



GRSA-INTERNATIONAL.COM / MAY 2024

GRSA INTERNATIONAL ATW MAGAZINE

LA BELLEZZA DI ROMA

Alexander Victorious

Iga Relentless

Rome a success



HEAD®



ROLAND-GARROS 2024 COLLECTION

Grab a piece of Roland-Garros, no matter where you're watching from with an exclusive collection inspired by the textures, details and colors of the only clay-court grand slam.

Available now at select retailers and [Wilson.com](https://www.wilson.com)



CONTENT

Section 1 - Tennis

We look at Rome in depth, but that's not all, Madrid was also a special occasion. Young talent in Rome showed us that the future is bright and more emerging stars are on the rise.

Section 2 - GRSA INTERNATIONAL

Workshops in Germany, Geneve stringing team Powered by GRSA and PRS and an update on UNITE NEPAL, GRSA NSA's first project already seeing progress.

Section 3 - Squash

Nick has gone through most of the rackets out there, but now it's time to look at some custom rackets.

Section 4 - Padel

There is news from Premiere Padel and an important partnership announced.

Section 5 - Pickleball

If you could, would you buy a franchise of a pickleball brand? Well it might not be too long before you can.

Section 6 - Badminton

News from around the world and the biggest tournaments, especially the European Championships.

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

Rublev: 'Proudest title of my career'

The 26-year-old clinched his second championship at this tier at the Mutua Madrid Open, securing a comeback 4-6, 7-5, 7-5 victory against debutant Masters 1000 finalist Felix Auger-Aliassime.

Rublev, who previously triumphed in Monte-Carlo in 2023, arrived in the Spanish capital after enduring a four-match losing streak. Nonetheless, the seventh seed showcased near-consistent performance to advance to the final and then displayed remarkable resilience in the title clash, securing the most significant win of his season after two hours and 47 minutes.



"I'm speechless. If you knew what I had endured in the past nine days, you would never imagine I could claim a title," Rublev expressed. "I'm incredibly elated. That one week altered everything because now it seems like I wasn't enduring defeats in the initial rounds for the past weeks!"

Despite conceding his serve in the opening game, Rublev steadily elevated his game to assert his powerful style against the Canadian opponent. He seized the critical break in the 12th game of the second set, demonstrating intensity and courage in the deciding set to secure his 16th tour-level title and second in 2024, following his previous triumph in Hong Kong.

"I'd consider this as the most satisfying title of my career," Rublev remarked. "I was practically exhausted every day. I couldn't sleep at night for the last three, four days."

Rublev, who delivered 25 winners against Auger-Aliassime, overcame second seed Carlos Alcaraz in the quarter-finals before battling past Taylor Fritz to secure a spot in the final. Conversely, Auger-Aliassime benefited from favourable circumstances in Madrid, receiving a quarter-final walkover from Jannik Sinner and a first-set retirement from Jiri Lehecka in the semi-finals.



While Auger-Aliassime appeared fresher entering the final, Rublev exhibited grit and determination in the decisive moments, elevating his record to 8-1 in deciding sets this year. The seventh seed now sits fifth in the PIF ATP Live Race To Turin, striving to qualify for the Nitto ATP Finals for the fifth consecutive year.



Auger-Aliassime aimed to secure his sixth tour-level title. The 23-year-old will ascend to No. 20 in the PIF ATP Rankings on Monday, marking his return to the Top 20 for the first time since last October.

In their sixth Lexus ATP Head2Head encounter, Auger-Aliassime displayed superior freshness from the outset against Rublev. The Canadian broke Rublev's serve to love in the opening game and executed clean ball striking, tallying 13 winners in the first set to take the lead.

Rublev found more success with his first serve in the second set, winning 80 percent of points behind his initial delivery compared to 62 percent in the opener. The 26-year-old held serve with relative ease throughout the set, not encountering a break point, before seizing the opportunity in the 12th game to level the match when Auger-Aliassime erred on a forehand.

In a closely contested third set, Rublev maintained command with his first serve, winning 93 percent of points behind his opening delivery, according to Infosys ATP Stats. The 26-year-old unleashed powerful forehands and remained steadfast in lengthy exchanges to extend his dominance to 5-1 in their Head2Head series. Rublev collapsed to the ground upon claiming the trophy before sharing an embrace with Auger-Aliassime.



Iga's Test in Madrid



World No.1 Iga Swiatek secured her inaugural Mutua Madrid Open title, displaying remarkable resilience by saving three championship points to overcome No.2 and defending champion Aryna Sabalenka in a thrilling 7-5, 4-6, 7-6(7) encounter. This match, hailed as the longest Hologic WTA Tour final of the season, extended over 3 hours and 11 minutes.

The Madrid triumph marks the 20th career victory for the 22-year-old Swiatek and her third of the season. She stands as the youngest player to notch 20 titles since Caroline Wozniacki achieved the feat in 2012.

With three Roland Garros titles under her belt, Swiatek has now conquered both WTA 1000s on clay, adding to her two-time triumph at the Internazionali BNL d'Italia.



Reflecting on her victory, Swiatek expressed, "Undoubtedly, when I reflect back in maybe a few years, it will hold immense significance. But presently, I'm simply delighted to have clinched this tournament regardless of my past victories. My aim is to triumph in every tournament I participate in."

The final marked the third clay-court encounter between Swiatek and Sabalenka. Over the last four decades, only Martina Navratilova and Chris Evert have engaged in more frequent clay battles as the top two players in the world.

In their 10th meeting and the first of the season, Swiatek and Sabalenka engaged in a fiercely contested opening set lasting an hour. Despite the challenging conditions on Manolo Santana Stadium, Sabalenka showcased consistent depth and precision to stifle Swiatek's aggressive gameplay.

Following a series of service breaks in the initial stages, the duo held serve in eight consecutive games before Sabalenka faltered. Serving at 5-5, she conceded her most erratic game of the set, allowing Swiatek to break. The World No.1 exhibited resilience to hold from 0-30 down, securing the set.



Despite Sabalenka's resilient performance throughout the fortnight, she swiftly rebounded from losing the first set by breaking Swiatek immediately to lead 2-0.

The second set witnessed a shift in momentum, characterised by the returner's dominance. Swiatek countered every break of her serve with a break of Sabalenka's until she finally held serve to level the set at 3-3. However, serving at 5-4, Swiatek's untimely double fault at 30-15 paved the way for Sabalenka to capitalise, ultimately forcing a third set.

In the decider, Sabalenka seized an early break to lead 3-1 with a forehand winner. Swiatek responded promptly, breaking back at 15 by intensifying the pace and intensity of her baseline strokes. Despite facing a break opportunity at 4-4, 0-30, Swiatek delivered a decisive hold to level at 5-5.



Serving to extend the match to a tiebreak, Swiatek saved two championship points to hold. Sabalenka squandered her first opportunity with a narrowly missed forehand, while Swiatek nullified the second with a precise one-two punch.

As the match approached the three-hour mark in the tiebreak, Swiatek and Sabalenka exchanged sides with little to separate them at 3-3. Sabalenka secured the first mini-break but couldn't maintain her lead, allowing Swiatek to level the score.

Swiatek earned her first championship point at 6-5 after Sabalenka's forehand sailed long. Despite Sabalenka's fourth ace, Swiatek persisted.



Sabalenka earned a third match point at 7-6, but another backhand error handed Swiatek her second championship point, which she capitalised on as Sabalenka's backhand found the net, prompting Swiatek to collapse in jubilation.

"At the end, I'm unsure what made the difference," Swiatek reflected. "I believe we both deserved to win today. It boiled down to those crucial points in the tiebreaker."

DOMINANT WIN ON

Spanish duo Cristina Bucsa and Sara Sorribes Tormo electrified the crowds at the Caja Magica by clinching the Mutua Madrid Open doubles title on home turf.

Seeded No.8, Bucsa and Sorribes Tormo surged past No.6 seeds Barbora Krejckova and Laura Siegemund with a commanding 6-0, 6-2 victory in the final, marking their triumph at the season's inaugural clay-court WTA 1000 event.

It was an auspicious debut for Bucsa and Sorribes Tormo as a doubles pairing, as they clinched victory in their maiden tournament together. Remarkably, they entered the event just 15 minutes before the doubles deadline closed, as their regular partners were unavailable.

Making national history, Bucsa and Sorribes Tormo became the first Spanish women to claim the Madrid women's doubles title. Previously, Garbiñe Muguruza and Carla Suárez Navarro had finished as runners-up in both 2014 and 2015.



"Wow, that's amazing," exclaimed Bucsa following their win. "I didn't expect that. I didn't know that we can make history, but finally, the wish came true."

"That's something incredible," added Sorribes Tormo. "Winning at home, winning in Madrid, which I really like. I think the history that we have behind [us], with [teaming up] 15 minutes before, it's pretty good."

In Sunday's final, Bucsa and Sorribes Tormo displayed dominance over two Grand Slam doubles champions in the 73-minute championship match. Fuelled by home support, the Spanish duo converted half of their 12 break points while conceding serve only once.

Moreover, they won an impressive 68 percent of points returning their opponents' second serves. Krejckova and Siegemund struggled with 25 unforced errors, while Bucsa and Sorribes Tormo committed just six in the final.

Bucsa and Sorribes Tormo swiftly secured the opening set, facing only one break point. As light rain fell in Madrid, the roof on Manolo Santana Stadium was closed between sets.

Though Krejckova and Siegemund showed resilience after the roof closure, managing to break serve early in the second set, they faltered in the subsequent game, allowing Bucsa and Sorribes Tormo to reel off five consecutive games to seal victory.



"I think every match was very, very difficult," commented Sorribes Tormo. "I think what we did well is that we went match by match, playing every point. Even today, I think we played perfect, but it could change."

For Bucsa, this marks her third career WTA doubles title, her second of the year (following the 2024 Bogota event with Kamilla Rakhimova), and her first at WTA 1000 level. With a career-high doubles ranking of No.38 last week, she is projected to climb even higher on Monday.

Sorribes Tormo secured her fifth career WTA doubles title, marking her first of the year. Achieving a career-high doubles ranking this month at No.26, projected rankings could see her make her Top 20 doubles debut on Monday. This is Sorribes Tormo's second doubles title at WTA 1000 level, having previously won WTA 1000 Beijing last autumn alongside Marie Bouzkova.



Nurturing Mental Health in Racket Sports

Lets delve into the critical balance between physical performance and emotional well-being. Let's explore how athletes can maintain their mental health both on and off the court.

1. Nutrition: Fueling the Mind and Body

Athletes often focus on their physical nutrition, but mental nutrition is equally vital. Properly nourishing the brain can enhance focus, mood, and overall well-being. Here are some key points:

Hydration: Dehydration affects cognitive function, so staying well-hydrated is crucial. Athletes should drink water consistently throughout the day, especially during training and matches.

Balanced Diet: A diet rich in whole grains, lean proteins, fruits, and vegetables provides essential nutrients for brain health. Omega-3 fatty acids (found in fish, walnuts, and flaxseeds) are particularly beneficial.

Mindful Eating: Encourage athletes to eat mindfully, paying attention to hunger cues and avoiding emotional eating. Stress can lead to poor food choices, so mindfulness matters.

2. Exercise and Sleep: The Dynamic Duo

Physical activity and restful sleep go hand in hand. Here's why they matter:

Exercise: Regular exercise releases endorphins, which boost mood and reduce stress. Racket sports provide an excellent workout, but athletes should also incorporate other forms of exercise, such as yoga or strength training.

Sleep: Adequate sleep is non-negotiable. During restorative sleep, the brain processes emotions, consolidates memories, and repairs itself. Aim for 7-9 hours per night.

3. Disconnecting and Relaxation: Finding Balance

In our hyper-connected world, athletes must intentionally disconnect to recharge mentally. Here's how:

Digital Detox: Set boundaries for screen time. Social media can amplify stress and anxiety. Encourage to unplug during downtime.

Mindfulness Practices: Meditation, deep breathing, and progressive muscle relaxation help manage stress. Even a few minutes of mindfulness daily can make a difference.

Nature Breaks: Spending time outdoors reduces cortisol levels and promotes mental clarity. A walk in the park or a hike can rejuvenate the mind.

4. Acceptance:

Embracing the Journey

Athletes often face setbacks, injuries, and defeats. Cultivating acceptance is essential.

Resilience: Teach athletes that setbacks are part of the game. Resilience involves bouncing back and learning from adversity.

Self-Compassion: Instead of self-criticism, encourage self-compassion. Athletes should treat themselves kindly, especially during challenging times.

5. The Soundtrack of Serenity: Music for Mental Well-Being

Music has a profound impact on emotions. Here are three types of music that can enhance mental health:

Relaxation:

Study Music Alpha Waves: This ambient music with alpha waves and binaural beats promotes relaxation and focus. It's perfect for winding down after intense training sessions.



Deep Focus Playlist: Curated instrumental tracks designed for concentration and work. Ideal for athletes seeking calm during preparation and recovery.



Concentration:

Powerful Meditation Music: Enhance memory and creativity with this meditation music. It aids focus and mental clarity during practice and competition.



Mindfulness Meditation Music: Use this soothing music for mindfulness and sustained attention. Athletes can listen before matches to center themselves.



Energy:

Brain Energizer Music: Gamma binaural beats boost mental energy and combat brain fog. Listen after meditation to regain focus and vitality.



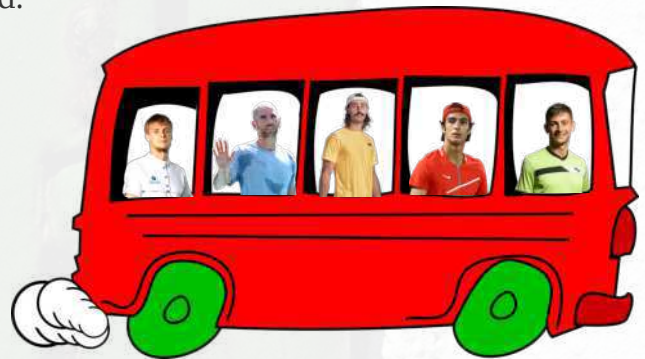
Internazionali BNL d'Italia got underway with reports of certain players showing fatigue from Madrid and other events. Reports that some of the wild cards are ones to look out for too and, up until day number 5, not many surprises!

But then the upsets started, and it may be seen as trivial to some, but when un-seeded players are taking out top 30's, it's an upset to the seeded players who you'd expect to do more and take more from the earlier games. But is there such a thing as an easy match? We think not, as even in other sports, we see the rise of the David's against the Goliath's of the sporting world.

Mariano Navone from Argentina fell relatively easy to the un-seeded Italian Luciano Darderi, 6-3, 6-2 was the final score, Mariano, not impressed with his own performance, congratulated Luciano but said he just wasn't feeling comfortable, no elaboration of what was missing or why.

Lorenzo Musetti was the next top 30 player to be dismissed early in the tournament, day 5 saw a total of 3 top 30's, 1 top 20, and 1 top 40 players sent packing by un-seeded players. Alongside Lorenzo went Alexander Bublik, Jordan Thompson and Adrian Mannarino. All established names and names you'd see against you and think... oh here we go... but it hasn't phased their opponents and they all moved on to the next round.

The bus home from day 5 wasn't full of seeded players, there were a couple of un-seeded that joined them but it was a day where we were shown some signs of brilliance that few people predicted, and even fewer expected.



Day 6 and it was business as usual for the seeds, except for Arthur Fils, who lost 6-5, 6-3, Alejandro Davidovich Fokina fell to Hamad Medjedovic, a close match it was too, 7-5, 6-4 and was just a few shots from going the other way, quite literally. Cam Norrie had a 3 setter with Jaume Munar from Spain, after he dropped the 2nd set, we kind of thought, surely not....and no, he fought back and took the third set 6-3. Final score being 6-3, 1-6, 6-3. Now one of the biggest surprises so far was the exit of Frances Tiafoe, who's been in pretty good form of late but Dominik Koepfer decided it's his time to shine and took the match in two straight sets, 6-4, 6-2. Now, it wasn't just Cameron Norrie who had a 3 setter, there were two more on day 6, Stefanos Tsitsipas lost the first set in his match which again, was so close, but he pushed back and this was one of those matches that you'd have liked to see more of... even at over 2.5 hours, you we could have watched these two play a whole new match... 7-6, 6-4, 6-4 and unfortunately Jan-Lennard Struff was leaving for Germany, but what an amazing match to watch, so very entertaining. The other 3 setter was the match between wildcard Stefano Napolitano and Juncheng Shang, the lucky loser who was given another chance, and even though he started with a spring in his step, he was demolished in the second 6-1 and the third 6-0, day 6 was a mixed bag of matches but Tsitsipas and Struff stole the show.

Day 7 and the fall of a giant, we don't think anyone was expecting that one, "I just wasn't able to find any kind of good feelings on the court, to be honest, striking the ball. I was completely off," was his answer when asked about his straight set loss to Alejandro Tabilo, Novak also said...

"Training was different. I was going for [a] kind of easy training yesterday. I didn't feel anything, but I also didn't feel the same. Today under high stress, it was quite bad - not in terms of pain, but in terms of this balance. Just no coordination. Completely different player from what it was two nights ago. Could be. I don't know. I have to do medical checkups and see what's going on."



In other matches, Zverev dispatched Luciano Darderi in the second set after a close call in the first set. A straight sets win but a tough first set made him re-adjust and stand his ground and move onto his next test, Cam Norrie. Taylor Fritz, Grigor Dimitrov, Karen Khachanov and the un-seeded Zhizhen Zhang all had straight set wins, with just two matches going to a third set, those matches were Nuno Borges vs the qualifier Francesco Passaro, 4-6, 7-6. 7-6 being the final score there, very entertaining to watch and Passaro is indeed someone to keep an eye on, over 3 hours and he was still looking like he could have played some more, he just didn't have the answers to beat Borges. The other match was that of qualifier Thiago Monteiro and Miomir Kecmanovic, not as titanic as the previous match but equally as entertaining. 6-2, 4-6, 7-6, oh it was entertaining alright, both players were all over the place, really exerting themselves as if it were a title-yielding match, but it was Thiago that seemed to keep the momentum going and in the final set had just enough push to take the win, that's some forehand he has.



Impressive and resilient Cameron Norrie found himself on yet another task of fighting back after losing the first set, but Stefanos was like a man possessed in the second. It might have been a bit of the heat for Norrie but he's been there before and knows how to push past it, this time though, on the other side of the net was the Greek genius that is Stefanos Tsitsipas, and he meant business.

Even after losing 6-2 in the first set, Norrie looked confident, determined and at one point you could have easily said, yep, he can do it... but the speed at which Stefanos recovered each time he was against the ropes was sheer brilliance, not a long match, but that last set, non-stop!

Before taking a look at how the ladies did in the opening days, we need to talk about the matches of Alexandre Muller vs Andrey Rublev and Alex de Minaur against Felix Auger-Aliassime. There are some interesting facts about these two matches, the first is that both went to 3 sets and the second is that neither winners of the first set went on to win the match. Alexander made relatively light work of his comeback from a set down against Andrey, losing the first set 6-3 but bouncing back in the second set to return the gesture winning it 6-3.

Then it was like Rublev switched off, or at least turned his energy levels down to half speed. It was a good performance from Muller, but you can't help wonder if there was another reason for Andrey's quite visible slump in form, 6-2 being the score of the 3rd set and Alexandre through.



So with that match being just over an hour and a half, the winners of the second longest match so far were Alex de Minaur and Felix Auger-Aliassime, a true battle for both players. It was just one of those matches, and with a tiebreak opener, we knew we were in for a corker.



There were a lot of good things about this match, so many we could fill two pages, but there were a lot of stats that give a better picture of what were the deciding factors. Felix had 13 double faults, to Alex's 1, but he also had 5, only 5 aces, to Alex's 1. So there were some seesaw moments throughout the match. Alex definitely had the upper hand on the second serve points won with a 16% success rate over Felix, but Felix had more unforced errors, and that is something that is going to play on your mind. That said, this marathon test of a match made sure we knew who was hungrier for a place in the next round, and that was Alex de Minaur.

So, while all this was going on, the women were also making their marks in the clay, with there not being any major upsets on day 1, day 2 saw a few early exits, Sloane Stephens was sent packing by world number 43, Yulia Putintseva, and she wasn't the only top 40 seed to be sent home either, Marta Kostyuk (world N°20), Veronika Kudermetova (world N°25), Liudmila Samsonova (world N°17), Ekaterina Alexandrova (world N°18) and Emma Navarro (world N°22) were all sent home on day 2, that really opened the field up to the unseeded players. The biggest upset so far would appear on day 3 and the dismissal of Ons Jabeur. Ranked 8 for the tournament, she was very confident on the build-up to the event but it was not to be her time.



It was another challenging hurdle in her 2024 campaign on the Friday, Sofia Kenin emerged victorious in a fiercely contested match, defeating Jabeur with a scoreline of 7-5, 2-6, 6-4. Meanwhile, defending champion Elena Rybakina was forced to withdraw from the tournament due to illness, which now seemingly opened the door so someone else could step in and take her spot, and considering her recent form, it's not very often that'll happen.

Anhelina Kalinina was on the receiving end of some luck too, her opponent Lesia Tsurenko was forced to retire, so was Oceane Dodin from France, and so was Russian Anna Blinkova, unfortunate exits from some very exciting players.

There were no huge surprises on day 4, well, we say huge, but when the world N°32 takes out the N°6, it definitely sparks attention. Sorana Cirstea from Romania put on a masterly display of talent and energy, close net work and strong returns being very much the deciding factors in her win against the always impressive Marketa Vondrousova, who this time fell short. The lack of returns won contributed to her losing ground and focus.

Maria Sakkari, ranked 5th for this tournament was in the zone, despite her tough first set, the tiebreak going her way which looked to deflate Anhelina Kalinina, but we know, Maria is a lot of Maria when she zones in and has you in her sights. Anhelina didn't win a single game in the second set, it was all Sakkari in all her might, what a convincing performance.



Maria moved on to face Victoria Azarenka on day 6 but that was the end of the line for the Greek powerhouse. The first set was a close one, but the second set, she looked tired and Victoria seized her opportunity, and bearing in mind that she'd played 3 sets the day before, if anyone should be tired, she should. It didn't phase her, she showed good form and a strong serve which pushed her over the winning line ending the match 4-6, 1-6. Day 6 also saw the departure of Elina Svitolina, Irina-Camelia Begu, Rebecca Sramkova, Sorana Cirstea, Paula Badosa (who had an amazing tournament), and Naomi Osaka who said she was taking so many positive things home from this tournament, she was really happy with her performance.

Day 7, quarter finals, and the finish line in sight, but who's going to be making the semi's? Well, Iga made light work of the American Madison Keys, 2 straight sets in just 1 hour 15 minutes, final score 6-1, 6-3. It's not a true reflection on Madison's tournament, she's had some very good matches and real glimmers of brilliance, she'll be back for sure.

One of the reasons for looking a little further into this tournament is the amazing display from the field of players, all of them. Some that on paper, you'd have thought would have been pushovers, yet they found some incredible form to take the places of some very experienced players. Rome never disappoints but this year really will stand out as one of the most entertaining for some time.

Alexandre Muller, Thiago Monteiro and Nuno Borges were the last of the qualifiers and unseeded players to make their way home, but a great display of talent on show, we have a lot of people to keep an eye on this summer so make sure you follow us while we pick out a few.



Zverev was in charge of taking care of world N°53 Nuno Borges from Portugal, having only been a professional since 2019, he's really done well and this tournament has been exceptionally educational for him as he himself said "this is one of my best performances, I have really enjoyed it and there is a lot more to come from me". 7-5, 6-2 the final score, can Fritz stop Zverev? Will he have the answers that others have failed to find?

Well you probably already know the answer to that, but, before we reveal that part to everyone else, what about the match between Taylor Fritz and Grigor Dimitrov? Ok, it wasn't the longest match of the tournament but that tiebreak in the second set was the longest and what a tiebreak. Incredible resilience from both players and you really couldn't set them apart. Taylor getting the upper hand at the end and that knocked the wind out of Grigor's sails for the 3rd set.

Before we head to the nitty gritty of the last few days, we'd just like to draw your attention to the match played on day 2, Grandstand arena, 2nd round of qualies.... all 3 sets to tiebreaker

	 Francesco Passaro (WC) ✓	7 6 ⁶ 7
	 Duje Ajdukovic (24)	6 ⁵ 7 6 ³

It was a fascinating match, we've already mentioned Passaro and his great match against Nuno Borges, but we can't take anything away from these two and this match. If you were present you definitely wouldn't feel short changed. Another stat for you, All of Francesco's matches went to 3 sets, every single one.... he was made to work hard all the way, so form us, well done!

So the first quarter final took place and... well, it was not quite the match we expected, not that it was a bad match but with the way Taylor had been playing, we thought there would be a 3rd set and one or two tiebreaks, but no, baseline magic and forehand strength were key to Zverev winning 6-4, 6-3, despite him having a bit of a scare in the 3rd game that needed some attention from the physio. This mean't he went on to face Alejandro Tabilo who made light work of Zhizhen Zhang with a similar result, 6-3, 6-4. But American hopes were not dashed just yet, the quarter final match between Tommy Pall and Hubert Hurkacz went to 3 sets, but Paul prevailed.

The last of the quarter finals was between Nicolas Jarry and Stefano Tsitsipas, another hum dinger of a match where the winner of the first set, in this case Stefano, didn't win the match.

So, with the men's semi finals set, we look at the women's last few matches where Coco Gauff, Aryna Sabalenka, Iga Swiatek, Danielle Collins, Jelena Ostapenko, Victoria Azarenka, Qinwen Zheng and Madison Keys were all set to see who'd make it through to the semi finals.

Coco and Qinwen were first up, a first set tiebreak to get us rolling and Coco had to dig deep and really use her power to push past the N° 7 seed. Again we expected there to be a serious exchange after seeing the first set and the way both were pushing, but it wasn't to be, Zheng lost momentum and Coco walked it in the second set. A very similar walk for Iga too, she won 6-1, 6-3 despite Madison's efforts to show her strength.



Danielle Collins was determined to keep American hopes of a final alive but she needed to get past Victoria Azarenka first, and then Aryna Sabalenka as Aryna was the victor of her match with Jelena Ostapenko. Danielle put in a strong performance. Victoria didn't just let herself get outplayed, it was a close first set but as we've seen in other matches, that second set having gone a set down, seems to be a hill some people struggle climbing back up, 6-4, 6-1 the result in Danielle's favour and a showdown with Aryna, where a very close first set that went to Aryna, Danielle then ran out of steam. Sabalenka cruised to the final taking the second set 6-2.

Coco probably had the last person she'd want to see in the semi finals, Iga, the American didn't let it phase her though, as always, passionate, determined and smiley, well, for most of the time. It's tough to get the upper hand over Iga, but Aryna had shown that it's possible to rattle Iga in Madrid, so Coco's sights were firmly set. Unfortunately, as we're used to seeing, Iga is just on a different level of confidence and form, she just doesn't stop, she made it look easy and as we know, at this level it's far from easy. 6-4, 6-3 and we're sure Coco is pleased with just how far she made it to. In her post match interview she said: "Against probably anybody else today, I would have won the match. I wanted to be aggressive, which I felt like I did. I think I missed some balls in some clutch moments. That's what being aggressive is. I think if I continue to play in this way, I will be more consistent in that."

What a tournament, this has been a real rollercoaster for so many players, from the demise of Novak to the excellence of Nuno, from Coco's frustration to Collins's close call. It truly has been an exceptional display of inspirational tennis. The ladies final was a repeat of Madrid but a slightly different scoreline as Iga reigned supreme again, this time with a 6-2, 6-3 masterclass, Was Aryna at her best? Was she thinking about her F1 appearance the day after? We know how talented she is and there's not a shadow of a doubt she'll be back and will be winning many titles, but the Iga bullet train is just unstoppable. Who will find the form to de-throne the champion? Right now, it's not looking like it will be any time soon, but we all know that can change in the blink of an eye.

For Alexander, from nearly injuring himself, to taking the title, Jarry put on a fine performance, but Zverev was on a mission, two close sets, but the victor had his sights on the title, he wasn't going to let it slip. Well done to the champs but also to everyone involved.....**Grazzie!**

In the Room

With Richard Parnell

GRSA CERTIFICATION LEVELS IN A NUTSHELL

This month's thoughts, in the room, are to do with the art of stringing and whether the existing GRSA certification levels lead to confusion.

Certification is a necessary part of creating industry changes and fostering a change in the mentality about the importance of a stringer in the structure of a sport. I have heard that some stringers believe that there are too many certification levels and as such it seems confusing to stringers. I think that this is obviously something that GRSA can improve and work on. If we analyze the existing certification levels, there are only 3 and each one is made up of two exams, so I would not consider them confusing.

Pro Stringer Certification – Basic & Advanced Techniques

Pro Stringer

Pro Master Stringer

Competition Stringer Certification – Preparation for Pro Event Stringing

Competition Stringer

Competition Master Stringer

Tour Stringer Certification – Basic & Advanced Pro Event Stringing Techniques

Tour Stringer

Tour Master Stringer



The latest certification level to be introduced, unique to GRSA, is the competition level of certification. Why did we feel the need to introduce another level? For the following two reasons:

- 1) The difference between Pro Master and Tour was too great, Pro Master Stringer is comprised of stringing 1 racket in 45 minutes and Tour Stringer is 3 rackets in 60 minutes. Some stringers aren't able to, and have no desire, to string at a tour event and this certification level helps those stringers stand out from the Pro Master stringers through a higher attainable level without going to the Tour level.
- 2) Stringers often don't know what to expect in a stringing room at a Pro event and this certification level addresses multiple aspects of the Tour experience by covering social media, player interaction, stringer materials needed, team management and general stringing protocols. This level prepares the stringer and provides the answers to most of the questions asked.

Be part of the change and get certified!

CHAMPION

MSV Tennis products are used by more than 30 national champions.

And by many enthusiastic players all over the world.



ROLAND-GARROS 2024 COLLECTION

Grab a piece of Roland-Garros, no matter where you're watching from with an exclusive collection inspired by the textures, details and colors of the only clay-court grand slam.

[SHOP COLLECTION](#)





Subscribe here to
receive the next issue!

[Subscribe here](#)

Follow us on social media
for the latest news



FUN FACTS

"You can beat a good player, because you can play better, but there is a type of player you'll never beat, that's a lucky one.... Unless one day, you become the lucky one!"

D.J Efford

1

Sports that use a netted (strung) racket

Badminton, Ball badminton, Battledore and shuttlecock, Crossminton (previously "Speedminton"), Frontenis, Qianball, Racketlon (a series of other racket and paddle sports), Rackets, Racquetball, Real tennis, Soft tennis, Speed-ball, Squash, Hardball squash, Squash tennis, Stické, Tennis, Tennis polo, Touchtennis.

2

Sports that use a non-netted (un-strung) racket/paddle

Basque pelota, Beach tennis, Downside ball game, Four wall paddleball, Frescobol, Jokari, Jombola, Matkot, Miniten, One wall paddleball, Paddle ball, POP tennis, Padel, Paleta Frontón, Pan Pong, Pelota mixteca, Pickleball, Pitton, Platform tennis, Road tennis, Sphairee, Stoolball, Table squash, Table tennis (Ping Pong), Tamburello, Totem tennis, Paddle Tennis.

3

On 9 May 2012, Samuel Groth (Australia) served an ace recorded at 263 km/h (163.4 mph) during an ATP Challenger event in Busan, South Korea. The serve came during Groth's second-round match against Uladzimir Ignatik (Belarus). In the match, Groth also hit serves recorded at 255.7 km/h (158.9 mph) and 253.5 km/h (157.5 mph), both of which surpassed Ivo Karlovic's (Croatia) previous record of 251 km/h (156 mph). However, Groth still lost the match 6-4, 6-3.

4

Sabine Lisicki (Germany) clocked 131 mph (210.8 km/h) on a speed gun while serving in the first set of a first-round match against Ana Ivanovic at the Bank of the West Classic tournament at Stanford University, California, USA, on 29 July 2014. A 129-mph (207.6-km/h) serve by Venus Williams (USA), recorded in a second-round match against Ashley Harkleroad at the 2007 US Open, was previously the fastest serve by a woman on the WTA (Women's Tennis Association) tour, although Brenda Schultz-McCarthy (Netherlands) sent down a 130-mph (209.2-km/h) serve in qualifying for the Western & Southern Open in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 2006 that wasn't recognised by the WTA because it happened outside of the main draw.

After setting the record, the defeated Lisicki tweeted: "Well...at least I broke the world record for fastest serve on the WTA".

Trivia: "Boom Boom" - nickname given to Sabine Lisicki (by former professional tennis player/coach Brad Gilbert) in tribute to her powerful serve!

Stringer Solutions

with Richard Parnell

TOP
TIP

Machine Ergonomics

I often get asked why a certain machine costs twice or three times as much as another. The answer is simple, ergonomics and its ease of use.

A really top class machine is designed to have everything a stringer needs in the right place and easily accessible with the least amount of effort possible. The stringer's job is already time sensitive, so any help in saving time is very welcome, especially in tournament settings.

Quite a few years ago I was asked to organise the stringing service for a tour event and the machines proposed were constant pull drop weight machines. I refused, not because the machine couldn't attain the desired tension, it could, however the time needed to string a racket using that machine would have made a stressful time much worse. The quality of the alloys and materials were also not as solid as the professional machines which could have led to frame deformations and low DT's, not what I wanted.

Having the clamps glide effortlessly as well as "holding" the string and not crushing it are all time saving qualities of a professional machine. Easy installation of the racket on the turntable is assured and most machines have height adjustments to look after the stringer's posture. Some have machine tilting possibilities that again make the stringer's job easier.

The quality of the tension head pulling motor is paramount when a machine is being used for high volumes. A cheap electric machine will have a subpar motor that won't hold up to the job demanded and workload.

Having all buttons in an easily accessible place saves time. For example, a knot over-tension button, an automatic & manual turntable lock, a pre-stretch option all mean that the work is a little more effortless.

I consider the machine an investment and I always advise stringers to go for the best machine you can afford, even if it means paying for it over an extended period of time, it will be worth it in quality produced and effort not wasted.

A stringer shouldn't need to move around behind the machine as everything is in its place, this is one way to gauge how good the stringer really is.

Whichever machine you can afford, they can all produce a top quality restring, some take a little longer and a little more effort.

Enjoy and look forward to your next restring.



18-25 MAI 2024
GONET GENEVA OPEN
 TENNIS CLUB DE GENÈVE



Winner : Casper Ruud
Runner up: Tomáš Macháč

Rackets strung: 293

Highest tension: 29/28

Lowest: 14,3/14,3

Novak showed yet again that he's human by being knocked out in the semi final to Tomáš Macháč



PRS & GRSA STRINGING TEAM:

Danielle Mann

(Management specialist/Tour Stringer)

Martin Mann

Head stringer. Team manager/ Tour Master

Kenneth Leong: (Tour Stringer)

Mark Jan Greebe: (Tour Stringer)

Benjamin Müller: 3 days of Tour Experience and achieved (Pro Master Stringer)



NOT JUST A PLAYER: Philippe Chatrier

We wanted to take a look at Philippe Chatrier, a figure who, while perhaps not as immediately recognisable as Federer or Nadal, has had an unforgettable impact on the world of tennis. Chatrier was the masterful architect who laid the foundations for the sport as we know it today.

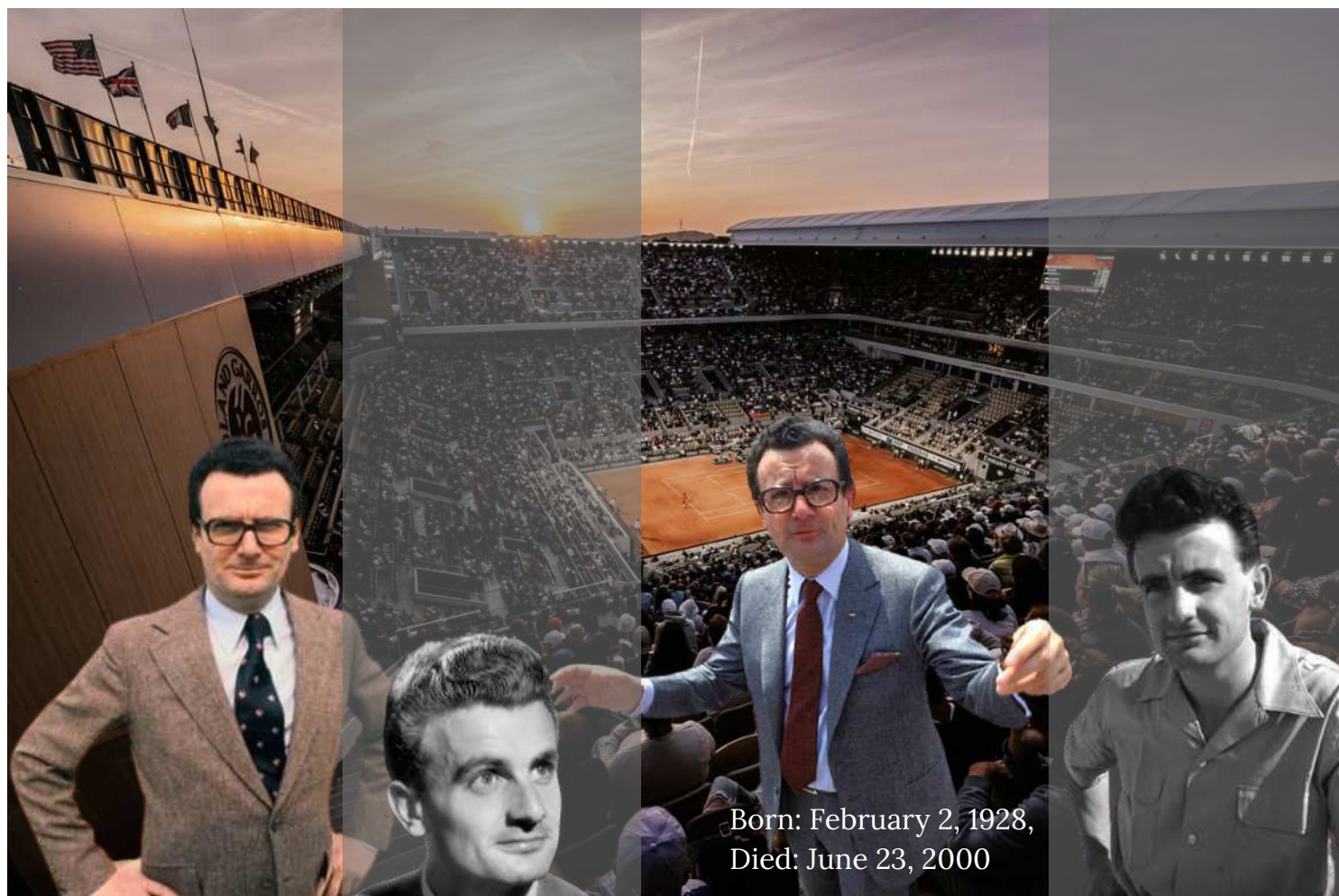
Philippe Chatrier was born in Paris in 1926, and before he became a star in tennis administration, he was a competent player in his own right. Although he never clinched a Grand Slam title, he did reach the quarterfinals at Wimbledon in 1950—a commendable achievement, to be sure.

However, Chatrier's true brilliance shone not on the court, but behind the scenes. In 1977, he became the president of the International Tennis Federation (ITF), and it was during his tenure that the sport underwent a major transformation. Picture the ITF as a ship and Chatrier as its captain, steering it towards new and exciting horizons. Quite the sight, isn't it?

One of Chatrier's most significant accomplishments was his successful campaign for the reintroduction of tennis into the Olympic Games. Indeed, it was under his leadership that tennis made a triumphant return to the Olympics in 1988, following a 64-year absence. The excitement of witnessing players like Serena Williams vying for Olympic gold can be attributed, in large part, to Chatrier's relentless efforts.

Moreover, Chatrier was a passionate advocate for the professionalisation of tennis. He envisioned a world where tennis players were revered as elite athletes, deserving of both respect and substantial pay. His dedication to improving conditions and prize money for players significantly boosted the professional circuit, attracting top-tier talent and captivating audiences globally. One can only think of how far we've come in the tennis world, especially with the creation of the PTPA in 2021 to advocate for, support and protect tennis players worldwide. What would Philippe say today?





Chatrier's influence was particularly profound at the French Open. As president of the French Tennis Federation, he oversaw the expansion and modernisation of Roland Garros, transforming it into the iconic venue that hosts the tournament today. The main court at Roland Garros bears his name—Philippe Chatrier Court—a fitting tribute to his invaluable contributions to French tennis and the sport at large.

A visionary with a global perspective, Chatrier was instrumental in promoting tennis as an international sport. He worked tirelessly to ensure that tennis was not confined to a handful of countries but was instead embraced worldwide. Under his leadership, the ITF extended its reach, fostering talent from every corner of the globe and bringing the sport to new audiences.

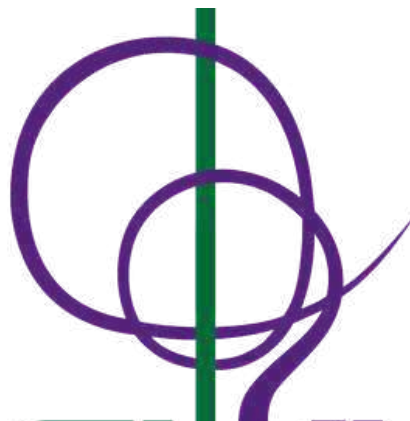
Philippe Chatrier passed away in 2000, but his legacy endures. Each time we witness a thrilling match at Roland Garros or see an Olympic tennis champion crowned, we are celebrating the fruits of his labour. He was a visionary, a leader, and, above all, a passionate advocate for the sport he adored. How fitting that this year, Roland Garros will also host the Olympics.

So, the next time you cheer for your favourite tennis star, spare a thought for Philippe Chatrier, the man who made it all possible. His impact on the world of tennis is as enduring as a Federer backhand and as exhilarating as a Nadal rally.



**STRING
CLUB.**

string-club.com



PARNELLKNOT

designed by stringers for stringers

parnellknot.com



PREMIUM RACKET SERVICE

TAKE YOUR GAME
TO THE NEXT LEVEL

- TENNIS STRINGING
- TOURNAMENT SERVICES
- ON COURT RACKET AND STRING ANALYSIS
- CUSTOMIZING, MOLDING, PAINTING
- MACHINE MAINTENANCE
- INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANCY FOR:
STRINGS, RACKETS & TENNIS GEAR

ITF J500 HTV International Offenbach

U18 M/F singles draws 64 players, U18 M/F doubles draws size 32 players

Singles

Winners M: Papamalamis singles, Winner f: Wakane Sonobe singles

Doubles

Winners M: Ribeiro de Almeda/ Vales : Rolls/ Vandromme

509 rackets strung - 17- 28 kg



Tennis Wiesbaden Open ITF W100

32 singles draw
16 doubles draw

Singles winner : Julia Riera
Doubles winner: Pigossi / Murray Sharan

217 rackets strung / 14 - 18 kg



GRSA
INTERNATIONAL



As an active member of GRSA International,
you are automatically entitled to be listed in the
"Find a stringer"
section of the website.

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



When GRSA was created, in April 2022, our main mission was to help change and revolutionise the stringing industry by being the change we wanted to see. Introducing better practices, guaranteeing standards, creating an opportunity for certified stringers to expand their knowledge base and advocating for better conditions as well as the important role stringers play in the grand scheme of a tournament, are just a few of the things we strive to attain.

Together with every single GRSA member, with each membership and with each course being taken, we get one step closer to achieving that goal of making a difference.

Aside from making a difference in the lives of stringers and the stringing industry, which is no small feat, we also look to other racket sports, with their recognition and how we can make an impact and be the bridge between players, stringers and consumers and the brands, for your voices to be heard.

Now, after many decades working in the stringing industry, we wanted to find a way to give back to the industry that gave us so much and changed our lives forever, in a way that would truly impact people all over the world. How could we do this? How could we make a real difference and help change people's lives for the better?

We did a lot of thinking, but the answer to those questions was simple:

GRSA No Strings Attached.

We want to empower and support people who are impoverished or have hit hard times through education that we can offer. But that isn't all. We are well aware that giving someone an education isn't enough to be able to change their lives around, but it's a good start. Therefore, we fundraise to be able to offer GRSA NSA (No Strings Attached) recipients everything they need to set up a stringing business in their area. Everything from teaching them to string from scratch, understanding the art of stringing and all the materials and tools they would need: a stringing machine, strings, rackets, stringing tools and accessories.

Once we realised that we could truly help people and make a difference we thought, what else? Why stop there? What about their community? Can we help? The answer is yes. We want to help our recipients' communities by providing aid where possible, be it by offering sports equipment and material, clothes, shoes, and of course, food and humanitarian aid.

Our first recipients are Unite Nepal, the following information from their website explains their amazing work in Nepal:

“Unite Nepal are based in Lamjung, Nepal very close to all the projects that we support. We are hands-on and therefore very well placed to witness change and also that the money and support end up in the right place. There are no directors’ wages and bonuses to pay which means that all the money and support goes where it should. We urge our supporters to come and visit us and witness first-hand how we run. Come and speak with the children, people, volunteers, the schools etc. We want you to ‘grow with us’”.

Why choose Unite Nepal as our first project? Because we share the same core values.

GRSA NSA is very close to our hearts as we want to be able to make a real difference in the world, and we know that the thing that made a difference in ours, can make one in the lives of others by giving them the tools to create a sustainable livelihood.

If you too want to make a difference in not just the world, but in people’s lives, become a GRSA NSA member or donate today by using the button below, or by visiting the NSA website, and help to make these projects possible. Every donation, no matter how big or small, gets us one step closer to giving 3 young adults a stringing education and all the materials and support they need to be able to learn a profession and generate an income for themselves, as well as providing 60 children between the ages of 10 and 16 tennis equipment so they too can take part and play the sport we love so much, as we firmly believe racket sports should be accessible to all.



HEAD balls received as part of the NSA incentive.



DONATE NOW



NICK DOWN Talks

DUNLOP CUSTOM SQUASH RACKETS

A few years ago, Dunlop brought out a range of "custom" rackets, which had a set of interchangeable handles with a special tool to assist with the changeover by loosening and tightening the handles with a screw in the butt cap.

Having listed stringing instructions for the full list of non-standard rackets, I am now going to look at a few more that are interesting but didn't make it onto the list because a) they are similar to something already on it, or b) they are interesting for some other reason than how they should be strung.

In all cases, they are no longer sold commercially.

Kicking off with the Dunlop Custom Series of rackets that are no longer sold by Dunlop. At the time, they were very popular and gave people the choice of the racket being, head-light, head-heavy or evenly balanced. It all depended upon which handle was attached to the racket.

Each handle had a designated place in the racket case and they were colour coded, depending upon whether it's owner preferred a particular balance.



Nick's Nugget

"Hold the tip of the string all the time, in order to string faster."



It shows gray listed as head-heavy making a difference of 0g. Red is even balance making a difference of 5g, and black is head-light making a difference of 10g in the handle. All three colours can be seen in the photo of the three butt cap areas, the lightest, making a difference of 0g (gray) has extra holes in it, clearly visible to anyone, making it lighter. Because the three handles get progressively heavier, the balance shifts and makes the head get progressively lighter.



There are no stringing instructions here because these rackets are of interest for other reasons. The Generic Fan Pattern was covered in a previous issue and is still available through the GRSA International page on Instagram.

U.S. Squash Foundation launched by U.S Squash

US Squash, the esteemed national governing body for squash in the U.S. and a proud member of the US Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC), has made a groundbreaking announcement: the establishment of the U.S. Squash Foundation.

This monumental move is driven by the Foundation's steadfast commitment to spearhead vital initiatives aimed at propelling squash forward across the United States.



After careful deliberation, the Foundation's inception marks a strategic leap forward for US Squash, solidifying its dedication to the sport by creating a U.S.-based philanthropic entity singularly devoted to fostering squash's growth.

Moreover, the Foundation empowers US Squash to actively engage and acknowledge the invaluable contributions of the sport's most generous patrons, all while collectively ensuring a resilient and sustainable financial framework for the governing body.

At its core, the Foundation is poised to embark on four pivotal initiatives:

- 1. Court Development:** Pioneering the installation of accessible and cost-effective courts in schools, public parks, and both indoor and outdoor public spaces.
- 2. Program Expansion:** Scaling up scholastic, collegiate, and community squash programs nationwide to broaden accessibility and participation.
- 3. Coaching and Training:** Establishing national coaching and training programs to nurture America's top squash talents, propelling them towards world and Olympic glory.
- 4. Squash United Fund:** Spearheading the "Squash United Fund" to unify funding efforts, fostering collaboration and bolstering U.S.-based organizations committed to squash's vitality and growth.

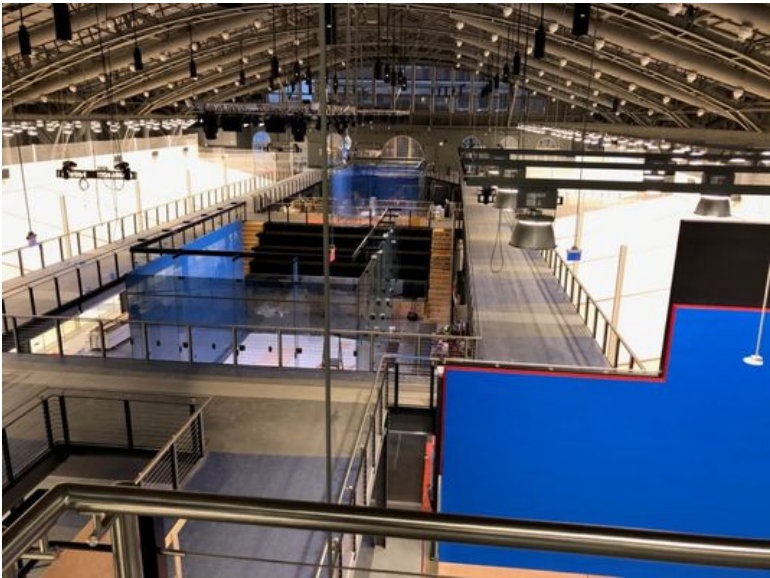


Marshall Pagon, esteemed as the inaugural Chair of the U.S. Squash Foundation and former Chair of US Squash, expressed his enthusiasm, stating, "The recent milestone achievement securing squash's inclusion in the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles marks the culmination of fifteen years of remarkable progress for US Squash."

He added, "The launch of the U.S. Squash Foundation signifies a pivotal moment, ushering in a new era for our sport and its governing body—a foundation dedicated to inclusivity, serving as a rallying point to champion squash initiatives tackling our sport's most critical strategic objectives."

Ned Edwards, revered as a US Squash Hall of Famer, assumes the mantle of the Foundation's inaugural Executive Director, affirming, "US Squash has propelled squash's upward trajectory through enhanced player engagement, the establishment of the Arlen Specter US Squash Center, and securing Olympic inclusion in the LA28 Games."

"Now," he asserts, "the U.S. Squash Foundation emerges as the linchpin, ensuring squash's enduring prominence among burgeoning sports for generations to come."



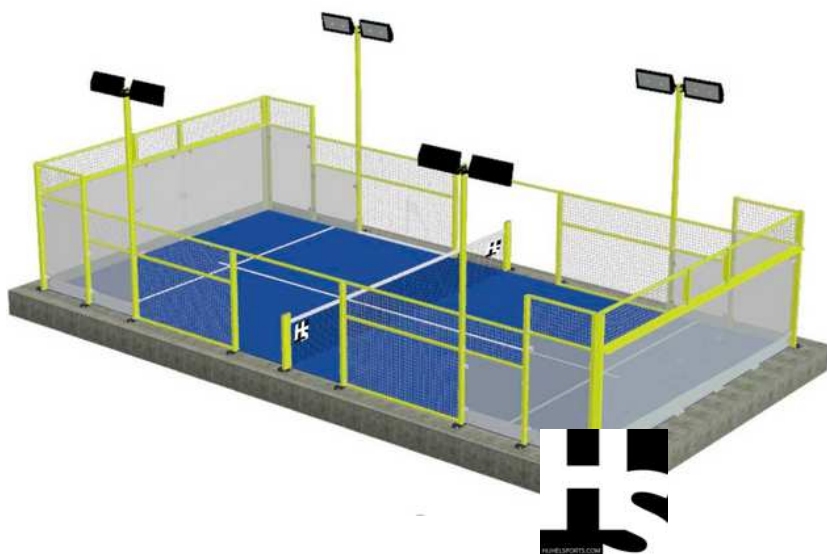
HUHEL SPORTS

HUHEL SPORTS HEAD OFFICE

C/ de la Giralda 18,
Castelldefells
(Barcelona)
Spain



Email: admin@huhelsports.com
Tel: (+34) 619 076 978



Energy efficient lighting,
secure structure guarantee

- Tempered safety glass
- Galvanized steel mounting plates
- Fibrillated artificial grass
- Monofilament grass
- High density welded mesh
- High quality poly finish

Huhel Sports supply the only courts with an aluminum structure that includes a 15-year anti-corrosion guarantee.

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

We can customize the courts to the customer's needs. We have ongoing stock and we are aluminum manufacturers with more than 50 years of experience.

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

INDIVIDUAL PANORAMIC COURT



EUROPE COURT



COLISEUM COURT



Email: admin@huhelsports.com
Tel: (+34) 619 076 978

Premier Padel, the esteemed global platform for professional padel tournaments, and Bullpadel, the eminent padel equipment brand, have proudly announced a momentous partnership. Bullpadel is set to become the official provider of technical apparel and rackets for Premier Padel until the culmination of the 2026 season.

In a concerted effort with Premier Padel, Bullpadel is crafting an exclusive Premier Padel collection tailored to padel enthusiasts worldwide. This collaboration ensures that players, ranging from social to professional, can access top-tier gear and attire to enhance their performance on the court.

The forthcoming collection will seamlessly blend sophistication and functionality, delivering elite performance gear for professionals, amateurs, and casual players alike. Expect to see Bullpadel's latest technological advancements and cutting-edge designs spanning clothing, rackets, footwear, bags, and accessories.

As anticipation builds towards December's Premier Padel Finals in Barcelona, Bullpadel will unveil a bespoke range of attire, rackets, footwear, and bags specially curated for the tournament.

Rob Mitchell, Premier Padel's Commercial Director, expressed, "This partnership transcends mere apparel—it's about fostering an exhilarating avenue for players and fans to immerse themselves in Premier Padel. Bullpadel's global reputation for elegance, quality, and innovation in padel perfectly aligns with our vision. Together, we aim to elevate the tour's profile and forge deeper connections with padel enthusiasts worldwide."

Alfredo Peñalver, CEO of Bullpadel, echoed the sentiment, stating, "We are delighted to join forces with the foremost padel tour globally, reaffirming our steadfast commitment to the sport's growth and promotion. Our collaboration promises unparalleled levels of engagement and unforgettable experiences for players and fans alike."

Stay tuned as Premier Padel and Bullpadel unveil their groundbreaking collections in the weeks ahead. The Premier Padel collection and exclusive Premier Padel Finals range will be available for purchase throughout the 2024 season, both online at www.bullpadel.com and through select retailers and tournaments worldwide.





CONFIDENT CONTROL

The captivating **Pro Staff v2** redefines precision with a longer handle, round head shape and all-new hole pattern.

[WILSON.COM](https://www.wilson.com)

SCAN FOR MORE
INFORMATION



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!

The pickleball event calendar is filling up, we try to bring a few different options when it comes to competitions, if you'd like more information, use the link in the logo below for more dates & venues.

ITALIAN OPEN PICKLEBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS 2024 (6th ed.)**EID:** 1458 **PRICE** EUR 52**Organizer:** ITALIAN OPEN PICKLEBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS**EVENT** - TOURNAMENT**Starting:** September 13, 2024 to September 15, 2024**City:** 65028 Tocco Da Casauria PE, Italia**Home Club:** Pickleball Tocco**Registration Deadline:** August 31, 2024 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 3**Hungarian Open 2024****EID:** 1450 **PRICE** EUR 40**Organizer:** Zoltán Böhm**EVENT** - TOURNAMENT**Starting:** August 16, 2024 to August 18, 2024**City:** Dabas, Magyarország**Tournament Venue:** Dabas-wellis Sportcentrum**Registration Deadline:** July 31, 2024 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 3**2024 Malta Pickleball Open****EID:** 1256 **PRICE** EUR 27**Organizer:** Steffi Pace**EVENT** - TOURNAMENT**Starting:** September 12, 2024 to September 15, 2024**City:** Birgu, Malta**Home Club:** De La Salle**Registration Deadline:** August 15, 2024 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 3**MORE
INFO**

I FOUND MY THRILL ON...BLUEBERRY... OK OK

The US Highbush Blueberry Council (USHBC) has forged a partnership with Major League Pickleball (MLP) for its 2024 season, designating blueberries as 'the official fruit of MLP'.

Pickleball, enjoyed by one in five adult Americans or 48 million individuals, boasts a staggering growth rate of 64% annually. As the inaugural produce commodity to collaborate with the premier organisation for professional coed team pickleball, USHBC aims to raise awareness of blueberries' benefits among pickleball enthusiasts, urging them to incorporate blueberries into their diets for a healthy and active lifestyle.

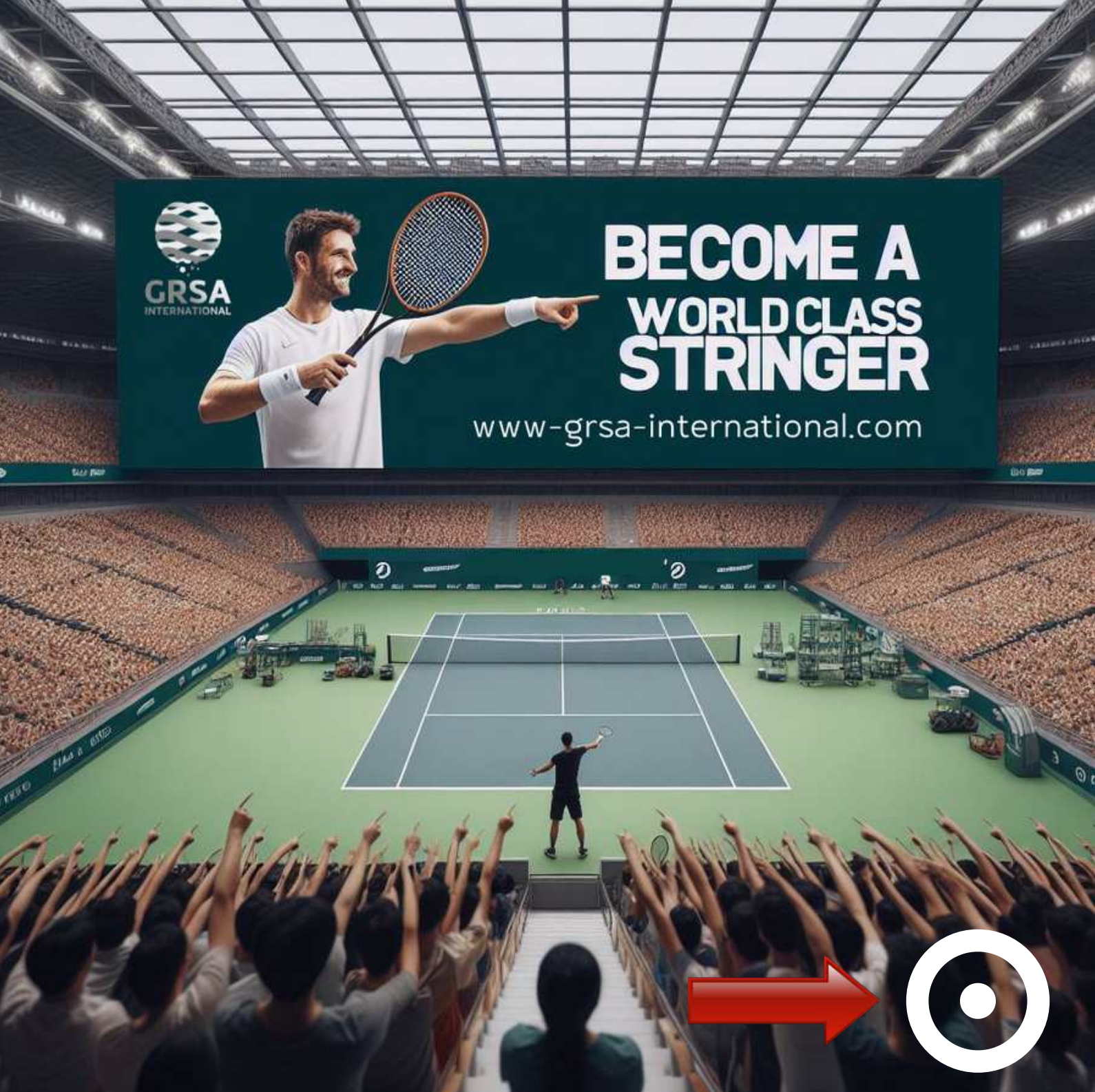
Kasey Cronquist, President of US Highbush Blueberry Council, expressed excitement about the partnership, highlighting the shared enthusiasm for blueberries' deliciousness and health advantages. Through this collaboration with Major League Pickleball, USHBC intends to tap into the fervor surrounding the sport and motivate consumers to embrace blueberries as a source of vitality, whether they're playing, watching, or both.

The MLP partnership encompasses a comprehensive national marketing promotions program spanning 11 events across the country, commencing with the season's inaugural event, MLP Atlanta. USHBC's advertising and messages promoting blueberry consumption will be featured in various platforms, including linear broadcast, streaming services, courtside signage, and MLP's social media channels, website, and newsletter. Additionally, blueberries will be provided to onsite attendees at MLP's VIP and player tents throughout the season.

To complement the sponsorship, USHBC will collaborate with pickleball influencers and players to create content showcasing how blueberries support nutrition for athletes and active lifestyles. Furthermore, USHBC plans to launch a National Blueberry Month campaign to further enhance consumption and excitement around pickleball, including special activities during MLP's mid-season tournament in July, oh and did you get the Fats Domino link??







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!

Life Time Fitness is diving headfirst into pickleball, showcasing its commitment to America's fastest-growing sport. Life Time's brand-new courts hosted one of the top-ranked male pickleball players globally earlier in the month, Ben Johns, alongside former tennis legend Andre Agassi, engaging in dinks and drops.

This investment in pickleball is a key component of the upscale fitness company's strategy to expand its brand. To further this objective, Life Time announced a partnership with Lululemon, designating the company as the official apparel partner for Life Time pickleball and tennis. The collaboration entails selling Lululemon apparel both online at Life Time clubs and during key pickleball events.

Celeste Burgoyne, President of Americas and Global Guest Innovation at Lululemon, remarked, "This partnership highlights the extraordinary growth of these sports and brings together the best in athletic apparel with the best in tennis and pickleball experiences."

Life Time, established in 1992, boasts over 170 "athletic country clubs" across the nation. These clubs are seeking innovative ways to reinvigorate fitness participation post-Covid. Bahram Akradi, Life Time's CEO and founder, an ardent pickleball enthusiast himself, believes that this dynamic, tennis-like sport can serve as a catalyst.

"Pickleball is gaining traction. It's consistently bustling," Akradi emphasized.

The popularity of pickleball continues to surge. Earlier in the month, Life Time unveiled Manhattan's largest indoor pickleball venue, featuring seven street-level courts near Penn Station. Akradi revealed that the company has invested between \$50 million and \$100 million into pickleball infrastructure, contributing 6% to 7% of Life Time's membership dues.

Life Time has also collaborated with professional pickleball to host nearly a dozen tournaments on its courts, some of which have been televised nationally. The Atlanta Open, part of the PPA Tour, took place at a Life Time facility in Peachtree Corners, Georgia, with 15,000+ attending.

Agassi, who recently delved into pickleball, citing its lower impact on the body compared to tennis, believes that the sport's appeal will skyrocket due to its health benefits, community-building aspect, and accessibility for beginners.

In February, Life Time appointed Agassi as the inaugural chairman of the company's pickleball and tennis board, entrusting him with enhancing the sport's prominence, programming, and leagues.

Off the court, Life Time is offering guidance from top pickleball player Ben Johns. Last month, the company announced that Johns, along with his brother Collin, would provide members with 70 instructional videos to enhance their skills.

Johns has witnessed firsthand the explosive growth of pickleball, noting a tenfold increase in his earnings since 2021 as the sport garners more sponsors and media coverage.

UBER CUP 2024

China claimed its 16th Uber Cup championship in a commanding fashion, securing a 3-0 victory over Indonesia in Chengdu on Sunday. This marked the first time since 2016 that the tournament was held in China, and the host nation entered as heavy favourites following their defeat to South Korea in the previous final two years ago.

Leading the charge in the singles matches was Olympic champion Chen Yufei, who dispatched Gregoria Mariska Tunjung in straight sets, 21-7, 21-16. "I am prepared to face any opponent. I have confidence and am in excellent form," stated Chen, who maintained a flawless record throughout the tournament without dropping a single set.

In the doubles encounter, the world No. 1 pair Chen Qingchen and Jia Yifan extended China's lead to 2-0 by overpowering Siti Fadia Silva Ramadhanti and Ribka Sugiarto with a decisive 21-11, 21-8 victory. Despite conceding the first set 21-10 in the second singles match, He Bingjiao rallied back to secure the victory for China with a 21-15, 21-17 triumph over Indonesian teenager Ester Nurumi Tri.

Chen Qingchen, who has partnered with Jia Yifan in four Uber Cups, acknowledged that this might mark their final team event together. "It could potentially be our last team event. It might be a poignant moment for our fans, but as this marks our final collaboration, we ask for your well wishes for our future endeavours," she expressed.

The youthful Indonesian team also etched their names in history by reaching the final for the first time since 2008. Tunjung remarked, "After 16 years, we have reached the final. It was a challenging journey, but we have demonstrated our strength. This tournament has provided valuable preparation for the Olympic Games ahead."



WANG TAT MENG - NOT QUITE DONE

After announcing his retirement plans, Lee Zii Jia's coach, Wong Tat Meng, reassured that both he and the world No. 10 would remain dedicated to their Paris Olympic campaign.

Following the conclusion of the Thomas Cup in Chengdu, China, Tat Meng, in an Instagram post, expressed gratitude to the Malaysian team for clinching a bronze medal. He also mentioned that this year's men's world team championship would mark his final participation.

The 57-year-old former international joined Zii Jia's Team LZJ last July following a year of service with the Hong Kong national team (singles).

Previously, Tat Meng spent four years with the Badminton Association of Korea, notably coaching the current world No. 1 women's singles player An Se Young.

When reached by news outlets, Tat Meng shared that he felt the timing was appropriate to step away during the prize-giving ceremony at the Hi Tech Zone Sports Centre in Chengdu. Malaysia secured bronze after a 3-1 loss to eventual champions China in the Thomas Cup semi-finals.



"It's a personal decision that came to me during the prize-giving ceremony. With over 20 years of coaching experience, I pondered when the right moment would be to retire from international coaching," Tat Meng explained.

"Even before working with Zii Jia, I had discussed my thoughts with him. We both understand that this Olympics is a crucial mission for us.

"At present, all my energy and focus will be on Zii Jia's final preparations for the Paris Games.

"What comes next, I have yet to deeply contemplate," Tat Meng added.

Team LZJ stated: "Coach Tat Meng's primary responsibility is to prepare Zii Jia for the Paris Olympics. That's the current focus. As we move forward, further discussions will be needed."

Zii Jia, who turned professional in 2022 after departing BAM, is the sole Malaysian men's singles player to qualify for this year's Olympics.

Currently, the 26-year-old Kedahan is striving to elevate his world ranking to secure a favourable seeding at the Olympics.

OLYMPIC HOPES & DREAMS FOR INDIA



Seven Indian badminton players, including former world champion PV Sindhu, have officially secured their places for the Paris Games across four categories based on their Olympic Games Qualification rankings. While Sindhu, alongside top-notch singles players HS Prannoy and Lakshya Sen, had already solidified their positions, the formalities were wrapped up on the specified day, the cut-off date set by the Badminton World Federation (BWF).

According to the qualification standards, the top 16 shuttlers in both men's and women's singles, determined by their Olympic Games Qualification ranking on the designated cutoff date, secure their slots for the quadrennial showpiece. Sindhu, a former world champion and a two-time Olympic medalist, claimed the 12th spot, while Prannoy and Sen secured the 9th and 13th positions, respectively, in men's singles.

India's formidable men's doubles pair, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, clinched the third position at the culmination of the Olympic qualification cycle, emerging as one of the nation's top contenders for medals in badminton.

In the women's doubles division, the Indian duo of Tanisha Crasto and Ashwini Ponnappa secured their berths after finishing 13th in the qualification rankings. However, the pairing of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand narrowly missed out on qualification.



AirBadminton Gains Momentum in Guatemala

Guatemala is propelling AirBadminton to new heights following the successful hosting of the Pan Am AirBadminton Championships. Held alongside the XXVII YONEX Pan Am Individual Championships, this tournament marked a significant step in popularizing the sport.

Technical Director of the Guatemalan Badminton Federation, Daniel Humblers, expressed his enthusiasm about the event's success. "We've been organising this continental event for some time and it's a fantastic opportunity for people to engage with AirBadminton. We plan to implement departmental associations to practice and expand the sport nationally," he said.

The competition featured three categories: mixed team relay, men's triples, and women's triples. El Salvador's women's triples team, competing for the first time, emerged victorious against Mexico, Guatemala, and Brazil. Daniela Hernandez from El Salvador celebrated their win, reflecting on the nostalgic and exciting experience of playing AirBadminton.

Brazil dominated the mixed team relay and men's triples. In the mixed team relay, they maintained a perfect record, overcoming Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Their men's triples team also remained unbeaten, with their toughest match against Guatemala ending in a thrilling contest.

Brazil's Izak Barelha highlighted the unique appeal of AirBadminton: "Playing on sand is a different experience. It's gratifying to win again and see the sport's growing popularity. It's fun and attracts the public, making it exciting for everyone involved."

As Guatemala continues to promote AirBadminton, the future looks promising for the sport's development and widespread participation in the country.





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.

Your
Guarantee!



grsa-international.com

media@grsa-international.com

Got some news?

Want to sell something?

Want to write an article?

Do you have some feedback to share?



IF YOU HAVE A GRSA BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP

or you'd like to advertise in the classified section of this magazine, please contact us via email.

info@grsa-international.com

Professional racket stringing & customisation

- **GRSA** Certified Tour Master Stringer
- Member of **Wimbledon** stringing team since 2016
- **Davis Cup** and **Billie Jean King Cup** stringer
- **Laver Cup** 2022 stringing team
- **ATP/WTB** Professional tournament stringer
- **Babolat** stringing team / **Dunlop** stringing team
- **HEAD** stringing team
- All rackets are strung on a **Babolat** Sensor Dual electronic machine or **HEAD** TE-3600 electronic machine
- Full racket customisation and matching service available – these services have been provided for Grand Slam champions
- Services provided for tennis, squash, badminton & Racketball
- Wide selection of grips and strings including:



CONTACT HUW PHILLIPS

☎ +44 (0)7870 654204

✉ **info@racketspec.co.uk**



HEAD®