



GRSA INTERNATIONAL ATW MAGAZINE

NOVAK TOOK THE TOP SPOT
& AN IMPORTANT TITLE

Ruud's Run

Iga's Paris





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CONTENT

Section 1 - Tennis

June's selection of events has given some brilliant results, better than that, it's seen a shift in the rankings and in the record books. Mo Thomson looks at RG, where Novak sealed N°23, Iga struts her stuff in Paris, and, do you really know your scoring?

Section 2 - GRSA INTERNATIONAL

Kenneth Leong is GRSA Manager for Singapore & Malaysia, GRSA & PRS pair up and form the HEAD stringing team in Berlin. Stringer Solutions talks about certifications, plus, a new certification that is exclusive to GRSA International.

Section 3 - Squash

Side by Side, The ND Method and who is Nick Down? a packed squash section this month.

Section 4 - Padel

Marbella promised some exciting padel action, and it didn't disappoint.

Section 5 - PickleBall

The world of pickleball continues to grow, there are developments in many areas, we look at some of the main ones.

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



Mo Thomson

“ Victory belongs to the most tenacious.”

Roland- Garros welcomed players to the 127th edition and 93rd Grand Slam event since 1925. It is the only Grand Slam event held on this surface and is considered to be the most physically demanding tennis tournament in the world due to the slower pace on clay and higher ball bounce combined with the best of 5 set Men’s Singles matches.

Bearing this in mind, it is almost incomprehensible to appreciate that Rafael Nadal has won this event an amazing 14 times between 2005 and 2022. His absence was sorely felt this year and was compounded by the news that he intends to retire in 2024.

So, with the 2022 champion not participating this year, the tournament was wide open.



#1 Alcaraz and #2 Medvedev must have been feeling confident of their chances especially with #3 Djokovic apparently still suffering from an elbow injury and not quite on top form. However, Novak must never be discounted especially as he had his own agenda to aspire to at the event – to win his 23rd Grand Slam.

Defending Men’s Doubles champions and veterans, Arrevalo/ Rojer were well placed to secure the title once again while defending Women’s champion, #1 Iga Swiatek, was looking to gain her 3rd Roland-Garros win in 4 years.

Coco Gauff, last year’s Singles and Doubles runner-up, was on top form and also looking for victory.

Women’s Doubles champions Garcia/Mladenovic who defeated runners-up Pegula/ Gauff last year did not reunite a team when Garcia chose not to participate. Mladenovic teamed up with Zhang Shuai but was eliminated in the 2nd round.

In the wheelchair Men’s Singles, #1 seed Alfie Hewett was firm favourite to win the title for an outstanding 4th time.

Hewett and his partner Gordon Reid, 16-time doubles champions at the 4 Majors were also chasing a 4th consecutive victory at Roland-Garros.

In the Women’s wheelchair both for Singles and Doubles, 26-year-old Diede de Groot was favourite and was bidding for her 10th back-to-back Grand Slam victory.

The Top 10 Seeds.

Mens Singles

- #1 Alcaraz
- #2 Medvedev
- #3 Djokovic
- #4 Ruud
- #5 Tsitsipas
- #6 Rune
- #7 Rublev
- #8 Sinner
- #9 Fritz
- #10 Auger-Aliassime

Womens Singles

- #1 Swiatek
- #2 Sabalenka
- #3 Pegula
- #4 Rybakina
- #5 Garcia
- #6 Gauff
- #7 Jabeur
- #8 Sakkari
- #9 Kasatkina
- #10 Kvitova

Men's Doubles Seeds

- #1 Skupski/Koolhof
- #2 Ram/Salisbury
- #3 Arevalo/Rojer
- #4 Dodig/Krajicek
- #5 Glasspool/Heliovaara
- #6 Bopanna/Ebden
- #7 Nys/Zielinski
- #8 Mektic/Pavic
- #9 Gonzalez/Roger-Vasselin
- #10 Granollers/Zeballos

Women's Doubles Seeds.

- #1 Pegula/Gauff
- #2 Siniakova/Krejckova
- #3 Aoyama/Shibahara
- #4 Hunter/Mertens
- #5 Schuurs/Krawczyk
- #6 Ostapenko/Kichenok
- #7 Kato/Sutjiadi
- #8 Ruse/Kostyuk
- #9 Townsend/Fernandez
- #10 Azarenka/Haddad Maia

Total Prize Money

€49,600,000

Men and Women's singles Prize money

Champion	EUR 2,300,000
Finalist	EUR 1,150,000
Semi-Finals	EUR 630,000
Quarter Finals	EUR 400,000
Round 4	EUR 240,000
Round 3	EUR 142,000
Round 2	EUR 97,000
Round 1	EUR 69,000

Men's and Women's Doubles prize money

Champion	EUR 590,000
Finalist	EUR 295,000
Semi-Finals	EUR 148,000
Quarter-Finals	EUR 80,000
Round 3	EUR 43,000
Round 2	EUR 27,000
Round 1	EUR 17,000

Mixed doubles prize money

Champion	EUR 122,000
Finalist	EUR 61,000
Semi-Finals	EUR 31,000
Quarter-Finals	EUR 17,500
Round 2	EUR 10,000
Round 1	EUR 5,000

Players in this most prestigious clay competition were obviously far more determined and careful, focused on remaining for as long and go as far as possible, unlike last month's Italian Open which was littered with top ranking fallers from the earliest stages of the tournament.

The run up competitions, of course, are vital practice - as well as valuable ATP/WTA points - but all tournaments on the clay circuit lead to Roland-Garros - the Mecca and grand finale of the clay court circuit.

No British Women's players featured this year, with all 6 players losing in qualifying rounds. Last standing man, Cameron Norrie was thrashed by Lorenzo Musetti 6-1, 6-2, 6-4, in the 3rd round.

#10 seed, Felix Auger-Aliassime was defeated in the 1st round by Italy's Fognini 6-4, 6-4, 6-3.

#10 Petra Kvitova, the 2 time Wimbledon champion, exited the draw, losing to Italy's Cocciaretto 6-3, 6-4, in the round of 128.

#2 Daniil Medvedev, champion of the Italian Open and who has never previously advanced beyond the Quarter Finals at Roland-Garros, was beaten by #172 Seyboth Wild in the 1st round 7-6, 6-7, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4.

#8 Maria Sakkari was defeated on day 1 by unseeded Karolina Muchova 7-6, 7-5 for the second straight year.

#9 Daria Kasatkina was beaten by world ranked # 192, Elina Svitolina 6-4, 7-6 to reach the last 8. Former world #3 Svitolina only returned in April after having a daughter in October with French player Gael Monfils. However, Sabalenka then beat Svitolina 6-4, 6-4 in the Quarter Final.



Doubles teams seemed to have taken the hardest hammering with 5 of the top 10 ranked pairs put out by Round 3 in both the Men's and Women's.

#2 Women's Doubles duo Krejčíková/ Siniakova were put out in the 1st round.

#6 Kichenok/ Ostapenko in the 2nd round

#5 Krawczyk/Schuurs in the 3rd round

#3 Aoyama/ Shibahara in the 2nd round

#4 Hunter/Mertens went out in 3rd round

The Men's Doubles seeds fared no better.

#6 Bopanna/Ebden out in the 1st round

#8 Mektić/Pavić in the 1st round

#7 Nys/Zielinski out in the 2nd round

#2 Ram/Salisbury 3rd round

Glasspool/Heliövaara 3rd round



Men's Singles Final.

#3 Novak Djokovic took on #4 Casper Ruud. Novak was looking for his 23rd Grand Slam title, while Casper Ruud, last year's Final runner-up was hoping to thwart his opponent – he had never taken a set from Djokovic – and secure his first ever Grand Slam victory.

With some brutal hitting from the back of the court and blisteringly fast serves – up to and over 200 km/h from both the men, Ruud set off with a punishing pace and pushed ahead but could not sustain the impetus, crumbling slowly under Djokovic's relentlessly solid, tenacious and methodical consistency.

Djokovic beat his opponent in 3 sets 5-7, 6-3, 7-5 to become the Mens GOAT winning all 4 Grand Slams at least 3 times and the French Open for the 3rd time. Not only did Djokovic win the Coupe des Mousquetaires, but he was also presented with a smaller version of the cup with all his 23 Grand Slam wins engraved on it.

He now returns to #1 ranking and becomes the favourite to take the Wimbledon title.

Men's Wheelchair Singles Final.

#1 seed Alfie Hewett took on #2 Tokito Oda, but was denied his 4th victory after a comfortable victory 6-1, 6-4 by the 17 year old Japanese player.

Oda's emotional first major's win means he now becomes the youngest Men's Wheelchair Singles #1.

Men's Wheelchair Doubles Final

#1 seeds Alfie Hewett/Gordon Reid faced #2 seeds, Martin De la Puente/Gustavo Fernandez. Champions for the last 3 years Hewett/Reid secured their 17th Grand Slam victory together and 15th consecutive Slam final.

Quad Singles Final

#1 seed N. Vink faced #2 S. Schroder and the match was taken to 3 sets. Vink came out victorious, winning 3-6, 6-4, 6-4.

Quad Doubles Final

New pairing and unseeded duo, Lapthorne/Ramphadi took on #2 seeds Davidson/Shaw and won 1-6, 6-2, 10-3. This is Andy Lapthorne's 2nd Roland-Garros Quad Wheelchair Doubles title.

Mixed Doubles Final

In an all unseeded Final, first time pairing Miyu Kato/Tim Puetz beat Bianca Andreescu/Michael Venus, 2 sets to 1 in a close fought battle to win 4-6, 6-4, 10-6.

Women's Singles Final

Karolina Muchova, ranked #43 in the world, put out #2 Sabalenka in an epic 3 set Semi Final to reach her 1st Grand Slam Final against World #1 Iga Swiatek, who at the time of the final was in her 64th week in pole position. In an outstanding close-fought battle where Muchova demonstrated incredible determination coming from a set and 3-0 down, it was disappointing for the #43 to double fault on Swiatek's first match point.

An emotional Iga Swiatek took the title for the 3rd time in 4 years winning, 6-2, 5-7, 6-4.

Women's Doubles Final

#10 seeds Fernandez/ Townsend, having trounced Gauff/Pegula in the Semi-Finals 6-0, 6-4 faced Hsieh/Wang who had played a rather closer Semi Final match against Melichar/Perez, winning 6-2, 3-6, 6-3.

In the three set Final Hsieh/Wang defeated the #10 seeds 1-7, 7-6, 6-1.

Women's Wheelchair Singles Final

#1 seed De Groot faced #2 Kamiji and dispatched her opponent 6-2, 6-0 to take the title.

Women's Wheelchair Doubles Final

#1 seeds Kamiji/Montjane took on De Groot/Moreno and won comfortably 6-2, 6-3.



Casper's Run

He's on the right track

Casper Ruud, the talented tennis player hailing from Norway, has captured the attention of the tennis world with his exceptional performance at the 2023 Roland Garros. Currently ranked number 4 in the world, Ruud's impressive run to the final showcased his skill, determination, and resilience on the clay courts of Paris.

Ruud's tennis journey began with great promise, as he quickly emerged as one of the most promising players from Norway. As a junior, he made history by becoming the first Norwegian to reach the top spot on the junior rankings. This early success set the stage for his remarkable professional career.

In 2019, Ruud made a significant breakthrough when he clinched his first ATP 1000 tournament victory against **Nick Kyrgios** in Italy. This triumph marked the beginning of a series of noteworthy achievements, with Ruud consistently earning valuable points and climbing higher in the ATP rankings. His tenacity and skill on the court soon established him as a force to be reckoned with.

The year 2020 proved to be pivotal for Ruud as he secured his first ATP title, further solidifying his status as an up-and-coming star. This achievement not only signalled his potential but also shattered several records previously set by his father, a renowned former tennis player. Subsequently, Ruud's ranking soared, and he entered the top 25 players in the world after an impressive performance against **Novak Djokovic** in the semifinals of the Italian Open.

He established himself as a formidable force in the tennis world. While his journey at the 2023 Roland Garros ended with a runner-up finish, his remarkable campaign has undoubtedly left an indelible mark, and his ascent to number 4 in the world rankings is a testament to his remarkable talent and future potential.

As the tennis world eagerly awaits Ruud's future performances, one thing is certain: his remarkable journey is far from over, and he will undoubtedly continue to make waves and leave a lasting legacy in the world of tennis.





Building on his success, Ruud continued to make significant strides in his career. His consistently strong performances in various tournaments showcased his versatility and skill on different surfaces. In 2022, he reached his first Masters 1000 final, narrowly missing out on the title against the talented young Spanish player, Carlos Alcaraz. Undeterred, Ruud's journey took him to the finals of major tournaments, including the French Open and the US Open, where he narrowly fell short of clinching the ultimate prize. Nonetheless, his consistent success led to a career-high ranking of number 2 in September of the same year, solidifying his status as one of the top-ranked players in the world.

Behind every successful athlete is a strong support system, and Ruud's is no exception. His father, Christian Ruud, a former tennis player himself, serves as his coach, providing valuable guidance and expertise. Together with Joachim Bjerke, they form a formidable team that works diligently to prepare Ruud for every match and tournament, ensuring his continued growth and success on the court.

Off the court, Ruud's impact extends beyond his impressive tennis achievements. Known for his philanthropic endeavors, he has organized numerous humanitarian actions around the world, further demonstrating his commitment to making a positive difference.

As the first player from Norway to reach a Grand Slam final, Casper Ruud has become a symbol of national pride and inspiration for aspiring tennis players in his home country.



So you think you know how to score Men's Tennis – is it 3 or 5 sets?

Men's tennis matches have historically been played over 5 sets, but you may have been perplexed to notice that matches have been concluded in 3 sets in recent years. But not every tournament seems to play by the same rules.

So what's going on?

Grand Slam Tournaments

Today, most professional men's tennis matches are played in a best-of-three-set format, with 6 games (and a possible tie-break) in each set.

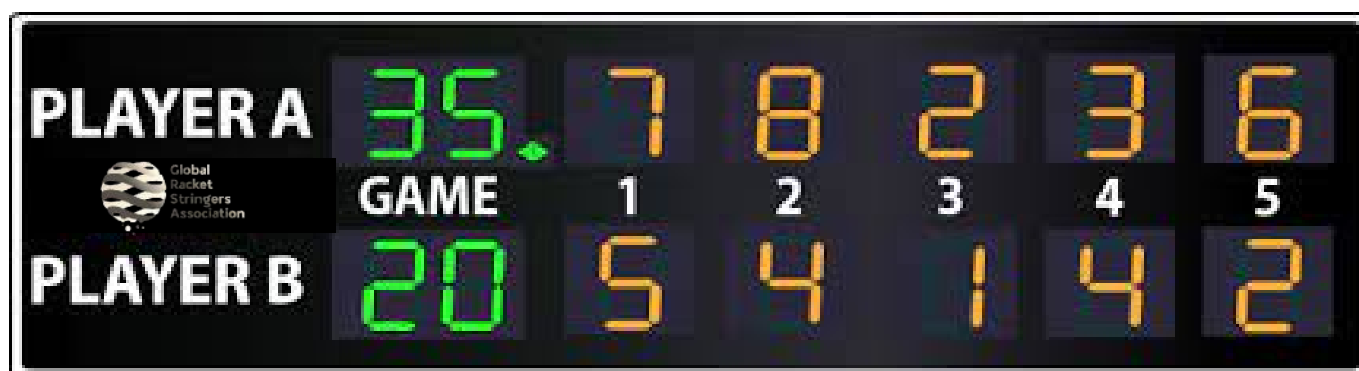
However, in Grand Slam tournaments – Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon and US Open, men play the best of 5 sets – of which the victor will need to win 3 of those sets. (Women's tennis is almost always played over 3 sets – and this includes Grand Slam events – and are scored the same way).

At Grand Slams, in the Men's competition, the men's main draw is played 3 out of 5 sets but the qualifying draw matches play 2 out of 3. This is to not excessively tire players before the main draw. Wimbledon is the notable exception to this, where they play 2 out of 3 sets until the final round of qualifying where they play 3 out of 5.



Grand Slam tournaments are one of the few large competitions which are not organized by the ATP or WTA but by the International Tennis Federation. And when it comes to scoring in the 5th set, Grand Slams have different rules.

At the Australian and US Opens, players play a tie-break if they are tied 6 games to 6. At Wimbledon, they will only play a tie-break in the 5th set, if they are tied 12 games to 12. In the French Open there is no tie-break in the 5th set and the 1st player to reach a 2 game margin wins the match.



ATP and WTA Events

Both men and women play 2 out of 3 sets at tour events regardless of whether it is a qualifying or main match draw.

At these events, there is always a 3rd set tie-break. Formally the finals of ATP 1000 events used to be played as 3 out of 5 sets, but increasingly demanding player calendars forced the ATP to change how many sets were played in finals.

Futures and Challengers

In these matches, both men and women play 2 out of 3 sets in the main draw. In 2019 a new rule was adopted where qualifying draws play 2 out of 3 sets with a 10-point tie-break in lieu of a 3rd set.

The Davis Cup and Olympics

These tournaments have also embraced the best of 3 sets format

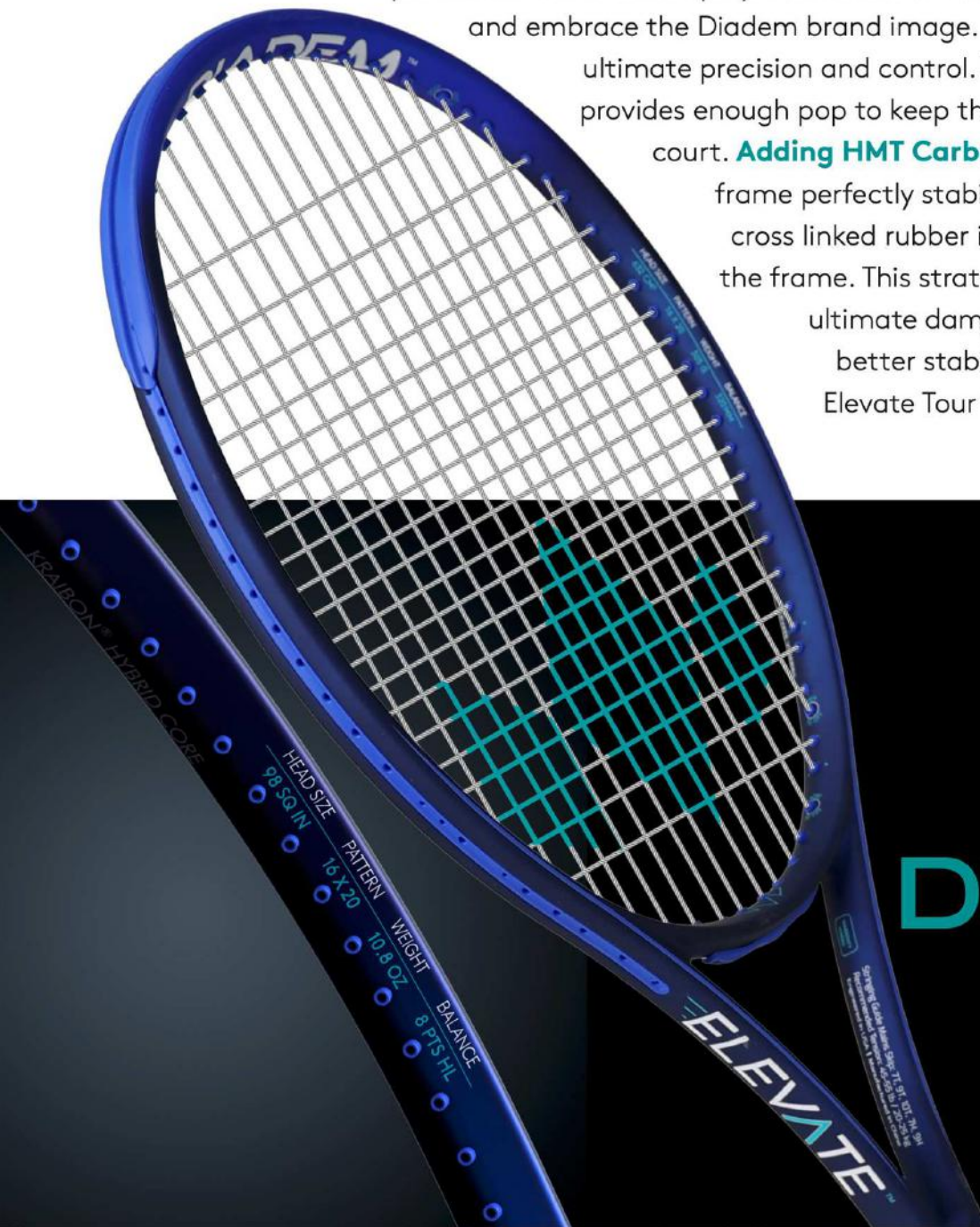
Doubles

The majority of doubles matches are played in a 3-set format, with a 10-point tie-break in lieu of a 3rd set. In the Australian, French and US Opens both men and women play the best of 3 sets (6 games in each). In Wimbledon, men's doubles matches are played over the best of 5 sets.

The tennis season is one of the longest and most gruelling of any sport, running from January 1st to the end of November. While long matches which can last for anything up to 11 hours, may be thrilling and great value for the spectators, for the players, the risk of serious injury, mental and physical burn-out and disaffection with the sport, may eventually become overwhelming. Playing long matches over 11 months of the year is simply not sustainable.

Gender parity is a point in favour of the 3 set introductions. Novak Djokovic also comments that the modern spectator may not have the same attention span as before, so shorter matches are more appealing. However Novak, along with veterans Nadal and Murray, still have a preference for the old 5-set matches.

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64RA
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Mains skip: 7T, 9T, 10T, 7H, 9H
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Spin

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27 in / 68.58 cm
64 RA
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Mains skip: 7T, 9T, 10T, 7H, 9H
21.5 mm Flat Beam
1 - 4

ELEVATE TOUR

Increased Stability
Added Power

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11.1 oz / 315g
8 pts HL / 315mm
27 in / 68.58 cm
67RA
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Mains skip: 7T, 9T, 10T, 7H, 9H
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ME

Iga - Paris is Yours!

(She's got so much ahead of her)

Iga Swiatek faced immense pressure as she aimed to secure her third Roland Garros title, making this tournament her most challenging yet. She had to confront not only the injury concerns that loomed over her but also the realization that her top ranking was in jeopardy after an uninterrupted 62-week reign. To maintain her position, Swiatek found herself in a position where she had to win every match.

Initially, everything seemed to be going according to plan as Swiatek took a commanding 6-2, 3-0 lead in the final against Karolina Muchova. However, in a sudden turn of events, Swiatek faltered and dropped the second set, putting her victory at risk.

Undeterred, Swiatek displayed her tenacity by mounting a comeback from a deficit on two occasions in the final set, ultimately clinching the victory. Despite it only being her fifth three-set match of the season, Swiatek demonstrated her ability to thrive under pressure, reaffirming her status as the leading contender on the tour.

In terms of Swiatek's career record at Roland Garros, her accomplishments are exceptional. Only two players in the Open Era have achieved better results in their first 30 matches at a Grand Slam event. Monica Seles boasted a flawless 30-0 record at the Australian Open, while she recorded an impressive 29-1 at Roland Garros. Additionally, Chris Evert also achieved a remarkable 29-1 record at Roland Garros.

It is worth noting that Swiatek, who celebrated her 22nd birthday early in the tournament, has become the youngest player to secure four women's singles Grand Slam titles since Serena Williams accomplished the feat at the age of 20 when she won the 2002 US Open, capturing her fourth Grand Slam title.

Furthermore, Swiatek has achieved a remarkable feat by successfully defending her French Open women's singles title from the previous season, a milestone that hadn't been accomplished in 16 years. The last player to achieve this feat was Justine Henin, who secured her third consecutive French Open title in 2007.

With her impressive performances and unwavering determination, Iga Swiatek has solidified her position as a rising star in women's tennis. As she continues to make her mark on the sport, her talent and ability to thrive under pressure promise a bright future for the young athlete.



Federer and Ball Girl Set Kate Middleton Straight in Wimbledon Encounter

In a delightful display of sportsmanship, tennis legend Roger Federer found himself in a lighthearted moment on the hallowed grounds of Wimbledon. During a visit to the Ball Boys and Girls program at the prestigious tournament, the Princess of Wales, Kate Middleton, joined forces with Federer for a friendly game. However, an unexpected twist occurred when Kate caught the ball served by Federer's teammate with just one hand, prompting a quick clarification on the rules.

In a video shared by Wimbledon on YouTube, Kate threw the ball over to Federer from the opposite end of the court. As the ball was served back to her, she instinctively caught it with a single hand. This impressive catch caught the attention of the ball girl, Mollie, who praised Kate's skills. However, Federer, ever the stickler for the game's regulations, stepped in to question the move, asking, "Are you allowed to do that?"

Amidst the friendly banter, Kate joined in, expressing her curiosity, "Oh yeah, are you allowed to do that? That's a good point." Federer kindly explained the rules to the Princess, highlighting the difference between Wimbledon and Australia, where catching the ball is permitted. Mollie chimed in to confirm that at Wimbledon, players are meant to let the ball bounce before catching it, though she couldn't help but appreciate Kate's impressive catch.

The TikTok clip capturing Kate's unexpected catch has since gone viral, amassing over 8.4 million views. Fans flooded the comments section with praise for the Princess, admiring her seamless ball-catching skills, despite the rule deviation. One enthusiastic supporter wrote, "It was a good catch though..." while another marveled, "You have to admit it looks so damn smooth when she catches it."



Many observers applauded Kate for her gracious response to being corrected on the court. "She's so gracious, 'Oh yeah, are you allowed to do that?' I'd have been all 'of course I am,'" one fan commented. Another admirer remarked, "See how nicely she takes criticism or correction? She was just like, 'Oh sorry smile'. She could teach a master class on decorum."

Over the weekend, Middleton and Federer met with 250 teenagers from Wimbledon's Ball Boys & Girls (BBGs) program, who will be working at The Championships in July. According to the official website of the organization, these dedicated teens, typically around 15 years old, commenced their training sessions at the Raynes Park Community Sports Ground in February.

During Wimbledon's YouTube video, Kate expressed her admiration for the teenagers' hard work during the training sessions. "To see the training and the dedication and the amount of time that is put into the training and making sure this goes well on the day for the champions who are playing at Wimbledon," she commended the group. "It's incredible to see it."

This encounter between Kate and Federer marks another collaboration between the two. In September 2022, they co-hosted the Laver Cup Open Practice Day, with the event's proceeds benefiting Action for Children and the All-England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club (LTA).



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In the Room

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CERTIFICATIONS

To be or not to be....Certified



The choice to become a certified stringer or not, often depends on how we look at the art of stringing.

If we see it as a job, to be done in the shortest time possible and we are a competent stringer with good technique, the question could be asked, what difference is being certified going to make? What is it going to bring extra to the table?

Or

If you love the art of stringing and want to be the best possible stringer, if you want to invest in yourself and measure your abilities against your peers, then certification is the way to go. Any of the recognized stringing associations offer different certification levels, some up to tour stringing standards. GRSA is proud to recognize nearly all other associations' certificates and offer the equivalent GRSA level, at no cost, when the stringer joins the GRSA family.

A few weeks ago, I saw an interview given by a stringer at a major tournament. When asked by the journalist whether you need a certification to work at a tournament, he said, "No, there is no certification to be a tour stringer and it's the brands that choose you!!"

Although this is partly technically correct, that was his chance of furthering and making the art of stringing more regulated and more well-known as an art. The fact that he isn't certified and was on video finishing a player frame with a double half hitch, he obviously doesn't feel that he needs any help with his stringing & his fellow stringers don't need his support as a spokesperson with a chance to do some good. Stringers rarely get mentioned in the winner's speech... but everyone else from the water boys and girls, to the ball people generally do get mentioned. Stringing needs some publicity and major exposure as no tournament in the world can exist without the stringing team.

This brings us to the fact that the art of stringing needs the brands to stand behind it and not see it just as a marketing tool or a money-making exercise. Some brands are more vocal than others about stringer education and furthering the acknowledgement of the skills and dedication of the stringers.

I hope that I have opened up a can of worms and we can get some positive feedback and suggestions on how to make stringing, mainstream. I really do believe that with a focused effort, stringing can be promoted and become a recognised art.

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FUN FACTS



A lot of the players are very complimentary about each other; they embrace at the end of matches because the level of the tennis has been so good. I think that's something that tennis has got to be proud of.



ANDY MURRAY

1 Wimbledon is the largest single annual sporting catering operation in Europe: serving 234,000 meals, 330,000 cups of tea and coffee, 140,000 portions of English strawberries, 10,000 litres of dairy cream and 29,000 bottles of champagne, among other things.

2 Wimbledon began in 1877 at the All England Club in the London suburb of Wimbledon as Gentlemen's Single Championship, making it the oldest tennis tournament in the world. Only 22 players participated.

3 During the course of Wimbledon fortnight, the stringing team can string over 4,000 rackets and in some cases use more than 60 miles of string.



4 Wimbledon rules state that all players must be dressed almost entirely in white. Umpires can ask a player to change if they don't meet the dress code. This was recently modified to allow some players to wear different coloured bottoms, This has been criticised by some and not by others but it's a very logical adaptation.

5 The tournament commands a global news access audience estimated at more than 1 billion people in 200 territories, making it not only the longest-running tournament, but the most viewed globally.



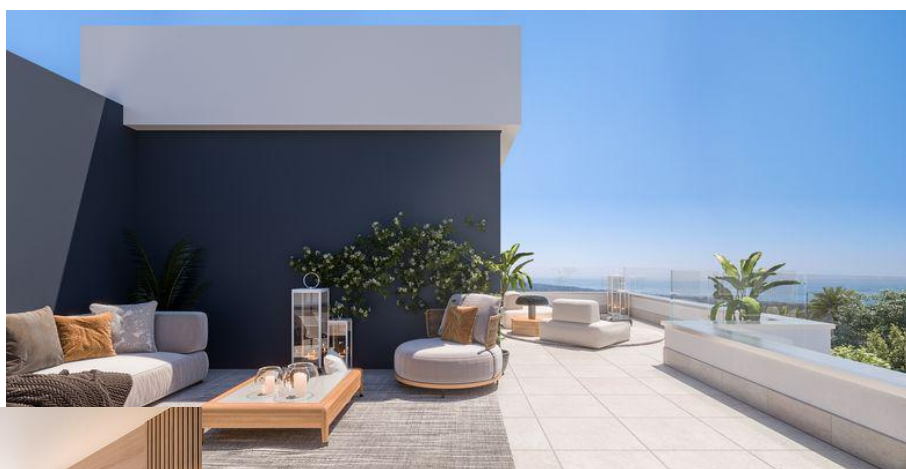
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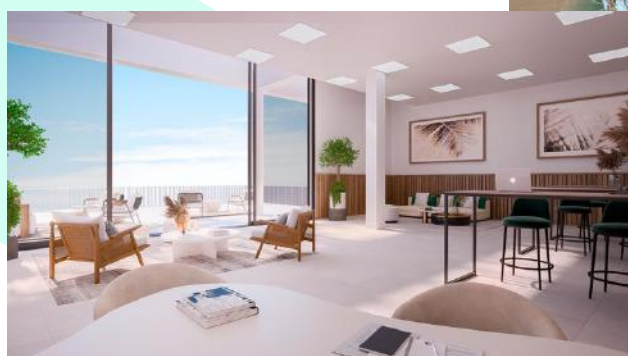


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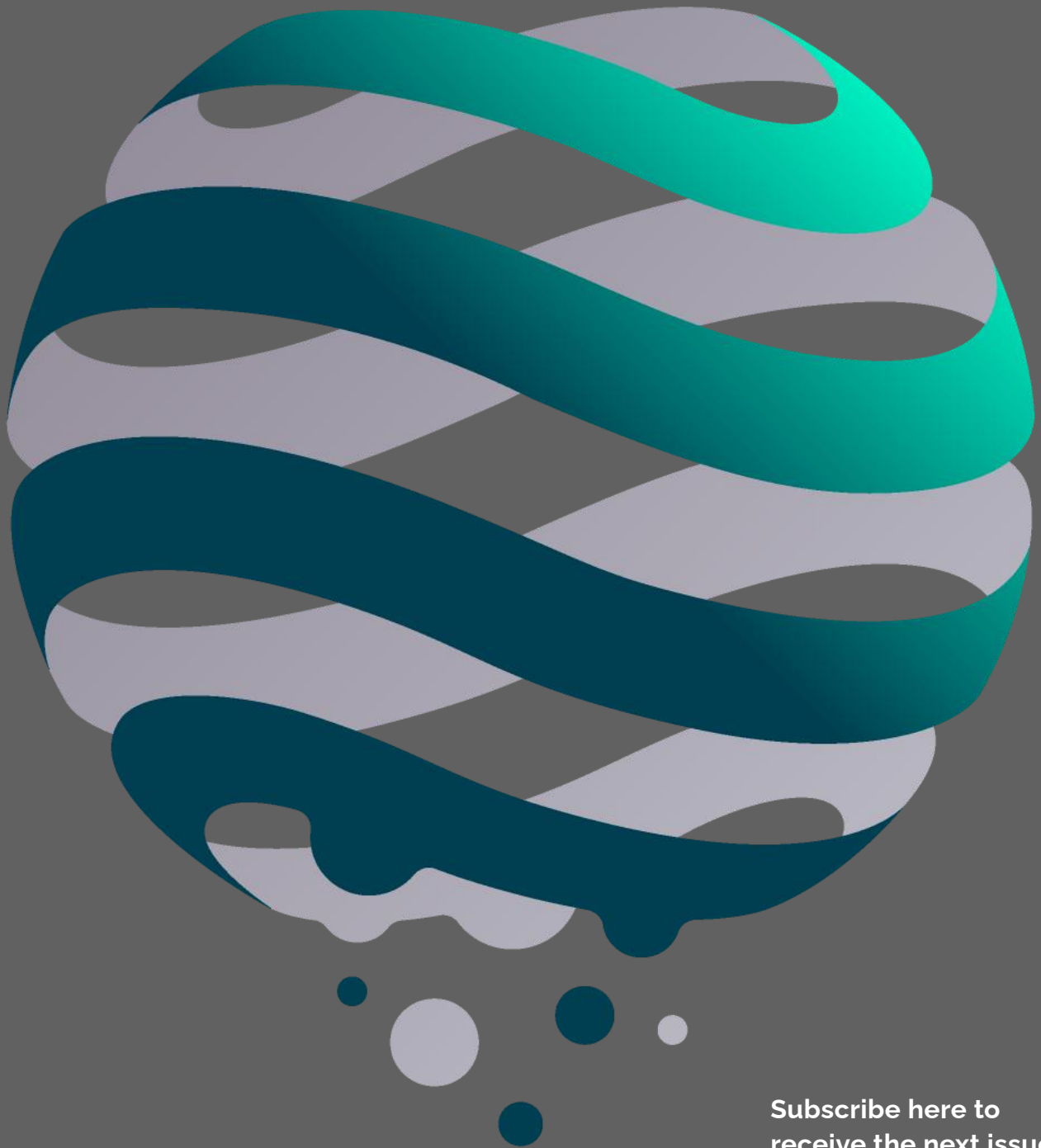
PROPERTY FEATURES

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- Co working space
- Communal Swimming Pool
- Gym
- Indoor pool
- Panoramic Views
- Private Gardens
- Solariums
- Spa



The project has everything for a comfortable living experience. Communal areas include heated indoor and outdoor swimming pools, spa, a fully equipped gym and a co-working space. Each property comes with a parking space and a storage room included in the price.

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ADOPTAS.ORG

by Alejandro Davidovich Fokina



At **GRSA**, we believe that it is essential to give back to the community and support initiatives that have a positive impact on society. One of the organizations that we are privileged to support is Adoptas.org, an amazing group of people dedicated to saving the lives of animals in need, founded by none other than **Alejandro Davidovich Fokina**.

Adoptas.org is committed to providing a safe haven for animals that have been abandoned, neglected, or abused. They work tirelessly to rescue animals from dangerous situations, provide them with medical attention, and find loving homes for them. Their tireless efforts have saved countless lives, and their impact on the animal welfare community cannot be overstated.

What sets Adoptas.org apart is its dedication to the welfare of each animal they rescue. Their team of experts provides medical treatment and rehabilitation to animals, ensuring that they are ready for adoption when the time comes. They work hard to match each animal with the perfect family, ensuring the animal's new home is the best fit. This level of care and attention is unmatched in the animal welfare community, and it's what makes Adoptas.org truly special.

Adoptas.org's commitment to the welfare of animals extends beyond just rescuing and rehoming them. They are also dedicated to educating the community about responsible pet ownership and the importance of spaying and neutering animals. Through their outreach programs, they work to prevent animals from ending up in shelters in the first place. Their efforts to promote responsible pet ownership, have had a profound impact on the community.

GRSA INTERNATIONAL are honoured to be able to support Adoptas.org. Their commitment to the welfare of animals is truly inspiring, and we are continually amazed by their tireless dedication to saving lives. We believe that every animal deserves a loving home, and we are glad to share the same belief as these wonderful people.



If you'd like to help this amazing cause then follow the instructions on their website, you really will be helping animals all across Spain.

MEETING KENNETH



Kenneth Leong is the **GRSA International Country Manager for Singapore and Malaysia**, based in Singapore he is a **GRSA Tour Stringer**, professional racket technician and entrepreneur. Kenneth speaks English, Mandarin and Cantonese, so if you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact him for anything GRSA related!

Kenneth has been stringing for more than 10 years and running a racket pro shop since 2020. His journey stringing started with feelings of frustration when he continually dealt with subpar equipment servicing and a lack of knowledge by supposed pro shops in his area. Tired of looking for one that would provide good services and sound advice, he decided to purchase his own stringing machine. The rest, as they say, is history.

Prior to his venture into stringing, he was a physical education teacher for 8 years and a jack of all trades when it came to sports. His love for physical activity soon brought him into contact with racket sports. A heightened interest in tennis began after the opening of his pro shop and some customers became hitting partners and great friends. **“It is a joy to share my knowledge in tennis equipment with my customers on a daily basis and it brings me great pride and satisfaction to know that my work is appreciated and helps my clients improve their game.”**

“Throughout my stringing journey, I’ve attended masterclasses and had my skills validated by two world-renowned stringers (Sam Chan & Richard Parnell) who have multiple grand slams, Olympic games and ATP/WTB tournaments under their belts. I attained the USRSA Master Racquet Technician, GRSA Pro Master Stringer and GRSA Tour Stringer certifications after attending their master classes.”



“I do not believe in a single best stringer, because our work is only ever as good as how it makes our customers feel. What I can offer to my clients and students are advice and best practices, in addition to continual professional development in skills and knowledge of the racket industry.”

At **GRSA International HQ** we are so happy that Kenneth has joined the team as his passion for teaching is second nature and he is always willing to help in any way he can, he is a great stringer and teammate!

Email Kenneth if you have any questions!



team.sg@grsa-international.com

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TENSION CHANGES

As we are fully in the grass court season, now would seem to be the perfect time to talk about tension changes due to court surface changes.

Grass Court – The fast nature of the grass court means that the ball slides through quicker, thus reaching the racket with more ball speed after the bounce. By raising tension slightly, we are looking at controlling this excess ball speed. A general rule of thumb would be to raise tension, however, the weather also has to be considered, once the “perfect” grass court tension has been found. Cloudy and cold weather will mean the ball goes through the air more slowly, so this must be taken into account as well and a lower tension used.

Clay Court – The slow nature of the clay court, means that the ball bounces higher and kicks up rather than sliding through. You could probably say, it is the exact opposite of grass. For this surface you would normally lower tension to make up for the lower incoming ball speed and to create more power. As more spin is used on clay, a lot of the “clay court” specialists use a lower tension on the crosses, so that the mains are “allowed” to move more and create more spin because of the “snap back” effect. It has been known in the past for a player to change strings (from natural gut to monofilament) depending on the surface.

Hard Court – As there are different types of hard courts, it’s very difficult to give a “one rule works for all” answer. There are slow hard courts and fast ones so the tension will be lowered or raised depending on the speed of the court. If a player is coming from a clay court tournament to a slow hard court, the tension would probably not have to be changed.

Some players prefer to keep the same tension, whatever the surface or weather conditions and just alter their play to take this into account. These players, are however, in a minority.

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.

The GRSA Certified Competition Stringer and GRSA Certified Competition Master Stringer are unique to GRSA International. (Presential & Online)



There was a definite gap in the certification pyramid, between the shop stringer certifications & tour stringer certifications, and after much thought, GRSA designed a certification level that prepares a stringer for what they will find when they start stringing at different professional events. This certification level fits perfectly between the Pro Master (technique-based exams) and the Tour certifications (Speed and consistency exams). As this certification level includes information on how to act and approach a professional event, this certification level must be passed before moving on to the Tour level certifications.

There are two levels, in keeping with the other GRSA certification levels.

GRSA Certified Competition Stringer & GRSA Certified Competition Master Stringer

Here are the instructions for the Competition level exams:

GRSA Certified Competition Stringer

[BUY NOW](#)

This exam doesn't have a written part and is purely practical.

- a) String a racket ATW with a monofilament string in 45 minutes – All strings are nice and straight.
- b) Change the pallets & butt cap on a HEAD (or similar frame) in 30 minutes
- c) Install base grips (right-hander) and over grips on 2 frames making them look identical (matched) in 20 minutes.

Apply the base grip to two rackets in an identical manner for a right-handed player (counterclockwise wrap). Then install an over grip on each of the rackets, again making them identical and wrapped for a right-hander.

GRSA Certified Competition Master Stringer Exam

[BUY NOW](#)

This exam has a written part and a practical part.

- a) A multiple-choice written exam of 40 questions in 60 minutes
- b) String 2 frames ATW with a Monofilament in 60 minutes – All strings are nice and straight.
- c) Install base grips (for left-hander) and overgrips on 2 frames making them look identical (matched) in 30 minutes.

Apply the base grip to two rackets in an identical manner for a left-handed player (clockwise wrap). Then install an over grip on each of the rackets, again making them identical and wrapped for a left-hander.

Both of these exams can be taken online and when you sign up for the exam, you will receive a study guide to help with the written exam. The exams will be marked from the usual MP4 format videos sent through to GRSA HQ.

Each exam can be done online and costs 120€, however, we have created a Competition Stringer Bundle for both levels, at 220€ - Contact us for the bundle!

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GRSA AROUND THE WORLD



Together, both PRS (Premium Racket Services) and GRSA make up the HEAD stringing team at this years Berlin Open. It's been an eventful tournament with rain playing an important part in the flow of things, 32 players in the singles draw, 16 in the doubles.

Rackets strung: 372

Lowest tension strung: 15kg

Highest tension strung: 29kg

THIS YEAR'S WINNERS WERE:

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CZE - Petra, KVITOVA

FRA - Caroline, GARCIA / BRA - Luisa, STEFANI



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TOALSON takes manufacturing seriously. They have long used strings mainly produced in their factory in Oita, Japan, to deliver high quality products to tennis players around the world. With over 60 years of experience in manufacturing, sales and marketing of sports products, Toalson is a reliable world player in the sports market.

Due to our partnership with GRSA, we are pleased to offer all GRSA members a 30% discount on all TOALSON products, all you have to do is enter the promotional code: GRSA when purchasing on our website. [CLICK HERE](#)



Aster Poly string

The tennis string Aster Poly is a very fast tournament tennis string with extremely long durability and best playability with incredible acceleration, control, and enormous spin.

Side by Side Fan Pattern

This month's pattern from the list of non-standard rackets is about side by side grommets, usually a fan pattern, as in this example. It has been used quite extensively in the past, by several brands, but I'm pretty sure, it is presently discontinued by the brands. It retains a lot to be learnt and is useful for good stringers.

I have used a Dunlop Black Max Titanium for this article, which has its own challenges to overcome. Not least, the fact that it has insufficient knot holes to string it in two pieces, without enlarging any holes to make additional knot holes. One piece of string must be used, and because of the tie-off holes that do exist, it is far easier to string the crosses up from the throat, as we saw last month in one of the options with the Generic Fan Pattern.

This is a closed-throat racket, has 14 mains and 18 crosses, it has nothing remarkable to see at first glance. There are difficulties for me to describe the numbering system due to the grommets being side by side and not in one line, like most rackets, so, for example, the 1st 2 grommets on the left (L) at the throat (T), I will call 1LTLOW and 1LTHIGH. As you read, imagine the racket is mounted in a machine.

There must be a hard weave at the throat, involving the main strings and the 1st cross string at the throat. Following these instructions, should ensure a hard weave at the throat, as required.



Nick's Nugget

Even when there is very little difference in height variation, such as the Generic Fan Pattern or Double-Barrelled Grommets there is still a need to Hard Weave. It affects performance when playing.

Mains

1LH to 1LTLOW

1LTLOW to 1LTHIGH

1LTHIGH to 2LH

2LH to 3LH

3LH to 2LTLOW

1RH to 1RTHIGH

1RTHIGH to 1RTLOW

1RTLOW to 2RH

2RH to 3RH

3RH to 2RTHIGH

2RTHIGH to 2RTLOW

2RTLOW to 4RH

4RH to 5RH

5RH to 3RTHIGH

3RTHIGH to 3RTLOW

3RTLOW to 7RH

2LTLOW to 2LTHIGH

2LTHIGH to 4LH

4LH to 5LH

5LH to 3LTLOW

3LTLOW to 3LTHIGH

3LTHIGH to 7LH

7LH to 10LH

10LH to 4LT

(Hold SS with starting clamp on outside of frame)

7RH to 10RH

10RH to 4RT

Tie-off SS at 5LT after 1st few crosses.



Crosses

1st cross is at 5RT (ensure cross goes over the 1st main)

Last cross is at 6LH and tie-off at 4RH.

Next Month:- All rackets made by Eye-Rackets.





“ND PRO METHOD” for competition squash stringing.

As some of you may know, Nick Down, the **Global Squash Manager** for **GRSA**, has spent 15 years stringing on the Pro Squash World Tour. During that time, he has strung the rackets for more than 20 world number one’s and many other highly ranked squash pros. He isn’t known as the squash stringing Guru for nothing!



During Nick’s time looking after their equipment, he came up with a revolutionary method for improving their game through a proprietary “tweak” known as the **ND PRO METHOD**.

Firstly, let’s look at aspects of the pro game; generally, their shots are much tighter on the side walls & they are faster, fitter and more accurate than the rest of us mere mortals!

Now, let’s focus on the aspect that is the most different: the closeness of the shot to the side walls. That aspect of the game combines many of the player’s skills, and this aspect can be helped by the racket stringer using the **ND PRO METHOD**.

You will often hear Joey Barrington and his colleagues, whilst commentating, using terms like “**Tight**” and “**Nice Squeeze**” etc. All these terms refer to the closeness of the ball to the sidewall, often clinging to the sidewall as it travels back. Sometimes, if the ball has been hit at an angle, it is designed to hit the sidewall at exactly the moment that an incoming player would optimally strike the ball.

In all cases, the player must strike the ball without the luxury of using the middle of the string bed. The player will have gotten used to playing off-centre hits, either on the frame or around the outer edges of the string bed. It’s impossible to get the racket close enough to the wall, to be able to use the centre of the string bed and hit the sweet spot because the wall is in the way.



If a player uses an open-faced racket on both, backhand and forehand, the ball will be drawn into the sidewall as it travels towards the rear of the court. Often, the ball will cling to the sidewall.

In these cases, when stringing for these world-class players, Nick will use the **ND PRO METHOD** to soften the area of the string bed, right next to the frame with a view to reducing the frequency of off-centre breakages or shear breakages and, consequently, the loss of the point and the need to change racket when not expected.

Nick has been using this **ND PRO METHOD** over the years, and all these players have come back stating that the stringing is perfect or that they like how his stringing helps their game. Nick would sometimes pick up the phone for a call from a player while abroad just to ask how he'd strung a racket. Players would often phone Nick a few days before a tournament, to ask if he would be there. The **ND PRO METHOD** is the reason why the players love Nick's work.

Now to share the secret behind the **ND PRO METHOD**. The two top crosses at the head and the two outside mains on either side **ONLY**, are double-pulled (tension two strings together with one pull). The rest of the strings are pulled individually. In this case, using this method, no added knot tension is applied before the knot. For the tennis stringers among us, Nick always adds knot tension when stringing tennis rackets.

There are many rackets, such as all the powering, Hinge, Arch-power and next-generation Bridge models, where all mains are pulled from the head, two at a time (double pulled), anyway.

Because each string on a racket is wrapped around the frame it is unlikely there will be any bleeding of tension to the next string. For the same reason, when pulling two strings at once under these circumstances, it is important to equalise the string tension. When pulling all main strings two at a time, it doesn't apply, when the string goes around any type of throat ring, the string is able to move more freely, and equalisation is not necessary.



So there you have it, the **ND PRO METHOD** is an easy one to apply and one which helps a small number of amazing players. This method came to Nick really easily, he didn't need to think about it for long as it's quite obvious.

This method is going to raise the hackles of the hardened tennis stringers; however, there are no side walls in tennis. Nick is also a **GRSA Certified Tour Stringer** in Tennis and recognises that there are some differences between the two sports and, indeed, the requirements in stringing for them.

So who is Nick Down?

Here's a look into the life of Nick



When did you start stringing and how long have you been doing it?

I had a successful junior career as a squash player, which included winning county championships three times and being invited to join the Welsh International Squad. In 1982 I joined the Police in London and after a few years became the Captain of the squash 1st Team. This carried on for a few years and we played in a lot of events. At one time I was playing for four teams weekly. I was buying loads of fuel and breaking a lot of strings. I learned how to string, bought a machine and immediately all of my teammates used me to string their rackets and consequently the revenue from the stringing paid for my fuel and match fees. That was back in the '80s, I left the Police after 30 years and in 2012 became a full-time stringer. As a stringer on the World Squash Tour, I have worked with Ashaway, Babolat, Black Knight, Dunlop, Head, Prince, Wilson, Unsquashable, Eye-Rackets and Harrow. During my time in the police, I worked in SO19 as a firearms instructor for about 15 years and whilst there became a fully qualified teacher and I'm now a member of the Society of Education and Training.



What have you done within the Racket Sports Industry, besides Stringing?

I write regular articles for the GRSA monthly magazine especially patterns for non-standard rackets, which I'm about just over halfway through. I've written the A-Z of Squash supplement to the A-Z of Stringing and maintain the list of Non-Standard Rackets on behalf of GRSA. I provide support and advice to other squash stringers and help to find tournaments that require a stringer. I provide a squash point of view to Richard and Daniel at the GRSA headquarters in Spain and I've visited them a few times to advise when filming for online squash courses. I was the Head Stringer at the Hurlingham Club in Fulham from 2013 until 2020 which is the largest racket sport centre in the UK. I have helped a number of brands with research and development and have been involved with some charity events.



How long have you known Richard Parnell, the President of GRSA International?

Believe it or not, I was at school with Richard in the 70s. I was unaware that he was so well known in the industry, in fact, I learned of his prowess as a stringer, before I realised that he was the same person that featured in a school tennis team photo with me from '79 or '80! (We made a partial reconstruction in about 2015).

When I retired from the Police in London after 30 years, it was easy for me to fly over to spend a week with Richard, with the view to bringing my tennis stringing to a better standard and work as a full-time stringer thereafter. At the time I hadn't seen Richard since school, about 32 years, it was great to meet up after so long and we've become good friends ever since. I had spent the previous 5 or 6 years taking annual leave to go to squash tournaments.



How much time have you spent on the World Tour (Squash)?

About 15 seasons, mainly in the UK, but in other countries too. In that time, amongst others, I have strung the rackets of over 20 World Number Ones. Including Jahangir Khan and Nicol David both legends. Without fail, all number ones have been very serious about their stringing, as you'd expect.



What's the fastest time you have taken to string a racket on the World-Tour?

Interestingly, I'm more of an advocate of quality over speed. I'm a firm believer that people will develop speed by repeating good quality time and time again. I.e. do it right and the speed will come on its own. That being said, I was once at the British Open in Hull and Omar Mosaad (Egypt) was playing James Willstrop (England) in a quarter final, Omar ran out of rackets and one of them came to me as an urgent on-court restring. Apparently, I did it in about 9 minutes! I say apparently, because unbeknown to me, a person in the crowd saw the whole thing and reported it on Twitter.

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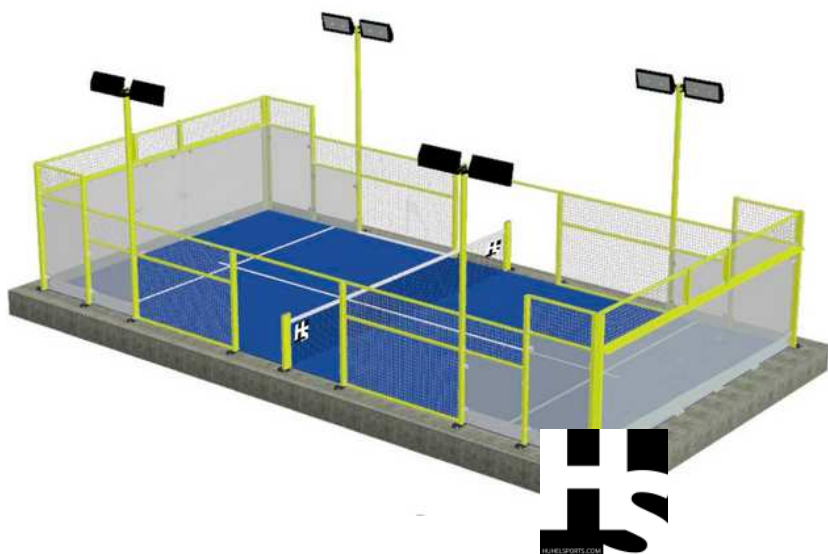
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INDIVIDUAL PANORAMIC COURT

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

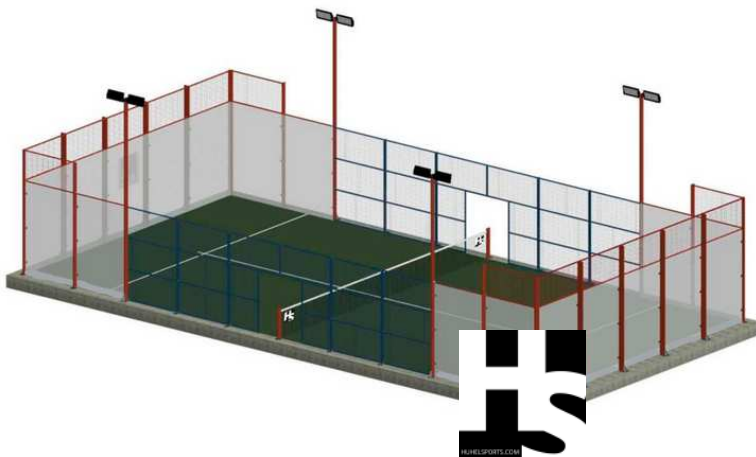


EUROPE COURT

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)

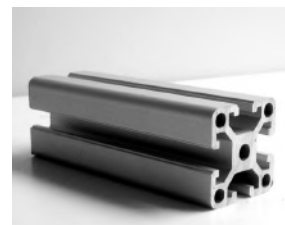
Top horizontal beam in 281x91 glass bottoms (2 units)

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



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MARBELLA

Arturo Coello and Agustin Tapia clinched the prestigious Cervezas Victoria Marbella Master title with a dominant display, overpowering Sanyo Gutierrez and Momo Gonzalez in a convincing 6-3, 6-2 victory on June 4, 2023.

Coello and Tapia strategically capitalized on a crucial break in the first set, displaying their exceptional skills and teamwork throughout the match. In the second set, they seized control by winning three consecutive games on Gutierrez and Gonzalez's serves, leaving their opponents with little opportunity to mount a comeback.

The triumph in Marbella marked Coello and Tapia's ninth championship of the season, further solidifying their position as the leading duo in the 2023 World Padel Tour. With an impeccable record, the top-seeded pair extended their remarkable winning streak to an impressive 42 matches. They are now closing in on the all-time record of 53 consecutive victories, which was set back in 2015, showcasing their exceptional form and dominance in the sport.

Momo Gonzalez, despite an unlikely appearance in the final on his home soil, faced a similar outcome as the previous year, finishing as the runner-up once again. His resilience and commendable performance throughout the tournament were evident, but ultimately, Coello and Tapia proved too formidable a force to overcome.





Paula Josemaria and Ariana Sanchez showcased their remarkable prowess on the court, clinching a resounding victory in the Cervezas Victoria Marbella Master final against Virginia Riera and Tamara Icardo. The formidable duo secured a decisive 6-1, 6-4 win, securing the Marbella Master title for the third consecutive season.

Riera and Icardo, competing in their first Master final as a pair, put up a valiant effort but couldn't overcome the relentless performance of Josemaria and Sanchez. The experienced partnership of Josemaria and Sanchez proved to be the difference-maker as they showcased their chemistry and expertise throughout the match.

Notably, Paula Josemaria's accomplishment in winning the same event for four consecutive years places her in esteemed company. She joins the exclusive ranks of Fernando Belasteguin (Sevilla 2013-2016) and Juan Lebron (Alicante 2019-2022) as only the third player ever to achieve this remarkable feat.

Moreover, the victory marked the twentieth title for the formidable duo of 'Ari and Paula.' Their exceptional partnership has consistently yielded success, with the Marbella Master triumph matching their outstanding performance in the previous season, where they clinched an impressive seven tournament victories.

Josemaria and Sanchez continue to demonstrate their prowess in the sport, leaving a lasting impact on the padel circuit as they further cement their status as one of the dominant pairs in the game.

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If you're a pickleball fan, here's a list of some of the competitions you might be interested in, you never know, one might be near you!

RHOEN OPEN 2023**EID:** 1178 **PRICE** EUR 35**Organizer:** Julian Izquierdo**EVENT** - TOURNAMENT**Starting:** September 02, 2023 to September 03, 2023**City:** 97618 Heustreu, Deutschland**Home Club:** Pickleball Rhön**Registration Deadline:** August 15, 2023 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 1**2023 Latin America Pickleball Open Championships****EID:** 1182 **PRICE** USD 30**Organizer:** Associacao Brasileira de Pickleball**EVENT** - TOURNAMENT**Starting:** August 18, 2023 to August 20, 2023**City:** Governador Valadares - Gov. Valadares, Governador Valadares - State of Minas Gerais, Brazil**Home Club:** Valadares Pickleball Clube**Registration Deadline:** July 31, 2023 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 4**2023 WORLD PICKLEBALL CHAMPIONSHIP (20,000 USD) In Memory of Karen Casquejo Estremos****EID:** 1204 **PRICE** USD 50**Organizer:** Pickleball Global**EVENT** - TOURNAMENT**Starting:** September 19, 2023 to September 24, 2023**City:** Bali, Indonesia**Home Club:** Liga Tennis**Registration Deadline:** August 31, 2023 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 5**MORE
INFO**

PHOENIX - In an exciting development for the sport of pickleball, USA Pickleball, the National Governing Body, has announced a long-term partnership with Pickleball United, a specialized manufacturer renowned for its cutting-edge pickleball products, notably the revolutionary True Court flooring system.

True Court, a remarkable rollable acrylic surface, is the crown jewel of Pickleball United's offerings. This proprietary innovation has taken the pickleball world by storm with its consistent bounce, exceptional cushioning, and unmatched playing experience. It's worth mentioning that Pickleball United holds the prestigious title of Official Court Partner for both the Association of Pickleball Professionals (APP) and Major League Pickleball (MLP).

Brady Kellogg, USA Pickleball's Managing Director of Partnerships, expressed his enthusiasm about the collaboration, stating, "We're absolutely thrilled to join forces with Pickleball United to promote their groundbreaking flooring product. The demand for pickleball courts in the United States has skyrocketed, and their solution addresses this need by providing top-notch non-skid and cushioned courts in unique settings like indoor arenas and outdoor parks. True Court has become an essential asset for our sport."

The remarkable True Court Surface has recently gained widespread recognition, having been successfully deployed at major pickleball events and renowned venues. Notably, it graced the Pickleball Slam and City Pickle at Wollman Rink in New York City, leaving players astounded by its performance. Additionally, the surface was chosen for the highly acclaimed 2023 Boca Raton APP New York City Open, a May event that took place at the prestigious USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in Flushing Meadows, New York. Looking ahead, the upcoming 2023 USA Pickleball Indoor National Championships in Atlantic City, scheduled for September 19-23, will showcase the excellence of Pickleball United's True Court.

Pran G, the visionary Founder of Pickleball United, expressed pride in the partnership, remarking, "We are honoured to align ourselves with USA Pickleball in our shared goal of enhancing the quality and accessibility of equipment for pickleball players. True Court, developed in collaboration with top professional players, not only meets the rigorous standards of competitive play but also instils confidence in players of all skill levels."

Venues eager to embrace the exceptional True Court are encouraged to reach out to Carl Schmits, USA Pickleball's Managing Director of Equipment Standards & Facility Development, via email for further information.

This collaboration between USA Pickleball and Pickleball United promises to revolutionize the sport, providing players with top-of-the-line equipment and enhancing the overall pickleball experience. The future of the game has never looked brighter.

Trish Stewart and Julie Scott embarked on a journey in 2019 to introduce pickleball to Puerto Rico, unaware of the impact they would make. The aftermath of Hurricane Maria had left the island with significant structural damage and little exposure to the sport. However, through their efforts and multiple trips to hold USA Pickleball clinics, they laid the foundation for pickleball's growth on the island.

Stewart, the regional training coordinator for USA Pickleball's Atlantic South Region, quickly realized the strong connection between Puerto Rico and the sport. She expressed her delight, saying, "It's just been a dream, because of the warmth of their spirits, the joy they have for learning pickleball, and we see how quickly our sport is growing."

Scott, the certified referee training coordinator, joined forces with Stewart during their trips, experiencing memorable adventures both on and off the court. The enthusiasm displayed by the Puerto Rican people to be a part of the pickleball community was remarkable. Scott, as USA Pickleball's ambassador-at-large, couldn't ask for more.

Membership in USA Pickleball on the island soared from 30 to over 200, showcasing the growing popularity of the sport. Furthermore, their efforts led to the certification of the first Puerto Rican referee, Javier Gonzalez, along with seven level 2 referees and 16 level 1 referees. Despite the language barrier, with the rule book and tests being available only in English, the inclusivity and love for pickleball prevailed.

Stewart expressed her pride in nurturing and witnessing the growth of these referees, likening it to motherhood. She stated, "They're only going to get better and better, and we want to encourage them to keep trying to get more experience and move up levels. It's been like motherhood, almost, because these are people we have nurtured for so long, and now they are flying on their own."

The efforts of the Puerto Rican referees, along with Scott, Stewart, and Larry Scott, were put to the test during the inaugural sanctioned tournament. Despite logistical challenges and tropical rainstorms causing delays, the players' enthusiasm and excitement remained unwavering.

Stewart envisions a rapid growth trajectory for pickleball in Puerto Rico, as larger developments and more tournaments are planned. With increased infrastructure, she believes that a pro tour event would be well-received. Scott and Stewart themselves hope to return in 2024 to referee the next edition of the tournament.

For Stewart, pickleball has been a source of comfort and connection, particularly during a difficult time marked by her husband's illness and subsequent passing. Going to Puerto Rico and witnessing the passion and love that the Puerto Rican community had for the sport helped her find solace. She reflects, "They helped me find a measure of peace, by knowing I was doing something good by being there with them with his blessing."

The journey of introducing pickleball to Puerto Rico has not only enriched the lives of the island's residents but also brought healing and purpose to those involved. The bonds formed and the impact made will forever hold a special place in their hearts.

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