



GRSA INTERNATIONAL ATW MAGAZINE

Alcaraz Defends

Barbora Krejčíková

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

Carlos tested by Paul

Carlos Alcaraz may not have delivered his finest performance, but the defending champion successfully overcame losing the first set in match against Tommy Paul in the quarter finals.

Despite its imperfections, the match was a thrilling contest. Tommy Paul pushed Alcaraz to his limits for two sets before the Spaniard clinched a 5-7, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2 victory.

Alcaraz's performance fluctuated between moments of brilliance and lapses of carelessness, yet his resilience ultimately overpowered Paul.

"Today was a really difficult match for me," Alcaraz acknowledged. "At the beginning of the first set and the beginning of the second set, it was kind of like I was playing on clay: big rallies, over 10 or 15 shots every point.

"I had to stay there strong mentally when I lost the first set. It was kind of difficult a little bit for me but I know this is a long journey, really long match so I had just had to stay there. I'm really happy to find the solutions and the good path."

The champion knew he had been tested. Paul's strong performance was commendable, but Alcaraz's ability to adapt and endure was decisive. That's the mark of a true champion.

Paul's journey to this point has been turbulent. He reached the fourth round a couple of years ago, which was his best Grand Slam result at the time. However, instead of building on this success, he struggled with the pressure and retreated.

As the US Open approached, his anxiety peaked. Expectations were high for him to shine at his home Grand Slam. It was then that his coach, Brad Stine, intervened dramatically. In a surprising move, he slapped Paul's face twice—not out of aggression, but to "reset" his mindset.

"I literally slapped him in the face, and I told him, 'Hey, I need Tommy Paul. Like, where's Tommy Paul? The guy who's here right now is not Tommy Paul.' I needed him to relax," Stine recounted to Marc McGowan of *The Age* in Melbourne last year.



Stine's mantra, "Be Tommy Paul," became a recurring directive, urging Paul to stay relaxed and perform at his best.

This year, Paul has indeed handled pressure well across various surfaces. He triumphed at Queen's Club on grass and in Dallas on a hard court; he reached the semi-finals of the Masters 1000 events in Indian Wells on hard and Rome on clay. Now, he aimed to break into the semi-finals at Wimbledon.

Alcaraz, however, is no stranger to pressure. At just 21, he has already claimed a Grand Slam title in each of the last three years and became the youngest ever world No.1 in 2022. His ability to stay relaxed and confident, often evidenced by his trademark broad smile, has unnerved many opponents.

For three hours, Paul managed to keep Alcaraz at bay. He moved swiftly, attacked the net, and broke Alcaraz's serve to take the first set. The real Tommy Paul had arrived.

Alcaraz, sensing the challenge, looked towards his coach Juan Carlos Ferrero for reassurance. Ferrero, whom Alcaraz regards as a second father, offered a quiet nod of encouragement.

Despite a shaky start, Alcaraz began to mount a comeback. After securing the second set, his serve still faltered, but his determination remained unshaken. Paul continued to challenge him, but Alcaraz finally found his rhythm.

When he secured a second break in the third set, Alcaraz's confidence surged. He turned towards his coaches with a renewed sense of assurance.

Minutes later, a faint smile appeared as he set up another point with a backhand down the line. Alcaraz then went on to win against Daniil and face a defiant Novak in the final.



Composed Elena

For the first time in days, the Centre Court roof was open for another excellent quarter final showdown, the sun made a welcome appearance, and the Queen graced the Royal Box. On this picturesque afternoon, Elena Rybakina showcased her power and poise, securing yet another victory on grass.



In a Wimbledon that has seen its fair share of surprises in the ladies' singles, Rybakina's triumph over Elina Svitolina to reach the semi-finals brought a sense of order and normality to the All England Club. Amid the upheaval of unexpected results, the 2022 champion provided a reassuring presence with her dominant serve, rapid groundstrokes, and a calm demeanor.

Rybakina's performance was marked by seven aces, 28 winners, and an unshakeable confidence. The presence of the Queen did not faze her; she played with the same rare, nerveless ease that has made her a formidable force on the lawn. Rybakina's record at the All England Club is impressive—21 matches played and 19 wins, giving her a winning percentage above 90%, surpassing even Martina Navratilova and Serena Williams, and just trailing Steffi Graf.

This Wimbledon, Rybakina stands out as the only former champion to have won a round in the ladies' singles. Her continued success, with a 6-3, 6-2 victory in just over an hour, keeps her on track to potentially lift the Venus Rosewater Dish once again. Remarkably, she has dropped only nine games in her last three matches.

The unpredictability of the ladies' singles draw this year has been evident, with top seeds like Iga Swiatek and Coco Gauff exiting early. Even defending champion Marketa Vondrousova lost in the first round, a rare occurrence since the 1990s. However, Rybakina, seeded No. 4, has navigated through the draw with composure, dropping only one set thus far against Germany's Laura Siegemund in the second round.

"I have amazing memories from 2022 and I enjoy it every time I'm on this court," said Rybakina, who is set to face Barbora Krejčíková on Thursday for a spot in Saturday's final. "I don't like being called the favourite but I have an aggressive game."

Rybakina's composed demeanor on court belies the pressures she has faced. During her title run two years ago, she became the first Kazakh player, man or woman, to win a Grand Slam title. While she admitted to feeling on edge then, this summer she has displayed a greater sense of assurance on the grass.

Her powerful hitting left Svitolina, who aimed for her third semi-final appearance, with little time to react. Rybakina's relentless aggression and precision underscored her readiness to reclaim her title, moving ever closer to another Wimbledon final, but it was not meant to be, the title slipped away.

Iga Finally Falls

Once again, Swiatek's transition from dominating the French Open's red clay to struggling on Wimbledon's green grass was evident. The No. 1-ranked Swiatek's 21-match winning streak came to an end with a lackluster performance and numerous mistakes, resulting in a 3-6, 6-1, 6-2 loss to unseeded Yulia Putintseva in the third round at the All England Club.

"Going from this kind of tennis, where I felt like I'm playing the best tennis in my life, to another surface, where I kind of struggle a little bit more, it's not easy," said Swiatek, who has only made it as far as the quarterfinals at Wimbledon once, exiting at that stage a year ago. "All that stuff really combines to me not really having a good time in Wimbledon."

Indeed, in 2022, her 37-match unbeaten run was also halted in the third round at Wimbledon, this time by Aлизe Cornet.



Swiatek, a 23-year-old from Poland, is a five-time Grand Slam champion with four titles at Roland Garros and one on the hard courts of the U.S. Open. Despite her success, she has struggled to replicate her dominance on grass, even opting out of a tune-up event before Wimbledon.

Swiatek attributed her struggles against the 35th-ranked Putintseva to a lack of rest after the French Open. "My tank of really pushing myself to the limits became, suddenly, empty," she said. "I was kind of surprised."

Svitolina advanced with a 6-1, 7-6 (4) victory over No. 10 Ons Jabeur, a three-time Grand Slam runner-up, including at Wimbledon each of the past two years.

Swiatek not only won all four previous meetings against Putintseva but also claimed every set they had played. Asked during a post-match interview on No. 1 Court how she managed to emerge with the victory, the often-animated Putintseva replied: "I don't know. Really, I don't."

Well, here is at least one key part of what happened: Swiatek looked very little like someone who has led the WTA rankings for nearly every week since April 2022 and is assured of remaining there no matter what happens the rest of the way at Wimbledon.

Putintseva is on an eight-match run of her own, all on grass, including a title at Birmingham before arriving in London. This is the first time in 10 appearances at Wimbledon that the 29-year-old from Kazakhstan made it past the second round.

"I was playing fearless. I was just: 'I can do it. I have to believe 100%. I have nothing to lose. Just go for it,'" Putintseva said at her news conference. "Also, my coach told me, 'No matter which shot you're doing, believe 100%.'"

Barbora Krejcikova

From French Open in 2021, to Wimbledon 2024



At age 18, a decade before Barbora Krejcikova won Wimbledon, she faced a crossroads: pursue a professional tennis career or move on to school and another path. Seeking guidance, Krejcikova wrote to one of her idols, 1998 Wimbledon champion Jana Novotna, and dropped the letter at her home in the Czech Republic. Novotna encouraged her to stick with tennis and mentored her until her death from cancer in 2017.

“Before she passed away,” Krejcikova said, “she told me to go and win a Slam.”

Krejcikova achieved that and more. She was an unseeded surprise winner at the French Open three years ago and added another major title with a 6-2, 2-6, 6-4 victory over Jasmine Paolini in the final at the All England Club. After Saturday’s match, Krejcikova saw her newly printed name on the list of Wimbledon champions next to Novotna’s.

“The only thing that was going through my head,” Krejcikova said, “was that I miss Jana a lot. It was just very, very emotional. ... I think she would be proud.”

Despite holding on to win on her third match point, Krejcikova insisted that nobody, including herself, would believe what she’s accomplished. Her 2024 season was marred by a back injury and illness, and her record was just 7-9 when she arrived at Wimbledon.

Krejcikova was the 31st of 32 seeded women at Wimbledon. After a tough three-setter in the first round last week, she faced more doubts. But by the end of the tournament, seventh-seeded Paolini praised Krejcikova: “You play such beautiful tennis.”

Krejcikova is the eighth different woman to win Wimbledon in the last eight years. Last year’s champion was also Czech: unseeded Marketa Vondrousova, who lost in the first round this year.

Paolini, the runner-up to Iga Swiatek at the French Open, became the first woman since Serena Williams in 2016 to reach the finals at Roland Garros and Wimbledon in the same season—and the first since Venus Williams in 2002 to lose both.

“If I keep this level,” said Paolini, a 28-year-old from Italy, “I think I can have the chance to do great things.”

The match was a back-and-forth battle. The last game took 14 points to decide, with Krejčíková fending off two break points. She converted her third match point when Paolini missed a backhand.

“I was just telling myself to be brave,” said Krejčíková, who also owns seven Grand Slam titles in women’s doubles and three in mixed doubles.

Krejčíková started strong, taking 10 of the initial 11 points. The crowd, likely hoping for a more competitive contest, loudly supported Paolini. However, Paolini seemed fatigued from her 2-hour, 51-minute semifinal win over Donna Vekić.

After a locker room break, Paolini took charge in the second set, controlling baseline exchanges while Krejčíková’s errors piled up. But Paolini faltered in the final set, double-faulting to get broken. Krejčíková held at love for 5-3 and served out the championship.

During the trophy ceremony, much like after her 2021 French Open victory, Krejčíková spoke about Novotná’s influence. Later, at her news conference, Krejčíková mentioned that Novotná frequently appears in her dreams.

A reporter asked what Krejčíková would like to say to Novotná now.

“I think I would turn it around,” Krejčíková said with a smile. “I would like to hear what she would tell me.”



Alcaraz Triumphs Over Djokovic in Wimbledon Final

Carlos Alcaraz secured his second Wimbledon title, defeating Novak Djokovic 6-2, 6-2, 7-6(4). The 21-year-old Spaniard successfully defended his title, marking his fourth major crown.

"It is a dream for me, winning this trophy," Alcaraz said. "When I was 11 or 12 years old, I said my dream was to win Wimbledon. I want to keep going, but it is a great feeling to play on this beautiful court and lift this amazing trophy."

While Alcaraz's 2023 victory over Djokovic was a five-set epic, this year's final was more straightforward.

Alcaraz dominated the seven-time champion, who had undergone knee surgery last month. Converting five of 14 break points, Alcaraz's stunning performance on return was key to his win.



With a two-hour, 27-minute victory, Alcaraz became the second man in the Open Era to win his first four Grand Slam finals, after Roger Federer. He also joined an elite group of men who have won both Roland Garros and Wimbledon in the same year, including Rod Laver, Bjorn Borg, Rafael Nadal, Federer, and Djokovic.

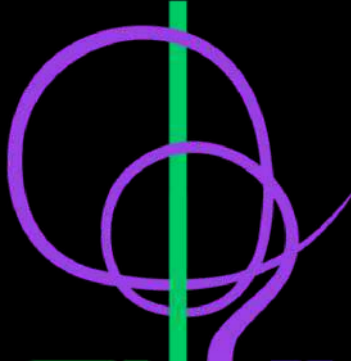
"I think fighting, believing," Alcaraz said about winning Roland Garros and Wimbledon back-to-back. "It is a huge honour for me to be part of those players. They are huge champions. I don't consider myself a champion yet, not like them, but I will keep building my path."

Alcaraz's consistency was key. He broke Djokovic twice in the first set, repeated the feat in the second, and overcame a late lapse in the third. Despite facing a brief setback at 5-4, Alcaraz retained his composure in the tie-break.

Djokovic, recovering from knee surgery, reached his 37th major final but struggled to find his rhythm. Despite a late surge, he couldn't sustain a comeback.

"Credit to Carlos for playing some complete tennis," Djokovic said. "He was an absolutely deserved winner today, so congratulations to him for amazing tennis."

Alcaraz's victory also boosted his standing in the PIF ATP Live Race To Turin, setting the stage for an intriguing second half of the season.



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The Tennis Ball: Understanding the Fluffiness Factor

In our previous article, we explored the growing concerns surrounding tennis ball quality, focusing on players' perspectives and the impact of ball degradation on their performance and health. Continuing our series, we now turn our attention to the technical intricacies of tennis ball construction and the role of "fluffiness" in ball performance. This piece, authored by experts at HEAD, aims to shed light on the critical aspects of ball fluffiness, its desired effects, and the manufacturing processes that influence this key characteristic. HEAD is one of the biggest tennis ball manufacturers in the world, and the information and data presented here reflect their extensive expertise in the field.

The Science of Fluffiness

Fluffiness in tennis balls is not merely a flaw but a deliberate design feature that significantly enhances the playing experience. This characteristic affects several aspects of the ball's behaviour:

- 1. Impact Feel:** A fluffy ball provides a better feel during impact with the racket, thanks to its increased surface softness and coefficient of friction (COF). This enhanced tactile feedback allows players to execute more precise shots with improved control.
- 2. Aerodynamics:** The fluffiness of the ball influences its aerodynamics, particularly through the Magnus effect and drag resistance. The Magnus effect causes the ball to experience a downward force when it spins, leading to more curved trajectories. Meanwhile, increased drag resistance slows down the ball more rapidly, demanding greater effort from players to maintain high speeds.
- 3. Bounce Dynamics:** Upon hitting the court surface, a fluffy ball experiences higher friction, which decelerates its speed but increases its bounce height. This change in bounce dynamics forces players to adjust their swings, adding an additional layer of complexity to their gameplay.

The Role of Felt Construction

The felt covering a tennis ball is crucial in determining its potential fluffiness. There are two primary types of felt construction: woven and needle.

- Woven Felt:** Contains a blend of nylon, polyester, wool, and cotton. Used predominantly in tournaments, woven felt enhances player performance across all surfaces. The wool-rich surface fiber provides superior touch and feel off the racket, proven durability, and consistent performance over the ball's lifespan. Its perfect balance of wool and nylon ensures high resistance to abrasion, making it the preferred choice for professional play.
- Needle Felt:** Made from similar materials but without cotton. While needle felt can also provide good performance, it lacks the superior characteristics of woven felt, particularly in terms of touch, feel, and durability.

The woven felt, due to its construction, has a higher tendency to become fluffy, while the needle felt tends to stay more compact. Additionally, the materials influence the extent to which a ball can become fluffy. The higher amounts of wool and cotton in woven felt, in fact, absorb more humidity, increasing the potential for the ball to become fluffy in a shorter time.

Manufacturing Process and Quality Control

The production of tennis balls involves several critical steps, with the application and treatment of felt being pivotal to achieving the desired fluffiness. Here is an overview of the key stages:

- 1. Felt Cutting and Adhesion:** Felt arrives at the factory in large rolls, which are cut into small, shaped pieces. A special adhesive, primarily made from natural rubber and white dye, is applied to the borders of each piece. These pieces are then attached to the ball either manually or by machine.
- 2. Third Cure:** This dual-curing process solidifies the felt's attachment to the ball, enhancing durability and preventing premature breakage. Temperature and curing time are adjusted differently for woven and needle felt to achieve optimal results.
- 3. Steam and Drying:** The balls pass through a steam tube or tumbler to raise the felt and remove mould lines. Proper steam pressure and timing are crucial to achieving the desired fluffiness.

HEAD's extensive experience in this field underscores the importance of precise control over these processes. Factors such as the milling/weaving pattern, yarn sizes, and material composition all contribute to the final quality of the felt. The factory conducts rigorous quality checks, including gauge, weight, and abrasion tests, to ensure consistency and performance.

Impact of External Factors

The quality of felt can vary due to numerous factors, including the stability of production, worker expertise, and machinery used. The COVID-19 pandemic notably disrupted production, leading to inconsistencies in felt quality. HEAD managed to maintain production continuity by creating a "bubble" environment for its workers, but suppliers faced challenges such as workforce turnover and the need for retraining, which impacted felt consistency.

Looking Ahead

HEAD is committed to addressing the "fluffiness" problem through continuous monitoring and feedback from players. Their proactive approach to investigating and refining the production process ensures that their tennis balls meet the highest standards, catering to the needs of professional players.

As we move forward, we will continue to explore the complexities of tennis ball manufacturing and performance, striving to enhance the player experience and maintain fair competition across diverse playing environments. Stay tuned for further insights into the intricate world of tennis ball technology.

By maintaining a focus on quality and performance, HEAD aims to support the evolving needs of tennis players and contribute to the advancement of the sport.

Andy Murray: A Storied Career of Triumphs and Trials

Andy Murray's name has become synonymous with British tennis greatness. His journey from a young talent to one of the sport's most celebrated figures is a testament to his skill, determination, and resilience. As we look back on Murray's illustrious career, it's clear that he stands as arguably the most successful British tennis player of all time.



Early Years and Breakthrough

Born on May 15, 1987, in Glasgow, Scotland, Andy Murray showed promise from a young age. His breakthrough came in 2005 when he reached the third round of Wimbledon as an 18-year-old. This performance hinted at the remarkable career that lay ahead.

Grand Slam Glory

Murray's first major triumph came in 2012, when he won the US Open, ending Britain's 76-year wait for a male Grand Slam singles champion. This victory was particularly sweet, coming just weeks after he secured the Olympic gold medal in London. His emotional triumph at the 2013 Wimbledon Championships, where he became the first British man to win the title since Fred Perry in 1936, solidified his place in tennis history. Murray captured his third Grand Slam title at Wimbledon in 2016, further cementing his legacy.

Achievements and Titles

Over his career, Murray has accumulated 46 ATP singles titles, including two Olympic gold medals (2012, 2016), and a Davis Cup victory in 2015, where he played a pivotal role in leading Great Britain to their first title in 79 years. His consistent performances saw him reach the world No. 1 ranking in November 2016, a position he held for 41 weeks.

Comparisons to Other British Players

Murray's achievements put him in a league of his own compared to other British players. Fred Perry's eight Grand Slam titles in the 1930s set a high benchmark, but the modern era's competitiveness makes Murray's accomplishments arguably more impressive. Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski, both contemporaries of Murray, never managed to claim a Grand Slam title, highlighting the Scot's unique success.

Controversial Moments

Like any great athlete, Murray's career has not been without controversy. His comments about equal pay in tennis sparked debates, but also showcased his advocacy for gender equality in sports. His decision to hire Amélie Mauresmo as his coach in 2014 was met with skepticism, yet it underscored his progressive outlook and commitment to innovation in his game.

Injuries and Comebacks

Injuries have been a recurring challenge for Murray, particularly a hip injury that required multiple surgeries. His decision to undergo hip resurfacing surgery in 2019 was a bold move to prolong his career. Despite the physical toll, Murray's determination saw him return to the tour, winning the European Open in 2019, a testament to his fighting spirit.

Looming Retirement

As Murray entered the twilight of his career, the signs of an imminent retirement became more apparent. His participation at Wimbledon in 2024 was likely his swan song at the All England Club. Although he bowed out earlier than hoped, the standing ovation he received was a fitting tribute to a player who has given so much to the sport and his country.

Legacy

Andy Murray's legacy extends beyond his titles and accolades. He has inspired a generation of British tennis players and fans, proving that with talent, hard work, and resilience, greatness is achievable. His influence on British tennis is unparalleled, and his contributions to the sport will be remembered long after he hangs up his racket.

As we reflect on Andy Murray's career and his recent decision to stop playing after the Olympics, it's clear that his impact on tennis is profound. He has not only elevated British tennis but has also left an indelible mark on the global stage. Whether this year's Wimbledon was indeed his last or not, Murray's legacy as one of the greatest British sportsmen of all time is firmly secure.



Thanks Andy



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Embracing the Tenniscore Trend: A Nostalgic Nod to Tennis Apparel

The world of fashion is ever-evolving, yet some trends manage to blend the old with the new in ways that captivate both seasoned enthusiasts and fresh admirers. "Tenniscore" is one such trend, merging the elegance of classic tennis attire with modern sartorial sensibilities. For our readers, who span from devoted stringers to tennis aficionados, this movement not only resonates with the rich history of the sport but also offers a stylish reflection of their passion. Let's delve into how tenniscore is shaping the fashion landscape and why it's worth paying attention to.

The Essence of Tenniscore

Tenniscore is a fashion trend inspired by traditional tennis apparel. It draws from the sport's iconic elements, such as pleated skirts, polo shirts, crisp whites, and retro trainers. The look is characterised by a clean, preppy aesthetic that evokes the elegance of vintage tennis matches.

A Historical Perspective

For many in our demographic, tenniscore is more than just a fleeting fashion statement; it's a nostalgic homage to the golden eras of tennis. The pristine whites of Wimbledon, the classic silhouettes worn by legends like Björn Borg and Chris Evert, and the unmistakable style of tennis clubs from decades past—all contribute to this trend's allure.



Tenniscore is more than just a trend—it's a celebration of tennis heritage and a stylish nod to the sport's timeless appeal. For our readers who live and breathe tennis, incorporating elements of this trend into their wardrobe is a way to showcase their passion in a fashionable manner. As you explore the offerings from brands like Lacoste, Fred Perry, and NikeCourt, you'll find that tenniscore provides a perfect blend of nostalgia and modernity, making it a trend worth embracing. By weaving the essence of tennis history into contemporary fashion, tenniscore allows us to wear our love for the game with pride, both on and off the court.



In the Room

With Richard Parnell

Check the weather forecast!

This month's thoughts, in the room, are to do with calculating your workload for the next day.

At the beginning of an outdoor tournament, with a full draw, work is building up and keeping on top of it is paramount. The normal way of dealing with it would be to finish all possible rackets the same day, leaving all machines clear for rackets coming in the next day. However, you can get some clues as to your work for tomorrow or the next day by checking the weather forecast and then work out how late you need to stay today.

If the forecast is 90% rain for tomorrow, you know that the rackets coming in the next day will be minimal, so finishing off all today's rackets and having a late night is no longer so important as you know you will have time tomorrow. This obviously doesn't concern rackets that have to be strung in the morning.

Why have a late night when the stringers will be sitting around doing nothing the next day? Have an early night, get some rest and finish the rackets in the morning, a well-rested team makes less mistakes.

Be part of the change!

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SOME FACTS

Manners and respect will always be stand out qualities of success. The respect you show fellow professionals, clients, event organisers, and staff, will have a lasting effect and will help you stand out from the rest.

D.J Efford

1 **GRSA International** is not just an association for racket stringers, it's also the Racket Sports association, we did this to help bring more enthusiasts into the world of stringing. To bring them closer to the craft and brands involved in the stringing world.

2 **Why we do what we do!**
The stringing world needs more recognition, but it also needs new talent and we intend to not only bring it more into the limelight, but encourage people to explore the possibility of making this extremely important craft a business opportunity.

3 **When we were looking at what to add to the ATW magazine**, we decided on a mixture of technical information and news so that both sides of our following had something they can relate to. All of the sports covered in the magazine have a link to a stringer's craft. Customising a paddle, be it for padel or pickleball is an important part of your service, most padel and pickleball players play another racket sport like tennis or squash, so who better to fine tune their paddles than the GRSA certified professional that looks after their strung rackets?

4 **GRSA International** is set on providing education driven excellence throughout its educational program, including tour experience for GRSA members that have already reached the required level. Offering members the opportunity to join the GRSA stringing team is something unique to GRSA, being able to gain experience in an event such as an ATP or WTA 250 or 500, taking your tour certification exam while gaining that important experience is a special thing, that's how GRSA intends to keep giving back to its members and supporters.

Stringer Solutions

with Richard Parnell

TOP
TIP

Tour Stringing, what should I take?

This is a question that most stringers ask themselves before an event. The more experienced stringer will have already worked out what he or she needs after trial and error and experience of having done it multiple times.

I often see stringers turning up with large metal cases with different compartments with everything from grommets and double sided tape to staplers and hammers and other tools.

The head stringer at the event will have already thought of everything needed to cover the team's needs and player requests. However, some requests just can't be satisfied as it's impossible to have all the tools on site in the stringing room, there just isn't enough room.

You only need to take the tools that are necessary for restringing a racket, so starting clamps, awls, cutters, pliers, setting off awl and string scissors. Some extra small items can be taken, like lip balm to help enlarge a grommet, it takes no space but can be a life saver and maybe a small amount of tubing to repair any damaged grommets.

Keep the tools to a minimum as space is never abundant and everything else should already be there anyway.

As they say... **“Less is more”**

Remember – The difference is in the small details.

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

Leaving your mark on the industry

In many professions, there are individuals who strive to be the best they can be, continually learning and bringing better things to their workplace, company, and industry. These individuals stand out not just because of their personalities, abilities, and commitment to their craft, but also because of their achievements both as a team and as individuals. They have left a mark, becoming references in their field.

Over decades of learning, there have been countless opportunities to share knowledge, teach, and help others rise through the ranks. It's important to always strive for excellence and avoid mediocrity. A select few earn the title of GRSA Grand Master, a rare distinction due to the uncommon trait of consistently putting others before oneself and giving back to the industry that shaped their careers.

The attributes of a GRSA Grand Master include the unselfish sharing of time, knowledge, and support. These individuals have years of experience at every level and stage, maintaining humility while becoming respected names within the industry. Nearly every dedicated stringer will have heard of them for one reason or another.

But how does one achieve this accolade? It is an invitational honour that requires at least 10 years of stringing and organising at major Tour events and slams. It demands clear support for other stringers, helping them grow and promoting their recognition. Moreover, it involves a deep commitment to helping others find passion and meaning in this unique workplace.

These are the main criteria for becoming a GRSA Grand Master Stringer, and we celebrate some of these exceptional individuals from around the world.

Achieve certified
levels through
known sources of
quality driven
education

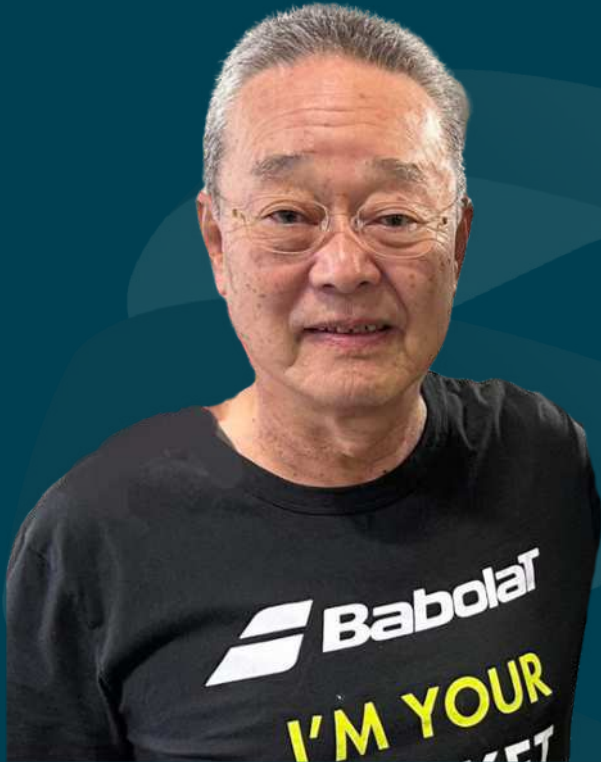
Strive to better
your abilities by
showing interest in
learning every single
day, from everyone,
at every level

String at the
highest level
constantly during a
minimum of 10 years,
slams, 1000's & other
major events

Give back to the
craft that has provided
so much over the
years, helping others
achieve their goals
and grow

GRAND MASTER (TENNIS)

Toru Yusuki



Grand Slam work began at Wimbledon and the US Open in 1992. He then went on to the Athens Olympics and the ATP Final in Shanghai, plus many more after that.

Toru is currently working in Japan at Forest Hills tennis resort and looks after all of the extra specialist work for Babolat Japan

Tomas Stilwell



Tomas is currently based in Toronto, Canada, working with the Merchant of Tennis as their Racket Service Manager.

Tomas' passion for the sport began as a child, where he competed as a junior in the UK. He has been stringing on the ATP & WTA tours since 2010, stringing at events ranging from Challenger tournaments to Grand Slams. He is certified by GRSA International (Global Racket Stringers Association) as a GRSA Grand Master. There are currently less than 10 people in the world with this certification, making Thomas a member of a very elite group of racket technicians.

Tomas has been a member of most of the different stringing teams around the world, his CV is so vast it has to be reduced to the highlights which are, stringing at all the Grand Slams, various Olympic games, Master 1000's as well as all levels of ATP and WTA events. Tomas currently works with the Canadian Davis Cup team and was a member of the DC winning Canadian team in 2022.

If Tomas isn't stringing or customising rackets he is cheering on his favourite sports teams. He is a season ticket holder for Arsenal FC, he used to be a very talented footballer himself, and he is an avid supporter of the Toronto Blue Jays.

Richard has been stringing for about 50 years with 30 of those at the highest level and for the best players in the world.

Richard took his USRSA MRT exam about 25 years ago, realizing the importance of being certified, and from then has strived to constantly improve and to climb the certification ladder to reach the top. Keeping an open mind is probably the best way to keep improving and luckily Richard gets to interact with some of the best stringers in the world and as such manages to learn from them.

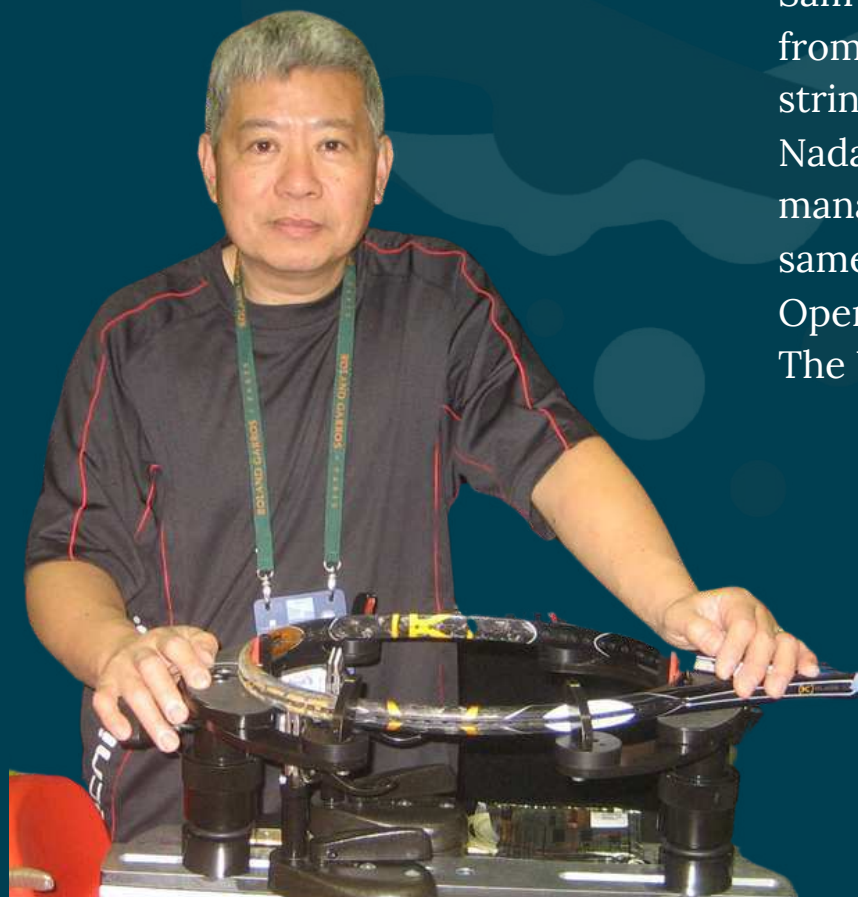
Richard has had the pleasure of having worked with all the other GRSA GMs at different tournaments over the years, but one tournament has stood out more than others and that is of course Wimbledon. Sam and Toru in the early 2000's and then Tomas in the 2010's. Contact is still there with a last meeting with Toru in Tokyo in 2015, Sam in Melbourne in 2016 and then Tomas in London from about 2016 onwards and at the DC Finals in Málaga which is a lot closer to home.

Richard lives by "The aggregation of marginal gains" and as such is always looking at ways of improving and honing his technique.

Richard Parnell



Sam Chan



Sam has been a very busy professional, from Olympic games to personal stringer for Serena Williams, Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer, he has also managed to be at all 4 majors in the same year Roland Garros (The French Open), The Wimbledon Championships, The US Open and The Australian Open.

Currently in Berwick, Victoria 3806, approximately 40km south-east of Melbourne, Australia, Sam teaches, strings and shares his knowledge with anyone who is interest in learning this amazing craft.



PREMIUM RACKET SERVICE

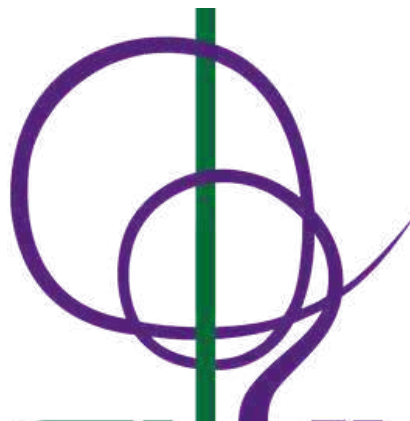
TAKE YOUR GAME
TO THE NEXT LEVEL

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**Global
Racket
Stringers
Association**

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

1st ANNUAL GLOBAL STRINGERS CONFERENCE

JOIN US AND LEARN
HOW TO STRING

Beginner's
Course

IMPROVE YOUR
SKILLS

Advanced
Stringing

PLUS..

VIP Speakers
Workshops
+ More

**FOR MORE
INFORMATION**

info@grsa-international.com

LIMITED SPACES
AVAILABLE

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



PRS - GRSA at the Zug Open - Switzerland

Zug is a beautiful city in Switzerland and has been the home of the Zug Open since 2022, it's a young tournament but does not lack in exciting players, beautiful setting and an extremely supportive crowd.



The official stringing team for HEAD is made up of Richard Parnell, Martin Mann, Tine Eiwanger, and Dominik Baumann. Rain has been a part of the tournament but not too severe and the crowds have really kept energy levels high.

Smaller tournaments are perfect to help stringers gain more experience and the ideal opportunity to get to know the team and build an understanding as to what will be required in bigger tournament and events.

Last year's winner Arthur Rinderknech was not at this year's event which meant a new name will be on the trophy as Dominic Stricker that won in 2022, was included in the line-up but bowed out in a 3 set clash with Rudolf Molleker. A very close contest between the two and the closest of the opening matches, 7-6. 6-7, 7-6 was the final score on day 3 of the event.

With a smaller field of players, it's obvious that the amount of rackets is less, so the amount of stringers is less, but that doesn't mean the team aren't being kept busy. No time to do too much sightseeing, it's business as usual with 32 singles and 16 doubles. For this contest, the N°1 seed was Botic van de Zandschulp, who lost on day 3.

Mika Brunold, a homegrown favourite, was made to work for his win, three sets to take out the N°1 seed and move to the next round and face his compatriot Marc-Andrea Hüsler. The youngster up against another lower ranked player, had already shown he was good enough but this time, straight sets took him to the bus stop, ok maybe not but he was going home.



Marko Topo and Jérôme Kym put on what will be classed as the match of the tournament in the quarter finals, it had absolutely everything, breaks, tie breaks, long rallies, fantastic winning points, it's no wonder it went to 3 sets and it really could have gone either way, 7-5, 6-7. 6-7 was the final score, what a match to witness and these players are destined for bigger things.

Jérôme Kym regained control after that mammoth match and beat Joris De Loore in the semi final, while the Argentinian Roman Andres Burruchaga advanced to the final by beating Marc-Andrea Hüsler in 3 sets.

The final was set, and looking at previous games, you'd think it was going to be more of a close contest but Jérôme was just in his element. He didn't seem phased by the task ahead, composed and determined, he took title in two straight sets, 6-4, 6-4. this young man was on fire, great to see!

Winner : Jerome Kym

Runner up: Roman Andres Burruchaga

250 rackets strung

Highest tension: 27,2/27,2

Lowest tension: 17,3/17,3

String used in KM: 2,86





SP.IN S2

NICK'S VIEWS

TIPS & TRICKS

Not to be confused with the Country Code of SP denoting Singapore in the world of Yonex and a few others. This month I am going to write about the SP.IN S2 squash racket.

I have one and Jon Sharpe has one. I know of no others. It follows that they are rare. The Brand SP.IN never survived and has been discontinued for many years. They also made a few models of Tennis racket, that are still rare but less than the S2 squash racket. That being said, I'm sure there's a few more about.

Jon also known as the String Doctor has a You Tube channel and if you want to see one strung, look there.  [CLICK THIS ICON](#)

The Brand were groundbreaking at the time, which would've been in the 80s most likely.

The racket has a few aspects that make it stand out on it's own, because of its design.

It's an open throat racket, not made of wood with 16 mains and 17 crosses.

Made by a USA company whose full name was SPorts INnovations inc. designed by Professor T.C. Soong PHD who called this a two-tension racket and written upon it was:-

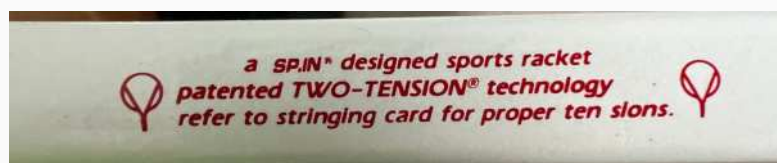
"Extremely Long main strings at much higher tension than cross strings makes network extremely responsive forgivable and shock-free".

It also lists a few patent numbers for the USA, UK, Europe, Taiwan and Canada.



Nick's Nugget

About 50% of Squash Rackets, whether standard or non-standard, have mains that end at the head. They can usually be strung in either 1-piece (2 knots) or 2-piece (4 knots). Make sure there's enough knot-holes.



The main strings go through the bridge around a piece of plastic next to a second, lower bridge, and back up to the head, via the main bridge on the way. The lowest cross string is just below the main bridge and there must be a hard-weave at this cross.

It is very similar to the Prince Triple Threat pattern (with ring), but there are no double-barelled grommets and no shared holes, just a few skips.

The design was to help you play better and get less Tennis Elbow, apparently.



Egypt dominated the WSF World Junior Squash Championships in Houston, USA, with Amina Orfi and Mohamad Zakaria securing historic wins. Orfi, 17, claimed her third consecutive title, becoming the only player to achieve this feat. She faced compatriot Fayrouz Aboelkheir in the final, overcoming early nerves to win 11-7, 15-13, 11-5. "I still can't believe it! I came into this match expecting a battle," Orfi said, already looking forward to the team event.

In the men's final, Zakaria, 16, made history as the youngest male champion, defeating Korea's Joo Young Na 11-6, 11-4, 11-6. Zakaria's strategic play kept Na at bay, sealing the victory after a tense video referee decision. "I've worked all my life for this moment. It's extra special because I have my father and coach here," Zakaria remarked, praising Na's significant improvement and impressive journey to the final.

Medals were also awarded to the semi-finalists. In the women's event, USA's Caroline Fouts and Egypt's Nadien Elhammamy took bronze. In the men's event, India's Shaurya Bawa and Malaysia's Harith Danial also secured bronze medals, marking notable achievements for their respective countries.

Results:

Women's Final

- [1] Amina Orfi (EGY) bt [2] Fayrouz Aboelkheir (EGY) 3-0: 11-7, 15-13, 11-5 (48m)

Men's Final

- [1] Mohamad Zakaria (EGY) bt [9/16] Joo Young Na (KOR) 3-0: 11-6, 11-4, 11-6 (37m)

Medalists:

- Gold: Amina Orfi (EGY) and Mohamad Zakaria (EGY)
- Silver: Fayrouz Aboelkheir (EGY) and Joo Young Na (KOR)
- Bronze: Caroline Fouts (USA), Nadien Elhammamy (EGY), Shaurya Bawa (IND), Harith Danial (MAS)



The 2023/24 PSA World Tour has been transformative for Mostafa Asal. Under the guidance of former World No.1 James Willstrop, the Egyptian star has refined his approach, showing significant improvement in both performance and demeanor.

A year ago, Asal faced a 12-week suspension from the PSA Tour. However, since returning at the Grasshopper Cup last October, he has focused on his game, distancing himself from past controversies. His work with Willstrop has clearly paid off, evidenced by Asal's calmness on the court and a newfound gentlemanly respect.

Reflecting on his season after winning the British Open in June, Asal expressed gratitude for the changes. "With lots of things that I am doing, I am grateful to be playing squash like this. Pontefract feels like home now. I realised there was something wrong, there was something to fix, and that is what I have done."

Asal credits Willstrop for helping him find balance. "It has been unbelievable to learn from him. He's had a big impact on me to try be calm on court. The best thing right now is that there are no bans. Everything is fine, and this is credit to James [Willstrop]."

Asal's standout victory came at the British Open, where he defeated World No.1 Ali Farag and World No.2 Paul Coll en route to the Platinum title. These wins showcased his combination of power and fluid movement, making him a formidable opponent.

Throughout the season, Asal achieved several high-profile victories, becoming one of only two players to beat Farag multiple times. He also captured Gold-level titles at the Florida Open and Black Ball Open, reaching the finals in his last six World Tour events, including the CIB PSA World Championships in Cairo.

Finishing the season in strong form, Asal aims to carry this momentum into the 2024/25 season, with hopes of closing the gap to Farag at the top of the men's rankings.



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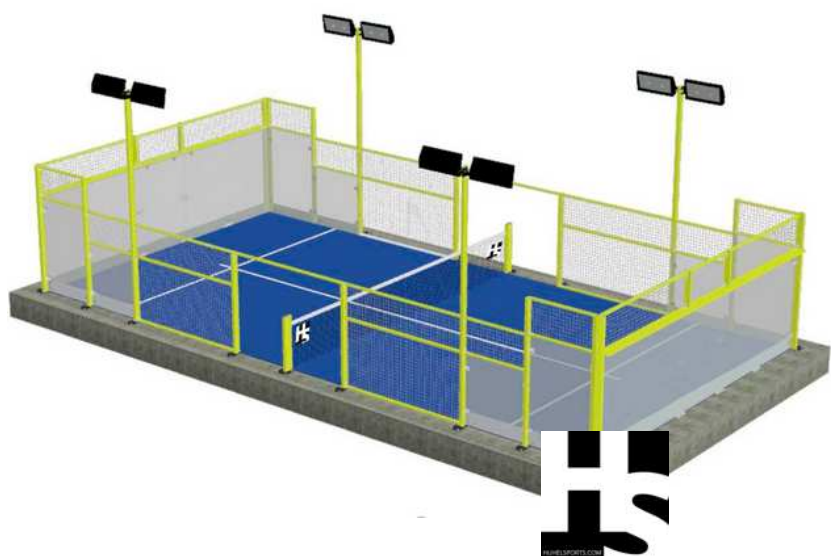
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We can have immediate availability for basic colours and 20 days for custom colours (longer transport time).

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Players and mothers: from Marrero to Sussarello, the second life of padel champions!

The FIP Platinum Sardegna final just over a month since her return to the court: Marta Marrero shines again in the major padel tournaments after an absence since late 2022, initially met with surprise before the reason became clear. The Spaniard had chosen to stop after deciding to become a mother, a significant step for a professional athlete who has dedicated her life to competition. A new awareness, enriched by the arrival of little Flavia last November, has given Marta new vitality. "I am eager to compete again, but I'm also a bit nervous, I want to do my best", she recently told the Spanish journalists, shortly before returning to competition.



An emotion that has paid off on the court: since June, the 41-year-old former world number one has reached two quarter-finals in the Premier Padel circuit (in Bordeaux and Malaga) before arriving at the Cagliari tournament with Zazu Osoro, the partner chosen for the new chapter of her career. "My thought was to return to play, but I was also realistic, a baby was coming, and I had to see how I felt, if I would be motivated to return. Then everything came together, and with my husband's support, we decided to move forward". Not forgetting what is now the most important part of her life: "I organized everything so I could bring my daughter with me because it was a priority". A great effort, but also great joy and energy that accompanies her, as she confirmed after yesterday's semi-final win against Guinart-Iglesias: "I am very happy because coming back after such a long time is never easy, and there are no guarantees of regaining your level".

The intertwining of sports and private life, with unique yet different emotions, is a theme that also accompanies other top padel athletes: for example, Lea Godallier, number 60 in the FIP ranking, who is also competing in Cagliari (where she was eliminated in the second round) and is still in the Sardinian capital for the FIP European Padel Championships next week with France. After becoming a mother at the beginning of the year, Lea brought her son to Sardinia, dividing her time between the Tennis Club courts and family moments in the city and hotel, where between lunch and a lullaby for the baby, she attracted the looks and smiles of those present. "I have the opportunity to realize my greatest life project", she said at the end of 2023 when she was already expecting her baby and had suspended her activity. Among the "career mothers" in padel, there could not be a lack of the Italian Giulia Sussarello, who won two medals at the European Games in Krakow. Less than a year later, she also became a mother and returned to play two months after giving birth. The Italian - who will also participate in next week's European Championships - broke the ice at the Italy Major Premier Padel in Rome, then won her first trophy immediately after, at the FIP Rise in Biella at the end of June. "Winning with my family and my son Andrea nearby is even more exciting", she said. A new side of women's padel that is evolving not only in competitiveness but also on a personal level, bringing the athletes who live it even higher.

Orsi Triumphs with Rodriguez, Marrero/Osoro Defeated in Three Sets

A marathon of 2 hours and 42 minutes for the first Italian victory in a major international tournament, the FIP Platinum Sardegna. Carolina Orsi wins in Cagliari paired with Spain's Nuria Rodriguez, defeating the number 2 seeds, Marta Marrero and Aranzazu Osoro, 6-2 6-7 6-3. The decisive match at TC Cagliari started well for Orsi and her partner, who immediately broke and then led 2-0, setting the direction for the set, which ended at 6-2. Rodriguez was the star, tirelessly running all over the court with Orsi ready to land the decisive blow, amid several errors from their opponents. However, the second set took a different turn: Marrero/Osoro led 4-1 before Orsi/Rodriguez made a comeback, then at 5-all, the Italian missed a chance to regain the lead with an off-target smash, perhaps hindered by the setting sun. This led to a hard-fought tiebreak, but even a comeback from 3-6 to 6-6 by Carolina and Nuria was thwarted by "Zazu" and Marta. The setback could have been significant, but at 1-1 in the third set, the Italian-Spanish duo secured a crucial break, allowing them to manage the match until the final push. After missing the first two match points, the victory came at deuce in the ninth game, a "punto de oro" that had never been so precious for the pair.

EMOTIONS "I want to thank the Cagliari crowd", said a moved Carolina at the end of the match. "It's my first major international title in the circuit, and I am very excited and happy to have won here in Italy. I will stay here another week for the FIP European Padel Championships, and wearing the blue jersey is a special adventure for me". She added: "Congratulations to the 'Viking' and Marta Marrero, who returned after a year and a half and played a great final. I also thank Nuria, who runs a lot, sometimes even for me, and played another incredible match". A feeling confirmed by Rodriguez, who achieved her best result since winning the FIP Star in Perugia last year: "Carolina makes everything easy; it had been a long time since I had so much fun on the court. It has been a tough season, especially at the beginning, with many injuries, so I also thank my entire team for always supporting me"



FIP Promotion Valencia, Rodriguez and Santigosa make the double

Second victory in a row in the CUPRA FIP Tour for Alonso Rodriguez and Daniel Santigosa who, after winning in Koksijde (Belgium), also took the title in the FIP Promotion in Valencia. In the final, Rodriguez (now number 95) and Santigosa (101) beat the pair formed by Adrian Marques and Mario Huete Hernandez 6-1 6-2. A clean sweep, that of the number 2 seed, who lifted the trophy without losing a set.

In the women's draw, however, the title went to number 7 seed Teresa Moriñigo and Elena De La Rosa, thanks to a 3-6 6-2 6-2 victory in the final over Carla Serrano and Aitana Garcia Roman (3). "We managed to win the title after five difficult matches, fighting on every ball and believing until the end – the two winners said –. Thanks to those who always support us".



The **HEAD Pro Spin Strips** have been developed to bring more spin and better control to padel players worldwide. Utilizing the **Rezztek®** technology, the **HEAD Pro Spin Strips** are made from a light, thin and durable material, that can be applied to the hitting surface of any padel racquet (in the sweet spot area) to help players generate more spin on important padel shots like volleys, bandejas, víboras, smashes and serves.



HEAD Pro Spin Strips' multi-layer material structure only weighs 2 grams per application, so it doesn't add unnecessary weight to a padel racquet. Its grippy rough surface increases the grip on the ball and also the spin that the player can generate on the ball.

MORE
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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!

BRESCIA OPEN - OTTAVA TAPPA ITALIAN PICKLEBALL TOUR - INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT

EID: 1559 **FREE**

Organizer: Tour IPT

EVENT - TOURNAMENT

Starting: October 05, 2024 to October 06, 2024

City: Brescia

Tournament Venue: Italian Pickleball Tour

Registration Deadline: September 24, 2024 (OPEN)

Tier Level: 3

1. NRW Open 2024 - in Oberhausen

EID: 1586 **PRICE** EUR 30

Organizer: Westdeutscher Pickleball Verband e.V. Westdeutscher Pickleball Verba

EVENT - TOURNAMENT

Starting: September 14, 2024 to September 15, 2024

City: Oberhausen, Deutschland

Tournament Venue: Westdeutscher Pickleball Verband E.v.

Registration Deadline: September 01, 2024 (OPEN)

Tier Level: 1

Game Set Match Doubles Weekend Tournament

EID: 1547 **PRICE** GBP 35

Organizer: Michal Cicvak

EVENT - TOURNAMENT

Starting: September 14, 2024 to September 15, 2024

City: Leeds

Tournament Venue: Game Set Match Jccs Leeds

Registration Deadline: September 04, 2024 (OPEN)

Tier Level: 1

**MORE
INFO**

Customising Paddles

Why do it? What are the benefits?

We already know that pickleball is rapidly taking over and tennis courts are being removed to make way for these specialist courts that are providing more income and an increasing fan base. This means that a lot of the things that we associate tennis with will be carried over into pickleball. The tournaments, sponsors, endorsement and customising. That's right, even though these paddles don't have strings, a stringer's work does not end with stringing rackets. An essential part of our training is to be able to look after all types of racket sports, and pickleball can't and shouldn't be left out, or you could be missing out on a great opportunity.

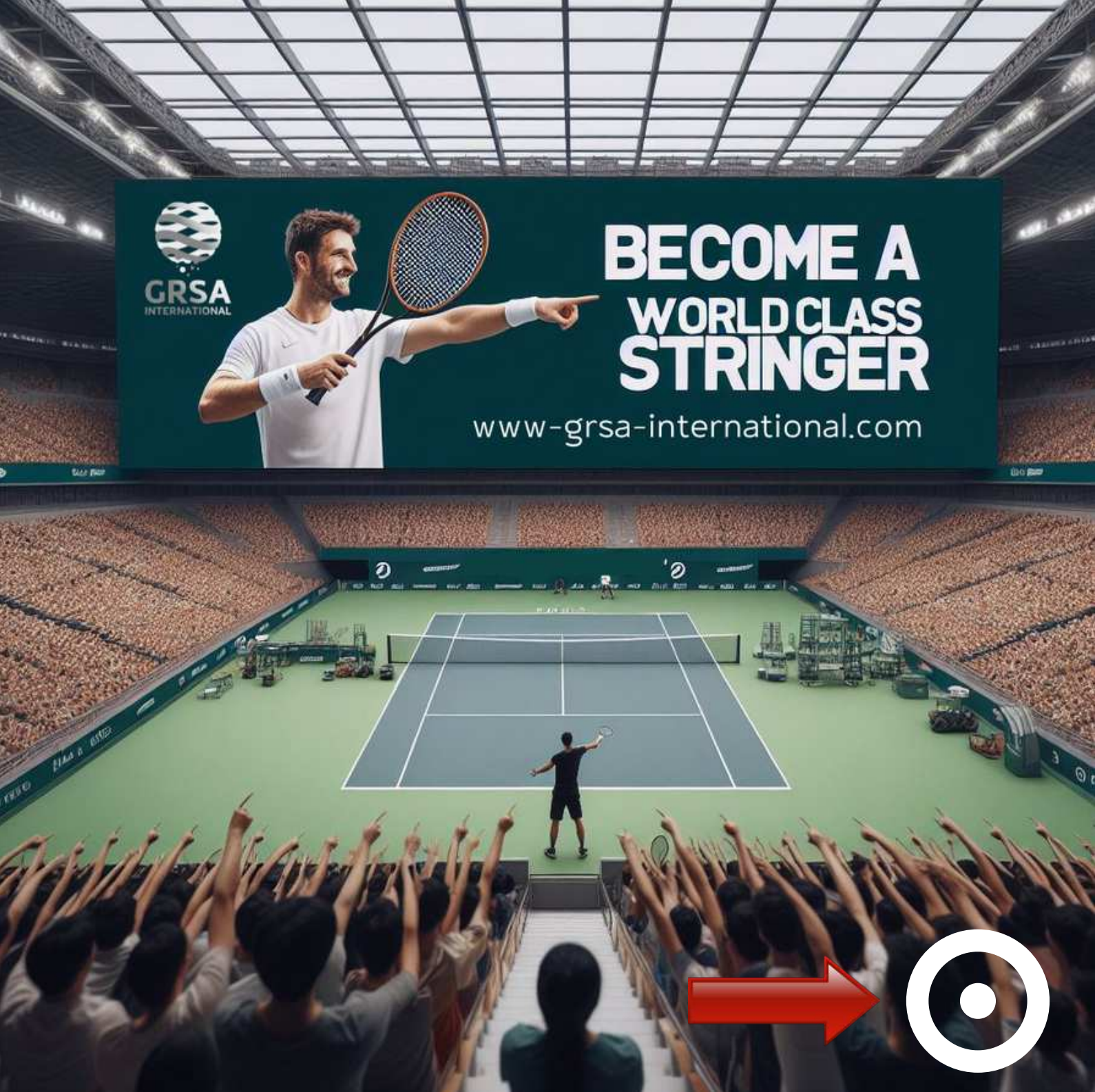


Balance point, swing weight, flexibility, torsion, grip sizing, grip moulding and more. These are just a few things that can be done, as is using lead tape! One of the reasons for using lead tape is that you may want to add overall weight to your paddle. Installation of the tape is easy but here are the main guidelines.

1. Use an alcohol pad or microfibre cloth with some medicinal alcohol to clean the edge guard. Just clean the paddle this way and the lead tape will stick to the paddle without coming off during play. There are guard tapes that will help protect the lead so it doesn't peel off or get damaged during play, but please keep in mind this will also add more weight to your paddle, so factor this in when calculating your desired end weight.
2. If you want to add lead tape to change the balance point, you may want to move the balance point closer to your hand, what do you do? You would put lead tape under the grip by removing the existing grip, unravelling it, place the lead tape in the desired area and then replace the grip. This will not decrease the swing weight but will make the paddle more maneuverable.
3. The third reason would be to increase torsional stability and reduce vibration. Placing the lead tape between 08:00 and 11:00, and between 14:00 and 17:00, this again moves the balance point and adds swing weight but helps prevent the hand and paddle from twisting as much and giving more stability on those slightly less accurate and off-centred shots. These are just a few things that can be done to help with customising paddles, gaining more knowledge about these and more, will help you provide your clients with an all round service, from tennis to squash, badminton to pickleball and even padel.

There really is no reason why you can't put your customising knowledge to work in different sports to help your business and service grow.





The industry's first course dedicated to preparing you for the competition environment.

GRSA have listened to stringers around the world and created a unique course that prepares you for the competition environment. If you're already at the Certified Pro Master level, the next step is to improve those skills and ready yourself for the tournament scene. Before getting to a tour level, the experience from smaller competitions and studying advanced techniques, are key to prepare for that high level and demanding tour setting. By learning how to speed up your stringing, how to minimise material wear, organisation skills and more, you're allowing yourself the chance to earn these two specialist certifications and bridge the gap between your existing level and the tour certification. If you're an active member you can access the exams in a bundle, if not, take the course!

Pickleball has surged in popularity, captivating players of all ages with its unique blend of tennis, badminton, and table tennis. To truly dominate the court, players need to be well-versed in a variety of shots. Here, we'll explore the diverse range of shots in pickleball and how to leverage each one for a competitive edge.

The Serve

The serve initiates every pickleball rally. Players can use various serving techniques, including the traditional underhand serve and the spin-infused serve. Mastering the serve is crucial for setting the tone of the game and gaining control from the first point.

The Groundstroke

Groundstrokes in pickleball are akin to forehand and backhand shots in tennis. Executed from the baseline, these shots aim to keep the ball in play and maintain control of the rally. Consistent groundstrokes require proper footwork, paddle control, and shot placement.

The Dink

The dink is a soft, controlled shot played close to the net, essential for kitchen (non-volley zone) duels. The goal is to maintain precision and a low trajectory, making it challenging for opponents to attack. The dink is strategic in both offensive and defensive scenarios.

The Drop Shot

Similar to the dink but executed from a greater distance, the drop shot is a surprise tactic used to catch opponents off guard. A gentle touch places the ball just over the net, enticing opponents to make a mistake. Finesse and accuracy are key for an effective drop shot.

The Lob

When opponents crowd the net, the lob becomes a valuable offensive weapon. The lob involves hitting the ball high and deep into the opponent's court, creating an opportunity to reset the point or force a defensive response. Perfecting the lob requires precise timing and shot selection.

The Drive

The drive is a powerful offensive shot aimed at putting pressure on opponents. Using a combination of topspin and pace, the drive can control the game's tempo and create openings for winners. Focus on paddle speed, timing, and follow-through when executing a drive.

The Smash

The smash is the pinnacle of offensive shots in pickleball. Typically executed when opponents hit a high ball, the smash involves a forceful overhead shot aimed at ending the point decisively. Successful smashes require timing, positioning, and paddle control.

Pickleball's charm lies in its accessibility and versatility. Mastering a diverse range of shots is key to becoming a formidable player. Whether serving with finesse, engaging in a dink duel, or unleashing a powerful smash, each shot has its strategic purpose. Consistent practice, understanding shot selection, and adapting to different situations on the court will empower you to take control of the game and elevate your pickleball prowess.

Olympic Dreams for Malaysia



Malaysia's hopes for an elusive Olympic gold largely hinge on its badminton shuttlers at the Paris Games. Since badminton's inclusion in the 1992 Barcelona Games, it has been Malaysia's primary source of Olympic medals, contributing nine out of the country's total 13 medals. Track cycling and diving have recently emerged as potential medal sources, but the spotlight remains on badminton.

Despite the emergence of other sports, badminton continues to bear the weight of Malaysia's Olympic aspirations. The shuttlers comprise nearly a third of the 26-strong Malaysian contingent, highlighting the sport's significance. Historically, Malaysia has secured at least one badminton medal in six out of eight Olympic editions since the Sidek brothers clinched the country's maiden bronze in men's doubles in 1992.

Key players include Lee Zii Jia and the men's pair Aaron Chia-Soh Wooi Yik, who are regarded as Malaysia's best hopes. Aaron Chia-Soh Wooi Yik, world No. 5, have been consistent performers, regularly reaching semi-finals in major tournaments. They won a bronze medal in their Olympic debut in Tokyo 2020 and ended Malaysia's long wait for its first badminton world champions in 2022. They enter Paris with high hopes and a favourable draw in Group A. While they face world No. 1 Liang Wei Keng-Wang Chang, they are expected to comfortably beat Britain's Ben Lane-Sean Vendy and Canada's Adam Dong-Nyl Yakura.

For Lee Zii Jia, Paris is a chance for redemption after his early exit in Tokyo 2020, where he lost to Rio 2016 gold medallist Chen Long in the last-16 clash. Since turning professional, Zii Jia has shown improved form and faces his first major test against Indonesia's Anthony Sinisuka Ginting in the last 16. Overcoming Ginting, who leads their head-to-head 5-1, could set up a clash with top seed Shi Yu Qi, a formidable opponent in the semi-finals. Zii Jia has recently shown promising performances, including a win over Anders Antonsen at the Malaysia Masters.

Mixed doubles debutants Chen Tang Jie-Toh Ee Wei, ranked world No. 9, have a favourable draw in Group D. They are expected to advance to the knockout stage, with their toughest challenge being China's Feng Yan Zhe-Huang Dong Ping. Their confidence could lead to surpassing expectations.

In women's doubles, Pearly Tan and M. Thinaah face a tough challenge in Group A, with strong pairs from China, Japan, and Indonesia. Their best chance is to win their first match.

In women's singles, Goh Jin Wei's prospects are limited, but advancing past the group stage would be commendable. Her main rival in Group H is world No. 17 Kim Ga Eun.

Overall, Malaysia's Olympic hopes rest heavily on its badminton athletes, with the potential to continue their medal streak and possibly secure the elusive gold.

Men's doubles ace Soh Wooi Yik is gearing up to add another achievement to his family's impressive badminton legacy as the Paris Olympics approach.

Recent years have been fruitful for the 26-year-old Wooi Yik.

He marked his Olympic debut in Tokyo with partner Aaron Chia, securing a bronze medal.

Following that, the duo made history as Malaysia's first world badminton champions, ending a 45-year wait for the nation.

For Wooi Yik, these titles hold special significance due to his family's deep roots in badminton.

His father, Soh Goon Chup, was an established national doubles player who partnered with Ong Beng Teong and won bronze at the Sea Games in Singapore.

Wooi Yik also draws inspiration from his legendary uncle, Soo Beng Kiang, his mother's brother. Beng Kiang is best known for his partnership with Cheah Soon Kit, with whom he won silver at the World Championships.

Wooi Yik is acutely aware that he carries not only the hopes of a nation but also the proud legacy of a family steeped in badminton excellence.

"My family always tells me that I've already achieved what they were unable to, and they're proud of me," said Wooi Yik.

His uncle, Beng Kiang, made two Olympic appearances, with his best outing being a fourth-place finish at the Atlanta Games.

Partnering with Tan Kim Her, the pair lost to eventual gold medalists Rexy Mainaky-Ricky Subagja in the semi-finals and were subsequently defeated by another Indonesian duo, Denny Kantono-Antonius Ariantho, in the bronze medal match.

Despite falling short of an Olympic medal himself, Beng Kiang has played a mentoring role for Wooi Yik over the years, ensuring the family's dream of winning the elusive gold for Malaysia continues.

Wooi Yik admitted that he still seeks guidance from Beng Kiang, even though he has established himself as a world-class player.

"My uncle too had a close encounter at the Olympics but was unable to secure a medal," he explained.

"Recently, I've met up with him and he's helped me a lot. He's shared many experiences and given me great input, this will surely help me adapt to the situation at the Olympics.

Regarding the nation's immense hope for them to bring home the gold, Wooi Yik believes it's nothing new for him and Aaron to handle, he added: "What Aaron and I need to do is stay focused."

NO OLYMPICS FOR MATHIAS

Mathias Christiansen has decided to withdraw from the mixed doubles badminton event at the Paris Olympics due to unintentional mistakes in his 'whereabouts' reports, risking a penalty.

As the Olympic tournament kicks off, Denmark's strong mixed doubles pair, Mathias Christiansen and Alexandra Bøje, will be absent. Christiansen informed Badminton Denmark of his decision not to compete at the Olympics after making three errors in disclosing his whereabouts. Athletes must report their daily whereabouts for the three months leading up to the Olympic Games in accordance with anti-doping regulations.

According to the rules, three warnings in 12 months can lead to a case at Anti Doping Denmark as an anti-doping rule violation, potentially resulting in suspension. For Christiansen, the decision to withdraw was difficult but inevitable.

"I'm devastated that my carelessness caused us to miss what should have been one of the highlights of our careers. I'm most devastated that it also means Alexandra won't be going to the Olympics. We have both trained intensively and have been looking forward to competing in Paris," said Christiansen.

"I don't want to risk my participation creating unnecessary noise, which can disturb our national team and other Olympic athletes. Therefore, I have chosen to withdraw."

At Badminton Denmark and DIF (the National Olympic Committee and Sports Confederation of Denmark), there is both regret over the situation and understanding of the decision.

"It's an incredibly unfortunate situation for Mathias at the worst possible time. We recognize the rules and that Mathias will most likely receive a suspension. But we are convinced that this is simply a case of unintentional failure to register his whereabouts correctly. There is absolutely nothing that points to attempted cheating or deliberately failing to follow the rules," said Jens Meibom, Head of Sport at Badminton Denmark.



**BADMINTON
DANMARK**

"We think it's very responsible and proper that Mathias has chosen to withdraw. Participating in the Olympics with such a case hanging over his head would be a major disruption for Mathias, Alexandra, their badminton colleagues, and the rest of the Danish delegation. Going to the Olympics without Mathias and Alexandra is a shame, but ultimately the right decision," added Meibom.

DIF echoed this sentiment, with CEO Morten Mølholm Hansen saying, "We understand the incredibly difficult situation that Mathias and Alexandra are going through. We are extremely sad to lose our strong mixed doubles team for the Paris Games, but we think Mathias has made the right decision for the sake of the other athletes. The rules are clear, and while inadequate reporting of 'whereabouts' is far from cheating, the rule is essential in the fight against doping and must be taken seriously."

Mathias Christiansen is now waiting to see if Anti Doping Denmark will report the case to the Doping Tribunal, which will then decide on a possible sanction.

"Right now, I'm waiting to see what happens with the case. As long as it's ongoing, I really just want peace and quiet to recover and figure out how to create the best possible foundation for my future badminton career," said Christiansen.

Badminton Denmark is ready to welcome Mathias Christiansen back after any possible quarantine.

"We hope this is not the end of Mathias' career, and after the case is closed and the possible suspension is lifted, we are open to resuming our full cooperation with Mathias," said Meibom.





QUESTIONS ANSWERED

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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