

GRSA INTERNATIONAL ATW MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY - 2025

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Jannik?



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Emma Radicanu faces menace, Sinner makes deal, Redfoo in professional tennis at 49, how tennis balls are helping sound, Diego Schwartzman retires and much more

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Roger Henry holds two workshops in the emerald isle, Ireland workshops underway. Mark Jan Greebe held the first workshop in the Netherlands

Section 3 - Squash

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Section 6 - Badminton

Canada claims 14th consecutive Pan American Mixed Team Championships title, historic day for Thailand at DAIHATSU Indonesia Masters 2025

Redfoo's Pro Tennis Debut at 49: The Party Rocker Takes Centre Court

From dance floors to tennis courts, Redfoo, best known as one half of the electro-pop duo LMFAO, has made an unexpected career pivot by debuting as a professional tennis player at age 49. The “Party Rock Anthem” hitmaker, real name Stefan Kendal Gordy, is no stranger to the sport, but his decision to officially compete on the professional circuit has stunned both music and tennis fans alike.

A Lifelong Love for Tennis

While the world associates Redfoo with energetic beats and flamboyant performances, his passion for tennis runs deep. The musician has been an avid player for years, frequently spotted at tournaments and even serving as a coach and sponsor in the past. His ties to the sport extend beyond casual enthusiasm—he previously attempted to qualify for the US Open, coached junior players, and was a familiar face at ATP and WTA events, often seen engaging with players and offering strategic insights.

Training for the Big Stage

Redfoo's transition to professional tennis has not been taken lightly. Over the past few years, he has trained intensively, working with seasoned coaches and fitness experts to prepare his body for the grueling demands of the sport. Despite starting his pro journey at an age when most players have long retired, his commitment and dedication are evident.





“He’s got a great work ethic,” said one of his trainers. “People think of him as just a performer, but he’s been training seriously, and his love for the game is real.”

The Debut Match

Stepping onto the court for his first official pro match, Redfoo showcased his skills against a younger, more experienced opponent. While the result wasn’t in his favour, his debut proved he’s more than just a novelty act—his movement, shot selection, and fighting spirit drew admiration from spectators. “Tennis is my first love,” Redfoo said post-match. “I may have started late, but I’m here to compete and enjoy every moment on the court.”

A New Era for Athlete-Entertainers?

Redfoo’s foray into professional sports at nearly 50 is a testament to his resilience and passion. His journey mirrors other musicians and entertainers who have transitioned into sports, proving that age is just a number when it comes to chasing dreams.

Whether he continues to pursue further tournaments or simply enjoys his time as a pro player remains to be seen, but one thing is certain—Redfoo has once again found a way to keep the party going, this time with a racket in hand.

As the tennis world watches on, one question remains: Will he be shuff, shufflin his way to victory?

Game-Changing Acoustics: How Soundbounce Gives Tennis Balls a Second Serve

Tennis is a high-impact sport—on the environment. With 400 million balls produced yearly and only 1% getting recycled, the waste is massive. Enter Soundbounce, a revolutionary concept turning discarded tennis balls into stylish acoustic dividers, wall panels, and furniture. By upcycling 283 balls per square meter, Soundbounce not only reduces landfill waste but also cuts CO2 emissions by 8.5 kg per square meter.

The brainchild of Mathilde Wittock, a visionary from Central Saint Martins, Soundbounce marries sustainability with innovative design, transforming sports waste into circular, modular materials. It's not just about noise control; it's about echoing a commitment to the planet.

With Soundbounce, the future sounds a lot greener.

Explore more about this eco-friendly revolution [here](#).



More Companies with Amazing Initiatives to Help Recycle Products Used in and Around Tennis

1. RecycleBalls

RecycleBalls focuses on recycling tennis balls by converting them into a unique crumb rubber product called "Green Gold." This material is utilized in various applications, including the construction of sports surfaces. The organization has developed a process that efficiently removes 99% of the felt from tennis balls, facilitating effective recycling.

2. Nike's Reuse-A-Shoe Program

Nike's Reuse-A-Shoe program collects worn-out athletic shoes of any brand and recycles them into Nike Grind material. This recycled material is then used to create sports surfaces like basketball courts, running tracks, and playgrounds, contributing to environmental sustainability.

3. Second Serve

Second Serve is a non-profit organisation run by teens that collects gently used tennis equipment and distributes it to underprivileged communities worldwide, including countries like Uganda, Argentina, India, and various regions in the USA. This initiative not only promotes sustainability by reusing equipment but also makes tennis more accessible to aspiring players globally.

4. GreenTennis

GreenTennis is an initiative that focuses on recycling and donating tennis equipment. They collect used gear and ensure it reaches individuals and communities in need, promoting both environmental responsibility and the growth of tennis.

These organisations exemplify innovative approaches to repurposing sports equipment, contributing to environmental sustainability and supporting communities in need.



Diego Schwartzman Bids Farewell to Tennis in Emotional Buenos Aires Farewell

Former World No. 8 Diego Schwartzman retired from professional tennis after a straight-sets loss to Spain's Pedro Martinez in the second round of the Argentina Open in Buenos Aires. The 32-year-old Argentine, affectionately known as 'El Peque' due to his 5'7" stature, walked off the court to a standing ovation from his home crowd, closing the curtain on a remarkable career defined by tenacity and resilience.

A Final Bow on Home Soil

Ranked No. 386 in the world, Schwartzman entered the tournament as a wildcard and gave his fans a nostalgic victory by upsetting seventh seed Nicolas Jarry in the first round. However, he fell to World No. 39 Martinez, 6-2, 6-2, in his final match. The emotional farewell was witnessed by Argentine tennis legends Gabriela Sabatini and Guillermo Coria, adding to the gravity of the moment.

Schwartzman had announced his decision to retire in May of the previous year, choosing to say goodbye in Buenos Aires, the city that shaped his tennis journey.

A Career Marked by Grit and Determination

Despite his smaller stature in a sport dominated by towering athletes, Schwartzman defied the odds, achieving a career-high ranking of World No. 8 in 2020. He claimed four ATP titles, including his biggest triumph at the ATP 500 event in Rio de Janeiro in 2018. Schwartzman's greatest Grand Slam run came at the 2020 French Open, where he reached the semifinals before falling to Rafael Nadal.

Known for his exceptional footwork, tireless defense, and relentless fighting spirit, Schwartzman earned respect across the tour for his ability to challenge the sport's giants, both literally and figuratively.





Reflecting on His Journey

In a heartfelt essay on the ATP Tour website, Schwartzman reflected on his career and the challenges he faced due to his height. “I have a small body, but it gave the biggest players in our history bad moments,” he wrote, emphasizing his journey of overcoming physical limitations through hard work and mental toughness.

“Something a lot of people spoke about was my height, 170 centimeters. I didn’t like that during my career, because many times when I was playing good tournaments, everyone was asking me how I did it,” he shared. “I had to work so hard off the court so that my opponents did not feel I had less power... I know that height is a very important thing playing tennis. But more than 50 per cent of the way you win matches comes from what you do away from the court.”

A Legacy Beyond Numbers

While his record may list four ATP titles, a top 10 ranking, and memorable battles against tennis legends, Schwartzman’s legacy is much more profound. He leaves behind an inspiring narrative of defying expectations, proving that heart, discipline, and perseverance can compensate for physical limitations.



Hasta Pronto Diego

As Diego Schwartzman exits the stage, he does so as one of the most respected competitors on the ATP Tour, an icon in Argentine tennis, and a role model for aspiring players worldwide.



Despair or Disruption?

The US Open has announced a significant overhaul of its mixed doubles format, aiming to elevate the event's profile and attract top singles players. Starting this year, the mixed doubles competition will be held on August 19-20, during the qualifying week preceding the main singles draw. The revamped tournament will feature a reduced 16-team draw, down from the previous 32, with a substantial increase in the winners' prize to \$1 million, up from \$200,000.

Format Changes and Objectives

The new format introduces shorter matches to accommodate players' schedules. Early rounds will be best-of-three sets played to four games, with tiebreaks at 4-4 and a 10-point match tiebreak in lieu of a third set. The final will adopt a best-of-three sets format to six games. Matches are set to take place in Arthur Ashe Stadium and Louis Armstrong Stadium, providing prime exposure. The United States Tennis Association (USTA) aims to spotlight mixed doubles and showcase the sport's top talent, with broadcasting partners like ESPN aiding in reaching a global audience.

Impact on Players and Their Careers

The restructuring has elicited mixed reactions from players. Proponents argue that the changes will attract higher-ranked singles players, thereby increasing the event's prestige and offering substantial financial incentives. Jessica Pegula, a former mixed doubles finalist, supports the initiative, viewing it as a means to attract more fans and grow the sport.

Conversely, several doubles specialists have expressed concerns. Reigning mixed doubles champions Sara Errani and Andrea Vavassori criticized the decision, labeling it as profit-driven and disrespectful to players. They view the shift as a "profound injustice" that disrespects an entire category of players.

The reduction in draw size and the emphasis on singles rankings for qualification may limit opportunities for dedicated doubles players, potentially impacting their careers and earnings.

Economic Effects and Industry Repercussions

Economically, the increased prize money underscores the USTA's commitment to enhancing the mixed doubles event's appeal. However, the reallocation of resources has raised concerns. To compensate for the reduced mixed doubles draw, the USTA plans to increase prize money for men's and women's doubles events.

Despite these adjustments, some players feel that the changes prioritize profit and entertainment over tradition and player respect.

The broader tennis community is closely monitoring these developments. While the USTA believes that showcasing top singles players in mixed doubles will elevate the event's status and attract a larger global audience, critics argue that the move may marginalize doubles specialists and alter the traditional fabric of Grand Slam tournaments. The long-term repercussions within the industry will depend on the execution of these changes and the responses from players, fans, and stakeholders.





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WTA Sanctions Stefano Vukov for Abuse and Harassment of Elena Rybakina

In a significant move to uphold player welfare, the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) has imposed a one-year suspension on coach Stefano Vukov after an investigation into allegations of mental abuse and harassment toward his former protégé, Elena Rybakina. This decision underscores the WTA's commitment to ensuring a safe and supportive environment for its athletes.

Background of the Allegations Elena Rybakina, the 2022 Wimbledon champion, and Stefano Vukov had a professional relationship spanning over five years. Their partnership saw Rybakina's meteoric rise in the tennis world. However, concerns about Vukov's coaching methods began to surface, leading to an internal investigation by the WTA.

Findings from the WTA Investigation: The WTA's inquiry revealed troubling aspects of Vukov's behaviour:

Mental Abuse: Vukov reportedly subjected Rybakina to demeaning comments, including calling her "stupid" and asserting that without his guidance, she would "still be in Russia picking potatoes."

Harassment: Post their professional split in August 2024, Vukov allegedly harassed Rybakina during the US Open by inundating her with over 100 missed calls and searching for her throughout the tournament venue.

Physical Strain: Investigations indicated that Vukov pushed Rybakina beyond her physical limits, leading to health issues and illnesses. These actions were deemed a clear violation of the WTA's code of conduct, resulting in Vukov's suspension from all WTA events for a year.

Rybakina's Response: Despite the allegations, Rybakina has publicly defended Vukov. She expressed disappointment with the WTA's decision, stating, "I'm just disappointed with the situation, and how the process went."

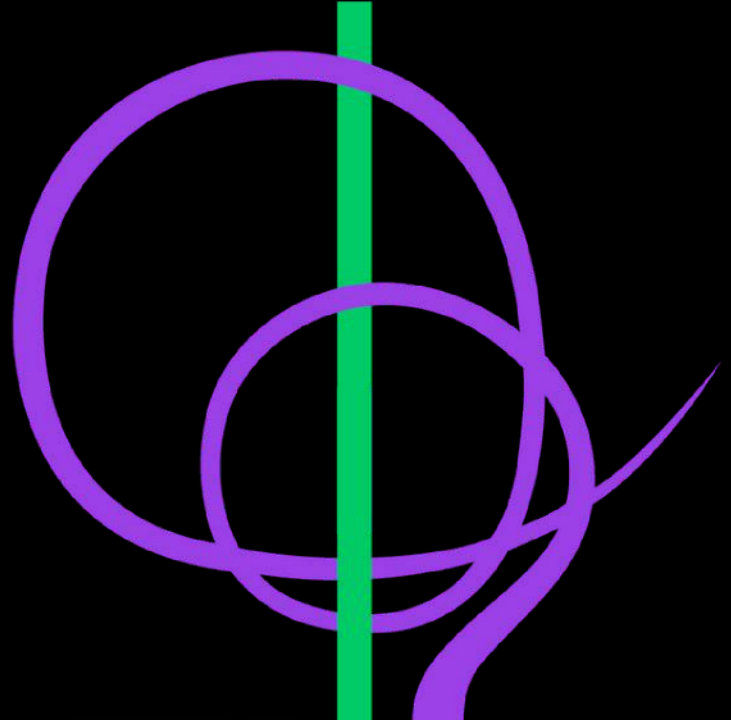
This defence highlights the complex dynamics often present in coach-athlete relationships, where boundaries can become blurred, and recognizing abusive behaviour may be challenging.

Implications for the Tennis Community

The WTA's decisive action against Vukov sends a strong message about the organization's zero-tolerance policy toward abuse and harassment. It emphasizes the importance of maintaining professional and respectful relationships between coaches and players.

This case also brings to light the necessity for players to have access to resources and support systems that can help them identify and address potential abuse. The tennis community is now prompted to reflect on coaching practices and ensure that the well-being of athletes remains paramount.

The suspension of Stefano Vukov is a pivotal moment in professional tennis, reinforcing the WTA's dedication to protecting its players. As the sport continues to evolve, fostering environments where athletes can thrive without fear of abuse or harassment remains a top priority.



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Jannik Sinner Accepts Three-Month Suspension Amid Doping Controversy

World No. 1 tennis player Jannik Sinner has agreed to a three-month suspension following a settlement with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). This decision concludes a complex case that has sparked extensive debate within the tennis community.

Background of the Case

In March 2024, during the BNP Paribas Open at Indian Wells, Sinner tested positive for clostebol, a prohibited anabolic steroid. The substance was traced back to his physiotherapist, Giacomo Naldi, who had been using a clostebol-containing spray to treat a personal injury. Naldi's subsequent bare-handed massages transmitted the substance to Sinner inadvertently. An independent tribunal initially found Sinner bore "no fault or negligence," allowing him to continue competing. However, WADA appealed this decision, seeking a suspension of up to two years.

Settlement Details

On February 15, 2025, WADA announced a settlement in which Sinner accepted a three-month suspension, effective from February 9 to May 4, 2025. This period allows him to return in time for the French Open, which commences on May 25. WADA's general counsel, Ross Wenzel, emphasized that the case was "a million miles away from doping," acknowledging the unintentional nature of the violation.



Reactions from the Tennis Community

The leniency of Sinner's suspension has drawn criticism from several prominent figures:

Novak Djokovic: The 24-time Grand Slam champion expressed concerns about perceived favouritism, stating, "The majority of the players feel like there is favouritism happening."

Alexander Zverev: Questioned the consistency of doping sanctions, suggesting that suspensions should be either non-existent if no fault is found or more severe if intentional doping is proven.



Stan Wawrinka: Voiced scepticism about the sport's integrity with a pointed remark: "I no longer believe in a clean sport."

These reactions highlight a broader concern regarding the consistency and transparency of anti-doping regulations in tennis.

Implications for Sinner's Career

While the suspension sidelines Sinner from several key tournaments, including four Masters 1000 events and at least two ATP 500 events, he remains eligible to compete in all Grand Slam tournaments this year. This outcome has led to discussions about the potential advantages top players may have in navigating doping allegations, especially when equipped with substantial legal resources.

The resolution of Jannik Sinner's doping case underscores the complexities inherent in anti-doping regulations within professional tennis. As the sport continues to grapple with issues of fairness and consistency, this case serves as a catalyst for ongoing discussions about the efficacy and impartiality of current anti-doping protocols.

Venus Williams Declines Indian Wells Wildcard Invitation

Seven-time Grand Slam champion Venus Williams has declined a wildcard invitation to compete at next month's Indian Wells tournament. The 44-year-old was offered a spot in the main draw, but organizers confirmed she opted not to participate.

"Our team has been informed that Venus is not accepting the wildcard this year. We wish her all the best and hope to see her back in Indian Wells in the future," read a statement from tournament director Tommy Haas.

Williams herself confirmed her decision on the Tennis Weekly podcast, stating: "I'm not playing. I'm going to be overseas. I'm not gonna be here."

The American has not competed since the Miami Open in March 2024, where she suffered a first-round loss to Diana Shnaider. Before that, she was also defeated in the opening round of the 2024 Indian Wells tournament by Nao Hibino.

Williams previously boycotted Indian Wells for 15 years after fans booed and jeered Serena Williams during her 2001 final against Kim Clijsters, following Venus' withdrawal from their semi-final match. She eventually returned in 2016, a year after Serena made her comeback



Mirra Andreeva Becomes Youngest WTA 1000 Champion in History



Mirra Andreeva made history at the Dubai Tennis Championships, becoming the youngest player to win a WTA 1000 title at just 17 years old. The Russian secured the title with a 7-6 (7-1), 6-1 victory over Denmark's Clara Tauson.

Her triumph ensures a top 10 debut in the WTA rankings next week, surpassing her goal of breaking into the elite by the end of the year. "Now it's the end of February and I've already made it, so this is incredible for me," Andreeva said.

On her way to the final, she defeated Grand Slam champions Marketa Vondrousova, Iga Swiatek, and Elena Rybakina. Despite early nerves and double faults, she dominated the second set, clinching victory when Tauson's return went long.

"This is something I dreamt of, and now my dream came true. I'm speechless," Andreeva added after her historic win.

Jack Draper Falls to Andrey Rublev in Qatar Open Final

British number one Jack Draper was beaten in three sets by Andrey Rublev in the Qatar Open final. Draper was seeking a third career ATP Tour title but lost 7-5 5-7 6-1 to the world number 10 in Doha. The opening two sets featured just one break of serve for either player, but the decider was more one-sided.

Rublev broke Draper twice to race into a 4-0 lead, before comfortably holding serve to seal victory. Despite the disappointment Draper, who reached the Australian Open fourth round in January, will rise up to a career-high 12th in the world rankings.

"It has been an amazing week - congratulations to Andrey, he was just too good today," said the 23-year-old, who has lost three of the five ATP Tour finals he has played in. "He outlasted me. We have both played some really tough matches this week and he was just too strong for me in the third set."

It is Rublev's second Qatar Open title after lifting the trophy in 2020, the first time he has won the same event on two occasions. "It is amazing. It is the first title I have won twice so I am really happy," said Rublev.



"We were both exhausted after some long matches this week. It was difficult but we were able to play to a good level. "After the second set, I started to play much more free - he was more tired. I was able to break him and the match changed completely."

Draper, 23, announced the decision to miss the Dubai Championship which starts on Monday, a day after losing to Andrey Rublev.

The Brit who is set to rise to 12th in the world rankings, has said he will return for the BNP Paribas Open and Miami Open which take place in March.

Draper posted on X: "Unfortunately, I have made the decision to withdraw from Dubai Duty Free.

"After a great week at Qatar Open Tennis, I'm taking on board advice to prioritise my recovery and manage my body after a number of long matches, and give myself the best chance of competing consistently throughout the year.

"I'm gutted not to compete at such an amazing event but will look forward to returning to competition at BNP Paribas Open and Miami Open."



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Emma Raducanu Distressed by Spectator's Fixated Behavior at Dubai WTA 1000 Event

During the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships, British tennis star Emma Raducanu faced a distressing incident involving a spectator exhibiting "fixated behavior." This episode not only disrupted her match but also raised significant concerns about player safety in professional tennis.

Incident Overview

On February 17, 2025, Raducanu was approached in a public area by a man displaying obsessive tendencies. The following day, during her second-round match against Karolina Muchova, Raducanu identified the same individual seated prominently in the front rows. Visibly upset, she approached the chair umpire in tears after the second game, leading to a brief halt in play. Security personnel promptly escorted the man out of the venue. The Women's Tennis Association (WTA) has since banned him from all future events pending a comprehensive threat assessment.

WTA's Response

The WTA emphasized its commitment to player safety, stating: "Player safety is our top priority, and tournaments are advised on security best practices for international sporting events." The organization is actively collaborating with Raducanu and her team to ensure her well-being and provide necessary support.



Match Outcome

Despite the emotional turmoil, Raducanu demonstrated resilience. She overcame an initial 4-0 deficit in the first set to force a tiebreak but ultimately fell to Muchova with a scoreline of 7-6 (8-6), 6-4. The match, delayed by rain, extended over two hours, concluding close to midnight local time.

Historical Context

This incident is not the first time Raducanu has faced such challenges. In 2022, a man was convicted of stalking her at her residence, leading to a five-year restraining order against him. These recurring episodes underscore the pressing need for stringent security measures to protect athletes from intrusive and potentially harmful behaviors.

Moving Forward

The tennis community, alongside event organizers, must prioritize the safety and mental well-being of players. Implementing robust security protocols and ensuring swift responses to any threats are essential steps in fostering a secure environment for athletes to perform at their best.

DID YOU KNOW?

Tennis is like life, you just never know how each day is going to go, even with the best plan, you still have to be able to adapt.

Redfoo, LMFAO

- 1** **David Nalbandian – 2012 Queen's Club Final:** Frustrated after losing a point, Nalbandian kicked an advertising hoarding, which struck a line judge's leg, causing injury. He was defaulted from the match, handing victory to his opponent, Marin Cilic.
- 2** **John McEnroe – 1990 Australian Open:** McEnroe was disqualified during his fourth-round match after receiving three code violations for unsportsmanlike conduct, racket abuse, and swearing. He later claimed he was unaware of a recent rule change that reduced the default threshold from four to three violations.
- 3** **Jeff Tarango – 1995 Wimbledon:** Tarango walked off the court during his third-round match after a dispute with the umpire, accusing him of being corrupt. His refusal to continue led to his default, and he was subsequently banned from the tournament the following year.
- 4** **Alexander Zverev – 2022 Mexican Open:** After a doubles match loss, Zverev repeatedly struck the umpire's chair with his racket, narrowly missing the official's feet. His aggressive behaviour led to his disqualification from the tournament.
- 5** **Novak Djokovic – 2020 US Open:** During a match against Pablo Carreño Busta, Djokovic, frustrated after losing a game, hit a ball that unintentionally struck a line judge in the throat. This action led to his immediate disqualification from the tournament.



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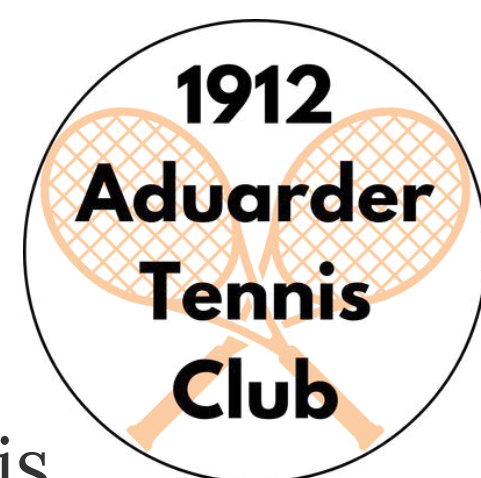


1ST WORKSHOP IN THE NETHERLANDS



Mark Jan Greebe - GRSA Instructor, held the first workshop in the Netherlands in Feb, 2025.

Held at Aduarder Tennis Club, it was the first chance **Stan Naaktgeboren** had to acquire some more knowledge and take his **GRSA Certified Pro Master Stringer** exam.



An exam which he passed with flying colours and is now on the road to take the next level of certification, in this case the **Competition & Competition Master certification**, designed to help bridge the gap and prepare stringers for the tour certification level which is more demanding and requires a deeper level of knowledge and experience that this certification brings.

Well done Stan, on to the next level!



Contact Mark Jan Greebe for more information about the next workshop.

 mark.jg@grsa-international.com

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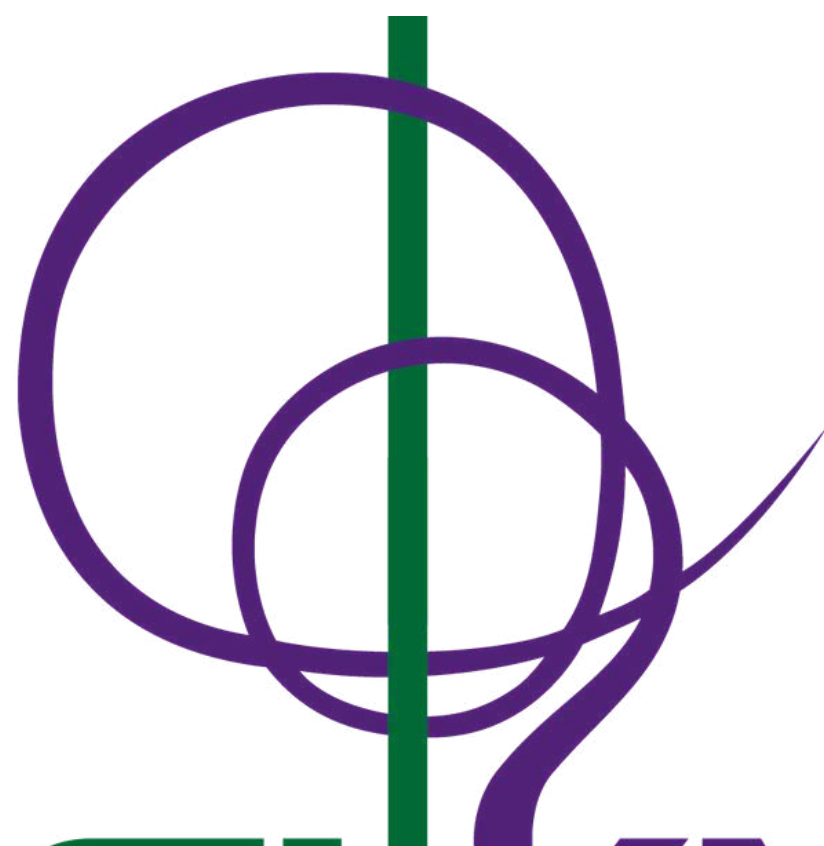
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GRSA WORKSHOPS IN IRELAND



GRSA Instructor Roger Henry - Ireland, played host to 2 Beginner Workshops in February. Greystones Lawn Tennis Club on the outskirts of Dublin welcomed 6 keen participants:

Lesley, Gráinne, Gareth, Alex, Marcel & Federico.

During the 2 days, under the guidance and watchful eye of Roger, everyone worked hard whilst gaining more knowledge and plenty of practical stringing practice.

Roger explained "It was great to work with all of our budding stringers and welcome them to the GRSA family. A few have already expressed a keen interest to work towards the next stage. I also want to take this opportunity to thank Gareth Hixson (Club Manager) at Greystones Lawn Tennis Club for looking after us all."



roger@grsa-international.com
+44 7599 639390

"Also a big thank you to Federico Raffo & team from HEAD Ireland (Daricia Sports) for their support with strings & grips & the provision of one of the HEAD stringing machines. HEAD is one of the GRSA Global Partners so it is great to work with them at a local level. Thanks to Richard & Daniel at GRSA Head Office for all their continued help and support"



"I am looking forward to setting up and running future workshops throughout Ireland and create a network of GRSA Certified Stringers who can ensure that the stringing needs of all players and their teams are well looked after"



While you're taking in some of the latest news from GRSA, why not listen to Roger's playlist on Spotify, you might find some old classics or even things you'd never think a stringer would listen to.



Shape the Future of Our Conference: Your Feedback Matters!

As we plan the next edition of our annual conference this November, we're reaching out to you – our dedicated and vibrant community of professionals. Your insights and feedback are invaluable in helping us craft an event that's engaging, inspiring, and perfectly tailored to your interests. Let's work together to make this year's conference even better than the last.

Help Us Create the Ultimate Experience

We're committed to delivering an event that provides exceptional value to every attendee. From innovative workshops and expert-led presentations to the latest in tech and branding, we want to ensure that every aspect of the conference exceeds your expectations.

Accommodation, Travel, and Extra Activities

The conference will be held at a beautiful resort, where accommodation will be available for attendees. Staying on-site ensures you have easy access to all sessions, networking opportunities, and activities without the hassle of commuting. If you need discount codes or additional information, feel free to contact us.

For those looking to explore beyond the conference schedule, we are also planning extra activities to enhance your experience. Whether it's local excursions, group outings, or relaxation options, we'll have something for everyone.

When it comes to flights, timing can make all the difference. Here are some tips to help you snag the best deals based on your location:

North America: Book domestic flights 1-3 months in advance for the best prices. For international flights, aim for 2-8 months ahead.

Europe: Book flights within Europe 1-2 months in advance, while international flights are best booked 3-6 months prior.

Asia: For domestic flights, book 2-3 weeks in advance. For international routes, start looking at prices 4-8 months ahead.

Australia and New Zealand: Domestic flights are cheapest 4-6 weeks in advance, while international travel should be planned 6-12 months ahead.

Flight prices fluctuate based on demand, so set alerts on platforms like Google Flights or Skyscanner to track fare changes. Tuesdays and Wednesdays are often the best days to find deals.

We'd Love to Hear From You so email is at: info@grsa-international.com

This conference is for you, and your feedback is at the heart of its success. Please take a few moments to let us know what you loved about last year's event, what you'd like to see more of, and any fresh ideas you'd like to bring to the table, we look forward to hearing from you.

2025

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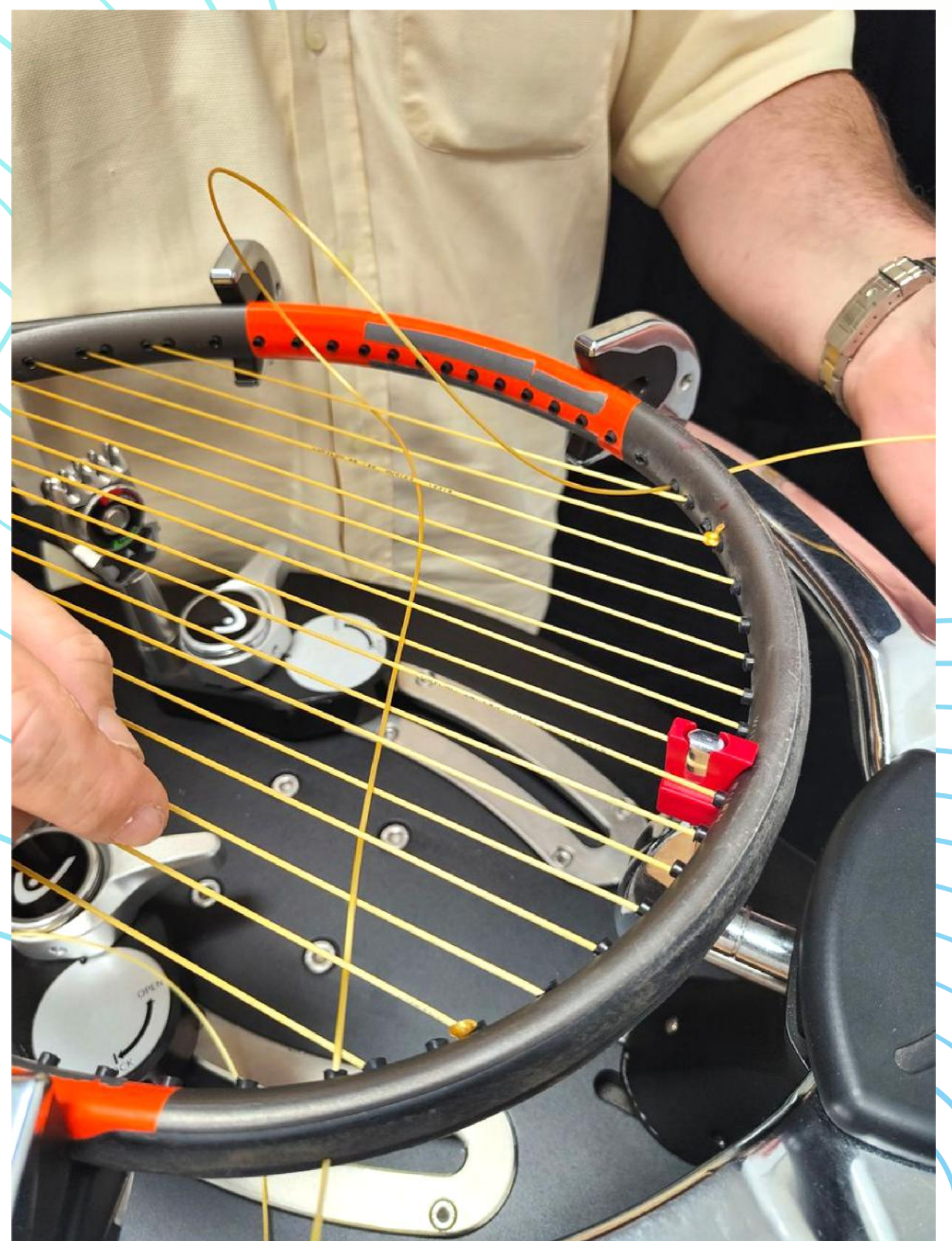
An easy tip on how to start your crosses on a 2 piece restring (4 knots)

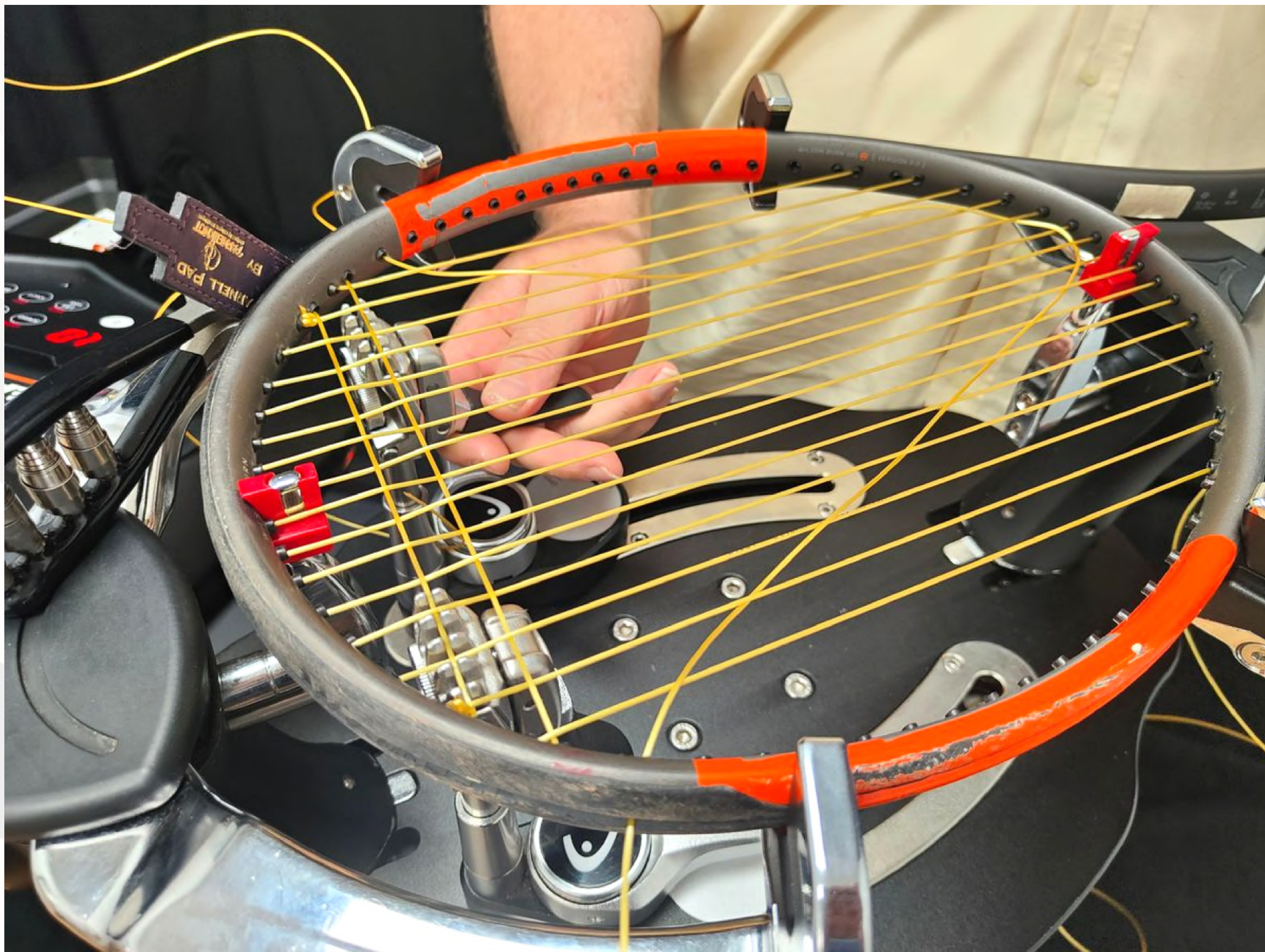


Once you have finished the mains and tied off, you are going to install the crosses from the head working towards the throat, to maintain frame integrity. If you start by threading the top cross, this means that 6 metres of string is pulled through the grommets and then the 2nd cross, another 6 metres of string also pulled through the stringbed.

If you are stringing with natural gut or a multifilament this means that by the time you get to the 3rd cross, the string has already been pulled through the mains twice, with the resulting friction and wear.

To give an alternative to starting on the top cross, my tip for this month is to start the crosses directly under the last outside main. Some frames have 1, 2 or 3 crosses above the last main. If you always start your crosses directly below the last main, then the length of string you will have to pull through the mains will be reduced to a minimum and the string will still be pristine when you start the cross below the last main.



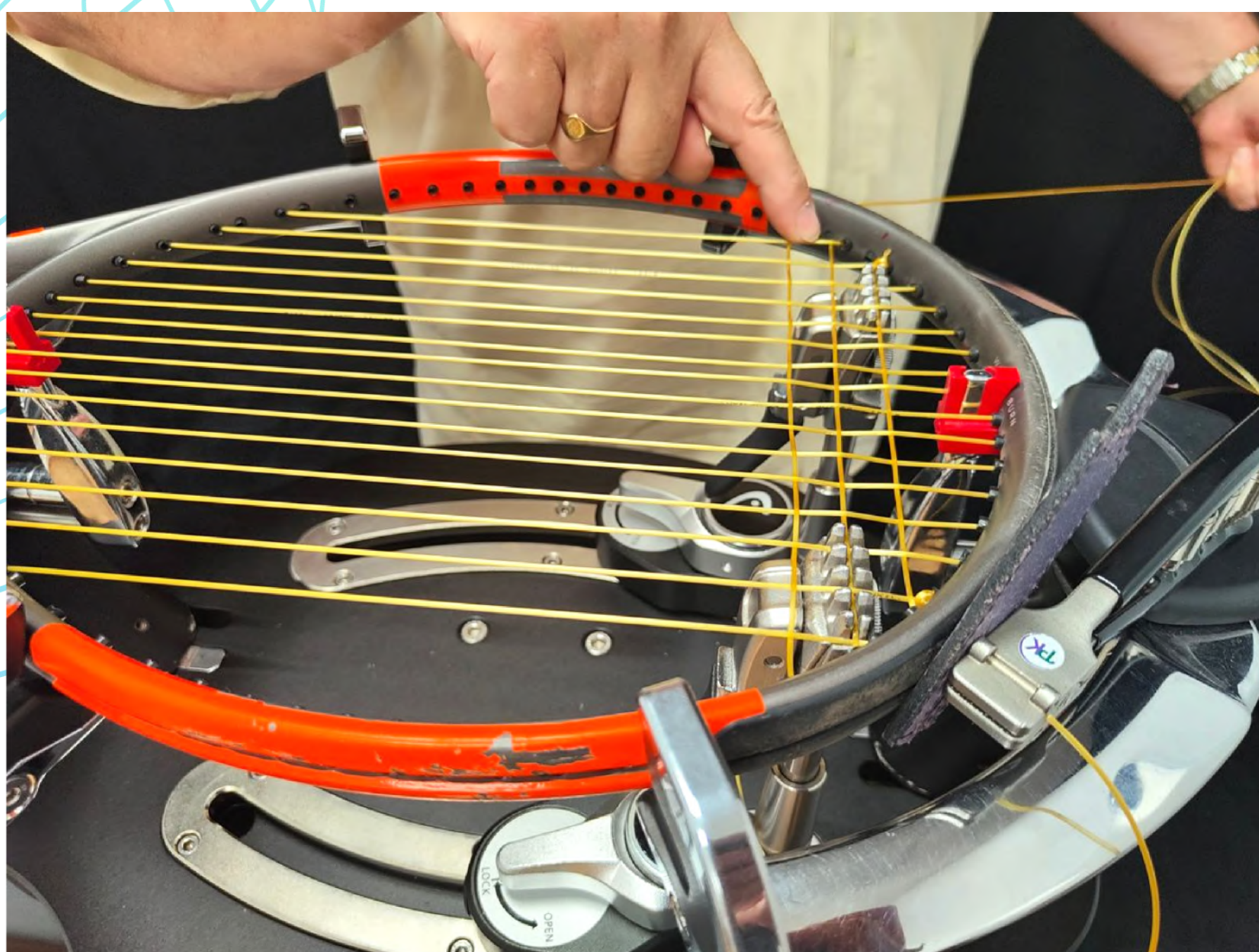


On the example shown, there is only one cross above the last main, so I will start on cross number two, thread enough string through to string the first two crosses and reach the tension head. Place my starting clamp on the string outside the frame (not forgetting the Parnell Pad) and then tension the first cross, clamp it and as the 2nd cross is already installed thread the 3rd cross through so that you string “one-ahead” and then carry on normally towards the throat.

Using this tip means that a natural gut restring will look as clean as possible, and the “fresh” gut is in the hitting area.

Any tips to share with your fellow stringers? Send them through to us via email and will include them in this section of the GRSA ATW MAGAZINE.

media@grsa-international.com



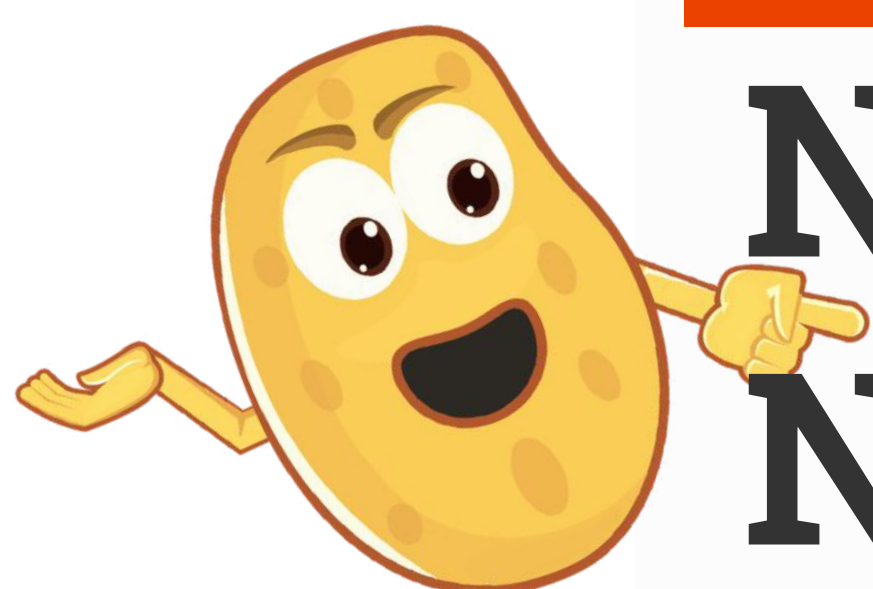
NICK DOWN Prince Triple Threat Pattern

Time to take a look at stringing the more challenging rackets on the list of non-standard squash rackets again. We will look at one racket per month starting with the Prince Triple Threat Pattern, which has been used for many years and is still in use today.

The main signs are that unlike most other Prince Premium patterns, there are 17 crosses, three double-barrelled grommets on each side at the head and a Powering at the throat.

When installing the mains, you must start at the head, alternate at the Powering and achieve a “hard-weave all around”. This means, the bottom cross string nearest to the powering, the powering itself and all 6 of the double-barrelled grommets.

I always have used a two-piece method for Prince models to avoid long runs of string around the outside of the frame.



Nick's Nugget

Save time on the easy weave side, when stringing PowerRing, ArchPower, hinge and inverted bridge patterns. Pass the string through the mains at the throat.

**MAINS:-**

Starting at the Head, LH1 down Below ring.
 Above ring to LH2. RH1 down Above ring.
 Below ring to RH2. RH2 to RH3,
 RH3 down Above ring. Below ring to RH4.
 LH2 to LH3. LH3 down Below ring.
 Above ring to LH4. LH4 to LH5 (upper hole of 2)
 LH5 down Below ring. Above ring to LH6 (upper hole of 2).
 RH4 to RH5 (lower hole of 2). RH5 down Above ring.
 Below ring to RH6 (lower hole of 2). RH6 to RH8 (skip RH7)
 RH8 down Above ring. Below ring to RH11 (skip RH 9 & 10, then
 into lower hole of 2). LH6 to LH8 (skip LH7)
 LH8 down Below ring. Above ring to LH11 (skip LH 9 & 10, then
 into upper hole of 2).

CROSSES:-

Fill in the gaps (remembering ONLY one string per hole).

Start at LH5 with knot at LH4. From the lower hole of LH5 go
 above the 1st Main you come to, continue to weave. Last cross is
 tied off at LT2, (up 1).



This pattern is quite quick and easy, once attempted a few
 times. When it was first produced, stringers refused to string it,
 quite unbelievable!

The most common mistake is not alternating the mains, above
 and below the powering. When putting in the 1st main in the
 centre on both sides, it is crucial to remember to not put them
 both either under or over the ring together; if you do that, it will
 guarantee a non-satisfactory outcome.

Another common error seen on any racket with double-
 barrelled grommets, is to put two strings in the same hole.
 Wherever there is a double-barrelled grommet, it's important to
 remember; only 1 string per hole!

EMAIL ME AT:

nick@grsa-international.com

Next month, the Prince O3 pattern.



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

Click the logo to listen to my list

U23 World Squash Championships Winners to Qualify for PSA World Championships

World Squash and the Professional Squash Association (PSA) have announced an exciting new development for the upcoming U23 World Squash Championships: the winners of the men's and women's singles events will automatically qualify for the prestigious PSA World Championships.

Inaugural Event in Karachi

The inaugural U23 World Squash Championships are set to take place in Karachi, Pakistan, from April 6-10, featuring a 32-player draw for both the men's and women's singles events. Each event will allow a maximum of two players per National Federation, competing for a share of a \$60,000 prize pot and valuable PSA ranking points.

Pathway to the PSA World Championships

The champions of both categories will secure a spot at the 2024-2025 PSA World Championships, scheduled for May 9-17 in the United States, which boasts a massive \$1,220,000 prize pool. This initiative provides an incredible opportunity for emerging players to compete against the world's best on one of squash's biggest stages.

Leadership Perspectives

World Squash CEO William Louis-Marie expressed his excitement:

"It's fantastic that the U23 World Squash Championship winners will get to compete against the very best in the world at this season's PSA World Championships. This announcement certainly adds to the excitement... It represents a great opportunity for players ending their junior careers to continue testing themselves against the world's best as they begin their senior careers."

PSA CEO Alex Gough echoed this sentiment:

"The PSA is thrilled to be able to support the U23 World Squash Championships... The event bridges the gap between junior squash and the professional Tour, helping young talents hit the ground running. Good luck to everyone competing in Karachi, and we look forward to seeing the best young talents at the PSA World Championships in May."

A New Chapter for Young Squash Stars

This landmark decision marks a significant step forward in supporting the transition from junior to senior competition, offering a seamless pathway for emerging stars to showcase their talents on the global stage. As the countdown to the U23 World Squash Championships begins, anticipation is building for what promises to be a thrilling tournament.

Joel Makin Triumphs at 2025 Pittsburgh Open in Epic Battle Against Youssef Ibrahim

Wales' Joel Makin claimed the 2025 Pittsburgh Open title with a gritty victory over Egypt's Youssef Ibrahim in a thrilling 75-minute showdown at Steel City Squash. Demonstrating incredible resilience and tactical prowess, Makin secured the win with a 3-1 scoreline, battling through long, punishing rallies and overcoming an early deficit.

A Fierce Contest of Endurance and Skill

The final opened with an exhausting 27-minute first game, characterized by grueling rallies as both players aimed to dominate the back of the court. The game was tied at 9-9 before Ibrahim edged ahead with a perfectly placed forehand drop and capitalized on an unforced error from Makin to take the lead.

Despite losing the opener, the demanding exchanges began to favour Makin as Ibrahim appeared to tire. The World No. 5 maintained his high-tempo play, forcing his opponent into errors and strokes, and eventually leveled the match at 1-1.

Turning the Tide

Ibrahim started the third game strongly, racing to an 8-4 lead with impressive shot-making. However, Makin's defensive tenacity and tactical retrievals enabled him to claw back, tying the game at 9-9 before clinching it 11-9, marking his first lead of the match.

With momentum on his side, Makin controlled the fourth game, building an early 5-1 advantage. Although Ibrahim continued to produce spectacular winners, the Welshman's consistency and strategic play proved too much, leading to an 11-7 victory and securing the Pittsburgh Open title.

Makin Reflects on the Battle

"It was a tough week. Youssef was playing some great stuff... If he's beating [World Champion Diego Elias] 3-0 then that's a very, very high level," Makin stated post-match. He praised Ibrahim's performance while emphasizing his own focus on maintaining quality and making minor adjustments after the first game.

On the intense first game, Makin said, "I wasn't deliberately elongating it... I just thought it was high quality with good exchanges. I would've liked to have nicked it, but when he's playing that well... you've got to accept it and make a couple of minor adjustments and go again."

Looking Forward

Makin now sets his sights on the upcoming Gold-level Texas Open, confident in his form and eager to continue his momentum. "It's a good week, it hasn't been too many miles on the legs. I'll try and recover over the next day or two and then go again," he remarked, showing his readiness for the challenges ahead.

A Well-Earned Victory

This victory not only adds another prestigious title to Makin's growing list of achievements but also cements his status as one of the most resilient and strategic players on the PSA Tour. As he prepares for the next leg of his campaign, all eyes will be on the Welshman to see if he can extend his winning form in Texas.

Raphael Kandra Wins 2025 Pembroke Open de Montreal

Germany's Raphael Kandra secured his 16th PSA Tour title by defeating home favourite David Baillargeon in the final of the Pembroke Open de Montreal. The match took place at Club Sportif MAA in Quebec, where Baillargeon had strong support from his local fans.

Path to the Final

- David Baillargeon reached the final by defeating Kareem El Torkey in the semi-finals, who had previously eliminated second seed Curtis Malik.
- Raphael Kandra, the tournament's top seed, narrowly survived a five-game quarterfinal against rising star Samuel Osborne-Wylde before cruising past fellow German Jeremias Azaña in the semi-finals.

Final Showdown

In an all-left-handed clash, Kandra and Baillargeon delivered a thrilling contest:

- Game 1: Kandra fought back from 3-1 down, rattling off seven consecutive points to lead 8-3. Despite a late surge from Baillargeon, Kandra secured the game 11-9.
- Game 2: After trailing 4-0, Kandra showcased his resilience by winning another 11-9.
- Game 3: Baillargeon led 6-4, but Kandra regained momentum to seal the victory 11-7, securing his first Tour title since 2023.



Yassin Shohdy Triumphs at DJED – SSA Challenger Tournament 1

Yassin Shohdy, one of the PSA Challenger 'Ones to Watch' for 2025, claimed his fourth title in 10 months at the DJED – SSA Challenger Tournament 1 in Egypt. The 20-year-old left-hander entered as the top seed after impressive victories in Egypt, Hong Kong, and Malaysia last year.

Tournament Journey

- Shohdy dominated his early matches against Omar Bahgat and Ahmed Sherif.
- In the semi-finals, he faced a tough battle against Taha Elshafei, with two of the three games going to tiebreaks.

Final Battle

In the final, Shohdy took on fellow left-hander and second seed Seif Tamer:

- Game 1: Tamer edged a tense tiebreak 15-13.
- Games 2-4: Shohdy responded with a commanding performance, winning 11-5, 11-7, 11-6 to secure his fourth career title.

Shohdy's Rapid Rise

At just 20 years old, Shohdy has now won four titles in just five finals on the PSA Tour, reinforcing his status as one of squash’s most exciting young talents.



Joel Makin - 2025 Pittsburgh Open title



Raphael Kendra
Pembroke Open de Montreal in Quebec



Yassin Shohdy
DJED – SSA Challenger Tournament 1.

Kuwait is set to take centre stage in the world of professional padel as it prepares to host the inaugural edition of the FIP World Cup for Pairs. This prestigious event, driven by BNK Holding in collaboration with Premier Padel, will take place from 3rd to 9th November 2025. As a major highlight of the 2025 season, the tournament will crown the first-ever "World Champions" officially recognised by the International Padel Federation (FIP), awarding them 2,000 ranking points and a share of the prize fund exceeding €1 million, equally distributed between the men's and women's categories.

Kuwait was chosen as the host for this historic tournament following the resounding success of the Kuwait City Premier Padel P1, held in November 2024. The event firmly established the country as an emerging force in international padel, earning high praise from players for its exceptional organisation and outstanding playing conditions.

The prestigious "The Arena Kuwait" in Zahra, located in the Hawalli Governorate, will serve as the main venue for the event, with additional courts at the Rafa Nadal Academy. Kuwait has consistently demonstrated its growing passion for padel, having successfully hosted the CUPRA FIP Tour (Rise) event in November 2023 and the Asia-Africa qualifiers for the FIP World Padel Championships 2024 in Kuwait City last September.

Qualification for the FIP World Cup for Pairs will be determined by player rankings following the Milan P1, scheduled for 6th to 12th October 2025. The event will feature a qualification round and a main draw consisting of 48 men's pairs and 40 women's pairs, with competitors able to form teams with players of the same or different nationalities. The champions in both categories will receive 2,000 FIP ranking points, while the runners-up will be awarded 1,200 points.

CARRARO: "Kuwait is a special place," said FIP President Luigi Carraro. "It has already written important chapters in the history of our sport. Looking back is essential for moving forward and shaping the future, and choosing this venue for the inaugural edition of the FIP World Cup for Pairs perfectly aligns with Kuwait's passion and dedication to padel. A huge thank you to BNK Holding President Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Premier Padel, and the National Federation. I am confident that our teamwork and collaboration will ensure an extraordinary event."

AL-KHARAFI: "This marks a new era for padel in Kuwait and the region as we proudly host the FIP World Cup for Pairs, reflecting our unwavering commitment to the sport's future in the Middle East. Let's make history together," added Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, CEO and President of BNK Holding KSCC.

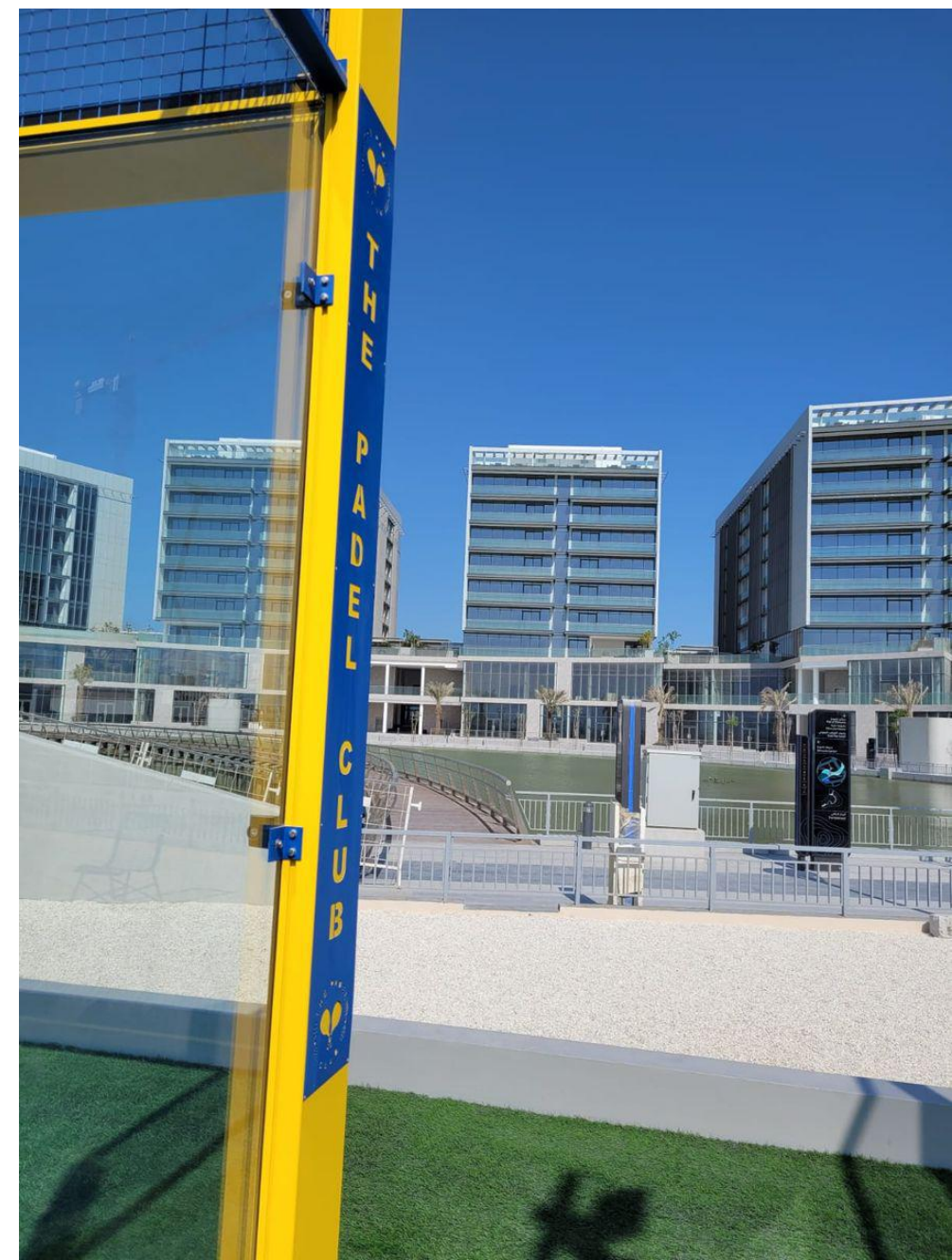
SUGDEN: "Last year's Premier Padel tournament was a spectacular event for both players and fans, firmly placing Kuwait on the global stage. The overwhelmingly positive response from players—who praised the world-class facilities and impeccable organisation—was instrumental in securing its place as the host of one of the sport's most significant events in 2025. It also reinforces our commitment to providing outstanding opportunities for players," commented David Sugden, CEO of Premier Padel.

• €1 million prize fund, equally split between men's and women's categories. • Winners earn 2,000 FIP points; finalists get 1,200. • "The Arena Kuwait" hosts the main court; extra courts at Rafa Nadal Academy. • Follows Kuwait's successful debut at Premier Padel P1 2024.

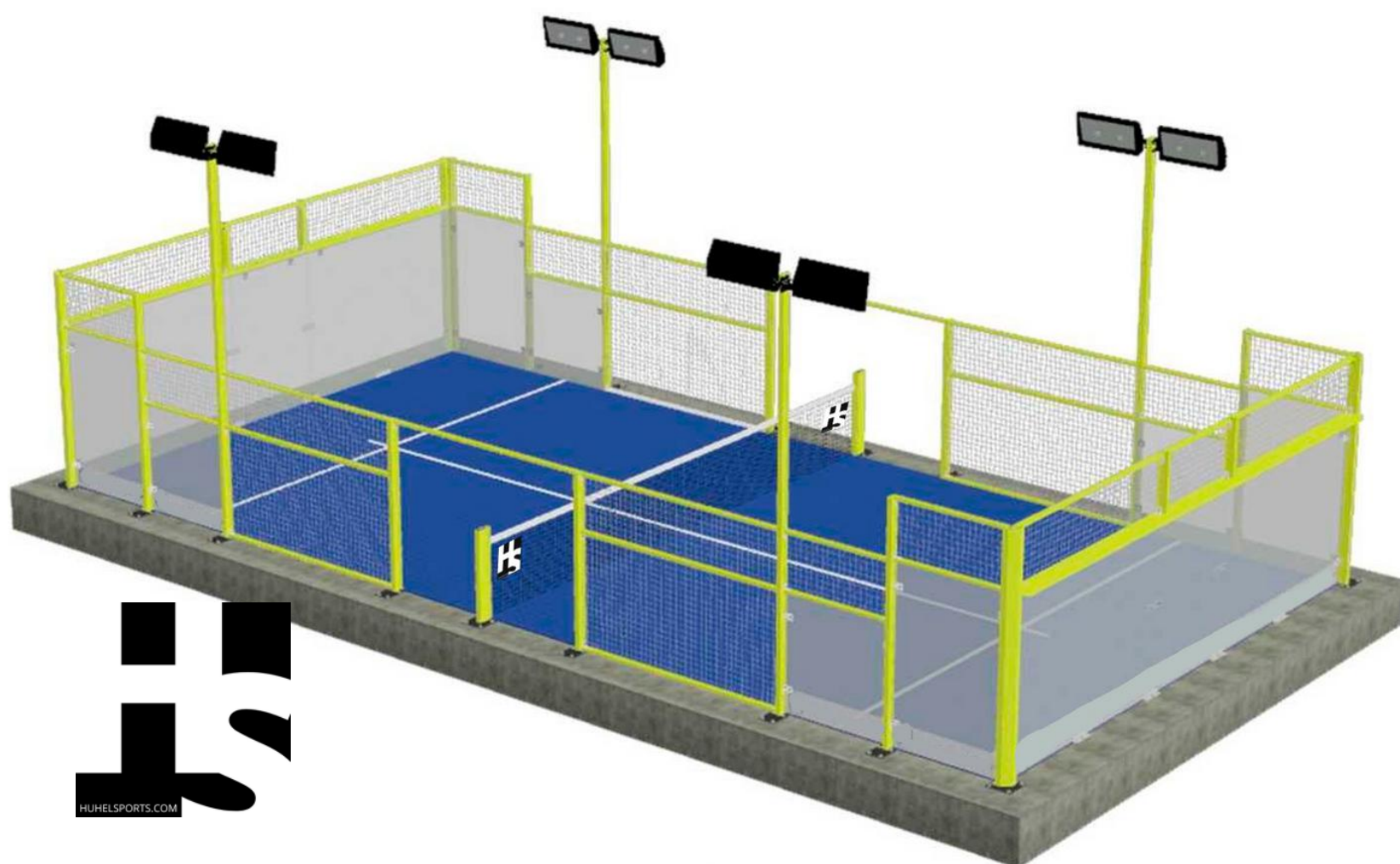
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It doesn't matter if you're an experienced player or just starting out, knowing where you can go to take part in open competitions is part of the fun of this forever growing sport, so here are some of the dates, visit the Pickleball Global website for more info.

WaPickleball 3rd Edition - Tournai, Belgium

EID: 1887 PRICE EUR 35

Organizer: Nicolas Bonsignore

EVENT - TOURNAMENT

Starting: May 30, 2025 to June 01, 2025

City: Brunehaut, Belgique

Tournament Venue: Pickleball Tournai

Registration Deadline: March 31, 2025 (OPEN)

Tier Level: 3

DUPR ROME OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP - 4TH ED.

EID: 1766 PRICE EUR 40

Organizer: Marco Maurizi

EVENT - TOURNAMENT

Starting: May 09, 2025 to May 11, 2025

City: Via Castore Durante, 88, Roma, Metropolitan City of Rome Capital, Italy

Tournament Venue: Augustea Sport City

Registration Deadline: May 03, 2025 (OPEN)

Tier Level: 3

Firenze Open Pickleball Championship

EID: 1916 PRICE EUR 40

Organizer: Filippo Galletti

EVENT - TOURNAMENT

Starting: May 30, 2025 to June 01, 2025

City: Firenze, FI, Italia

Tournament Venue: Chimera Club Ssd

Registration Deadline: May 27, 2025 (OPEN)

Tier Level: 1



Linkin Park Joins the Pickleball Craze: "Caught in the Pickle"

In a surprising but exciting crossover between music and sports, Linkin Park recently shared a photo on their Instagram account captioned "Caught in the pickle." This playful nod not only highlights the band's engagement with the rapidly growing sport of pickleball but also aligns them with a host of other celebrities who have embraced the game. The rise of pickleball has been particularly noteworthy in the racket sports community, and its growing popularity is now reaching new audiences, including the world of rock music.

Linkin Park's Foray into Pickleball

The Instagram post, dated February 8, 2025, features the band members on a pickleball court, paddles in hand, showcasing their enthusiasm for the sport. As they gear up for their "From Zero World Tour 2025," it appears that the band is incorporating recreational activities into their schedule to stay active and engaged while on the road. With pickleball's accessibility and social nature, it's no surprise that Linkin Park is getting involved.

Pickleball's Growing Celebrity Appeal

Pickleball has seen a surge in popularity not just among casual players and tennis fans but also among various high-profile athletes and entertainers. Linkin Park now joins a growing list of notable figures who have taken to the court, including:

Eugenie Bouchard – The former Wimbledon finalist has transitioned into professional pickleball while continuing her tennis career. Encouraged by the Professional Pickleball Association in 2023, Bouchard signed a three-year contract to compete in both sports.

Kristen Bell and Dax Shepard – This Hollywood power couple enjoys playing pickleball together and has even set up a court at home to compete against each other.

Leonardo DiCaprio – The Oscar-winning actor is known for his passion for sports, and pickleball has now become part of his routine.

Jamie Foxx – The versatile performer has taken up pickleball, further solidifying its status as a mainstream pastime.

The Allure of Pickleball in the Racquet Sports Community

For racket sports enthusiasts, pickleball offers a unique blend of tennis, badminton, and table tennis, making it both accessible and exciting. The sport's growth is reflected in its increasing professionalization, with tournaments, sponsorships, and endorsements fueling its expansion. For many, including Linkin Park, pickleball provides an engaging way to stay active while embracing a competitive yet social environment.



Fil-Am Brings Pickleball to Underprivileged Kids in Manila

Every evening at 6 p.m, the rooftop court of Manila Central Adventist Elementary School in Sta. Cruz, Manila, comes alive as children rally back and forth, learning the fast-growing sport of pickleball.

At the heart of this initiative is Gelfie Napoles, a 66-year-old Filipino-American from Los Angeles, California, who traveled to the Philippines in February to introduce the sport to underprivileged kids for free.

Napoles, a retired X-ray technician, had long dreamed of bringing pickleball to the poor communities of the Philippines.



His initial plan was to launch the program in Tondo, where he grew up before migrating to the U.S. at age eight. However, without a suitable court, he found a home for his mission in Sta. Cruz.

With the help of an acquaintance and donations from the pickleball community, Napoles gathered paddles, balls, and a net, creating an inclusive space for kids to learn.

Breaking Barriers in Pickleball

"I have friends playing pickleball in America. And they say it's for the rich people because they are the ones who can afford these 200-dollar paddles."

"It should be for everybody. In America, yung mga mahihirap na athletes, they became famous. Who knows—one of these kids could be a champion?"

One of Napoles' 30 students, 14-year-old Jake Inacay, dreams of becoming a professional pickleball player. He enjoys the energy Napoles brings to the court.

A Growing Community, A Brighter Future

A pickleball tournament is set for February 27, marking the kids' final session with Napoles before he returns to the U.S. at the end of the month.

Though his visit is temporary, his impact will last. The Manila Central Adventist Church, which owns the school's court, has pledged to continue the training program.

"Instead of playing on the streets or spending hours on their phones, this is a good way to keep them engaged."*

For Napoles, this is more than just teaching a sport—it's about inspiring a new generation.

"It gives them hope. It gives them motivation that you can play the sport and be somebody."



Ben Johns and Anna Leigh Waters Stunned in First Loss in 340 Days

For the first time in nearly a year, pickleball's most dominant mixed doubles duo, Ben Johns and Anna Leigh Waters, have suffered a defeat at the MESA Open. The team of Anna Bright and Dekel Bar handed them their first loss since March 18, 2024, when Bright—alongside a different partner, Andrei Daescu—was also responsible for their previous defeat.

With this victory, Bright cements herself as the only player to have bested Johns and Waters twice in the past 18 months, solidifying her place as the second-best mixed doubles female player in the world.

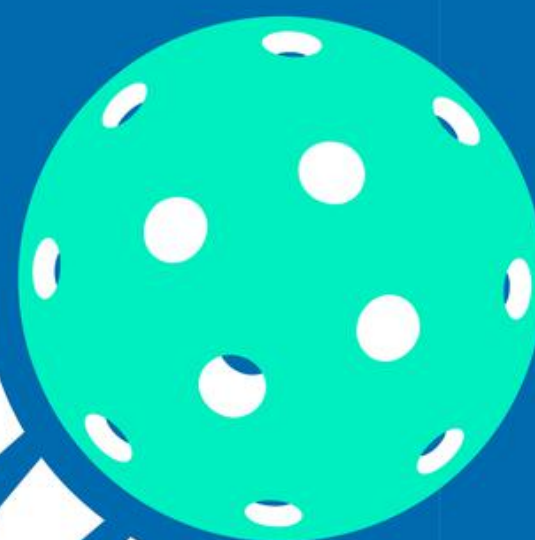
The thrilling semifinal match lasted nearly 90 minutes, with Bright and Bar taking the first game in dramatic fashion, 12-10. Johns and Waters responded with an 11-7 win in game two, setting up a decisive third game. Despite falling behind 5-1 early, Bright and Bar stormed back, ultimately sealing the match with four straight points to win 11-9.

While this loss won't erase Johns and Waters' dominance, it serves as a reminder that challengers are closing in. For now, though, they remain the gold standard of mixed doubles pickleball—just with a little more competition at their heels.



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Canada Claims 14th Consecutive Pan American Mixed Team Championships Title

Canada continued their reign in the Pan American Mixed Team Championships, clinching their 14th consecutive title and 21st overall at the Pan Am Cup 2025 held in Aguascalientes, Mexico. Despite an early setback, the Canadians showcased their dominance by defeating rivals USA in the final.

Final Match Highlights

Mixed Doubles

Presley Smith/Jennie Gai (USA) defeated Ty Alexander Lindeman/Crystal Lai (Canada) 21-17, 21-12
USA took an early lead with a convincing win in just 29 minutes.

Men's Singles

Brian Yang (Canada) def. Enrico Keoni Asuncion (USA) 21-3, 21-12
Yang's dominant performance levelled the score for Canada.

Men's Doubles

Ty Alexander Lindeman/Kevin Lee (Canada) def. Chen Zhi Yi/Presley Smith (USA) 21-15, 18-21, 21-19
In a thrilling three-game battle, Lindeman redeemed his earlier loss, giving Canada the lead.

Women's Singles

Michelle Li (Canada) def. Lydia Chao (USA) 21-10, 21-8
Michelle Li, Canada's star player, secured the title with a commanding victory in just 20 minutes.

Path to the Final

Canada topped Group
A with dominant victories against:

Mexico (5-0)

Cuba (5-0)

Defeated Guatemala (3-1) in the semifinals.

USA led Group B by overcoming:

Guatemala (4-1)

Costa Rica (5-0)

Advanced to the final by defeating Brazil (3-1) in the semifinals.



Canada's Continued Dominance

This victory solidifies Canada's legacy as the powerhouse of badminton in the Pan American region, extending their remarkable winning streak to an amazing 14 straight titles.

Historic Day for Thailand at DAIHATSU Indonesia Masters 2025

Jakarta, Indonesia – Finals day at the DAIHATSU Indonesia Masters 2025 marked a historic moment for Thailand, as both men's and women's singles titles were won by Thai players for the first time in HSBC BWF World Tour history.

At the Istora Senayan on Sunday, Ratchanok Intanon ended a 10-month title drought, while Kunlavut Vitidsarn became the first Thai men's singles player to claim the Indonesia Masters crown.



Intanon Ends Title Drought

Intanon, a former world champion, had not won a title since the 2024 Spain Masters. However, she delivered a strong performance to defeat Sim Yu Jin 21-18, 21-17, sealing her first victory of the year.

“Ten months? Oh, that’s fine, it’s not a year,” she laughed when reminded of her title wait.

“This gives me so much motivation. It reminds me that I can return to the top eight and reset my goals. My fitness is improving after a long injury, and I feel positive. It’s encouraging to start the year with a title.”

Intanon’s confidence showed at match point when she surprised her opponent with a backhand serve.

“Honestly, I don’t know why I did it. I wanted to throw Sim off balance. I’d been serving long most of the match, and maybe she was overthinking her response. I needed to beat my own doubts first to seal the win.”

Vitidsarn Stuns Christie in Thriller

Later in the day, Kunlavut Vitidsarn defeated local favourite Jonatan Christie 18-21, 21-17, 21-18 in an intense men’s singles final. Christie, who aimed for a second title on home soil, struggled with Vitidsarn’s patient, rally-driven playstyle.

“Christie is a top player, so my focus was on enjoying the match and learning from him,”* said Vitidsarn. “This win feels special. After crashing out in the India Open first round last week, I didn’t imagine I’d be champion here. My form after the Olympics hasn’t been great, so this victory means a lot. I need to build on this momentum heading into the All England.”*

Vitidsarn, known for his dart-throwing celebration, inspired by Tottenham Hotspur’s James Maddison**, admitted he was too exhausted to celebrate properly.

“Honestly, I was exhausted. I thought about it, but with Tottenham leading Liverpool 1-0 in the Carabao Cup semifinals, I didn’t feel the need (laughs).”



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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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