktorija Golubic claims her first WTA title since 2016. Saudi Arabia's Special Olympics Event.

## Section 2 - GRSA INTERNATIONAL

We share images and information from the recent GRSA Annual Stringers Conference, it was an absolute pleasure to meet, greet and spend time with some very special professionals. Solinco also became partners with GRSA with more to come over the coming months.

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

# RAFA'S CAREER... AND SO IT COMES TO AN END

It wasn't the ending he hoped for, nor that of the home fans, but Rafa did what he set out to do, end his career playing in the Davis Cup one more time.

It was the Netherlands that took that dream finish from Rafa, but as always, graceful in defeat, he congratulated them and thanked his team for the opportunity to be a part of the Davis Cup team on what would be his last professional appearance.



During his retirement speech, he thanked his family, his friends, the fans and most importantly his team and colleagues, the ones that have been there through the years and helped him bring out the best of what was once a hobby that quickly turned into his career, and one he loved!



This match wasn't a definite, there was always a chance they wouldn't have to call on him, or at least that's what they made us think. But how could he be there and not play? How could he say farewell from the stands? He had to play, it's what we all wanted for him, and for us as fans.

During the speech, he made a special mention to his team of professionals that he also classes as personal friends and influential pieces to his success.

Rafa has been instrumental in bringing traction to a lot of brands throughout his career, he's been an exemplary brand ambassador for the likes of NIKE, BABOLAT, KIA and LOUIS VUITTON. His career expands 22 years, he's won 92 titles and is the most successful clay court player of all time with a record 14 titles. Titles he's taken away from the likes of Andy Murray, Novak Djokovic, and his very first title, where he helped Spain win the Davis Cup by beating the legend that went on to be one of Rafa's most fiercest rivals, but at the same time, his best friend, Mr Roger Federer.

Federer and Nadal played each other 40 times, with Nadal leading 24-16 overall, including 14-10 in finals.

Rafa faced Novak 60 times, including in all four major finals, with Djokovic leading 31-29 overall. Djokovic leads 15-13 in finals of all levels.

Murray took on Nadal a total of 24 times, with Andy only beating Rafa on 7 occasions



His appreciation to the media was an interesting moment, he said "I might not have always played my best but you have always been supportive..nearly always".

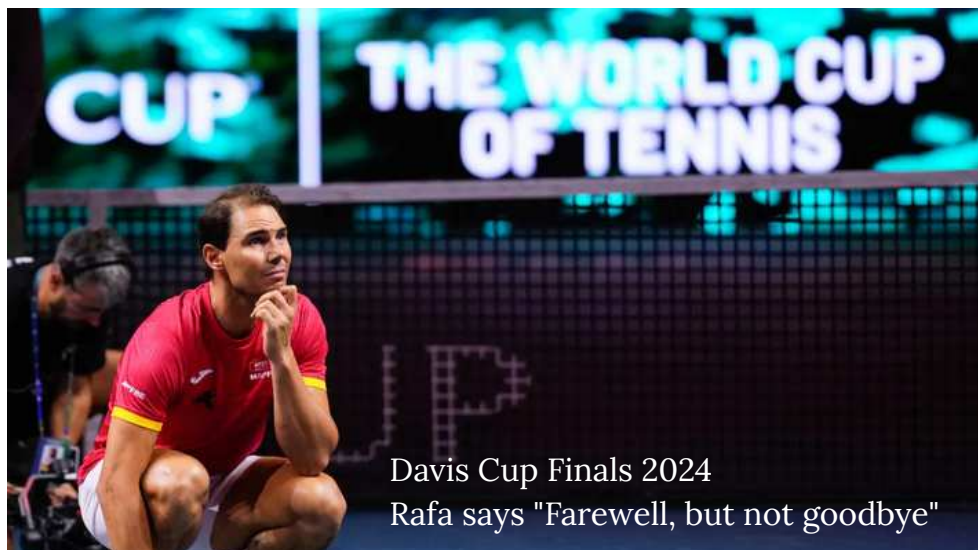
"I believe I have been a good ambassador for the sport all over the world, and the way you have portrayed me is how I believe I have shown myself". He also showed his gratitude to the institutions such as the ATP, LTA and Spanish Tennis Federation for all of their

support over the years, their support in the low times as well as the good times, it's something he has always respected and been thankful for. Rafa has always shared his thoughts about the industry, where it can improve, where there is room for things to change and at the same time, congratulating and giving praise where it's due. He is one of the few players that over the years has mentioned all of the staff in his acceptance speeches, but unfortunately not stringers.

Rafael Nadal, a brand, a player, an ambassador, an innovator, a phenomenon, a warrior, a gentleman, a friend... he's been called so many things over his career, and very very rarely has anything negative been said. And if there has been anything, mainly it's been from rivals, or people that through mind games and jealousy, they have voiced things they have later gone back and corrected, or apologised for. Most recently, Novak said, "there is no friendship in rivalry, but we might get dinner some day".



Novak isn't the only one to show resilience in sharing his emotions when it comes to friendships and relationships with other players, unless of course there is an issue with them, then he's been known to be very vocal, but with Rafa it's always been different. Even the most defiant rivals, the strongest critics, the most biased followers, none of them can deny that Rafa will be remembered for years to come as one of the greatest tennis players to ever walk the court, there is no doubt!



Davis Cup Finals 2024  
Rafa says "Farewell, but not goodbye"



# GOLUBIC ENDS TITLE DROUGHT WITH VICTORY AT JIANGXI OPEN

Viktorija Golubic has claimed her first WTA title since 2016 with a standout performance at the Jiangxi Open in Jiujiang, China. The Swiss player, who has faced her share of challenges on the WTA Tour, triumphed over Rebecca Sramkova in the final, winning 6-3, 7-5 to secure her second career title and mark a triumphant return to the winner's circle.



## A Journey Defined by Resilience

Golubic's career has been a journey of ups and downs, highlighted by moments of brilliance and resilience. The 31-year-old's last title win came eight years ago at the Ladies Championship Gstaad, a feat that had once placed her on the radar as one of Switzerland's promising talents. In the years since, Golubic has maintained a consistent presence on the Tour, climbing to a career-high ranking of No. 35 in early 2022 and reaching the Wimbledon quarterfinals in 2021, but a second title had remained elusive—until now.

The Jiangxi Open title serves as a testament to Golubic's tenacity and dedication to the game. Coming into the tournament ranked No. 168, she took the court with a point to prove, making her way through a field of tough competitors with determination and skill.



## An Impressive Run in Jiujiang

Golubic's path to the title was marked by decisive performances. She opened the tournament with straight-set victories over You Xiaodi and Jessica Bouzas Maneiro, followed by a win against Dutch player Arantxa Rus. In the semifinals, she faced the top-seeded Marie Bouzkova, defeating her with a commanding 6-4, 6-1 scoreline to earn a spot in the final.

In the championship match against Sramkova, Golubic once again displayed her resilience. After taking the first set 6-3, she found herself down a break in the second. However, Golubic's experience and composure allowed her to fight back, eventually sealing the set 7-5 to lift the trophy.

## What This Win Means for Golubic

This victory is not only a significant milestone but also a testament to Golubic's perseverance. The eight-year gap between titles underscores the challenging journey she has endured, and the win in Jiujiang serves as a reminder of her enduring skill and competitive spirit.

For Golubic, this title could signal a turning point. Having navigated a demanding career filled with both high and low points, she has shown that determination and a love for the game can lead to redemption. With this win, Golubic re-establishes herself as a formidable player on the Tour and will look to build on this momentum in the coming season.

## A Glance Ahead

The Jiangxi Open victory may be a springboard for Golubic as she aims to climb back up the rankings and compete in larger tournaments. As she sets her sights on 2024, fans and followers will be eager to see if this title marks the beginning of a new chapter in her career. With her skill, experience, and newfound confidence, Golubic is well-positioned to make a lasting impact on the WTA Tour.





## Zeynep Sönmez Claims First WTA Title at Merida Open, Setting a New Milestone for Turkish Tennis

In a breakthrough moment for Turkish tennis, 22-year-old Zeynep Sönmez captured her first WTA singles title at the Merida Open Akron in Mexico. Sönmez delivered a commanding performance in the final, overpowering American Ann Li with a straight-sets victory, 6-2, 6-1, and firmly announcing her arrival on the WTA Tour.

### An Impressive Path to the Top

Sönmez's journey to the title wasn't without its challenges. In the semifinals, she faced a tough test against 17-year-old rising star Alina Korneeva. After dropping the first set, Sönmez found her rhythm, showcasing her resilience and adaptability to pull off a comeback win, securing her spot in the final. Her ability to adjust and stay composed under pressure has been a defining aspect of her play throughout this tournament, setting her up for a promising career on the Tour.



### A Historic Achievement for Turkish Tennis

With this title, Sönmez becomes only the second Turkish player to win a WTA singles title, following in the footsteps of Çağla Büyükakçay, who won the Istanbul Cup in 2016. Her victory is a milestone not just for herself but for Turkish tennis, which has been striving to make its mark on the international stage. Sönmez's win at the Merida Open is expected to inspire young players across Turkey, contributing to the growth of tennis in a country where the sport continues to gain popularity.

## On the Rise in the WTA Rankings

This victory at the Merida Open is projected to catapult Sönmez into the WTA Top 100 rankings for the first time in her career, marking a significant step forward for the young player. Her debut within the Top 100 is a clear sign of her rising potential, positioning her as a talent to watch in the coming years. With this win, Sönmez has laid a strong foundation for her future, and her impressive performance in Merida suggests that more successes could be on the horizon.

## What's Next for Sönmez?

Sönmez's triumph in Merida could be a turning point in her career. The confidence she gained from this tournament, combined with her ability to perform under pressure, suggests she is ready to take on higher-ranked players and compete in larger events. As she prepares for her next steps on the WTA Tour, Sönmez will aim to build on this momentum, further establishing herself among the sport's emerging talents.



## A New Face for Turkish Tennis

Sönmez's journey, from a promising junior to a WTA titleholder, reflects the growing support for tennis in Turkey and highlights the potential for future Turkish stars on the world stage. As she continues to push boundaries and make strides internationally, Zeynep Sönmez's success will undoubtedly serve as a beacon for Turkish players and fans alike.



# Saudi Arabia's Special Olympics Event: Empowering Athletes and Championing Inclusivity

In a powerful demonstration of inclusivity, Saudi Arabia recently hosted a Special Olympics event in Riyadh, held in conjunction with the WTA Finals. This initiative, a collaboration between the Saudi Special Olympics, the Saudi Tennis Federation, and the Women's Tennis Association, not only empowered athletes with intellectual disabilities but also showcased Saudi Arabia's commitment to integrating these athletes into mainstream sporting events. By bringing together world-class WTA players and Special Olympics athletes, the event highlighted the transformative power of sports and created a platform for celebrating resilience and determination.

## The Growing Presence of Special Olympics in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's relationship with Special Olympics has grown significantly since the nation's initial involvement in 1994, with the Saudi Special Olympics Federation officially established in 2019. Under the guidance of figures like Prince Faisal bin Fahd bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and Minister of Sports Abdulaziz bin Turki Al-Saud, the organization has expanded its reach, promoting physical and mental well-being for individuals with intellectual disabilities through athletic and health programs.

Programs like the recent event in Riyadh help make sports more accessible and enjoyable for these athletes, with the Saudi Tennis Federation working toward a broader goal of inspiring one million Saudis to play tennis by 2030. This commitment to promoting an active lifestyle for all is paving the way for greater inclusion, breaking down stigmas, and allowing individuals with intellectual disabilities to become active participants in the community.

Judy Murray said on social media "When the world's best tennis players joined 24 young people from Special Olympics in Riyadh on centre court for a fun clinic as part of the community engagement programme for the @WTA Finals"



## Empowering Through Participation

The Riyadh event was marked by a tennis clinic that brought together Special Olympics athletes with WTA stars, including Coco Gauff, Jessica Pegula, Hsieh Su-Wei, and Elise Mertens. For many Special Olympics participants, it was a unique opportunity to experience tennis, learning the basics of the sport while engaging with professional players. The session aimed to encourage skill-building and confidence among the athletes, and it served as a heartening example of sport bridging the gap between diverse groups.

Ann Austin, Executive Director of the WTA Foundation, expressed her support, highlighting the significance of the WTA's global partnership with Special Olympics: "We are excited to be adding Riyadh to our global list of Special Olympics chapters that we work with." This initiative emphasizes the importance of international collaboration in fostering inclusivity, making sports a unifying force for communities worldwide.

## Saudi Arabia's Special Olympics Athletes on the Global Stage

The recent event in Riyadh is just one example of the growing visibility and accomplishments of Saudi Arabia's Special Olympics athletes. On the international stage, these athletes have showcased their skill and determination, winning accolades and representing their country with pride. At the 2022 Special Olympics Unified Cup in Detroit, the Saudi football team secured a gold medal, and in the 2023 Special Olympics World Games in Berlin, Saudi athletes won an impressive 24 medals, including nine golds, six silvers, and nine bronzes.

These achievements highlight the dedication of Saudi Special Olympics athletes and the success of the programs supporting them. The opportunities provided through Special Olympics empower athletes to discover and develop their talents, foster independence, and promote healthy lifestyles.





## **The Larger Impact of Special Olympics in Saudi Arabia**

The Saudi Special Olympics Federation doesn't just focus on athletic training—it also includes health and wellness programs tailored to the specific needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Athletes are given access to free health screenings and education on healthy living, ensuring that the impact of Special Olympics extends beyond the playing field.

Programs like the Riyadh tennis clinic and the continued support of the Saudi Tennis Federation underscore the Kingdom's dedication to creating a more inclusive environment for individuals with disabilities. By involving Special Olympics athletes in high-profile events, Saudi Arabia is actively promoting a culture of acceptance and reducing societal stigmas around intellectual disabilities. The success of these programs also stands as an example of how sports can drive positive social change, creating connections and providing opportunities for those who might otherwise be sidelined.

## **Looking Forward: A Path Toward Greater Inclusivity**

Saudi Arabia's commitment to supporting Special Olympics athletes is part of a broader movement to integrate sports into the lives of all its citizens. With an increasing focus on inclusivity, programs like these are helping to inspire a new generation of athletes and broaden the nation's perspective on what athletes with intellectual disabilities can achieve.

As Saudi Arabia continues to elevate the profile of Special Olympics athletes and foster partnerships with international organizations like the WTA, the Kingdom is setting a new standard for inclusivity in sports. The Special Olympics program, along with initiatives like the recent tennis clinic in Riyadh, embodies a forward-looking vision where every individual, regardless of ability, has the opportunity to excel, compete, and be celebrated.

With more events, training programs, and global partnerships on the horizon, Saudi Arabia is positioning itself as a leader in inclusive sports. The achievements of its Special Olympics athletes will not only continue to inspire but will also pave the way for a more inclusive future, where the transformative power of sport is accessible to everyone.

A graphic logo for PARNELL KNOT, featuring a vertical green line that forms the letter 'K' and loops into a purple knot-like shape at the top.

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# Taylor Fritz Reflects on Career-Best Season After Turin Final Loss

Taylor Fritz closed out a breakthrough 2024 season with a runner-up finish at the Nitto ATP Finals in Turin, cementing his status among the game's elite. Despite falling to World No. 1 Jannik Sinner in straight sets, Fritz finishes the year ranked a career-high No. 4 and is optimistic about his future.

"It's been a really good week for me," Fritz said after the final. "Ending the season like this gives me a lot of confidence. In 2023, when I briefly hit World No. 5, I didn't feel like I belonged there. Now, I do. That belief is a huge part of achieving big results."

The American became the first from his country to reach the Nitto ATP Finals title match since James Blake in 2006, with notable wins over Alexander Zverev, Daniil Medvedev, and Alex de Minaur. However, Sinner's impeccable serving proved insurmountable.

"He served absolutely lights out," Fritz said of Sinner, who landed 71% of first serves and kept Fritz on the defensive. "He took risks on the second serve, placing it well and mixing it up. I was really impressed with how he served."

Looking ahead to 2025, Fritz is focused on refining his game. "I need to get more explosive and quicker off the split step," he said. "That will help my return of serve and improve my chances to break." Fritz also aims to address backhand power issues, particularly when balls wear out, which allowed Sinner to dominate extended rallies.

With two titles in 2024 and five Americans ranked in the Top 25, Fritz leads a strong contingent into the new season. "It's been a great year," he reflected. "I achieved my goal of finishing in the Top 5, and I'm ready to build on this success."





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## Sinner Leads Italy to Back-to-Back Davis Cup Titles, Highlighting a Historic Week in Málaga

World No. 1 Jannik Sinner capped off a remarkable 2024 season by guiding Italy to its third Davis Cup title in Málaga, defeating the Netherlands 2-0 in the final. His 7-6 (7-2), 6-2 victory over Tallon Griekspoor followed Matteo Berrettini's commanding 6-4, 6-2 win against Botić van de Zandschulp, securing Italy's back-to-back titles in the prestigious tournament.

"We are very happy to be back here holding this trophy. It feels like we are in Italy," Sinner said, reflecting on the passionate support from Italian fans in Málaga. "You have a different pressure carrying Italy on your shoulders, but we handled it well. It means so much to me."

The Davis Cup Finals coincided with the first Annual Stringer's Conference of GRSA International, the dynamic global stringers association headquartered in Málaga. The conference brought together stringers from around the world, celebrating their vital role in tennis. Many attendees also had the chance to witness the Davis Cup Finals firsthand, blending expertise with the excitement of the event. GRSA's presence underscored the synergy between players and the often-unsung heroes of the sport.

For Sinner, the triumph added to a stellar year that included Grand Slam victories at the Australian Open and US Open, as well as the ATP Finals crown. The 23-year-old ended the season with an impressive 70-6 record despite battling personal challenges, including an ongoing doping investigation. "The most important thing is that the people who know me trust me," Sinner said. "Sometimes life gives you difficulties, and you just have to face them."

Italy's victory also follows the women's Billie Jean King Cup triumph, cementing the nation's rise as a tennis powerhouse. With this win, Italy becomes the sixth team to secure consecutive Davis Cup titles since the format changed 52 years ago.







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# FUN FACTS

"I thought I was a good stringer, in fact I thought I was a great stringer, until my mentor came back from sick leave and I saw how he strung, then I realised I wasn't good at all".

**Drew Violette**, GRSA MEMBER who recently passed his Competition Master Exam and is well on the way to the tour certification!

- 1** Did you know that racket sports specialist, professionals and enthusiasts also have the potential to play other sports, such as golf, hockey, cricket and baseball? Hand/eye coordination is already there, so if you think you can't, it's all in that thought, because you're already using the main tools for something else.
- 2** Your attention span changes through age, but it's not age that changes it, it's discipline and motivation, if your discipline dips and with it your motivation, your attention span becomes less and then both your work and capacity to learn becomes harder. Stay motivated and disciplined in your work, regular breaks and value your work.
- 3** If you're prepared to invest in your future, be it investing in a home, in a car, in finance, why not keep investing in knowledge? We often get to a point where we feel comfortable and stop there, not thinking about the tomorrow where we might need a plan b. Keep learning, open your horizons and try to take in as much as you can. You can never learn too much.
- 4** You cannot learn with blinkered vision, only looking in one direction will just stunt your growth as you won't see the changes that happen all around you. Taking in as much information as you can, will always allow you to make the choices you feel are right. If you don't have all of the information, how can you know all of the answers? The answer is, you can't, nor will you have all the answers always, but that shouldn't stop you from trying to find them, from learning and from growing as a person.



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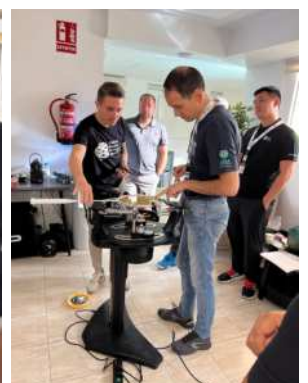
This helps people around the world find a stringer close to them and knowing that you're GRSA certified will make all the difference to them when choosing a trusted professional.

# THE 1st GRSA ANNUAL GLOBAL STRINGERS CONFERENCE

GRSA was founded nearly three years ago with the primary goal of uniting stringers—not just by fostering a sense of community, raising awareness about the importance of certification, or offering a dedicated service that is direct, efficient, and supportive, but also by creating opportunities to connect in person through our annual conferences. Bringing this vision to life took time, as we were determined to find the perfect venue, assemble the right people, and ensure meticulous preparation to make the event both compelling for professionals and accommodating for their families or partners. We are confident that we achieved this, and that everyone who participated found the experience enjoyable and rewarding.

On the Thursday, some people arrived quite early and managed to head out in to Málaga and surrounding areas. later in the evening meeting up at a local steak house for a general get together and a few laughs.

It was a fantastic opportunity to meet new faces, trade a little background and share some interesting bits of information before the first day of the conference, which would start with the badminton workshop given by GRSA Instructor Marco Schoepers. It was great to see just how many people actually like taking on badminton stringing





We looked at a series of essentials in the Badminton workshop, tensions, strings, racket characteristics, machine adaptors, knots and a lot more. Marco shared some of the anecdotes from recent tournaments and clients needs, plus listed some of the essential things to look at when professionally re-stringing a badminton racket.



**GRSA Global Badminton Director Mark Goodman** couldn't attend due to a recent medical intervention but sent his well wishes as we did to him, but even though Mark couldn't be there, someone who has had plenty of time with Mark, Chris Goodchild was in attendance and shared some of the Goodman ethos and techniques, and this is what these kind of workshops are all about.



It's a very special way of engaging and including other people's experience and expertise, allowing others to see many different sides to everyday stringing, and as we know, sharing is caring, plus, information is key to grow. If you want to learn more, the information has to be out there, so thanks to Chris from TopSpin Tennis for the insight.



# THE GURU AND THE ND PRO METHOD



The afternoon of day 1 saw the team enjoy a unique opportunity to pick the brains of probably the most knowledgeable squash stringer in the business, Mr Nick Down, GRSA International Global Squash Manager and super nerd when it comes to weird and wonderful squash rackets that only a handful will have ever strung, more lovingly named The Guru.



Nick's Nuggets have been one of the most popular segments in the GRSA ATW magazine, so it was no surprise that quite a few people had some interest in knowing more from the man himself, and with all of the rackets available, it was a great opportunity to see them in the flesh and get some very handy tips about them. It's not easy to take it all in with so many options, that said, Nick's gentle approach and teaching skills are huge helpers in making things easy, "within reason" to grasp and take in. There were even some who wanted to try out some of the patterns.

It was also the perfect opportunity to share the ND Pro Method, an improved way of stringing and making things neat and tidy, but also allowing better control, power and accuracy where needed!



# WELCOME COCKTAIL

After an inspiring first day of presentations and workshops at the GRSA International Stringers Conference, we transitioned to an evening of relaxation and connection at the stunning La Sierra restaurant. Tucked away in the serene hills of Cerrado del Águila and surrounded by a lush golf course, and amazing padel complex, the venue provided the perfect backdrop for an unforgettable cocktail event.



Guests were treated to an array of delightful canapés, including crispy deep-fried Camembert bites with a tangy red onion and cranberry marmalade, delicate filo-wrapped prawns with sweet chili dip, savoury serrano ham croquettes, and creamy smoked salmon and cream cheese pinchos. The buffet spread was equally impressive, featuring a traditional Spanish paella bursting with flavour, gourmet mini burgers, and an inviting grazing board laden with jamón serrano, an assortment of cheeses, hummus, fresh crudités, and crunchy picos. The menu was thoughtfully crafted to cater to a variety of tastes while showcasing the best of Spanish cuisine—a combination that proved to be a hit with all in attendance.



**Above:** Emma and Chris, taking in the awesome view and making the most of the warm evening out on the terrace, a terrace that looks over the valley and over to the mountains of Mijas. The weather really behaved for us, having had floods just a couple of days before. And yes, those clouds did worry us, just for a little while.

**Left:** Nick Peck from Nick Peck Tennis, in St Neots and Chris Goodchild from TopSpin Tennis in Cambridge.

More than just an evening of delicious food and drinks, the cocktail was a celebration of camaraderie and community. For many attendees, this was the first chance to meet face-to-face with colleagues and peers they had previously only interacted with online or heard about in name. The atmosphere was warm and welcoming, creating a perfect setting for conversations to flow, connections to deepen, and new friendships to form.

This relaxed and friendly evening not only left us with lasting memories but also set the tone for the days ahead, energizing us for Day 2's packed schedule of presentations and discussions.



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# DAY 2: JAM PACKED

After a brief catch-up and talk about the night before, and making sure there were no sore heads, we got underway with a very busy day of information, starting with Richard Parnell, President of GRSA International who kicked off by sharing some background about GRSA, why and how it started, the mission, the message we're trying to send out, and where the future can take us all if as a community, we push to make our craft one of importance and recognition. This is a common goal and not one of one individual, but of a community that feels that more should be done in seeing that things change within the industry.





# HEAD®



Luke Smith from HEAD was like a fish in water in his new role, excellent engagement with all of those present, even getting stuck in with stringing as his journey has only just begun in this part of the industry.

The HEAD presentation was very complete, taking a look into the science behind racket design, and certain parameters. It was also a good opportunity for Luke to share some insight into string combination, racket and string matching, balancing and so much more, we can't actually share too much about this, trade secrets, but it was a pleasure to see so many people immersed in the data Luke shared.





# DIMAS: TOUR STRINGING AND MOVING UP THE RANKS

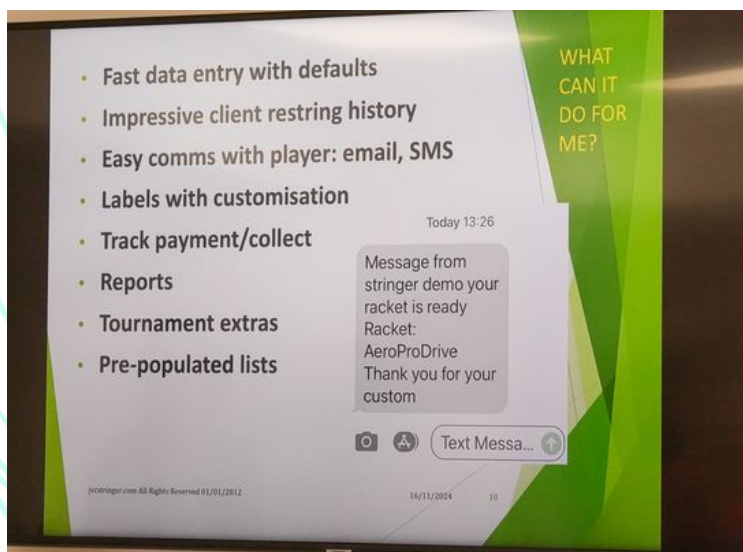


Dimas Mendez, widely known on social media as "The Wandering Stringer" and a GRSA Instructor for Costa Rica and Panama, took the stage to share his journey from aspiring stringer to a recognised tour professional and, more recently, his transition into his new role as a coach.

Dimas spoke candidly about starting from the ground up, emphasising the importance of observing, listening, and staying alert to absorb as much knowledge as possible, "always being a sponge". He reflected on his early mistakes, particularly how trying to rush the process often backfired. Instead, it was his patience, attention to detail, and unwavering determination that ultimately helped him stand out. His family's deep roots in tennis also fuelled his passion and drive, inspiring him to turn the sport into his life's work and reach the influential position he holds today, both on and off the court.



During the presentation, Dimas and Richard reminisced about the first time they met and how their professional relationship has opened doors to new opportunities. They also highlighted the core values they share: a meticulous focus on detail, a commitment to giving back to the industry by sharing knowledge, and a genuine care for the quality of their work. Above all, Dimas stressed the importance of maintaining an open mind, as learning is a continuous process. "We're always learning; we never stop—and that is the key," he concluded.



**Jenny Stokes**, still an active tennis player and mother, who has seen her fair share of hotel rooms and tennis courts while travelling with her children, joined us in representation of **JVC Stringer**, a full racket service software that has been used in some of the top majors. An excellent presentation showcasing all of the relevant details and characteristics of a complete package for any stringing business.

Owner **John Vinnell** could not be with us in person but he joined via video to answer any questions. He also took note of some interesting points and ideas.

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Richard followed the coffee break on Saturday morning with the presentation “**The Aggregation Of Marginal Gains**” and its relevance with the stringing process. Richard started basing his teaching and classes on this approach and the results have been nothing short of amazing. Without a doubt, the best way to improve!



The presentation was well received by all present, no one fell asleep, maybe because of the coffee break just before. It tied in perfectly with the comments made by Dimas in his presentation and we encourage everyone to be a sponge.

# RN Parnell International S.L

Here's a breakdown of the network

Parnell Knot - 2012, Parnell Academy - 2016, Parnell Language Services - 2016



In 2022 GRSA was launched



In 2024



In 2025



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# CUSTOMISING WORKSHOP WITH MARTIN MANN

Martin Mann is the probably best advocate for GRSA, his work ethic and understanding of what GRSA is trying to achieve is a perfect synergy. His attention to detail and dedication to the craft was always the main reason Martin was asked to be part of GRSA, since then the growth has been outstanding, and there is still so much more to come.

This workshop helped people get hands-on with one of the most important parts of a stringing service, one that not many people have really put their hands to in detail, now was the perfect time to pick the brains of someone who is very experienced and has a great reputation.



Customising is an art in itself and requires dedication, patience and attention to detail, those small details that make all the difference as Richard had mentioned in the morning session.

So before going to the nitty gritty of racket customisation, Martin went through a series of points about the stringing service PRS & GRSA provide, he looked at the who, how and why's of tournament stringing, plus he answered all of the questions that came up from people interested in getting more into tournament stringing, and those looking to improve their current service.



Time to move on to the part where everyone could get their hands on some rackets and machines again, this time the 3 in 1, and the new 4 in 1 from HEAD. Martin showcased the new features of the 4 in 1 machine, while going through the details of the key elements to pay attention to when customising rackets. What to look for, what questions to ask, where we should be paying the most attention and getting to the right conclusions in a reduced timeframe.





While Martin was going round the different groups that were made, Richard was also sharing his expertise and valuable information.

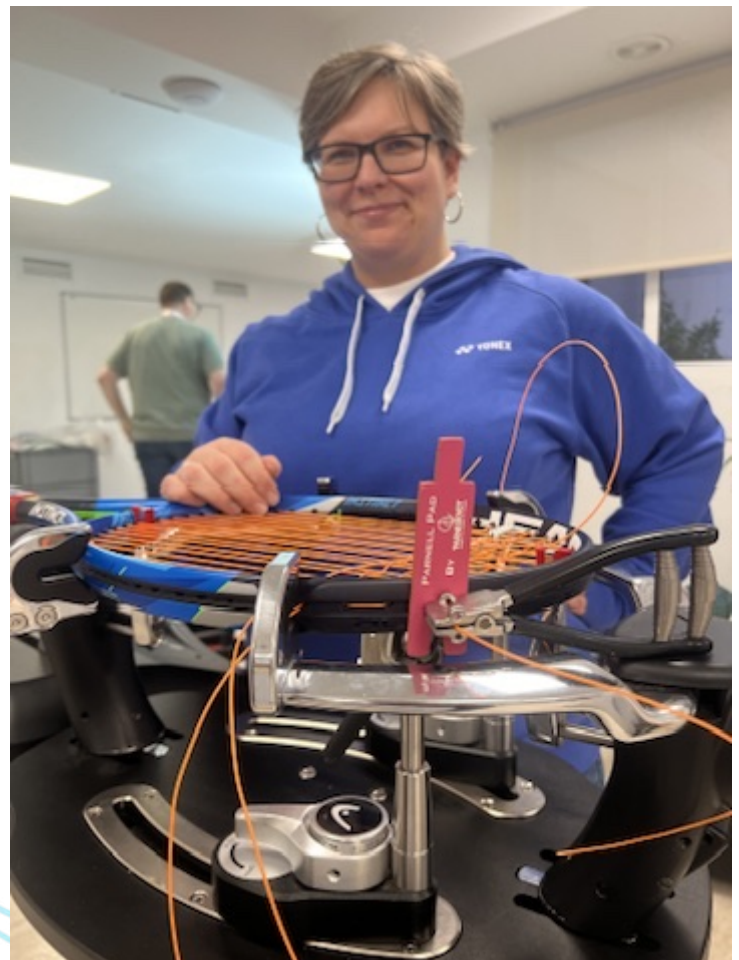
Benny and Marco we're asking about weight distribution and placement, which will always be different depending on the racket, this is a time consuming thing but, very rewarding. Once you have that experience, then the process speeds up, it's just a matter of getting the key parts to come as second nature, then add that information to each individual task.

The machines were busy so some people took the opportunity to get on the other machines to practice their stringing, to learn some more tricks and techniques, and see how others are doing things that are of interest. This really is the best way to learn, watching other people, comparing notes, stories and taking it all in. Once you've done that, then it's down to you to use the information how best you see it. In some cases, even watching someone else can give you an idea to improve it, or add it to your own way of doing things.



Caroline Morokutti, who is already involved in the industry, but never really got into stringing, did her first racket, and a job well done. Well, she has a good teacher and her colleagues on the day were also there to give her support. Julia was with her all the way, and even Julia picked up some valuable tips from Instructor Mark Jan Greebe.

Both ladies did a great job and they were really keen to learn, and as we know, once you get the bug, once you start to gain confidence and improve, you just want to keep going and learn more.





**P.R.S.**

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# GALA DINNER TIME



We wanted to celebrate getting everyone together, we wanted to include family members too, so what better way than having a gala dinner that brought some sparkle to the weekend, and it was just the start of an amazing evening.

Sponsored by Wilson, this dinner was stunning, from the menu to the service, from the entertainment to the raffle and auction, we'll get to those shortly, but here are some of the memories from that night, a night that we will all remember.

**Wilson**

After some canapés and some drinks, it was time to take our seats in the dining room ready to enjoy some of the finest food in the area.

Windham Grand are well known for their service and great food, they did not disappoint at all.

Everyone spoke highly of the beautifully presented dishes, the quality and quantity, add to the mix the atmosphere as we all shared even more stories and experience, it's a recipe for a wonderful evening that even the smallest ones enjoyed!

Here's what you missed!

## MENU

It's time to eat

GRSA STRINGERS CONFERENCE 2024

### STARTERS

**Selection of vegan dips (VG) - Beetroot hummus, tzatziki, roasted spicy tomato, selection bread sticks & grissini.**  
Superfood Quinoa Salad: (V) - Quinoa, avocado, cherry tomatoes, mixed leaves, sherry vinaigrette, crumbled feta

### MAINS

**Sea Bass Fillet, Tender Stem Broccoli, Seafood and Dill Sauce**  
Monkfish and Prawn Skewer, Olive Oil and Pimentón de La Vera Paprika

**Honey Roast Duck with Sweet Sauce, Seasonal Vegetables and Chef's Potatoes**  
Pork tenderloin with Malaga wine sauce, pine nuts, sultanas, accompanied by seasonal vegetables and Chef's potatoes.

### DESSERTS

**Cheesecake with red fruits and vanilla ice cream**  
Dark chocolate mousse, chocolate ganache and black cherries

### DRINKS

White - Viura & Chardonnay 2022 Rioja  
Red - Crianza 2020 Rioja  
Glass of cava Comte de Subirats  
Soft drinks, beers and water















OH THE MAINS....and we mean..ohhh



# FOR THE SWEET TOOTH'S





**GRSA**

**NO STRINGS ATTACHED**

**GIVING  
BACK**

EDUCATION THROUGH SPORT

# AND THE WORK CONTINUES

The recent success of the GRSA Global conference wasn't just down to the organisation and hard work of the GRSA team, but more to do with the professionals attending and collaboration of our partners who provided some amazing gifts for the raffle and charity auction.

Masters of Ceremony Richard Parnell and Daniel Efford took to the stage to get things underway with a raffle, Natasha Parnell also joined in helping share some of the wonderful prizes with everyone who attended.

Each attendee was given a strip of raffle tickets that was included in the Gala Dinner sponsored by Wilson. More tickets were sold on the night with all proceeds going to the **UNITE NEPAL PROJECT** which is still ongoing.



This part of the evening was pure luck, and one of the very lucky ones was Mark Jan Greebe from the Netherlands who had 3 of his tickets pulled out of the hat, but in true MJG fashion, he kindly gave away one of his wins to help level the winner table out a little.

George Pahiakos from Greece was also up more than once to collect a prize or two, Rackets, bags and a whole load more were donated by HEAD who really went the extra mile for the raffle.





24k Gold plated Parnell Pad's were included in the raffle courtesy of Parnell Knot, and yes, real 24 carat gold leaf was used to plate these very special pads, not to be used in the stringing room we think.



# HEAD®

The fabulous gifts kept on coming, with bags from the COCO collection, Team HEAD bags...



Boom rackets, Radical & Prestige Rackets, caps and visors





**Benjamin Reuffurth** - Germany  
From: Mundo del Tennis



**Danielle Mann** - Germany, from PRS (Premium Racket Service)



ONLINE AUCTION - 网上拍卖

**NOVAK DJOKOVIC**

Signed

**MEMORABILIA**

MAKE YOUR BID IN THE COMMENTS BELOW  
在下面的评论中提出您的出价

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这是一生一次的机会

ONLINE AUCTION - 网上拍卖

**ARYNA SABALENKA**

Signed

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ONLINE AUCTION - 网上拍卖

**JANNIK SINNER**

Signed

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ONLINE AUCTION - 网上拍卖

**ALEJANDRO DAVIDOVICH FOKINA**

Signed

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ONLINE AUCTION - 网上拍卖

**ZHIZHEN ZHANG**

Signed

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**ARYNA SABALENKA**

Signed

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# SIGNED SEALED AND DELIVERED

We had some amazing things to auction on the night, both online and live, as we gave people in the room and online the chance to bid for some exclusive signed memorabilia.

All proceeds going to the **UNITE NEPAL PROJECT** which is still ongoing, helping provide much needed equipment and supplies.

ONLINE AUCTION - 网上拍卖

**ELENA RYBAKINA**

Signed

**MEMORABILIA**

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ONLINE AUCTION - 网上拍卖

**COCO GAUFF**

Signed

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ONLINE AUCTION - 网上拍卖

**COCO GAUFF**

Signed

**MEMORABILIA**

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ONLINE AUCTION - 网上拍卖

**VICTORIA AZARENKA**

Signed

**MEMORABILIA**

MAKE YOUR BID IN THE COMMENTS BELOW  
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# The Auction: A simple task

When we started to look at ways of being able to make this happen, we really didn't think it would be as testing, after all, how hard could it be? Post some pictures, get people interested and then go live so people can bid...

Well, taking into consideration all the time zones, the fact that people in different countries have access to different social media and communication, the task became not so simple after all.

That said, we managed to engage with the US, China, South Korea, Japan, Europe and Africa. Prior to the live event, we had online bids for most of the items available, closing the online bids by 9pm on the Saturday evening, by that time, the total amount bid was in excess of €1000.

After the Gala Dinner, sponsored by **Wilson**, and the raffle that was made possible by **HEAD**, both partners had donated some exceptional things for the auction and it was time to go live, and no, it didn't go smoothly... but who dares wins!

It's about trying to include as many people as possible, trying to make the most of an amazing get together, exceptional online support.

The Novak racket, Zhizhen Racket, Davidovich Racket and balls that were posted online, all went to the online bidders and have now been sent to the fortunate bidders. In the room there were some close calls with some of the bids, going once, going twice... another bid.. this is what makes this not only fun to watch, but even more fun to be involved in, the buzz of nearly winning or taking the prize, the should I? Shouldn't I?... it's the thrill of the chase, but, there is something you should always remember, even though it's might be for a good cause, even though you really want it, set your limit and stick to it.

**Don't miss the next conference, it's already promising to be bigger and better!**



# LOCAL ORPHANAGE PLAYS TENNIS

Thanks to NSA & HEAD



**GRSA - No Strings Attached** continues to work with **UNITE NEPAL** and thanks to your donations and the support from our partners, we're able to provide equipment, education and supplies that will make their days that little bit brighter.

The coaches are also part of the education program, being given specialist training on the stringing side of the project also helps them provide a service that before wasn't as available, and this helps generate income for the club and orphanage. At the same time, they will also get to a level where they can train younger enthusiasts and share the importance of stringing with the hope that some of them will one day be given the opportunity to progress and become important pieces of a growing industry in their own country as well as outside.

If you'd like to contribute to this amazing project, please use the donations link on the next page and be part of something truly magical, young orphans being given something very special to look forward to in a safe, fun and supervised environment.



Click on the image below to join or donate, the process is easy





# Group drills, coordination and posture!

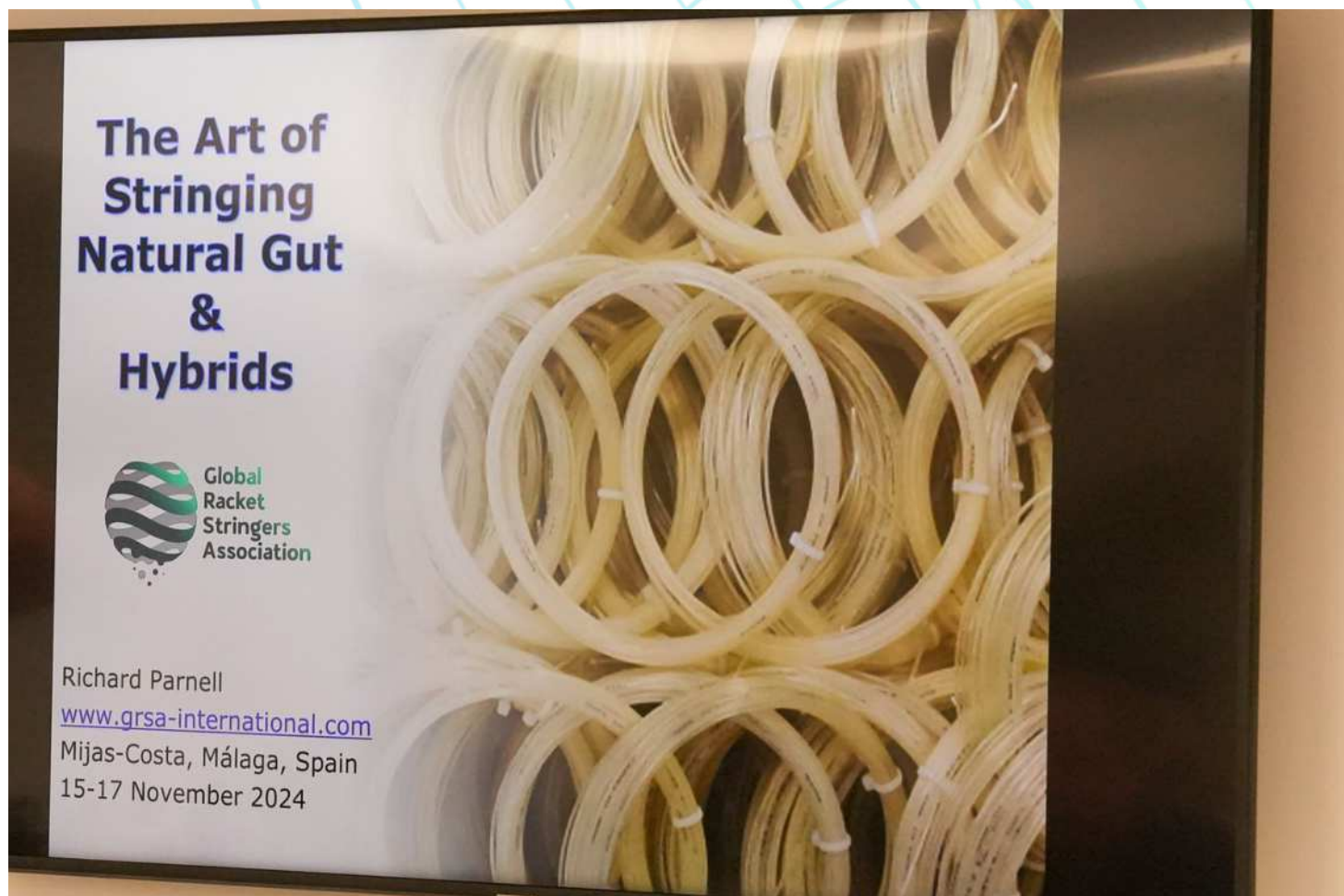


# DAY 3, THE FINAL PUSH

It's the final day and one that some will remember fondly, why? Well because they passed their certification exams and will now move on to the next level, as well as use this as a trampoline to better their offerings in the industry, while at the same time, get one step closer to excellence, keeping them one step ahead of their competitors.

But before we get to that, Richard Parnell took us through one of the most important aspects of a stringing service, being able to string natural gut and not just gut on its own, hybrids too, something some stringers still haven't experienced that much.

There is so much to know about natural gut but the basics are often forgotten. Knowing the origins of something can really help understand the whole process, value, reputation, and general product awareness we need to be able to handle these materials.



**NEW FOR 2025**  
**NEW FOR 2025**  
**NEW FOR 2025**  
**NEW FOR 2025**



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**CONSULTING**

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**WATCH THIS SPACE**



# with Nacho Alonso

The second presentation on Day 3 was delivered by Nacho Alonso, South EMEA Sales Director for Wilson, who joined us remotely from Barcelona. Nacho brought a touch of Wilson's legacy and future innovation to the conference, offering insights into one of the most iconic brands in the sports industry.

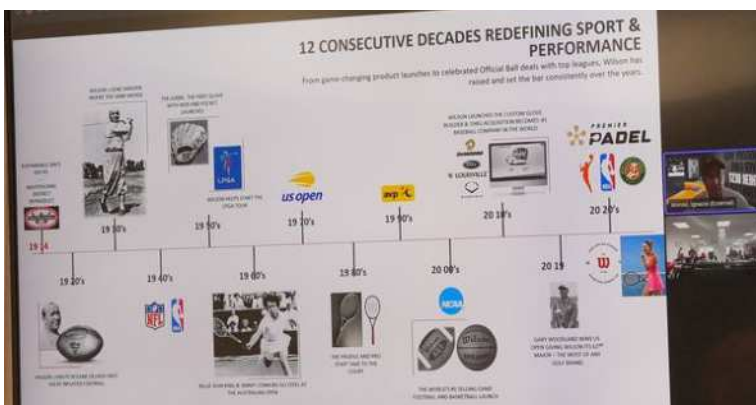
Wilson, founded in 1914, is a cornerstone of the global tennis landscape, with a history steeped in groundbreaking innovations and iconic moments in sports. From the early days of creating baseball gloves to becoming the go-to brand for professional and recreational tennis players alike, Wilson has always been at the forefront of sporting excellence. Nacho emphasized how the brand's ethos is rooted in a commitment to athletes and performance, continually striving to design equipment that elevates players' games.

During his presentation, Nacho provided an overview of Wilson's diverse range of products, from rackets and strings to accessories. He shared a glimpse into the brand's future, teasing some exciting product launches slated for 2025 and 2026. While details were limited, it was clear that innovation remains a priority, with Wilson aiming to cater to the evolving needs of players at all levels.

One of the standout elements of Nacho's talk was the behind-the-scenes look at how Wilson collaborates with professional players to create custom rackets. This meticulous process involves close communication with athletes to ensure their rackets meet their specific needs, from weight distribution to string tension. Nacho highlighted the importance of pairing the right strings with particular frames, a detail often overlooked but crucial to maximizing performance. This alignment between frame and string type underscores Wilson's attention to detail and commitment to precision.

While the presentation leaned more towards a general sales overview, it served as a reminder of Wilson's enduring impact on the tennis industry. From championing innovation to fostering relationships with top players, the brand continues to shape the game, both on and off the court.

**Right:** Nacho and Richard answering some of the questions asked by the attendees



# CERTIFICATIONS AND MORE MACHINE WORK!

A few people added some certifications to their collection, Drew Violette from the US decided to go for the Competition and Competition Master. Drew has been stringing for some time now and has ample experience with teaching and stringing, so he felt it was time to move one step closer to that Tour Certified Stringer, he passed with flying colours under the watchful eye of a number of attendees, something that's not normal but did add a similar element of pressure to the exams you would experience in a competition environment.

Also taking the Competition & Competition Master Certification was Chris Goodchild from Top Spin Tennis, who passed! And the Pro Master exam was taken by Zhaiwei Yan, running short on time, there is still one part left to finish which will be done very soon.



Sergej, Marco, Nick, Stefan, Chris, Cristian, Drew, in fact most of the experienced stringers managed to take some time on the new **HEAD/PARNELL KNOT** machine. There is some excellent features on there, the feedback was very good and those changes allow us to be gentle with the machine, we can feel the difference in the rails, tension head, clamps and more... as smooth as silk!





**Master Class & Customisation Workshop** help by **GRSA Chief Instructor - Martin Mann** at PRS Headquarters at the end of November. Benjamin and Stefan were both keen to take on more knowledge after attending the **GRSA Stringers Conference**, so as soon as they were home, it was time to book in and organise a specialist workshop with Martin.

They're both now prepared to take on the next part of their training, Pro Master and Competition Certifications. Well done gents, onwards and upwards.



# 2025

13th to the 16th, NOVEMBER 2025  
Mijas, Málaga (Spain)

## 2<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL GLOBAL STRINGERS CONFERENCE

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## “GO ON, HAVE A GO!”

Having just attended the inaugural GRSA-International stringer's conference on the Costa Del Sol, I met loads of really high quality stringers. Many of them said, quietly, that they would like to try stringing a squash racket. My reply was “make sure you get the right type”. About 50% of squash rackets are of a standard construction as opposed to the more challenging type on the non-standard list, of which there are 17.

If you haven't done one before, it might be a nightmare! There is a danger of being put off for life, no matter how good a stringer you are.

It's very important to select a racket from the standard line up and then it should be a lot less of a challenge and the stringer can, quite rightly, put a feather in his/her cap and feel proud, once they finish it.

There is a speed test on the Tour and Tour Master squash exams. The racket(s) in use for this may be any standard closed-throat racket where the mains finish at the head; there are no complications such as double-barrelled grommets or hard weaves etc.

I realise now that I always speak about the more challenging non-standard rackets, assuming, rightly or wrongly, that most stringers would be able to string them already.

It's a good idea for most stringers, that want to try a squash racket, don't get put off for life at the outset! Stringing for any sport is an art. The perception is that squash rackets are easy to string, however, it's important to get the right type! There is potential to string some incorrectly or, worse, not finish at all.



## Nick's Nugget

**Remeasure the string when you have about half a dozen crosses to go, it'll help only the required amount of string being weaved through the mains.**



An example that, illustrates this point, very well, I think, is the Prince Triple Threat pattern with a powering at the throat. It's been around for 20 years, and is still in use on the current range of Prince Rackets. In the UK, probably elsewhere too, shops refused to string these rackets when they first came out. I think they are one of the fastest rackets to string, granted, a bit of knowledge is required.

So, in conclusion, I'll continue to talk about the more challenging rackets on the non-standard list with a view to helping to educate those looking to take exams in the future, but use Standard rackets for the practical (hands on) parts. That should be met with more success and not put people off!

A final word, especially for all the Tennis Stringers out there, don't use Polyester strings in a Squash Racket! After extensive research, it's very difficult to control a squash ball with Polyester. Most likely due to the materials not getting along with each other.

EMAIL ME AT:

**[nick@grsa-international.com](mailto:nick@grsa-international.com)**



What do you listen to when you're in the stringing room?

Click the logo to listen to my list

## World Squash Federation and PT SportSuite Announce New Digital Partnership to Expand the Sport's Reach

In a major step towards enhancing fan engagement and expanding the global reach of squash, the World Squash Federation (WSF) has announced a digital partnership with PT SportSuite, a leading sports technology company. This collaboration aims to create a digital ecosystem for squash that will bring the sport closer to fans, players, and organizations worldwide, leveraging digital tools to modernize and elevate the game.

### What the Partnership Entails

The partnership between WSF and PT SportSuite is designed to build a unified digital media platform that will serve as a central hub for all things squash. The platform will feature a range of content, including match highlights, player profiles, behind-the-scenes footage, and exclusive interviews, allowing fans to engage with the sport in new and immersive ways. By implementing advanced media solutions, PT SportSuite will enable WSF to offer a more interactive experience for squash enthusiasts, supporting the sport's growth on a global scale.

A significant feature of this collaboration is the integration of PT SportSuite's mobile technology, which will allow players, coaches, and fans to capture and share content through dedicated apps. This approach empowers the squash community to actively participate, contribute content, and stay connected, whether by showcasing personal highlights or following international tournaments.

### Expanding Squash's Digital Presence

The World Squash Federation's commitment to expanding squash's digital presence comes at a pivotal time for the sport, which is working to attract new fans and boost engagement on a global scale. This partnership will give WSF a platform to showcase squash's dynamic nature and reach a broader audience, especially younger fans who increasingly consume sports through digital channels.

One of the goals of the partnership is to provide athletes and coaches with direct access to a library of educational content. Training videos, coaching resources, and skill development guides will be available, allowing players at all levels to benefit from professional insights. This aspect of the platform not only promotes skill-building but also strengthens the community by making the sport more accessible to aspiring players worldwide.

## Bringing Squash into the Digital Era

With PT SportSuite's expertise in digital transformation, the partnership will incorporate data analytics and performance insights, which could be used to enhance training, measure performance, and offer fans an in-depth look into the world of squash. By providing a digital ecosystem where media, data, and analytics come together, WSF aims to present squash in a fresh, modern light that aligns with the expectations of today's sports audiences.

PT SportSuite's Chief Marketing Officer, Rich Cheary, expressed his excitement about the collaboration, stating that the partnership would help bring the sport into the digital era by "empowering squash communities globally to tell their stories." This initiative is seen as a way for players, fans, and organizations to feel more connected and actively contribute to the sport's evolving narrative.

## A Stronger Community Through Digital Engagement

The partnership's impact goes beyond just engaging fans; it aims to unify the global squash community. By connecting people through shared experiences, video content, and interactive platforms, the WSF and PT SportSuite hope to strengthen squash's presence worldwide. Squash clubs, leagues, and events will have a centralized digital space to share their stories, highlight achievements, and foster community spirit. For organizations within the sport, the partnership offers new ways to showcase their events and connect with fans. Live streaming options, enhanced event coverage, and real-time updates on tournaments will make squash more accessible and enjoyable to follow, building a stronger global community of squash enthusiasts.

## Looking Forward

This digital partnership between the World Squash Federation and PT SportSuite represents a transformative step for squash, with the potential to grow the sport's global footprint and attract new audiences. By offering a comprehensive digital experience, the WSF is moving forward with its vision to modernize squash and strengthen its appeal.

As this digital ecosystem develops, squash fans can look forward to a richer, more interactive experience that not only brings them closer to the game but also connects them with the players, coaches, and communities that make up the world of squash. The partnership between WSF and PT SportSuite promises a new chapter for squash, one that is defined by innovation, community, and a commitment to taking the sport to new digital heights.



**ASHAWAY**<sup>®</sup>



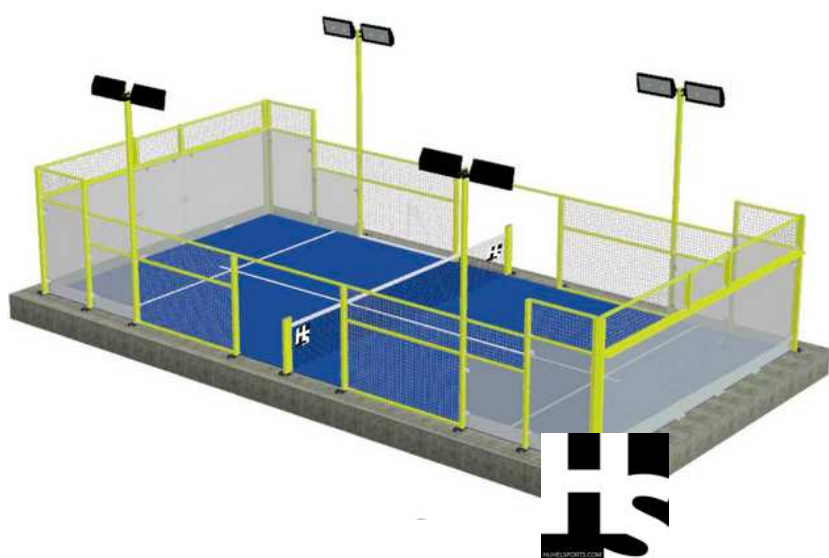
# HUHEL SPORTS

## HUHEL SPORTS HEAD OFFICE

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

# Spain Dominates in Spectacular Style at the CUPRA FIP Promotion India Padel Open

In a breathtaking showcase of skill and resilience, Spain has reaffirmed its dominance in the world of padel. The inaugural CUPRA FIP Promotion India Padel Open, held in the vibrant setting of Greater Noida, ended on a high note as Spanish athletes clinched both the men's and women's doubles titles in thrilling finals on Sunday.

## Men's Doubles: Precision and Power Prevail

The men's final saw the formidable Spanish duo of Pol Alsina and Edu Altimires Ros take center stage against the determined French team of Arthur Hugounenq and Thomas Seux. With precision, poise, and undeniable chemistry, Alsina and Altimires Ros triumphed in straight sets, 6-4, 7-5, earning themselves a well-deserved victory. Their commanding performance left no doubt about their status as padel elite.

## Women's Doubles: A Comeback for the Ages

If the men's final was a display of control, the women's doubles final was an exhibition of heart and tenacity. Spain's Ainize Santamaria Landa and Aitana Solan Domenech overcame a rocky start against Japan's Kotomi Ozawa and Spain's Elisabeth Nogueras Lorenz. After losing the first set 3-6, the Spanish pair roared back with stunning precision and relentless energy to claim the next two sets, 6-1, 6-2. The crowd erupted as they secured their dramatic victory, a testament to their unyielding spirit and tactical brilliance.

## A Spotlight on Padel's Growing Popularity

More than just a tournament, the FIP Promotion India Padel Open served as a landmark moment for the sport in India. Combining the strategy of squash with the pace of tennis, padel is played in doubles on a smaller court, and its engaging format has captivated fans around the globe. This event not only highlighted the elite talent of international players but also ignited interest in the Indian sporting community, setting the stage for padel's rapid growth in the country.

## Final Results Recap

### Women's Doubles Final

Ainize Santamaria Landa / Aitana Solan Domenech (ESP) defeated Kotomi Ozawa (JPN) / Elisabeth Nogueras Lorenz (ESP) 3-6, 6-1, 6-2

### Men's Doubles Final

Pol Alsina / Edu Altimires Ros (ESP) defeated Arthur Hugounenq / Thomas Seux (FRA) 6-4, 7-5

## Looking Ahead: A Bright Future for Padel in India

With its electrifying matches and enthusiastic crowd, the FIP Promotion India Padel Open has left a lasting impression, proving that padel is more than just a niche sport—it's a global phenomenon in the making. As India embraces this fast-growing game, the future looks bright for both players and fans alike.

Spain's triumphs at this inaugural event underline their status as trailblazers in padel, but perhaps even more exciting is the promise of what's to come in India's padel journey.

## Young Stars Libaak and Augsburger Propel Argentina to Padel Glory

In a defining moment for Argentina's padel scene, young talents Valentino Libaak and Leo Augsburger led their national team to victory at the World Championship, securing a historic gold medal. This achievement highlights Argentina's rise in the padel world, fuelled by a new generation of talent ready to challenge the sport's traditional powerhouses.

### Emerging Talent on a Global Stage

Libaak and Augsburger, both in the early stages of their careers, have quickly proven themselves as key figures in Argentina's padel ascent. Their synergy on the court was evident throughout the tournament, with Libaak's raw power and Augsburger's strategic finesse forming a partnership that teams struggled to counter. These performances underscore not only their potential but also Argentina's growing strength in the sport, as the country makes significant strides on the international stage.

Their triumph at the World Championship signals the maturity and skill these young players have developed, defying the odds against more seasoned competitors. It's a testament to the depth of Argentina's padel talent pool and the effectiveness of the country's developmental programs.



The photo that sparked some controversy within the NOX camp, right or wrong paddles?

## **Argentina's Journey to the Top**

Argentina's path to this World Championship victory was filled with formidable challenges, facing off against highly-ranked teams. Guided by a dedicated coaching staff, Libaak and Augsburgers navigated each stage with composure and adaptability, proving their ability to perform under pressure. Their victory marks a pivotal shift in a sport historically dominated by European nations, opening new opportunities for Argentina to shine on the global padel stage.

The coaching and support system around Libaak and Augsburgers were critical, providing the structure and preparation necessary to excel in a high-stakes environment. The teamwork between players and coaching staff reflects a well-rounded approach to nurturing talent, emphasizing Argentina's commitment to developing its players from grassroots levels to the international arena.

## **A Victory with National Significance**

This win is more than a gold medal; it's a turning point for Argentine padel. The success of Libaak and Augsburgers has brought national pride and elevated Argentina's status within the global padel community. Their journey to the top serves as inspiration for aspiring players throughout the country, illustrating the possibilities when talent meets dedication and opportunity.

Argentina's newfound prominence in padel is a significant accomplishment for a nation that has long supported the sport. The victory represents years of hard work within the country's padel infrastructure and highlights the importance of investing in young athletes. As these investments come to fruition, Argentina is poised to become a formidable force in padel, challenging the dominance of established European teams.

## **A Future Brighter Than Ever**

For Argentina, the future in padel looks promising. With players like Libaak and Augsburgers at the helm, the nation's competitive potential is reaching new heights. This gold medal win could usher in an era of expanded interest in padel across Argentina, inspiring younger generations and sparking even greater support for the sport.

As Libaak and Augsburgers continue to build on this momentum, their careers will likely encourage more young Argentine players to pursue padel at competitive levels. This victory has broadened the sport's appeal and solidified Argentina's reputation as a rising contender in padel, offering a promising outlook for the next wave of talent.

## **Celebrating a Landmark Achievement**

Libaak and Augsburgers' World Championship gold not only brings Argentina to the forefront of international padel but also marks a memorable chapter in the country's sports history. Their achievement is a beacon for future players and a proud moment for a nation embracing its role in the sport's evolution. With Argentina now firmly on the padel map, the global community is sure to keep an eye on the country's journey. As new talent emerges and the sport's popularity continues to grow, Argentina's impact on padel is set to be lasting, and the legacy of this win will serve as a foundation for many more victories to come.

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**HOIANA WPC FINALS****EID:** 1622 **PRICE:** USD 60**Organizer:** Pickleball Global**EVENT - TOURNAMENT****Starting:** January 08, 2025 to January 19, 2025**City:** Hoiana Resort & Golf, Duy Hải, Duy Xuyên District, Quảng Nam, Vietnam**Tournament Venue:** Hoiana Resort & Golf**Registration Deadline:** December 31, 2024 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 5**WPC Series - 2024 WPC Taichung (2nd Marc Pickleball Cup)****EID:** 1510 **PRICE:** USD 40**Organizer:** Pickleball Global**EVENT - TOURNAMENT****Starting:** December 26, 2024 to December 29, 2024**City:** Taichung City, Taiwan**Tournament Venue:** Taichung International Tennis Center**Registration Deadline:** December 05, 2024 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 3**Epiphany Tournament****EID:** 1805 - FREE**Organizer:** Giuseppe Baro**EVENT - TOURNAMENT****Starting:** January 04, 2025 to January 05, 2025**City:** Via Ferdinando Bettini, 35133 Padova PD, Italia**Tournament Venue:** Pickleball Padova**Registration Deadline:** December 31, 2024 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 3

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INFO**

# New Standards in Pickleball Equipment Testing: Elevating Fairness and Performance on the Court

As pickleball continues its meteoric rise, new equipment standards are being introduced to keep the game fair and ensure that gear meets the evolving needs of players. With organizations like USA Pickleball partnering with ASTM International to introduce rigorous testing methods, players and manufacturers alike are seeing a shift towards more precise, performance-focused standards. Here's what these new standards mean for the future of pickleball equipment.

## Precision Testing for Paddles and Balls: Raising the Bar

The 2024 update introduces a Paddle/Ball Coefficient of Restitution (PBCoR) test. This metric measures how much energy is transferred when the ball hits the paddle, effectively gauging a paddle's power. Slated for implementation in the final quarter of 2024, the PBCoR test will use direct measurement techniques that provide a more accurate picture of a paddle's performance compared to the indirect testing methods previously used. This move by USA Pickleball, in collaboration with ASTM, reflects a push to ensure that all paddles meet strict, standardized specifications to support fair play and competitive integrity.

The enhanced standards also extend to pickleball balls, aiming for consistency in bounce, durability, and flight. These updates address players' calls for more reliable equipment, especially given the sport's fast pace and precision demands.

## Consistency Across Brands and Models

These new testing standards are not only about ensuring fair competition; they're about creating consistency. With pickleball expanding internationally, players want equipment that performs consistently regardless of brand or specific model. By implementing direct testing for both power and durability, these standards guarantee that paddles and balls from different manufacturers offer comparable quality and responsiveness on the court. This focus on standardisation is especially beneficial for players who regularly compete in different locations and with varying equipment. Additionally, manufacturers will be held accountable through regular testing and compliance checks, ensuring that equipment maintains quality long after it hits the market. For players, this consistency offers peace of mind, knowing that the paddle they practice with will perform the same way in a tournament setting.

## Encouraging Innovation within Clear Boundaries

The new equipment standards also create an environment that supports innovation while ensuring that products meet fair play requirements. Manufacturers are encouraged to continue advancing paddle design and materials, but now within clearly defined performance limits. For example, the UPA-A's recent paddle certification program limits acceptable deflection force (ADF) to 46 and sets a maximum spin rate at 2200 RPM. These parameters allow for advancements in paddle technology without giving players an undue advantage in power or spin. This innovation-friendly yet regulated environment means that players can look forward to gear that incorporates the latest technology—without compromising the fundamental balance of the game. These boundaries ensure that any advancements in paddle or ball design remain within the spirit of fair play, keeping skill at the forefront.

## What This Means for Players and the Game

For players, these testing standards are more than just technicalities—they affect the entire playing experience. With a reliable standard for paddles and balls, recreational and competitive players alike can enjoy a more balanced game, where equipment enhances skill without skewing results. From the perspective of pickleball's governing bodies, these standards are an essential step to preserve the sport's integrity as it continues to attract players globally.

As the sport grows, these updates also signal to new players that pickleball is committed to fair competition. Newcomers can trust that when they invest in equipment, it will perform to a consistent standard that supports their growth in the game.

## Looking Forward: A Level Playing Field

With the addition of the PBCoR test and other precise measures, pickleball is embracing a new era of equipment standards that ensure fair play while supporting technological advancement. This balance of innovation and integrity sets the stage for a future where players can focus on developing their skills, knowing their equipment will match the sport's official standards.

## For the Pickleball Community, These Developments Mark an Exciting New Chapter.

With consistent, quality-tested equipment, players of all levels can enjoy a game that celebrates skill, precision, and fair competition. As more players hit the courts in 2025, they can rest assured that the gear they rely on will support their passion for the sport in a way that's balanced, reliable, and ready for the game's continued growth.



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## Christie's Dream Run Secures Spot in World Tour Finals

Indonesian badminton star Jonatan Christie has earned his place in the upcoming BWF World Tour Finals in Hangzhou, thanks to a stunning performance at the China Masters 2024. His remarkable run through the tournament not only highlighted his skill but also solidified his reputation as one of the world's top shuttlers.

Christie's campaign in the China Masters was nothing short of impressive, featuring a series of hard-fought matches against top-tier opponents. One of the standout moments came in the semi-finals, where he overcame China's top seed, Shi Yuqi, in a thrilling encounter. Although Christie ultimately finished as runner-up, losing to Denmark's Anders Antonsen in the final, his consistent performances throughout the event secured the crucial ranking points needed to qualify for the prestigious World Tour Finals.

Reflecting on his achievement, Christie expressed both pride and determination. "Qualifying for the World Tour Finals has been a key goal this season," he said. "The competition at the China Masters was intense, and reaching the final has boosted my confidence heading into Hangzhou."

The BWF World Tour Finals, scheduled for December, will bring together the top eight players from the World Tour rankings to compete for one of badminton's most sought-after titles. Christie's qualification is a significant milestone, affirming his position as a leading figure in the sport.

As anticipation builds for the tournament, fans are eager to see Christie back in action. With his recent form, he will undoubtedly be a strong contender, ready to end his season on a high with a standout performance in Hangzhou.





Spain's junior badminton team faced a crucial showdown against the Netherlands at the European Junior Championships in Ibiza 2024, vying for a spot in the quarter-finals. After a hard-fought 3-2 loss to England in the group stages, the Spanish team needed a decisive 4-1 victory over the Netherlands to keep their championship hopes alive.

The match against England had been a rollercoaster of emotions. Spain's mixed doubles pair, Adolfo López and Carmen Jiménez, set the tone with a commanding straight-sets victory. However, England quickly turned the tide, winning the men's and women's singles matches, as well as the men's doubles. Spain's women's doubles team added a second point to the scoreboard, but it wasn't enough to secure the overall win.

The Netherlands, who topped the group with an earlier 4-1 victory over Austria, posed a formidable challenge. The stakes were high as both teams sought to advance to the knockout rounds, with the quarter-finals and semi-finals scheduled shortly after the group stage. The team final was set to take place later that weekend, followed by the start of individual events.

Led by Director of Sport Arturo Ruiz and coaches Vicent Martínez and Carlos Longo, the Spanish team entered the match determined to showcase their skills and resilience. Drawing on their preparation and teamwork, they left it all on the court in their bid to progress in the tournament.

The European Junior Championships, hosted in the stunning setting of Ibiza, have once again highlighted the rising talent in European badminton. While the results of this decisive clash shaped Spain's journey, the players' determination and team spirit will undoubtedly leave a lasting impression on the sport.

# NEW CERTIFICATIONS

Congratulations to **Dan Beedle** for achieving the level of **GRSA Online Certified Pro Stringer**.

Also to **Dongmin Kim** for reaching the **Online Certified Pro Master Stringer** and he's well on the way to getting his **Online Certified Competition & Competition Master Stringer**.



**Tiago Silva** was able to take the next step also by passing the **GRSA Online Certified Pro Master Stringer**.

So has **Jis Sheng Guang**, **Lee Wei Min**, and **Wesley Van Zomeren**. **Erik Ratta** completed the **Online Competition** certifications while **Masataka Uwano**, **Matt Reid**, **Min Gyu Lee** and **Suengyun Yu** all obtained their **Online Certified Pro Stringer** certificates.

**JANG SUN HO** from South Korea was also successful in his **Online Certified Pro Stringer** exams, he is now ready to go on to the **Online Pro Master Certification**.

Who's going to be next?

*Congratulations!*

# QUESTIONS ANSWERED



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## **Q - Why is a GRSA certification good for me?**

**A** - When a stringer shows a GRSA certification, this is a clear sign that they have received the best training currently available and will provide a professionally balanced service.

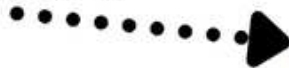
## **Q - What makes GRSA stand out from the rest?**

**A** - GRSA is a globally recognised association that includes some of the best and most knowledgeable Professionals, Master Stringers and Grand Master Stringers in the industry, this means the knowledge base is incomparable.

## **Q - What does GRSA teach its certified stringers?**

**A** - GRSA teaches the importance of looking after the player, from the basics to the most intricate of details. How to provide accurate information, how to help improve and guide each individual.

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