



GRSA-INTERNATIONAL.COM / SEPTEMBER 2024

GRSA INTERNATIONAL ATW MAGAZINE

MAIDEN US OPEN TITLES



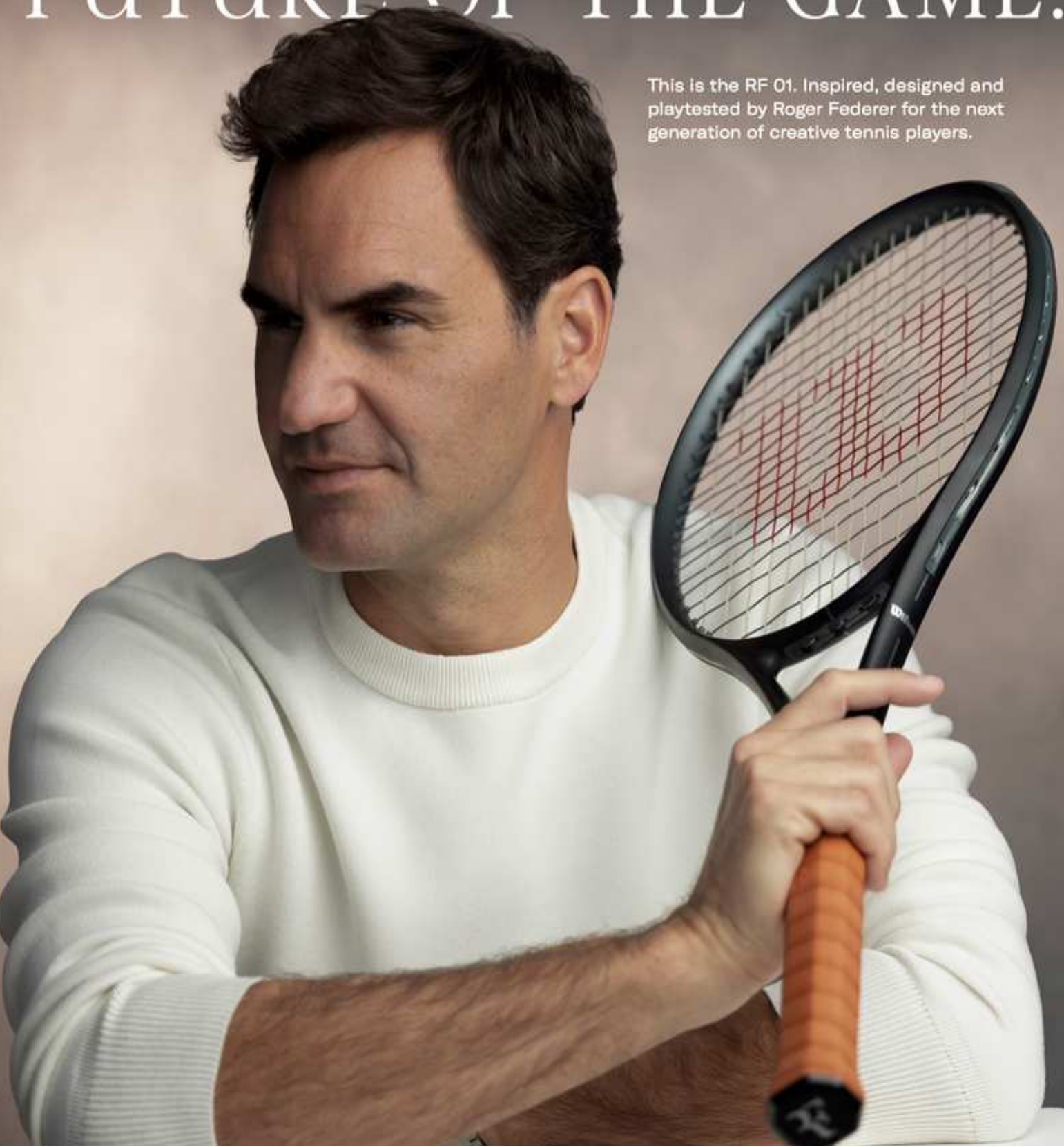
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INTRODUCING A RACKET FOR THE FUTURE OF THE GAME.

This is the RF 01. Inspired, designed and playtested by Roger Federer for the next generation of creative tennis players.



CONTENT

Section 1 - Tennis

The US Open, where home favourites shine, giants fall and yet, we still get amazing tennis and some very special moments. First time winners, shock exits, you name it, it happened. News from PTR and if you didn't know how strong Zverev really is, we take a look at some of his stats.

Section 2 - GRSA INTERNATIONAL

The GRSA Conference is getting closer and busy, take a look at what's in store, plus a new instructor joins the team in the Netherlands, we introduce you to Mark Jan Greebe.

Section 3 - Squash

Emrik Baron II, do you remember how special this racket was? Well, Nick takes a look at this iconic piece of history.

Section 4 - Padel

Iconic pairings show off their skills in some epic encounters.

Section 5 - Pickleball

Anna Bright and Rachel Rohrabacher, a force to be reckoned with.

Section 6 - Badminton

It's been a busy month, Malaysian magic, China Open and the return to form of a legend.

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

Jannik Soars in New York

Jannik Sinner's 2024 US Open victory is a landmark moment in his young career, as he lifted his first title at the New York Slam, adding to a stellar year in which he also triumphed at the Australian Open. Sinner's resilience was on full display throughout the tournament, culminating in a final showdown against American Taylor Fritz, where the Italian showcased the poise and determination that has made him world number one.



Fritz is the first male American to play a US Open final since 2006



This latest Grand Slam win comes on the back of a season rife with controversy, after Sinner faced scrutiny due to two positive tests for clostebol, a banned substance linked to muscle growth. However, the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) determined that the substance had entered his system accidentally, tracing the contamination back to his physiotherapist. Cleared of any wrongdoing, Sinner expressed relief and gratitude, reflecting on how the investigation had cast a shadow over his season.

After sealing the win, Sinner acknowledged the emotional toll the ordeal had taken but highlighted how important this victory was for him personally and professionally. "This title means so much because the last period of my career was not easy," the 23-year-old Italian said, acknowledging that the investigation still lingered in his mind but emphasizing how he managed to stay focused and perform when it mattered most.



This year has been transformative for Sinner, who, after capturing his first Grand Slam at the Australian Open, cemented his place among tennis's elite. His triumphs have not only solidified his ranking as world number one but also marked him as one of the sport's brightest stars. His grit, both on and off the court, is shaping a legacy that seems destined for even greater heights in the years to come.

Aryna Almost at the Top Teer!

Aryna Sabalenka is just 2169 points (at the time of writing this article) behind the world number one Iga Swiatek, her performance throughout the US Open has been sublime and her smile the beacon of light as she rejoices in glory with her maiden US Open title.

A year ago, her chances were scuffed with a home crowd onslaught pushed Aryna to her limits and Coco to a home turf win. This year it was a different story, Sabalenka was prepared for the crowds backing of the local Pegula and she was defiant, she even started to win them over a little, but they pulled back and tried their best to lift Jessica and get her back in the match.

It was a straight sets match but no pushover, Jessica put up a good fight with some extremely well fought points, she just couldn't get the breaks when she needed them. Her forehand was working well, close up net work wasn't really there, she was stumped and then found some form, it just wasn't enough to take the points she needed to and edge past Aryna.



"It's also very special place here, the US Open," Aryna commented in her press conference after the win. "I also had a lot of tough losses in the past. I was always hoping that one day I'll be able to hold this beautiful trophy. It's been always my dream."

"That's why it's very special, because no matter what, every time I was coming back stronger, and I was learning, I never gave up on this dream, and yeah, you know, it means a lot."



1 hour and 53 minutes to win the match 7-5, 7-5, on a rainy day in New York, and the even though the roof was closed on the Arthur Ashe stadium, these young ladies put on a brilliant performance for all to see.



This year's US Open in New York delivered some surprising exits, with major contenders in both the men's and women's draws crashing out earlier than expected. The men's side saw two of the sport's biggest names, Novak Djokovic and Carlos Alcaraz, suffer uncharacteristic defeats.



Carlos Alcaraz, the reigning Wimbledon and French Open champion, was ousted in the second round by Botic van de Zandschulp. The Dutch player, ranked 74th in the world, produced one of the tournament's biggest shocks, defeating Alcaraz in straight sets 6-1, 7-5, 6-4. This defeat marked Alcaraz's worst performance at the US Open in four years.

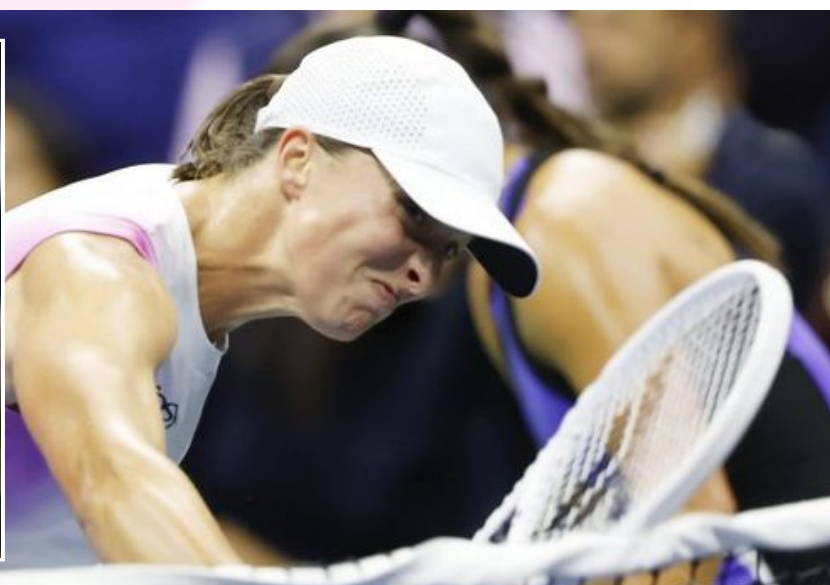


Equally surprising was Novak Djokovic's third-round exit. The Serbian, fresh from his Olympic triumph, was knocked out by Alexei Popyrin in a four-set battle. The Australian's aggressive play and Djokovic's uncharacteristically poor serving led to a 6-4, 6-4, 2-6, 6-4 upset, ending Djokovic's hopes of a 25th Grand Slam title.

On the women's side, defending champion Coco Gauff saw her title defense cut short in the fourth round by fellow American Emma Navarro. In a three-set thriller, Navarro defeated Gauff 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, repeating her Wimbledon success against the same opponent earlier in the season.



Another significant upset came when Iga Świątek, the 2021 US Open champion, lost in the quarterfinals to Jessica Pegula. The American triumphed in straight sets, 6-2, 6-4, denying Świątek a shot at another title.



These early exits created an unexpected path for the eventual champions, Jannik Sinner and Aryna Sabalenka, both of whom capitalized on the absence of the sport's biggest names to claim their first US Open titles.



NEWS.....NEWS.....NEWS.....NEWS.....NEWS.....NEWS

Wesley Chapel, FL (September 2024) — Professional Tennis Registry (PTR) and Professional Pickleball Registry (PPR), leading organizations that certify and educate racquet sports professionals, were excited to announce the grand opening of their new office on September 24th at 9 AM.

Previously located on Hilton Head Island, SC, PTR and PPR have selected Wesley Chapel for their new headquarters due to the area's rich tennis history at Saddlebrook Resort, a world-class facility known for its top-notch courts, hospitality, and vibrant community.

The decision to relocate marks a new chapter for PTR and PPR as they aim to expand their presence and continue driving growth in the racquet sports industry. PTR and PPR's new office is conveniently located just steps away from Saddlebrook's tennis and pickleball courts, providing an ideal environment for racquet sports professionals to grow and collaborate.

In celebration of the grand opening, PTR and PPR will host a week of networking opportunities and workshops tailored to racquet sports professionals. The organizations are also planning a range of exciting events in the coming year, from coach education programs to competitive play opportunities open to both members and non-members.

Peter Hurley, the newly appointed CEO of PTR, conveyed his enthusiasm for the transition: "This represents a significant new chapter for both PTR and PPR. Saddlebrook's exceptional facilities, coupled with the dynamic tennis and pickleball community in Wesley Chapel, make it an ideal location for our new headquarters. I am eager to lead PTR and PPR as we advance our growth and continue to influence the future of racquet sports from this outstanding base."

ZVEREV'S POWER

Alexander Zverev has built his career on dominating service games, regularly overpowering opponents with a potent first serve. But in recent competition, the German star has also become a force on return, creating a lethal combination for those across the net.

This blend of serve and return mastery has led Zverev to accumulate a tour-leading 56 match wins and secure his seventh qualification for the Nitto ATP Finals.

At 27, Zverev has proven his all-around game by ranking among the Top 5 in both serve quality (8.8) and return quality (7.49), based on data from Tennis Data Innovations in partnership with TennisViz. This Shot Quality metric is measured in real-time by analyzing key factors like speed, spin, depth, width, and the shot's impact on the opponent. Zverev excels by combining power with heavy spin.

A crucial factor in Zverev's rise has been the improvement in his forehand Shot Quality. Last season, he ranked 13th in this category, but now he's surged to fifth, complementing his already lethal backhand, where he remains fourth on the leaderboard.

"Sascha likes to serve big, return big, but he's also intelligent on court, he can read the game very, very well," said Mischa Zverev, a former No. 25 player and key member of his brother's coaching team.

This season, Zverev has been pounding his first serve at an average of 129 mph, well above the tour's 116 mph average. His second serve is just as menacing, averaging 105 mph—11 mph faster than the tour standard.

Zverev's Serve Performance:

- 1st Serve Speed: 129 mph (Tour Avg. = 116 mph)
- 1st Serve Accuracy: 59 cm from the sideline (Tour Avg. = 58 cm)
- 1st Serve Effectiveness: 67.1% (Tour Avg. = 60.9%)
- 2nd Serve Speed: 105 mph (Tour Avg. = 94 mph)
- 2nd Serve Effectiveness: 26.2% (Tour Avg. = 23.4%)



Shapovalov Commands Canada to Finals



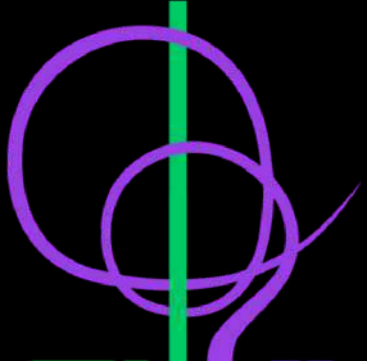
Denis Shapovalov propelled Canada into the Davis Cup Final 8 with a commanding 6-0, 7-5 win over Great Britain's Daniel Evans, securing Canada's crucial point in their Group D decider. Needing only one victory to advance, Shapovalov fired 25 winners and saved two break points to push his nation through.

Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime followed up with a 7-6(8), 7-5 triumph over US Open semi-finalist Jack Draper. Auger-Aliassime, who hadn't dropped a set all week in Manchester, avenged his recent Cincinnati loss to Draper, further cementing Canada's spot in the final stages. Despite the outcome, the British doubles team of Neal Skupski and Henry Patten won their match 7-6(4), 6-4 against Gabriel Diallo and Alexis Galarneau.



In Group A, Italy topped the standings after Flavio Cobolli defeated Tallon Griekspoor 7-6(4), 4-6, 6-3, following Matteo Berrettini's 3-6, 6-4, 6-4 comeback win over Botić van de Zandschulp. The Netherlands still qualified for the Final 8, securing second place by winning the doubles rubber. Wesley Koolhof and van de Zandschulp overcame Italy's Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori 7-6(6), 7-5, edging out Brazil in sets won.

Berrettini's win over van de Zandschulp came after the Dutchman's surprise US Open victory against Carlos Alcaraz. With Jannik Sinner cheering his team on, Italy now looks to defend their Davis Cup crown, while both Brazil and Belgium missed out on qualification.

A stylized graphic of a tennis racket head with a purple frame and a green vertical line passing through the center, with a purple loop around the top.

PARNELL KNOT

designed by stringers for stringers



THE NEW **HEAD** / PARNELL KNOT
STRINGING MACHINE

PRE-ORDER DETAILS WILL BE RELEASED SOON



EXTENDING THE LIFESPAN OF TENNIS AND PADEL BALLS: THE ROLE OF PRESSURIZERS

In the ongoing discussion about tennis ball performance and sustainability, a new solution has emerged: the use of pressurizers. As highlighted in our previous articles, tennis balls naturally lose pressure during play, which affects their performance and lifespan. This issue can now be effectively addressed with the use of pressurizers, devices designed to maintain or restore the internal pressure of tennis and padel balls, thus extending their usability and performance on the court.



The Science of Pressurization

Pressurizers function by enclosing balls in a sealed environment where pressure can be controlled and maintained. This process prevents the loss of bounce that typically occurs as pressurized gas escapes from the balls over time. Some pressurizers are equipped with pumps that allow users to inject air, achieving pressure levels up to 29 PSI, which is essential for maintaining optimal ball performance and to recover the pressure inside the ball through the process of osmosis.

In pressurizers, this process involves balancing the internal and external pressures of the balls. By increasing the pressure inside the sealed container, a pressure equilibrium is created, which facilitates gas exchange through the rubber material of the ball. This exchange helps maintain the ball's bounce and performance, as the rubber allows for a gradual equalization of pressure, akin to osmosis, where molecules move to balance concentrations. This mechanism ensures that the balls retain their desired pressure levels, extending their usability and consistency on the court.

Who Benefits from Pressurizers?

Not all players will find pressurizers equally beneficial. According to Mauro Pinaffo, Senior Product Manager of Tennis and Padel balls, players who train daily and apply significant spin and power will likely wear out the felt before the ball loses pressure. These players typically require new balls regularly. In contrast, players who engage in the sport less frequently, such as once or twice a week, and have a less aggressive playing style, will benefit more from pressurizers. These players can enjoy nearly fresh ball conditions until the felt is fully worn out. Pressurizers are particularly advantageous for padel players of all levels. Padel is less aggressive on the felt compared to tennis, thus benefiting more from the use of pressurizers. This tool helps sustain ball quality, providing a consistent playing experience over time.

Environmental and Performance Benefits

The International Tennis Federation (ITF) is currently exploring the use of pressurizers as part of their research into extending the lifespan of tennis balls to reduce the sport's environmental impact. ITF's tests indicate that repressurized balls stabilize their deformation over time, maintaining bounce more effectively than balls left open, which tend to soften and lose bounce.

HEAD Pressurizers: A Sustainable Solution

HEAD's new collection of pressurizers is both environmentally friendly and cost-effective. These devices use an O-ring to seal air inside, maintaining or restoring the pressure of tennis and padel balls. The HEAD X3 and X4 PUMP models feature a patented hermetic sealing system and a high-end valve to inject air, allowing for pressure increases up to 29 PSI. This innovation not only prolongs the life of the balls but also ensures consistent performance, reducing the need for frequent replacements and minimizing waste.



Manufactured in Spain with high-quality materials, HEAD pressurizers are distributed internationally and have been tested for quality and sustainability. They represent a significant step towards reducing the environmental footprint of tennis and padel by conserving resources and supporting a circular economy.

Cost Savings and Economic Impact

Using pressurizers can lead to significant cost savings. For frequent players or clubs that use a large number of balls, the reduction in replacement frequency can result in substantial financial benefits. For example, if players typically replace balls every four matches, using a pressurizer could extend this to every 20 matches, cutting costs by up to 80%.

Pressurizers offer a practical solution for maintaining ball performance and extending their lifespan, making them a valuable tool for regular players and sports institutions. While they require an initial investment and some maintenance, the benefits in terms of performance consistency and environmental impact make them a worthwhile consideration for many players. As the sports industry continues to emphasize eco-friendly practices, tools like pressurizers play a crucial role in promoting sustainability and enhancing the playing experience.

By incorporating pressurizers into their routine, players can enjoy a more consistent and cost-effective playing experience while contributing to environmental sustainability. The future of tennis and padel looks promising with these innovations, ensuring that the game remains enjoyable and accessible for players of all levels.

Laver Cup Berlin 2024: Alcaraz Leads Team Europe's Comeback Victory



In a thrilling display of resilience and top-tier tennis, Team Europe clinched the 2024 Laver Cup in Berlin, reclaiming the title from Team World with a 13-11 victory. The weekend saw an array of stellar performances and dramatic matches, with Spain's Carlos Alcaráz spearheading Europe's triumphant comeback on the final day.

Day 3 Heroics: Alcaraz and Zverev Turn the Tide

Team Europe entered the final day trailing 8-4, facing what seemed to be an insurmountable deficit. Alcaraz, the former world No. 1, teamed up with Casper Ruud to give his team a vital lifeline by winning the opening men's doubles match, defeating Frances Tiafoe and Ben Shelton 6-2, 7-6(6). Yet, Team World answered back when Shelton edged Daniil Medvedev in a tense singles match 6-7(6), 7-5, 10-7, pushing the World team's lead to 11-7.

Enter Alexander Zverev, who faced a fired-up Frances Tiafoe. Down a set and a break, Zverev mounted a courageous comeback, ultimately winning 6-7(6), 7-5, 10-5 in the match tiebreak. This crucial win set the stage for Alcaraz to close out the event in dramatic fashion.

Alcaraz sealed the title for Team Europe with a commanding 6-2, 7-5 victory over Taylor Fritz. The young Spaniard saved multiple break points in the second set, showcasing his grit under pressure. Reflecting on the win, Alcaraz expressed gratitude for his team: "It was a really tough one, we almost lost. But Sascha [Zverev] played really well and gave me the chance to win the cup. We're really happy with everything".



Notable Performances Throughout the Tournament

On the Friday, Stefanos Tsitsipas ignited Europe's campaign with a confident 6-1, 6-4 win over Thanasi Kokkinakis. Tsitsipas' shot-making prowess, particularly his backhand down the line, garnered admiration from the crowd and helped establish momentum for his team. "It was important for us, Team Europe, to get a point," Tsitsipas remarked after his win.



For Team World, Taylor Fritz had been a consistent performer. He secured a pivotal win over Zverev in straight sets on the Saturday, marking his third consecutive victory over the German. Fritz's victory placed Team World in a commanding 6-4 lead, and he later partnered with Shelton for a decisive doubles win on Day 2. Despite his valiant efforts, Fritz couldn't overcome Alcaraz in the final match, but his role in keeping Team World competitive was undeniable.

Captains' Reflections and The Path Forward

Team Europe's captain, Björn Borg, hailed his squad's resilience: "It's all about performing at the right time, and the boys did that brilliantly this weekend." He particularly credited Zverev's comeback as the turning point in the event.



For Team World, captained by John McEnroe, it was a bittersweet ending. While disappointed in the narrow defeat, McEnroe praised Fritz and Shelton for their contributions. "I'm proud of these guys. It was close, but that's tennis—you have to seize the moment," he reflected during the closing ceremony.

The Laver Cup's unique team format once again delivered high drama and unforgettable moments, with Berlin's Uber Arena providing the perfect stage for tennis' top stars to shine. As the 2024 edition concludes, fans eagerly await next year's showdown in San Francisco. Will Team Europe defend their title, or will Team World.

Spanish Superstar in the Making???

Martin Landaluce is living the Spanish teenage tennis dream, following closely in the footsteps of his compatriots, Carlos Alcaraz and Rafael Nadal. The 18-year-old is making waves on the ATP Challenger Tour after lifting the US Open boys' singles title in 2022, just a day before Alcaraz won his first major title in the same tournament. While Alcaraz was celebrated on the grand stage of Arthur Ashe Stadium, Landaluce's victory took place on the more modest Court 11, but back in Spain, the country was buzzing with excitement for the young talent.

Facing rising expectations, Landaluce reached out to Alcaraz for advice on managing the pressures that come with sudden fame. "I was asking him, 'How do you manage to be with one million [followers], or all of your country above you, watching you, saying, 'You have to be this, or you have to be this number'? It's very difficult," Landaluce shared. Alcaraz, known for his maturity, offered a key piece of advice: "Try to be part of Instagram, social media, only with your family and that will get rid of [a lot of] expectation." This insight has been crucial for Landaluce as he navigates his early professional career.

Landaluce's tennis journey has been deeply influenced by his family. His father, Alejandro, still competes on the ITF Seniors Tour, and Martin began practicing with his mother before he was even a year old. Despite his siblings also playing, it was Martin who quickly rose to prominence, eventually training at the prestigious Rafa Nadal Academy in Madrid, which he considers his "second home." Reflecting on his time with his two idols, Landaluce said, "That's one of the best things I've experienced in my career. The two big references for me... They are very good people. I love playing with them. I try as much as I can to practise with them, to ask them questions, it's a very good experience."



Landaluce's passion for tennis was ignited while attending the ATP Masters 1000 tournament in Madrid. Watching the top players inspired him to set high goals for himself. "I was there watching many times like, 'I want to be there. I want to play there and win the tournament'. It's a great goal to have in mind," he said. One match that stood out to him was watching Nikoloz Basilashvili, and he recalls thinking, "Wow, I want to play like this!" as Basilashvili executed incredible winners.

As Landaluce continues to rise in the professional ranks, he's developing his own fearless and brave style of play. "I don't leave anything on court," he stated. "I like to be very brave in difficult moments." This mindset and his growing experiences with tennis legends like Nadal and Alcaraz position Landaluce as an exciting new prospect for Spanish tennis, with many eagerly watching his journey unfold on the ATP Challenger Tour.

OFFICIAL HEAD CHINA INTERNATIONAL STRINGING TEAM

The Official HEAD China International Stringing Team is thrilled to be at the 2024 China Open in Beijing, where tennis takes center stage across three major events: the ATP 500, WTA 1000, and ITF Jr 500. This dynamic team of 11 stringers — representing Singapore and China — is working tirelessly to ensure every racket is strung to perfection for the elite players competing in one of the most prestigious tournaments in Asia.

With matches running from early morning until late night, the team faces long hours, often stringing hundreds of rackets per day. But their dedication and camaraderie prove that, as they say, "teamwork makes the dream work." The tournament is a massive undertaking, yet the spirit of collaboration and the joy of being part of such an iconic event make it all worthwhile.

The China Open, held at the renowned National Tennis Centre in Beijing, is host to top-tier players like Aryna Sabalenka, Jessica Pegula, and Naomi Osaka on the WTA side. Meanwhile, Jannik Sinner, Carlos Alcaraz, and Daniil Medvedev headline the ATP draw. As the tournament progresses, the competition heats up, with players battling not only for titles but also for valuable ranking points leading up to the year-end finals.

GRSA president, Richard Parnell, is leading and organising the stringing team for these world-class athletes, ensuring that their equipment is finely tuned to perform under the highest pressure.



Alejandro Davidovich Fokina visited the stringing room, long time friend and exceptional professional seen with Richard Parnell, Martin Mann, Rafa Madrid and the rest of the team

In the Room

With Richard Parnell

THE GLAMOROUS WORLD OF TOUR STRINGING

Most tennis fans or enthusiasts don't realise the work that is done behind the scenes so that tournaments can take place and be projected around the world. This behind the scenes action is performed by a small group of "Unstrung Heroes" for the best players in the world in one of the most high-profile sports there is. But what does it take to be part of this elite group of artisans and craftsmen and women?

Before getting to the physical side or the skillset needed to be able to join a Tour Stringing team, let's have a look at what is involved in being a part of this amazing group of people.

- Travel
- 12-18 hour days of non-stop physical work
- Lack of sleep
- Constant pressure and deadlines
- Ability to handle stress and work under fire
- 100% perfection guaranteed from start to finish
- A character that is in tune with the team
- The ability to represent the brand or company who owns the contract in the best possible way

One of the most asked questions by fellow stringers is "how do I join a professional stringing team at the Tour events"? By looking at the list above and if you can put a tick against each of the bullet points then you are indeed a rare breed.

I have heard stories of stringers arriving at a GS event, seeing the workload involved and turning around and going back to the airport, as they knew that the workload was just too heavy for them. 30 to 40 rackets and sometimes more are required on the first days. Those 30-40 rackets have to be perfectly done, straight strings, same DT and the last one as good as the first one. These players really do know the difference if their rackets are strung incorrectly.

Travel can be a joy and a positive part of the experience, however, with different time zones affecting sleep patterns, this can be a stringer's worst nightmare as loss of concentration has a direct result on the end quality. 10 am in Tokyo is 3 am in Madrid, so be prepared to be jetlagged and out of sync when you have to start a tournament coming from another time zone.

The first days of a tournament are the worst and involve 12-18 hour days to cover the workload. Standing behind a machine for 12-18 hours is physically demanding and can create back pain, cramps and any other myriad of complications. This physical aspect has a direct result on the work produced.

By working 12-18 hour days, sleep is seriously reduced. A normal workday at a tournament is 8 am until 9 or 10 pm depending on the size of the event. At a GS it is quite normal to work from 6 am until 11 pm on the “busy” days and then be back in the room at 6 am the next day for another marathon of stringing.

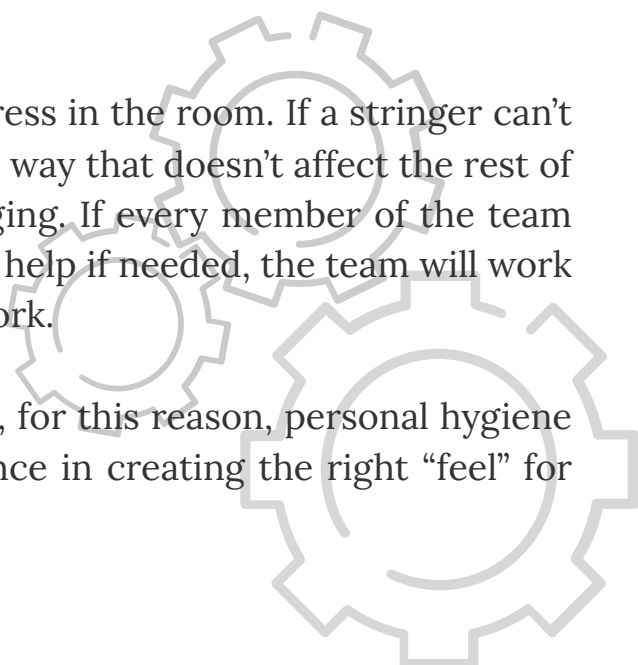
The workload often isn't evenly distributed in the stringing room as sometimes a stringer can end up with some workloads that make your eyes water (same stringer, same machine, for the same player is normally in operation in most stringing rooms). Deadlines are in place all day and sometimes you can spend a whole day playing catch up.

Having 12 or 15 racket that are “string in the morning” for 9 am means an early start and a deadline that needs to be adhered to. Sometimes there is a mishap or a mistake and this means that the deadline just got closer and the stress level higher. Being able to handle these situations & not caving in, is what makes a Tour stringer more than anything else.

Any stringer who has a refined technique should be able to create a uniform tension. By using the same technique every time, the end result should be the same every time (DT), being consistent is the key to being good enough to apply or consider joining a Tour stringing team. No mistakes should ever leave the room, if there is a misweave, or a low DT, cut it out and restring, you will have to make the time up somewhere else.

As mentioned before, there is a lot of controlled stress in the room. If a stringer can't handle the stress and pressure by controlling it in a way that doesn't affect the rest of the team, that stringer is not made for Tour stringing. If every member of the team holds it together, gets their work done and asks for help if needed, the team will work as a unit. As they say: Teamwork makes the team work.

The stringing team reflects the brand's core values, for this reason, personal hygiene & personal appearance are of paramount importance in creating the right “feel” for the team and projecting a professional image.





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FUN FACTS

You cannot progress without keeping up with the changes around you. To keep up with those changes, networking is one of the ways you'll always find out about them, don't close doors and keep in contact with your fellow professionals.

D.J Efford

- 1** Jannik Sinner becomes the first Italian to win the US Open men's singles title. It's been a great Slam for the Italians. In Mixed Doubles, Sara Errani and Andrea Vavassori became the first all-Italian pair to secure a Mixed Doubles Grand Slam title in tennis history.
- 2** Number of major titles won by Aryna Sabalenka in 2024. Sabalenka, Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner top the Grand Slam singles leaderboard this year with two apiece.
- 3** By reaching her maiden Slam final, Jessica Pegula became the third American woman to reach a US Open final after turning 30, following Martina Navratilova and Serena Williams.
- 4** Sabalenka has become the fourth player to win the Cincinnati and US Open women's singles title in the same season in the Open Era, along with Kim Clijsters (2010), Serena Williams (2014) and Coco Gauff (2023).
- 5** 22 Years since a full Grand Slam season has passed without a member of tennis's fabled Big 3—Djokovic, Rafael Nadal, Roger Federer—winning a major singles title. It last happened in 2002, the year before Federer won his first Wimbledon title. The winds of change blew with significant force in 2024, with Alcaraz and Fritz sweeping the four Grand Slam men's singles titles on offer.

Stringer Solutions

with Richard Parnell

TOP
TIP

An easy tip on how to keep the main strings straighter when installing the crosses

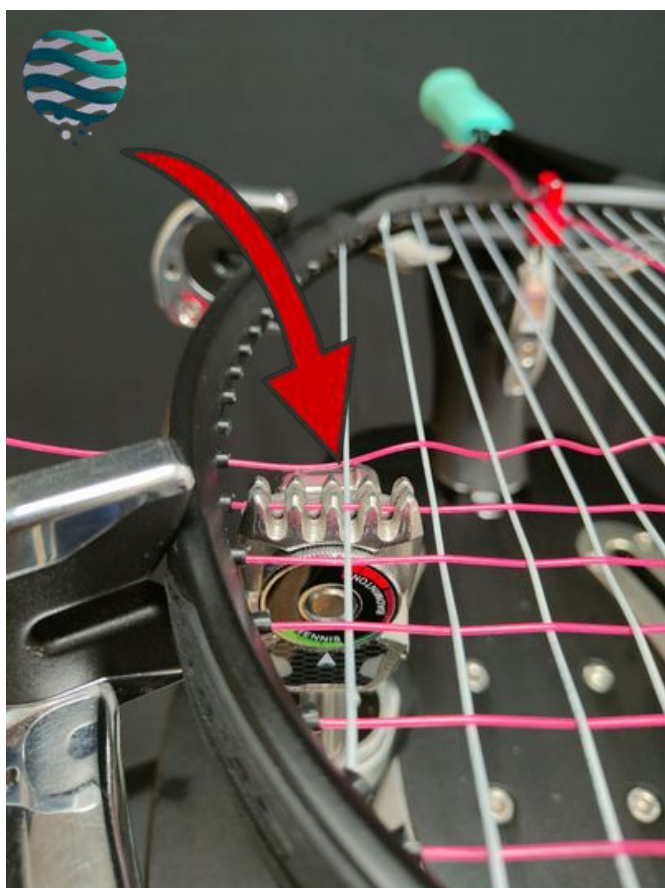
One of the most common mistakes I see when helping stringers is them not straightening the mains and only concentrating on the crosses. Here is some helpful advice to address this.

Once the mains have been installed, whether it is a 2 or 4 knot method being used, you start installing the crosses working from the head towards the throat (to guarantee the frame's integrity).

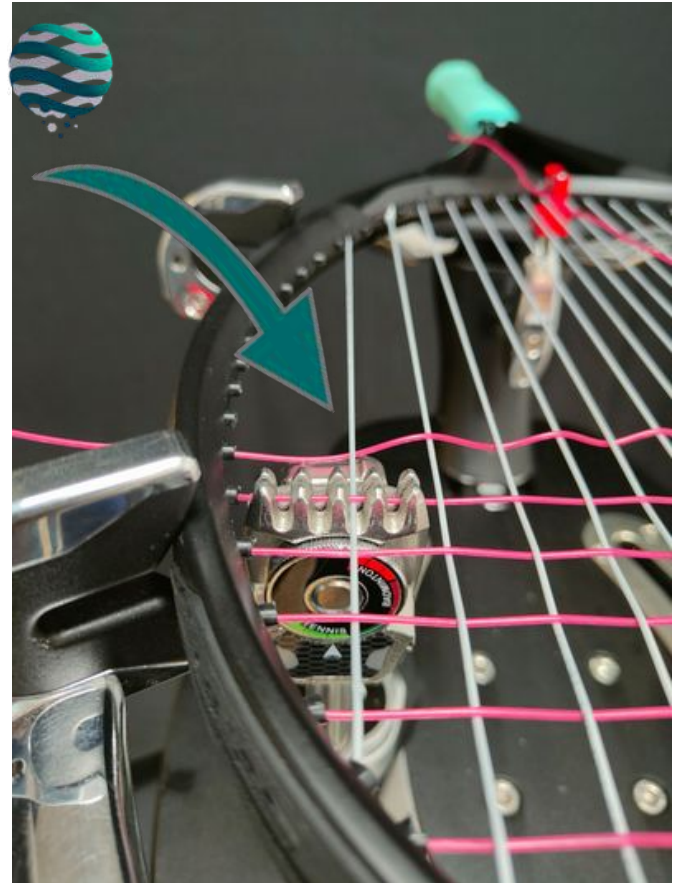
While installing the crosses, the two outside mains tend to be pulled out of place by the clamps, which means that the mains need straightening once the crosses are finished. This obviously adds time to the total stringing time, when time is something, a stringer doesn't usually have a lot of.

There is an easy way to counteract the movement of the mains.

In the first pictures you can see the clamp placement and the main string movement.



In this second set of pictures you can see the slight difference in the clamp placement & clearly see that the mains are now straighter.



By “placing” the clamp in a particular chosen spot on the string, you are going to achieve two benefits from this:

- 1) You will be more precise and gentler by “placing” the clamp as opposed to just “putting” the clamp on the string. By being gentler, there is less risk of the cross string in the clamp twisting and ending up not straight.
- 2) The outer main strings will remain straighter and hardly need any touching at the end of the restring.

Straight strings are a sign of a professional restring. The aesthetic value can help with the perceived value of your work.

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



PREMIUM RACKET SERVICE

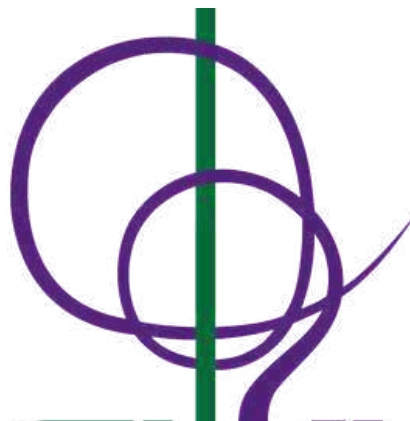
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LET'S MEET MARK JAN GREEBE

Mark Jan Greebe is the newly appointed GRSA Instructor for the Netherlands. Residing in Bussum, he brings years of experience, passion, and expertise to the GRSA International team. We had the chance to sit down with Mark Jan and get to know more about his journey, his insights, and his dedication to the world of racket stringing.

A portrait of Mark Jan Greebe, a man with glasses and a white t-shirt, sitting with his arms crossed. The background is a mix of teal and grey circles.

MARK JAN GREEBE
GRSA Certified Tour Stringer

Mark Jan's journey in stringing began at the age of 12. He recalls how his father, tired of Mark Jan breaking so many strings during his junior tennis days, decided to invest in a drop-weight machine to save on stringing costs. His father was his first teacher, but nowadays, Mark Jan admits, his father barely remembers how to string a racket. His first stringing experience took two hours, but he fell in love with the craft almost immediately. For him, stringing is much more than just putting strings into a racket; it's about setting goals, performing under pressure, and finding calmness. As a father of four and a grandfather of one, he treasures the peaceful focus stringing brings him in his otherwise busy days.

In his daily life, Mark Jan is a tennis specialist at Intersport in the Netherlands, where he customises rackets and advises clients. Before this, he spent over 20 years as a tennis coach, but as time went on, being away from home every night took its toll. Now, he teaches just three hours a week, enjoying a better balance between work and home life.

Over the years, Mark Jan's passion for materials like rackets and strings only grew. His quest for knowledge led him to pursue his first stringing course, he also served as a Wilson ambassador in the Netherlands. His journey with GRSA began when he completed his certifications, achieving the prestigious GRSA Tour Stringer status after a masterclass with Richard Parnell in November 2022.





DAVIS CUP FINALS - 2023

He proudly became the GRSA Instructor for the Netherlands soon after, and in November 2023, he was fortunate enough to string for the Dutch team at the Davis Cup finals in Malaga. Since then, he has worked with the P.R.S/GRSA/Head team at high-profile tournaments like the ITF 500 in Offenbach and the ATP 250 in Geneva.

When we asked if he had a story to share, Mark Jan's response was inspiring: "Never give up on your dreams, goals, and aspirations. I always wanted to become a tournament stringer on the international circuit, but I never knew how to do it. Little by little, I found the right path, worked hard, remained patient, and kept believing in my abilities. Hours spent behind my stringing machine paid off."

Mark Jan's favourite racket sport is tennis, and he credits the sport for much of his happiness—after all, he met his wife on the court! While he doesn't have a favourite player on the tour right now, he holds great admiration for the legends of the game, particularly Novak Djokovic, Roger Federer, and Rafael Nadal. In his younger years, he was inspired by players like Mecir, McEnroe, and Edberg, and he still enjoys watching matches from the 80s and 90s on YouTube. Although he's new to stringing on the international tour, he fondly remembers stringing for Taylor Fritz and Casper Ruud at the Gonet Geneva Open.

Mark Jan's goal is to become a TourMaster stringer and to continue promoting GRSA in the Netherlands by conducting workshops and inspiring the next generation of stringing enthusiasts. His passion and commitment to his craft make him a perfect fit for GRSA International, and we are thrilled to welcome him as part of our growing team.

Following the GRSA tradition, we highlight everyone's musical journey in the stringing room. From AC/DC to Vivaldi, most stringers have music on when stringing, each of our instructors has a playlist on Spotify, so, it's only fair that we share Mark Jan's list of musical delight. Just click the logo to be taken right there, enjoy!





**Global
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15th to the 17th
NOVEMBER 2024
Mijas, Málaga (Spain)

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Knowledge is power
excellence through education



GRSA is all about Stringer excellence and education, our goal globally, is to maximize the potential of as many stringers as we can and the 1st Annual stringer's conference that takes place between the 15th and the 17th of November 2024, is designed to play a large part in this.

The GRSA conference is going to offer something for everyone, as the courses are designed for all levels of expertise and experience

Have you ever thought:

“Racket stringing looks like fun and a way to save some money at the same time”.

Why not join the beginner's stringing course, given by GRSA Grand Master, Richard Parnell, and learn a new craft the right way from the start? You couldn't have a better or more experienced teacher! Add a new string to your bow.

Included in this 1 day beginner's course is an introduction to strings, basic technique to string a racket from A to Z, tools needed and types of machines available.

Already know how to string, but are looking to improve and reach the next level? Take our advanced techniques course given by GRSA Grand Master Richard Parnell, with the help of GRSA Tour Master Martin Mann. This course, as part of and in conjunction with the GRSA International Stringer course will prepare all levels for what is needed to work at a Tour event.

Included and covered in this course, is advanced techniques to increase speed and to maintain a constant DT. The course also covers the quality needed to be part of the GRSA team and by showing what you can do, who knows, you might have what it takes.

Ever wanted to know more about racket customising?

This course, given by Master customiser Martin Mann, will help you with the approach and hands-on part. Included in this course is how to approach customising, how to prioritise certain parameters & how to achieve goals for a player's needs. Lead placement and its positive and negative effects on play, gripping and grip modifications and so much more.

Considered becoming certified and investing in yourself and your craft?

By joining us at the GRSA conference, certification will be available to you, meaning that gaining a global recognition of your stringing level is but a step away.

While at the conference enjoy a pre-conference cocktail get-together and also sit down with your peers for a gala dinner that will be all about networking, making new friends, putting faces to names and spending an evening with like-minded stringers.

The gala dinner will also feature a raffle and an auction with all proceeds being destined for the GRSA charitable association, GRSA-No strings Attached. The first project underway is to help train some new stringers in Pokhara, Nepal through a project that is looking to provide machines, training and everything needed to give them a chance in life through making stringing their profession. Enjoy a Gala evening and give back to the industry we love.

Were you ever given the opportunity to discover the beauty of Andalusia?

Granada, Seville and Cordoba are but a short train ride or drive away. Jerez, the Sherry centre of the world and home to the amazing horse shows is a short drive away too. Gibraltar is 1 hour by car and the beautiful city of Málaga (voted best city to live) is 30 minutes away and home to, among other things, the Picasso Museum.

Why not make a holiday of it with some education and entertainment in an idyllic setting? 330 days of sun per year makes the area a nice place to visit in November.

The 2024 DC Finals are taking place in Málaga the week after the conference, so if you fancy watching some top class tennis, it is on your doorstep.

GRSA signifies excellence, let us help you be the best you can be and join us in Mijas in November.

PLEASE USE THE LINKS PROVIDED IN ORDER TO JOIN US, JUST CLICK THE IMAGES

Prices of rooms vary due to size, the discount code must be used when making the booking and will not be applied afterwards if missed.

Wyndham Grand Mijas is just 20 minutes from Málaga airport and 2 minutes walk to the beach, 15 minutes to the local town, shops, restaurants and bars.



**Signing up is easy,
just follow the
instrucions on the
signup page**



CONFERENCE TIMINGS & SCHEDULES

WEDNESDAY 13th November

BEGINNER WORKSHOP – LEARN TO STRING (BEFORE THE CONFERENCE)

***additional cost to the conference for this workshop.**

THURSDAY 14th November

BEGINNER WORKSHOP – LEARN TO STRING (BEFORE THE CONFERENCE)

***additional cost to the conference for this workshop.**

FRIDAY 15th November

09:00 – 12:00 BADMINTON AND/OR SQUASH

14:00 – 18:00 SQUASH AND/OR BADMINTON

19:00 – COCKTAIL & MEET & GREET – (dress code: smart casual)

SATURDAY 16th November

09:00 – 10:00 – PRESENTATION

10:00 – 11:00 – PRESENTATION

11:00 – 12:00 – PRESENTATION

12:00 – 14:00 – LUNCH BREAK

14:00 – 18:00 – CUSTOMISING WORKSHOP, GRSA STRINGING TEAM WORKSHOP + ADVANCED STRINGING

19:00 – 24:00 – GALA DINNER – INCLUDING CHARITY AUCTION & RAFFLE

SUNDAY 17th November

09:00 – 10:00 – PRESENTATION

10:00 – 11:00 – PRESENTATION

11:00 – 12:00 – PRESENTATION

12:00 – 14:00 – LUNCH BREAK

14:00 – 16:00 – WORKSHOP – TO BE DEFINED

16:00 – 17:00 – WRAP UP MEETING

17:00 – OPTIONAL CERTIFICATION TESTING

****All times are subject change, updates will be sent to all registered members in the coming weeks, any significant changes will also be announced if/when they occur.**

DISCOUNT CODE FOR ACCOMODATION: 9900190743



OVER TO OZ

EMRIK IS THE PORT OF CALL

BARON II

Having written about the Fin rackets from Australia last month, this month I will return to Australia. Born in Sydney, Cam Nancarrow, reached no.2 in the world, and he was world champion in 1973. He was sponsored by Emrik, another Australian brand, and used the Emrik Baron 11 racket. This month I'll talk about the Emrik Baron II, a wooden open throat racket from the '70s.

You will see from the pictures that this racket has an innovative design. On the one hand, it is a wooden racket with a small head. On the other hand, the throat is open, and, very unusually, has string in the throat and an extra bridge that has a function of making the racket more stable.

Written on the side of the racket, next to Cam Nancarrow's signature, is:-

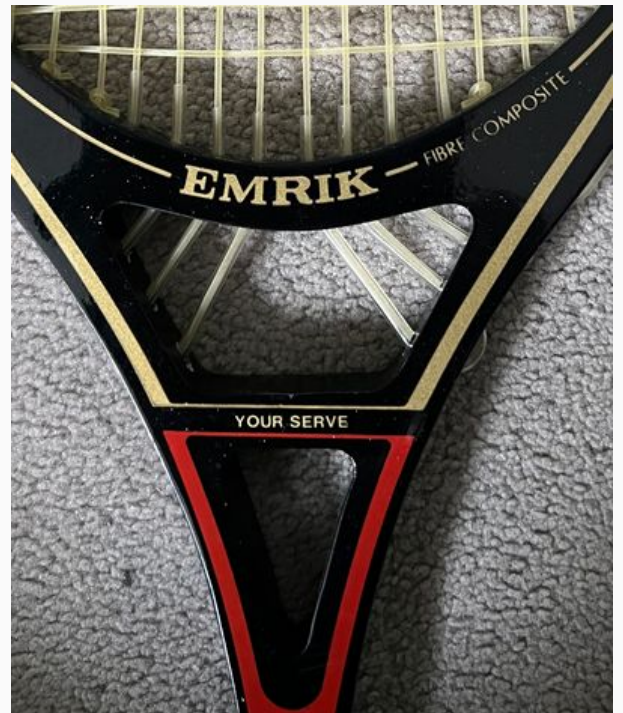
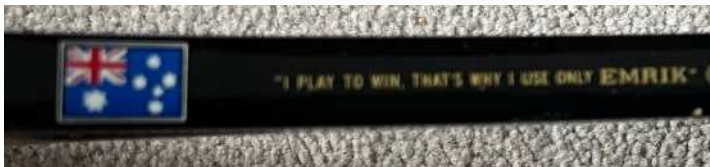
"Winner of the Australian, New Zealand, South African, British, Scottish, Canadian & World Titles"

It also quotes Cam Nancarrow:-

"I play to win, that's why I use only EMRIK"

Cam is still around now aged 79.

The six centre main strings, travel through the first bridge and loop around the outside of the frame also utilising some tubing.



Nick's Nugget

If a racket isn't mounted centrally, strings will be a different distance from tensioners and will feel different.



This makes the central six main strings very slightly longer.

Presumably, in the quest for extra power, however, racket shapes were soon subject to greater change and any improvement in this type of design was shortlived.

HANI'S SECOND TOUR TITLE

Egypt's Habiba Hani wrapped up an outstanding week of squash by capturing the title at the Squash Inspire – Abbas Family 9K, presented by Play Squash Academy, marking her second PSA Tour triumph.

The 19-year-old had made waves last year with a breakout performance at the Costa Rica Open, claiming the title in only her second PSA event. Despite a brief lull since that success, Hani arrived at this tournament in fine form after a strong showing in the CIB Egyptian Open qualifiers.

Seeded No. 7, Hani cruised past Luiza Carbonieri in the second round, losing just 10 points in a dominant 14-minute win. However, the road to the final became significantly tougher from there. In the quarter-finals, Hani battled Ukraine's Alina Bushma, taking a two-game lead before being pushed into a decider, which she ultimately won 11-8 in the fifth.

Her semi-final match against Australia's No. 2 seed, Alex Haydon, required another comeback, as she fought back from 2-1 down to book her spot in the final against Malaysia's Xin Ying Yee, who was chasing her fourth consecutive Tour title.

The final proved to be a thrilling contest. The first game saw momentum swing back and forth, with Hani eventually closing it out after a late run of points. Yee responded in the second, overcoming a determined fightback from Hani to level the match.

In the third game, Hani mounted a remarkable comeback from 6-2 down to win 11-7, securing nine points from ten. Yee fought back again in the fourth, edging a tension-filled game 11-8 to force a decider.

Despite dropping the first point of the final game, Hani seized control, rattling off 10 consecutive points to bring up nine match balls. After missing the first, she sealed victory on the second with a precise backhand down the line, letting out a roar of triumph as she celebrated her hard-fought win.

This victory marks Hani's second PSA Tour title and a testament to her growing presence in the squash world.



Ainaa Amani and Velavan Senthilkumar secured decisive victories at the ACE Challenger Tour 12k, both winning their finals in straight sets to claim the titles.

In the women's final, 19-year-old Hana Ismail had already caused upsets by defeating two home favourites, including top seed Aifa Azman. However, facing No.2 seed Amani proved to be a tougher challenge. Ismail started strong, building a 6-2 lead in the opening game, but Amani remained composed, closing the gap and winning six consecutive points to take the game.



In the second game, Ismail again started well, leading 3-0, but could only manage one more point as Amani's speed and consistency overwhelmed her. The Malaysian then cruised through the third game, securing a 10-7 lead and sealing victory with a backhand volley to win her third PSA Tour title, and her first on home soil.

In the men's final, India's top seed Velavan Senthilkumar faced Pakistan's Noor Zaman. Senthilkumar had not dropped a game all week and showed his dominance early, winning four straight points in the first game before closing it out 11-5 with a powerful backhand crosscourt winner.

The second game saw the Indian maintain control, wrapping it up 11-6 in just 12 minutes. The third was more competitive, with Zaman pushing back to 9-9. However, Senthilkumar capitalized on a no-let and a stroke decision to claim victory, marking his fourth PSA Tour title.

Both Amani and Senthilkumar's triumphs capped off strong performances, with neither player dropping a game throughout the tournament.



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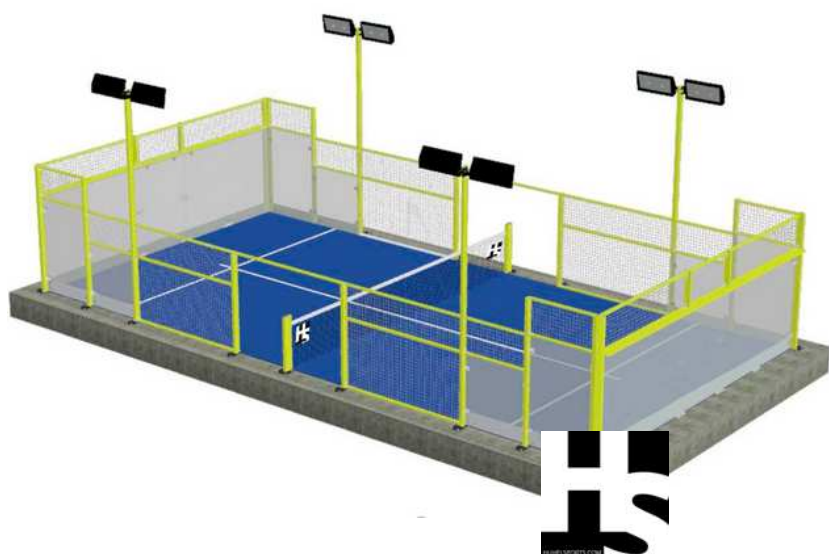
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In addition, all our courts are certified by the EU as well as all its components.



2024 Event Calendar

October



Paris Major Premier Padel: 28 September - 6 October

Sweden Premier Padel P2: 5 - 13 October

Newgiza Premier Padel P2: 19 - 27 October

November



Dubai Premier Padel P1: 3 - 10 November

Kuwait City Premier Padel P1: 9 - 17 November

Mexico Major Premier Padel: 23 November - 1 December

December



Milano Premier Padel P1: 30 November - 8 December

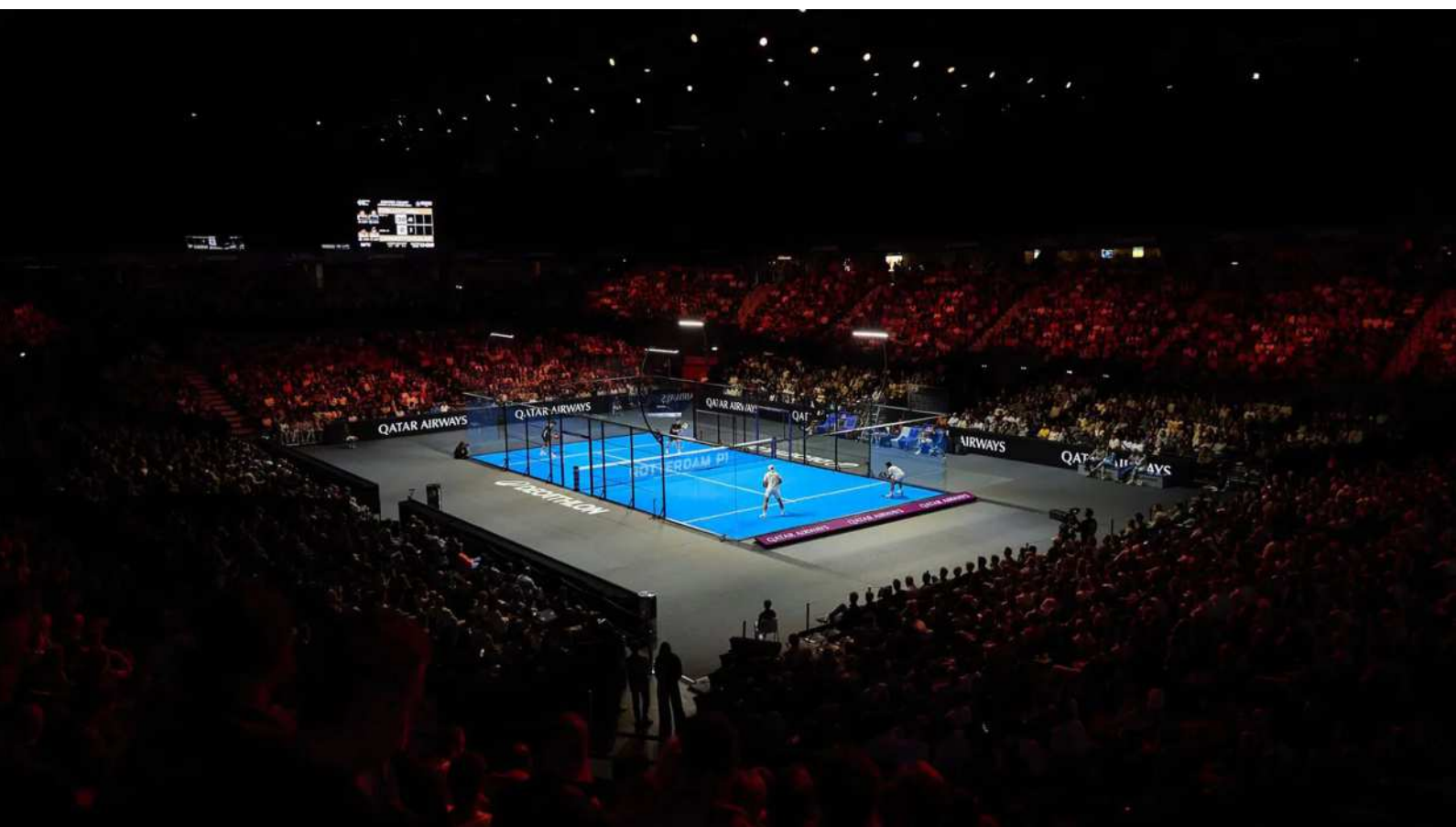
Premier Padel Finals: 19 - 22 December

The Decathlon Rotterdam Premier Padel P1 concluded on a high note, attracting over 36,000 fans throughout the week at Rotterdam Ahoy. The tournament, part of the Qatar Airways Premier Padel Tour, set new attendance records, showcasing the Netherlands' growing significance in the professional padel scene.

With packed arenas and sold-out sessions, 5,800 fans filled the stands on finals day, while over 1,600 attended the qualifying sessions earlier in the week. The event created an electrifying atmosphere for players and spectators alike, with 14 courts set up across the venue—five for competition and nine for brand activations and fan interaction zones.

The tournament not only provided top-tier padel but also created a festival-like experience, immersing everyone in the sport. On the court, world-class performances took center stage. In the men's event, No.1 pair Arturo Coello and Agustín Tapia continued their dominant run, capturing the title. Meanwhile, the top women's duo, Ariana Sánchez and Paula Josemaría, added another victory to their successful season.

The event underscored padel's global appeal, cementing Rotterdam as a key destination in the sport's expansion, what will next year bring?



ROTTERDAM



COELLO & TAPIA, TRIAY & FERNÁNDEZ SHINE IN HISTORIC VALLADOLID VICTORY

The Oysho Valladolid Premier Padel P2 tournament reached a thrilling conclusion, uniting the world's top padel talent in an unforgettable week of action. With a remarkable turnout of 5,382 fans at the semifinals, the event set a new standard for professional padel in Valladolid. The energy was electric as supporters packed the stands, cheering on their favourite pairs. The grand finale drew in over 4,600 spectators, solidifying the tournament as a testament to the sport's rapidly growing appeal in the region.

In a clash that showcased the best of women's padel, Gemma Triay and Claudia Fernández emerged victorious over Ari Sánchez and Paula Josemaría, delivering a commanding 6-3, 6-2 performance. Their triumph, achieved in just over an hour and fifteen minutes, marked their fifth win against Sánchez and Josemaría on indoor courts, evening the score to 5-5 in their head-to-head matchups this season. This win sees Triay and Fernández securing their ninth final appearance this year and clinching their fourth title of 2024, tying them with Delfi Brea and Bea González as the season's most accomplished women's duo.

"Grandpa, this tournament is for you."

These heartfelt words from Arturo Coello encapsulated a defining moment, as he and his partner Agustín Tapia claimed victory in the men's final of the Oysho Valladolid Premier Padel P2. In a gripping three-set showdown, Coello and Tapia showcased their exceptional skill and tenacity, thrilling the audience with breathtaking rallies that had the crowd roaring. This win not only marked Coello's first home victory but also cemented the duo's status as an unstoppable force, becoming the first men's pair to secure four consecutive tournament victories. Their triumph in Valladolid added to an impressive tally, bringing them to their ninth title of 2024 and their thirteenth as a partnership in Premier Padel. For Coello, winning on home soil in front of a passionate local crowd was a career-defining moment, proving that fan support can be a game-changer when it matters most.

As the curtain falls on the Oysho Valladolid Premier Padel P2, the Qatar Airways Premier Padel Tour concludes an extraordinary three-week run, with packed venues across Madrid, Rotterdam, and Valladolid. This dynamic tour has brought the pinnacle of padel to Europe, creating an infectious, high-energy atmosphere in every city. The next chapter awaits in Paris, where the Greenweez Paris Major Premier Padel is set to take place at the iconic Roland Garros, promising another spectacular showcase of the sport's elite talent.

THE GRSA INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT EXPERIENCE



This could be your opportunity!

The tournament experience is an initiative **GRSA** really believes in, it's designed for stringers looking to gain more experience, more knowledge and be part of the wonderful world of tournament stringing.

We're already looking at dates for this year and will announce them soon, but this is your chance to let us know if you're interested.

**CONTACT US FOR
MORE INFORMATION**

DO YOU BELIEVE
YOU HAVE THE
ABILITY TO PASS
THE TOUR
CERTIFICATION?



THIS IS FOR ANYONE WHO IS:

**GRSA CERTIFIED
COMPETITION MASTER**

**MORE EVENTS
WILL BE COMING
SOON!**

If you're looking for a Pickleball event to either go and see, or take part in, here are just a few of the upcoming events, use the link to see more and who knows, you might just get involved and win!

HUAHIN PICKLEBALL OPEN IN MEMORY OF BRENNAN BLEDNICK**EID:** 1636 **PRICE:** 650 Baht**Organizer:** Christian Wind**EVENT - TOURNAMENT****Starting:** November 08, 2024 to November 10, 2024**City:** Huahin, Hua Hin District, Prachuap Khiri Khan, Thailand**Tournament Venue:** Arena Hua Hin**Registration Deadline:** October 31, 2024 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 2**2nd Namur International Pickleball Open****EID:** 1513 **PRICE** EUR 30**Organizer:** Pickleball Namur**EVENT - TOURNAMENT****Starting:** October 25, 2024 to October 27, 2024**City:** Namur, Belgique**Tournament Venue:** Pickleball Namur**Registration Deadline:** October 18, 2024 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 2**1. Gifhorner Pickleball Indoor Open****EID:** 1728 **PRICE** EUR 20**Organizer:** Katharina Brechler**EVENT - TOURNAMENT****Starting:** November 30, 2024 to December 01, 2024**City:** Bruno-Kuhn-Straße 41, Gifhorn-Gamsen, Deutschland**Tournament Venue:** Mtv Gifhorn**Registration Deadline:** November 15, 2024 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 1**MORE
INFO**

LIGHTNING STRIKES TWICE: ANNA BRIGHT AND RACHEL ROHRABACHER VS CATHERINE PARENTEAU AND ANNA LEIGH WATERS

The statistical analysis of Anna Bright and Rachel Rohrabacher's two victories over Catherine Parenteau and Anna Leigh Waters reveals several interesting similarities and differences.

Match Scores and Outcomes:

- Austin Open (March 18): The scores were 11-4, 3-11, 11-6, 11-8 in favor of Bright/Rohrabacher.
- Atlanta Slam (September 15)**: The scores were 11-3, 11-9, 9-11, 11-5 in favour of Bright/Rohrabacher.

Third Shot Analysis:

- In Austin, Catherine Parenteau took on most of the third-shot responsibilities for her team, hitting 65% of them, while Rohrabacher hit 62% for her team.
- In Atlanta, there was a shift: Anna Leigh Waters hit 85% of her team's third shots, while Bright took on a larger role for her team, hitting 51% of the third shots.

Third Shot Selection:

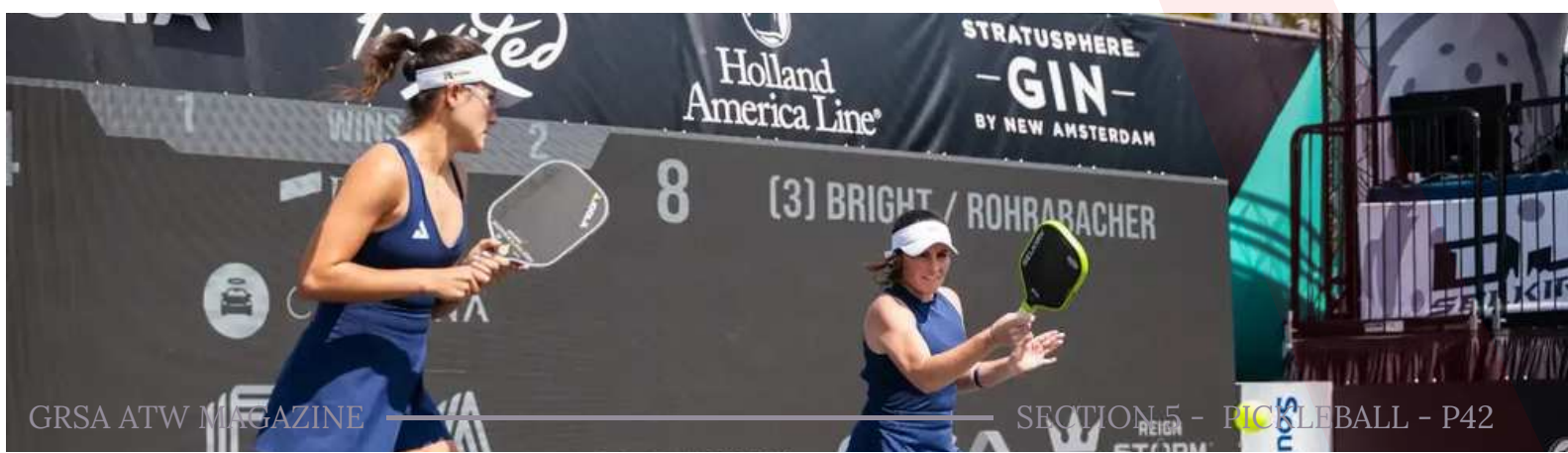
- The Austin Open featured a more aggressive play with a preference for third-shot drives: 55% for Bright/Rohrabacher and 68% for Parenteau/Waters.
- The Atlanta Slam shifted to more third-shot drops, especially from Bright/Rohrabacher with 88%, compared to 50% from Parenteau/Waters.

Pace of Play:

- Austin was a faster-paced match, with 67% of rallies being nine shots or fewer, and an average of 8.7 shots per rally.
- Atlanta saw longer rallies, with 46% lasting nine shots or fewer, and an average of 11.6 shots per rally.

Clean Winners:

- Bright/Rohrabacher dominated this category in both matches, with a 19-8 lead in Austin and a 28-14 lead in Atlanta.
- Rohrabacher led individually, registering 14 clean winners in Austin and 18 in Atlanta, which were at least seven more than any other player in both matches.



Speed-Ups:

- Bright/Rohrabacher led in this category in both matches: 68% to 59% in Austin and 52% to 35% in Atlanta.
- Typically, teams that outperform their opponents by 5% or more in speed-up rallies win about 90% of the time, which proved true in both instances.

Challenging Waters on the Left Side:

- In Austin, Waters played 57 rallies on the left, and Bright/Rohrabacher managed only one winner past her backhand (1.57%).
- In Atlanta, with Waters playing 139 rallies on the left, Bright/Rohrabacher hit 10 winners past her backhand (7.19%).

The significant increase in success against Waters' backhand in Atlanta might indicate that Bright/Rohrabacher identified and exploited a potential weakness more effectively in their second encounter.

As they prepare for the upcoming Stratusphere Gin Virginia Beach Cup and other PPA tournaments, it will be fascinating to see how these teams adjust and whether Bright/Rohrabacher can continue their dominance if they meet again.




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HEAD



Back in the Stride

Viktor Axelsen has hit his stride in style, securing back-to-back victories, including the highlight of his season – his second Olympic gold earlier in the year.

His most recent triumph at the LI-NING Hong Kong Open 2024 saw him claim one of the few remaining SuperSeries titles missing from his impressive collection. In a commanding performance, the world No. 2 dominated surprise finalist Lei Lan Xi with a 21-9, 21-12 victory, wrapping up the match in just 44 minutes.

“I’m very happy to win this tournament, as you could see from my celebrations,” said the 30-year-old Dane after his win. “I hadn’t made it far here before, with my best result being the quarterfinals, so finally getting this title feels amazing.”

Reflecting on his performance, Axelsen added, “I maintained a consistent level throughout, with just a few mistakes at the start of the second game. Overall, I played an excellent final.”

Axelsen’s resurgence began earlier this year with his victory at the Malaysia Masters, his first final of the season, ending a title drought that stretched back to his HSBC BWF World Tour Finals triumph. Before that, his form had been patchy, with exits in the second round of the French Open, quarterfinals at the All England, and semifinals at both the Malaysia Open and European Championships.

However, he found his peak at the Paris Olympics, where he stormed to gold without dropping a game. After a short break from competition, Axelsen returned to the court, picking up right where he left off.

“I haven’t been able to train as much as I would’ve liked since Paris, but I’m pleased with how I’ve come back,” he said. “Performing at this level after the Olympics is never easy, so I’m a bit surprised I could still play at such a high standard.”

Now firmly back on the winning track after a challenging start to the season, Axelsen is poised to defend his title at the upcoming VICTOR China Open. It also offers him a chance to secure his first Super 1000 title of the year and extend his current winning streak.



Malaysian Magic

The dynamic Malaysian duo, Pearly Tan and Thinaah Muralitharan, delivered a special victory for their country, securing the LI-NING Hong Kong Open 2024 women's doubles title on the eve of Malaysia Day. Their triumph not only marked a historic milestone but also served as a meaningful celebration of the nation's federation.



By defeating second seeds Liu Sheng Shu and Tan Ning 21-14, 21-14, Tan and Muralitharan became the first Malaysian women's doubles champions in the tournament's 42-year history. It was a sweet redemption for the pair, especially after narrowly missing out on the Korea Open title just weeks earlier, during Malaysia's National Day celebrations.

“Unfortunately, we couldn’t clinch the title in Korea, but I think God gave us another opportunity, so we’re really happy we won this one,” said the 26-year-old Muralitharan. “This is a gift for our country. Happy Malaysia Day, and thank you to all the fans back home for their support. This win is a big confidence boost for us.”

The victory ended a two-year title drought for the world No. 8 pair and snapped a four-match losing streak against their Olympic silver-medalist opponents. Tan and Muralitharan last tasted success in October 2022 at the French Open and had been chasing redemption since their runner-up finish in last year’s final against Apriyani Rahayu and Siti Fadia Silva Ramadhanti.

The duo’s eagerness to close out the match was evident, as they let five match points slip before Liu’s serve found the net, sealing the win.

“We both wanted to finish the match quickly, and that’s why we made some simple mistakes we shouldn’t have,” Muralitharan admitted. “We’ll learn from this and be more careful next time.”

Tan, meanwhile, is already focused on the next challenge at the upcoming Super 1000 China Open, looking to carry forward their momentum.

“We want to be more consistent, and we hope we can keep this momentum going,” said the 24-year-old.

With their latest win, Tan and Muralitharan have now added another prestigious title to their collection, with a Super 1000 crown being the only major title missing from their HSBC BWF World Tour accolades. Along with their 750 French Open title, they also secured the Super 300 Swiss Open in 2021.

TAIPEI OPEN: THAIS FRUSTRATE LOCAL FAVOURITES

Pakkapon Teeraratsakul and Phataimas Muenwong clinched the YONEX Taipei Open 2024 mixed doubles title, defeating local favorites Yang Po Hsuan and Hu Ling Fang in straight sets. The Thai pair, considered underdogs against their second-seeded opponents, wrapped up the final in just 40 minutes with a 21-17, 21-19 victory, making history as the first mixed doubles champions from Thailand in the tournament.

This victory also marked their second title of the season, following their win at another Super 300 event, the US Open, earlier in the year.

Yang Po Hsuan later found redemption in the men's doubles final, partnering with Lee Jhe-Huei to secure a 21-7, 25-23 victory against fellow Taiwanese players Chiang Chien-Wei and Wu Hsuan-Yi.



Other Highlights:

- Sim Yu Jin captured her first HSBC BWF World Tour title, dominating Indonesia's Putri Kusuma Wardani 21-17, 21-13 in the women's singles final.
- Lin Chun-Yi won his long-awaited home title, overcoming fellow countryman Chi Yu Jen 21-17, 21-13 in the men's singles final.

BADMINTON'S UNEXPECTED COMEBACK: GOH & LAI'S JOURNEY OF RESURGENCE

Badminton is a game full of surprises, a sport where the relentless demands of the world tour often test even the strongest athletes. The pressure can be immense, and finding the perfect formula to stay mentally free can feel like an elusive science. Yet, sometimes, it's a sudden life event or a shift in mindset that brings clarity, and all the pieces start to fall back into place.

Just ask Goh Soon Huat and Lai Shevon Jemie. After two Olympic cycles filled with unfulfilled dreams, disappointments, and a dip in rankings, many would have expected them to bow out. But through unwavering belief, mutual support, and, as Lai puts it, perhaps a bit of divine intervention, this Malaysian mixed doubles pair has embarked on a remarkable comeback that few could have predicted.

Since embracing their journey toward the Paris 2024 Olympics, the newlyweds have not only clinched the YONEX Swiss Open 2024 and the PERODUA Malaysia Masters 2024 but also carved their way into one of the biggest achievements of their careers by advancing to their first Super 1000 final at the VICTOR China Open 2024 on the HSBC BWF World Tour.

On the Verge of Greatness: Their Maiden Super 1000 Final

Their emotions were raw and authentic as they reflected on this incredible milestone. "I am Christian, and there is one phrase that I always keep in mind. When one door closes, another door opens. And I think we're seeing that, we have never given up and that has kept us going until today," shared Lai, her words resonating deeply.

"We're playing freely now. There's less pressure, and we're enjoying it more than ever," added Goh, emphasizing the newfound joy they've discovered on tour.

Facing the Media: A Time for Reflection

"It's surreal," Lai expressed when speaking to the media. "It's a feeling I've never experienced before. Now, with three finals in a year, it's an unbelievable achievement for us. I want to thank my partner for helping us keep it together today."

Lai's dream of reaching a Super 1000 final is finally within reach, a goal she had envisioned for years. "I've always told him [Goh] that I wanted this, to make a big final one day. Every match we play is one less match in the future, so we just want to appreciate every chance we get on court now, so long as we come out safely without injuries or illness. But I think you guys will be seeing us for quite some time still."

For Goh, the answer is simple: "It's all down to mindset."

Reflecting on their 21-18, 21-18 victory, he stated, "We played well in the pressure points today. We were more comfortable, brave, and stable. This is very important for us. Because when we lose our mindset, we lose our focus. So that's been the main key—a stable mindset."



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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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