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October - 2025

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Federer Rekindles Court Speed Debate: Are Fast Surfaces Dying Out?

When Roger Federer speaks, tennis listens. And when he chose to weigh in on the long-running debate over court speeds, the conversation suddenly shifted from niche grumblings to front-page fodder.



During a live edition of Andy Roddick's Served podcast at the Laver Cup, the Swiss legend admitted he favoured quicker courts—aligning with Roddick's claim that today's game has been “slowed down to its detriment.” Federer even hinted that tournament directors prefer slower surfaces because it increases the likelihood of crowd-pullers like Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz contesting the final.

Alexander Zverev quickly backed him up, bemoaning the homogenisation of surfaces and accusing the tours of manufacturing conditions that suit baseline rallies. Unsurprisingly, Sinner himself was asked about the furore while in Beijing. His response was diplomatic: “We don't make the courts. It's not our decision. We try to adapt every week.”

Losing Tennis' Greatest Differentiator?

Federer's intervention highlights a bigger issue than player favouritism: the disappearance of true variety in surface speeds. Tennis was once defined by the need to master contrasting conditions—fast indoor carpets, skidding grass, gritty clay. Today, most ATP and WTA surfaces fall between slow and medium-fast, with the lightning-quick courts of old virtually extinct.

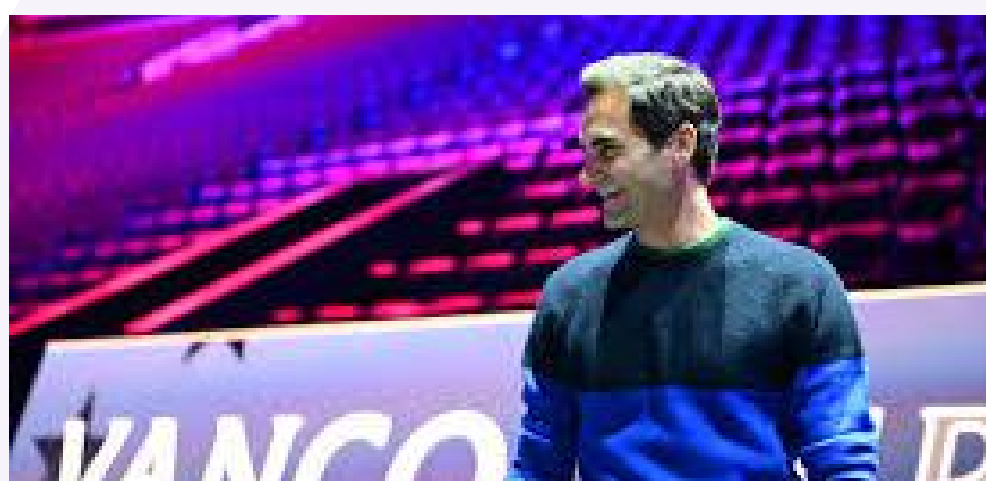
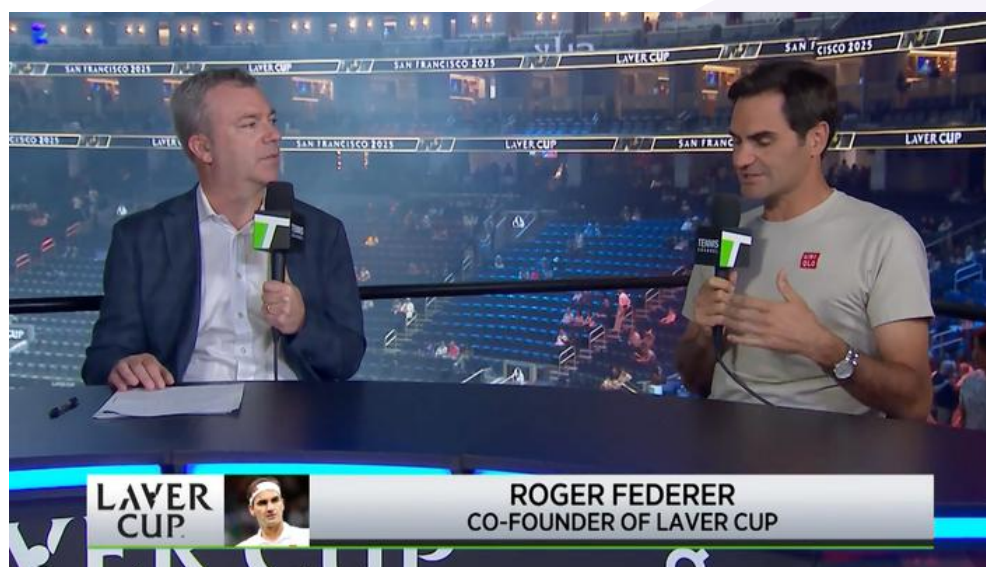
Wimbledon set the trend when it swapped to slower ryegrass in 2001, ending the notorious “serve-bot shootouts” that dominated the '90s. In 2008, the ITF further capped extremes by restricting Davis Cup hosts from using ultra-quick courts. Curiously, there was never a “too slow” category—only “too fast.”

Numbers Don't Lie (Or Do They?)

The ITF measures surfaces using the Court Pace Rating (CPR), a laboratory-and-match-based system ranging from 20 (very slow) to 50 (fast). By this yardstick, Roland Garros typically sits around 23, while the Australian Open edges towards 42. In 2024, most Masters events landed in the “medium” to “medium-fast” zone, with Paris peaking at 45.5 and Indian Wells plodding at 23.

Broadcasters use their own predictive metrics, based on rally length and ace frequency, producing the Court Pace Index (CPI). Tennis Abstract goes further, rating tournaments by how much more (or fewer) aces occur compared with the average. On this scale, Basel is the fastest (1.54—meaning 54% more aces than normal), with Paris and Cincinnati the only Masters 1000 events cracking the top 15.

Yet statistics often clash with player perceptions. Frances Tiafoe dubbed Washington “a servebot fest” this summer, Taylor Fritz thought Canada felt “lightning-fast,” while many players swore Cincinnati had slowed down. Even the US Open split opinion.



The Players' Perspective

For all the talk of slowing surfaces, John Isner—a man who lived and died by his serve—remains unconvinced. “It just seems to me some courts are faster, maybe some are slower,” he said on the Nothing Major podcast, recalling some of his best Slam results coming not indoors, but on the clay of Roland Garros.

In truth, conditions are rarely static. Temperature, humidity, balls, and even altitude can alter how a court “feels” on the day. What’s quick to one player may be sluggish to another.

Did You Know?

Before 2001, Wimbledon finals often lasted less than two hours, dominated by booming serves and abbreviated rallies. Goran Ivanišević’s epic 2001 triumph over Pat Rafter was played on the new, slower grass—a fitting bookend to the “big serve” era.

Federer's Call to Action

So where does that leave us? Federer’s plea to quicken the Laver Cup courts might not turn the tide, but it does underscore a truth many players miss: court speed variety isn’t about favouring one style over another—it’s about preserving the sport’s unique balance.

Without those contrasts, the game risks becoming one-dimensional. As Federer surely knows better than most, tennis is at its best when adaptation is just as vital as shot-making.

Looking Back: Therapy and Tennis – When Madison Keys Opened the Conversation

Sometimes it's worth revisiting stories that risk slipping into the background, because their relevance doesn't fade with time. This is one of them. A few months ago, Madison Keys spoke openly about the role of therapy in her life and career. It was a moment that cracked open a subject tennis had long kept sealed: the mental health of its players.

A Courageous Shift

For decades, tennis glorified the image of the unflinching competitor—players were expected to be stoic, unshakable, and impervious. Therapy, if acknowledged at all, was disguised as “mental coaching,” packaged in visualisation drills and performance cues. Keys disrupted that narrative.



Speaking candidly, she explained that the turning point wasn't sports psychology but proper therapy, where she addressed the wider challenges of her life, not just her serve. “You are not just a tennis player,” she said. “You're a full person.” That shift not only gave her perspective but also coincided with her long-awaited Grand Slam triumph at the Australian Open.

Zverev's Admission

Around the same time, Alexander Zverev's words added weight to the growing discussion. After an early Wimbledon exit, the German star—ranked No. 3 at the time—spoke with raw honesty about feeling “lonely” and “empty,” admitting he had lost joy in his profession.

When asked about therapy, he didn't dismiss it. Instead, he acknowledged: “Maybe for the first time in my life I'll probably need it.” For a top male player to voice such vulnerability marked a significant cultural shift in a sport that had long equated silence with strength.

The Unrelenting Calendar

What both players touched on, directly or indirectly, was the grinding nature of the tennis schedule. Year-round competition, endless travel, and little recovery time take a toll that is far more than physical.

Iga Świątek later spoke openly about the strain: “The scheduling is too intense... I don't think people would stop watching tennis if we played fewer tournaments.” Her comments echoed the frustrations of Alex de Minaur, who lamented finishing Davis Cup duty only to plunge immediately into pre-season.

The system, players argue, leaves little space to nurture an identity beyond the sport. And when your sense of self hinges solely on fluctuating results, the cracks inevitably show.

Gauff Holds Nerve to Stun Pegula and Lift Wuhan Open Title



Coco Gauff is the new queen of Wuhan.

The world No. 3 produced a gutsy finish to edge past fellow American Jessica Pegula 6-4, 7-5, clinching her first title since triumphing at Roland Garros and extending her flawless record in hard-court finals to an unprecedented 9-0.

A Rollercoaster Contest

In their maiden singles final meeting, both players had their chances. Gauff flew out to a 4-1 lead in the opener but was pegged back as Pegula clawed her way level. Just when the set looked set for a tiebreak, Pegula faltered with a flurry of unforced errors at 5-4, handing Gauff the edge.

The second act saw momentum swing again. Pegula raced into a double-break cushion at 3-0 and later stood within touching distance of forcing a decider at 5-3. But the 21-year-old Gauff, showing maturity beyond her years, ripped off ten consecutive points to wrestle back control.

At 5-6, Pegula bravely ventured forward, carving out a backhand volley only to fluff the follow-up on an open court forehand. On match point, she attacked once more, but Gauff's passing shot whistled by to seal the title.

Champion's Composure

The Delray Beach native, who turns 22 in March, is now 11-3 in tour-level finals and boasts three WTA 1000 crowns without dropping a set in Wuhan. Her variety – mixing heavy spin, teasing slices, and bursts of pace – kept Pegula guessing throughout.

“Closing matches is where Coco shines,” remarked one commentator. “She’s learning how to suffocate opponents when it matters most.”

Did You Know?

Gauff's hard-court final streak of 9-0 makes her the first woman in tennis history to achieve such a start – an astonishing record for someone still in her early twenties.

Exhaustion in the East: A Warning for Tennis

The 2025 Asian swing was supposed to deliver a thrilling showcase of autumn tennis. Instead, it became a stark reminder of the sport's most fragile fault line: the human body under extreme strain. Across Shanghai and Wuhan, soaring temperatures and suffocating humidity reduced elite athletes to physical wrecks. Novak Djokovic was violently sick on court, Jannik Sinner crumpled with cramp, and more than a dozen players retired mid-match.

By the time the trophies were lifted, the tennis had almost been overshadowed by scenes of suffering. The headlines weren't just about forehands and tiebreaks — they were about whether the sport's relentless schedule, combined with climate extremes, has finally tipped into dangerous territory.

Bodies Breaking Down

Djokovic, at 38, defied the odds by reaching the semi-finals in Shanghai — becoming the oldest man ever to make the last four of an ATP 1000. Yet even he admitted he was “trying to stay alive on the court”.



The first casualty of the week was France's Terence Atmane, who retired after just eight games in his opener against Camilo Ugo Carabelli. “After the first point of the match both of my hands were shaking,” the 23-year-old wrote later. “After two games, my whole body was trembling and I was suffocating after every point. The heat stress could have been worse than losing consciousness.”

He was not alone. Hamad Medjedovic, Yibing Wu, David Goffin, Tomas Machac, Casper Ruud and Jannik Sinner also withdrew, the latter collapsing mid-match against Tallon Griekspoor. Sinner, who had less than three days to recover from his Beijing title before playing in Shanghai, needed to be helped off court. Even Griekspoor admitted: “It was incredibly brutal. By the third set, I could barely hold the racquet.”

In Wuhan, it was much the same story. Britain's Emma Raducanu, Jelena Ostapenko, Dayana Yastremska, Elise Mertens, Clara Tauson and Karolina Muchova all retired. Raducanu had her blood pressure checked before pulling out, while Ostapenko revealed she had suffered heat stroke.



Rules — or the Lack of Them

Heat protocols exist in women's tennis, allowing a 10-minute break under extreme conditions, but standards vary by tournament. On the men's tour, no such rule is in place — leaving decisions to referees. Holger Rune, who cramped in defeat to Valentin Vacherot, was blunt: "There should be a heat rule like in the Slams. Every player would agree."



The ATP later admitted it is reviewing its stance, stating: "Player safety remains a top priority. An official heat policy is under active evaluation in consultation with players, tournaments, and medical experts."

The Schedule Question

Even without extreme weather, fatigue has become a central issue. The tennis season runs virtually non-stop from January to November, with Grand Slams, Masters 1000s, and mandatory events on both tours. Top players have little choice but to enter — or risk losing ranking points.

As Iga Świątek put it: "The Asian swing is the hardest part. The season feels like it should be ending, but you still need to push. There are a lot of injuries. It's too long and too intense."

The problem isn't just volume but sequencing. Victoria Mboko skipped Cincinnati this summer after winning the Canadian Open because she had only 48 hours to recover. Sinner faced a similar dilemma after his Beijing title, left drained before Shanghai. A simple fix, some argue, would be spacing major events by at least a week.

A Wider Sporting Dilemma

Tennis is far from alone. Formula 1 has shifted its Qatar Grand Prix to December after drivers wilted in the heat, while Japan moved its F1 race from autumn to spring. The 2026 FIFA World Cup in North America is already preparing for soaring summer temperatures. Climate change is rewriting the sporting calendar.

For tennis, with its global footprint, the challenge is acute. The calendar has barely changed in a decade, but the weather has. Moving events by a fortnight, or rethinking regional swings, could be enough to spare players from dangerous extremes.

A Warning, Not Just a Blip

China's tournaments delivered winners, drama and dazzling tennis — but the enduring image is of athletes cramping, collapsing and conceding to conditions. This Asian swing has been less a celebration of resilience than a warning siren.

Rune Faces Achilles Surgery After Stockholm Setback

Holger Rune has confirmed he requires surgery on a serious Achilles injury sustained during his Stockholm semi-final, forcing the Dane to face an extended spell on the sidelines.

The world No. 11 was in command against France's Ugo Humbert — leading 6-4, 2-2 — when he suddenly pulled up in visible pain and was forced to retire. The 22-year-old hobbled off court to a hushed crowd, the atmosphere turning from celebration to concern in an instant.

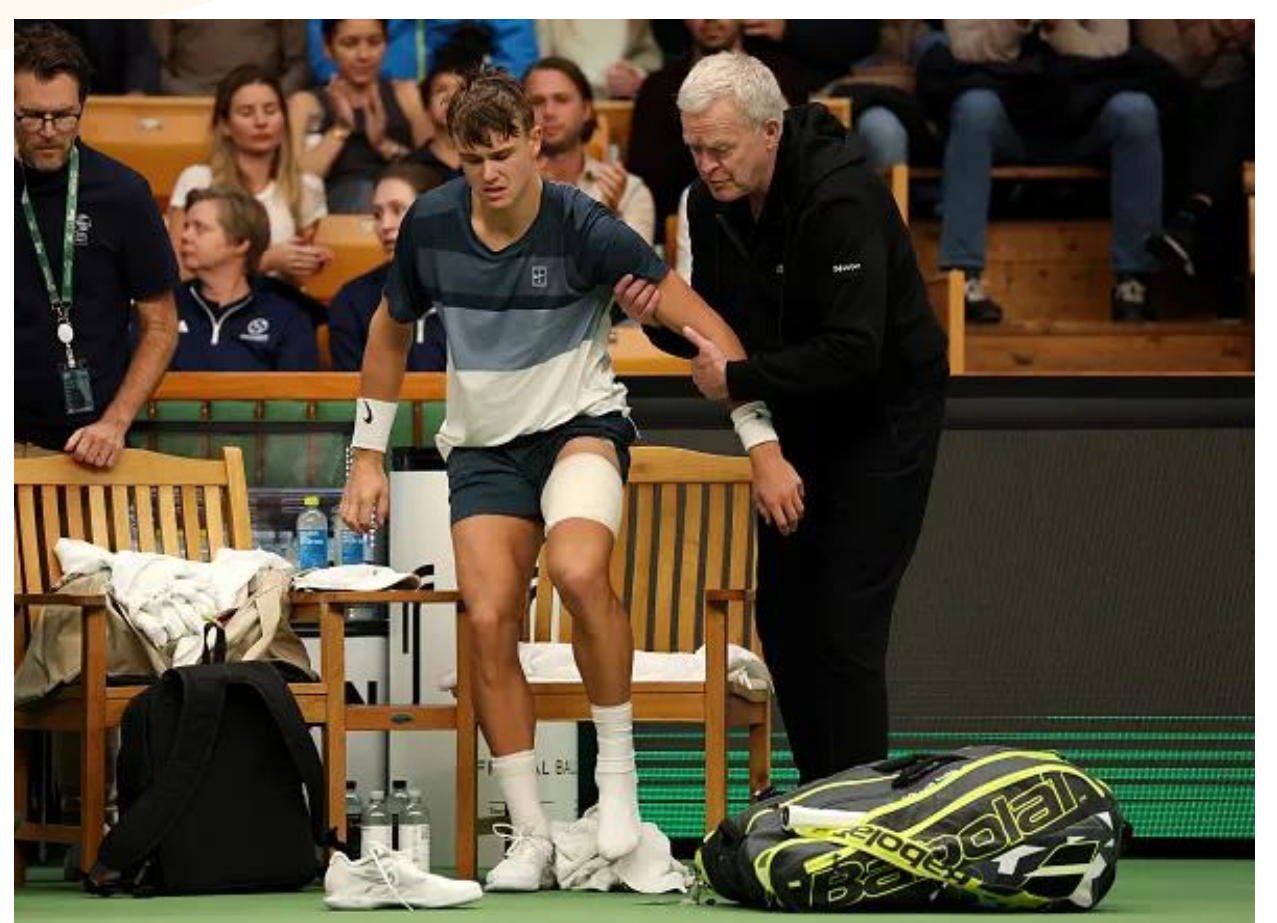
“It's going to be a while before I can step on court again. It's tough. I had so much joy on court in Stockholm and it's unbearable to think that I won't feel this energy for some time now,” Rune reflected in an emotional Instagram post.

Doctors have confirmed that Rune's Achilles is “fully broken on the proximal part” and that surgery is scheduled for next week. The Dane admitted the reality of the injury has been difficult to accept.

Rune has already made a name for himself as one of tennis' rising stars, reaching three Grand Slam quarter-finals and climbing as high as world No. 4. This latest setback, however, represents the biggest challenge of his young career.

Did You Know?

The Achilles tendon, named after the warrior of Greek mythology, is the strongest tendon in the human body. For athletes, it's also one of the most feared injuries — recovery can take many months, making Rune's comeback one of the sport's most closely watched stories in 2025.



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Race to Turin Heats Up: Auger-Aliassime, Ruud and Medvedev Close In on Top 8

With Novak Djokovic sealing his spot at the ATP Finals over a very intense weekend in the second half of the month, just five places remain up for grabs in Turin – and the chase is tightening by the week.

A trio of ATP 250 tournaments may have been considered minor in prestige, but they had a major say in the season-ending Race. Felix Auger-Aliassime, Casper Ruud and Daniil Medvedev – all sitting just outside the elite eight – each picked up a title, banking crucial points at exactly the right time.

The State of Play

Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner booked their tickets to Turin during the summer, while Djokovic became the third man to qualify, leaving the rest of the pack scrambling for position. Alexander Zverev, Taylor Fritz, Ben Shelton and Alex de Minaur currently sit in strong positions, but the final berth remains precarious.

That spot is held by Lorenzo Musetti, though the Italian failed to go beyond the quarter-finals in Brussels, opening the door for those in pursuit. And with two ATP 500s taking place this week in Basel and Vienna, the stakes are rising fast.

Who Made the Biggest Moves?

Auger-Aliassime, who lifted the trophy in Brussels, was the biggest beneficiary. Just a week ago, the Canadian trailed Musetti by 530 points – now the gap has been trimmed to just 340. Meanwhile, Ruud’s triumph in Stockholm added 240 to his tally, while Medvedev collected 200 points in Almaty.

Jack Draper, sidelined since the US Open with an arm injury, has slipped back, while Holger Rune’s Achilles injury appears to have ended his season prematurely. Both absences have left the door wide open for the chasing trio.

Qualified:

Carlos Alcaraz – 11,040

Jannik Sinner – 8,500

Novak Djokovic – 4,580

Chasing Pack:

4. Alexander Zverev – 4,280

5. Taylor Fritz – 3,835

6. Ben Shelton – 3,720

7. Alex de Minaur – 3,545

8. Lorenzo Musetti – 3,485

9. Felix Auger-Aliassime – 3,145 [+1]

10. Jack Draper – 2,990 [-1]

11. Casper Ruud – 2,735

12. Holger Rune – 2,590

13. Daniil Medvedev – 2,560 [+2]

14. Andrey Rublev – 2,420 [-1]

15. Alexander Bublik – 2,380 [-1]

Medvedev Ends Title Drought in Almaty, Dedicates Victory to Daughter Victoria

Daniil Medvedev finally lifted silverware again on Sunday the 19th, halting an 882-day wait as he defeated Corentin Moutet in the Almaty Open final. The former world No. 1 prevailed 7-5, 4-6, 6-3 in a tense contest to claim his 21st career title—one that carried a special family significance.

The triumph was witnessed by the entire Medvedev clan. His wife, Daria, and daughters, Alisa and Victoria, were on hand to see him return to winning ways. In an emotional moment during the trophy ceremony, the 29-year-old dedicated the victory to his youngest child.



“It’s the first time I’ve had both of my daughters with me at a tournament, so to win a title here is really special,” Medvedev said. “The first trophy I collected after Alisa was born was for her. This one is for Victoria.”

A Kazakh Welcome

Both Medvedev and runner-up Moutet were honoured with a chapan, the traditional Kazakh robe awarded as a mark of respect and merit. Draped in the flowing garment, Medvedev looked every bit the champion returning to familiar heights, even if it has taken him the best part of two and a half years to rediscover them.

A Unique Streak Lives On

Remarkably, Medvedev extended one of the quirkiest records in modern tennis. Since first breaking through in Sydney back in January 2018, every single one of his 21 ATP titles has come from a different city. Almaty now takes its place on that exclusive list—a reminder of the Russian’s extraordinary consistency across the globe.



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João Fonseca Flies High: From No. 46 to No. 28 After Historic Basel Triumph

Brazilian prodigy João Fonseca has stormed into the tennis spotlight with a dazzling breakthrough in Basel, capturing his maiden ATP 500 title—and with it, a remarkable jump in the world rankings from No. 46 to No. 28.

At just 19 years old, Fonseca’s triumph is not only the biggest win of his career but also the most significant title by a Brazilian man since Gustavo Kuerten lifted the Cincinnati Masters trophy back in 2001. It’s an achievement that cements the teenager’s place among his country’s all-time greats.



A New Star in Brazil’s Tennis Galaxy

Fonseca’s new mark of No. 28 makes him the fifth-highest-ranked Brazilian in ATP history—an extraordinary milestone for a player barely out of his teens. Since ATP rankings began in 1973, only six other Brazilians have ever cracked the world’s Top 30.

Highest-Ranked Brazilian Players ATP Rankings History

- Gustavo Kuerten – No. 1 (December 2000)
- Thomaz Bellucci – No. 21 (July 2010)
- Thomaz Koch – No. 24 (December 1974)
- Fernando Meligeni – No. 25 (October 1999)
- João Fonseca – No. 28 (October 2025)
- Luiz Mattar – No. 29 (May 1989)
- Marcos Hocevar – No. 30 (June 1983)

Next up for Fonseca is his Masters 1000 debut in Paris, where he faces Canada’s Denis Shapovalov (No. 24) in what promises to be a fiery first-round clash.

Did You Know?

Gustavo Kuerten, known affectionately as “Guga,” spent 43 weeks as world No. 1 and remains Brazil’s only Grand Slam champion in the Open Era.



Davidovich Fokina and Noskova Break Into the Top 15

While Fonseca stole the headlines, two other rising stars also hit personal milestones this week.

Spain's Alejandro Davidovich Fokina reached his fourth final of 2025 in Basel, where he fell to Fonseca, but still climbed from No. 18 to No. 15, marking his Top 15 debut.

On the women's side, Linda Noskova achieved the same feat after finishing runner-up in Tokyo, where she lost to Belinda Bencic. The Czech starlet moves up from No. 17 to No. 13, her highest career ranking so far.

Bencic's Comeback Continues

Bencic, meanwhile, has her own reasons to celebrate. Her Tokyo title—the 10th of her career—propelled her from No. 13 to No. 11, her best position since returning to the circuit as a mother last year. The Swiss, once ranked as high as No. 4, appears to be finding her rhythm again on the world stage.

American Ann Li Cracks the Top 40

Over in Guangzhou, American Ann Li capped off an impressive week by lifting the WTA 250 title, soaring 11 places up the rankings from No. 44 to No. 33—her long-awaited Top 40 debut.



The 24-year-old's resurgence has been one of the feel-good stories of the season, marking her return to form after injury setbacks.

The Takeaway

From Fonseca's historic Brazilian breakthrough to Bencic's inspiring comeback and a new generation of stars rising fast, this week's rankings reveal a changing of the guard in world tennis—one driven by youth, resilience, and belief.

Belinda Bencic Triumphs in Tokyo to Capture 10th Career Title

A decade after finishing runner-up at the Toray Pan Pacific Open, Belinda Bencic returned to Tokyo to claim redemption—and a milestone title. The Swiss star powered past Linda Noskova 6–2, 6–3 in Sunday’s final, sealing the 10th WTA title of her career.

It was a fitting full-circle moment. In 2015, Bencic fell to Agnieszka Radwanska in the same event by a near-identical score. Ten years on, she stood centre stage once more, lifting the trophy that had eluded her.

“I feel very welcome in Japan,” Bencic told the Tokyo crowd. “It’s always been a beautiful place for me throughout my career, and I’m honoured to be among the champions who have won here.”



That list includes legends like Billie Jean King, Martina Navratilova, Steffi Graf, Maria Sharapova, and Naomi Osaka. Bencic herself now joins them twice—she also won Olympic gold in Tokyo in 2021.

A Week of Grit and Glory

Bencic’s path to the title was anything but smooth. She survived match point against Karolina Muchova in the quarter-finals, prevailing 3–6, 7–5, 7–5 after more than three hours, then edged past Sofia Kenin in another three-set battle. By Sunday, her resilience shone through—she saved all 10 break points and needed just 81 minutes to close out Noskova.

Rising Again

Since returning from maternity leave last year, Bencic’s climb has been meteoric. She began 2025 ranked No. 421; after her Tokyo triumph, she’s projected to rise to No. 11—her highest position since her comeback.

Next stop: Hong Kong, where she’ll lead the field as top seed in her final event of the season.

DID YOU KNOW?

You are not just a tennis player. You're a full person that has all of these other really great attributes and other interests, and just different things in your life.

Madison Keys

It might seem obvious to some, but here are some facts about the tennis ball.

1

The iconic yellow colour of tournament tennis balls dates back to the early 1970s? The International Tennis Federation (ITF) officially permitted yellow (or white) balls in 1972 after research showed that “optic yellow” offered far better visibility on colour television screens. Prior to that switch, balls were predominantly white or even black.

2

Modern regulation tennis balls must adhere to strict size and weight limits to be ITF-approved? According to the ITF Technical Booklet, standard adult tennis balls must measure between 6.54 cm and 6.86 cm in diameter (approximately 2.57 to 2.70 inches), and weigh between 56.0 g and 59.4 g. These specifications help ensure consistency and fairness in play.

3

The fuzzy felt covering on a tennis ball plays a vital role in its aerodynamics and spin behaviour? The felt is typically woven wool and synthetic fibres, applied in curved panels over a rubber core. This “nap” helps delay flow separation in the boundary layer of air around the ball, reducing drag and improving trajectory control and spin.

4

The construction and composition of tennis balls have their roots in far older forms of the game? Early tennis-type balls (in the sport's historic predecessors) were made of leather stuffed with hair, wool, or other materials. Over time, the shift came to hollow rubber cores with felt coverings, as the modern sport developed and equipment standards evolved.

5

Must the internal air pressure of a tournament-level ball be precisely controlled? According to the International Tennis Federation (ITF) documentation, yes! Standard pressurised tennis balls are inflated to approximately 10-13 psi (70-90 kPa) above atmospheric pressure. This ensures that the ball meets the bounce and deformation criteria specified in the rules for official matches, and helps guarantee consistent performance across brands and tournaments.

Stringer Solutions



with Richard Parnell

Tools... Which and Why

When people ask me which tools they should invest in, my advice is always the same — buy the very best you can afford.

A top-quality tool is a one-time investment. I've seen countless cases where someone opts for a well-known but mid-range brand, only for a cutter blade to snap, leaving the tool useless. If that happens in the middle of a Tour event, it's far from ideal.

Naturally, I'm partial to the Parnell Tech range. These are tools I spent years testing before allowing my name to be associated with them. That said, there are plenty of other brands that deserve respect and a place in any professional stringer's kit. The Kimony range, for example, is consistently reliable. Their awls are top-notch — both in quality and performance — and their starting clamp, while on the pricier side, is excellent. The Kimony grommet awl has saved me more than once when dealing with stubborn grommets.

The Parnell Tech starting clamp, however, remains a standout. My two have served me for over a decade, performing flawlessly through Grand Slams and major tournaments, and they're still going strong. I always recommend having two clamps — one dedicated to starting crosses and the other for tightening knots safely. The Parnell Tech cutters and curved nose pliers are equally impressive in both precision and durability.

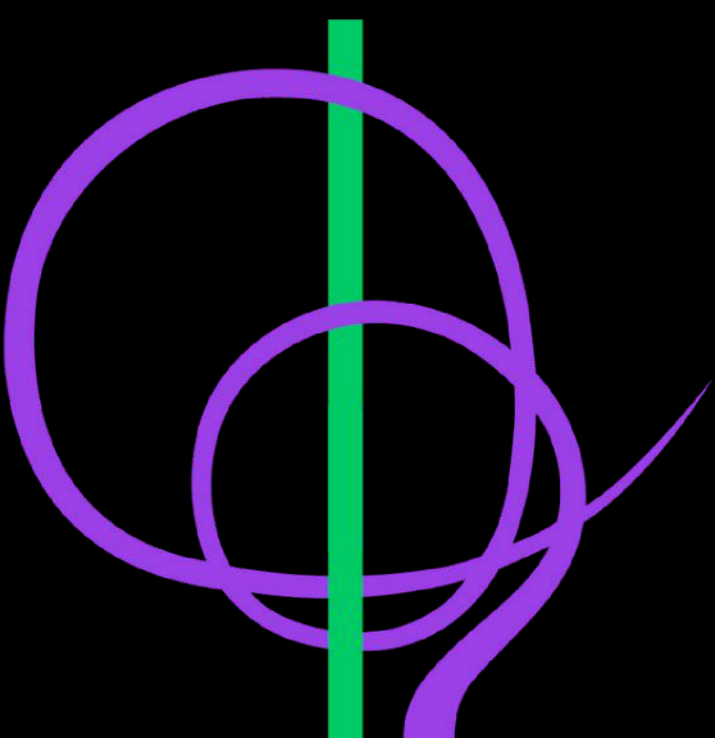
I often hear people claim that the Parnell Pad isn't necessary because their tools don't damage frames. I disagree. Even the best tool can leave marks on a frame's finish under the wrong conditions. For example, when starting crosses with a clamp that pulls against the bumper, I've seen plastic marked by the clamp's edge. My view is simple: why take the risk? The Parnell Pad eliminates that concern and allows the stringer to focus entirely on the task at hand. Personally, I never let any tool touch a frame without some form of protection.

If you're using the "Yusuki" method to start your mains, then the Parnell Block — or any similar device — is essential. It shifts the clamp's contact point further away, preventing the clamped string from being pulled against the grommet edges.

New tools are currently being added to the Parnell Knot website, with more to come, so check in from time to time and see if there is anything that suits your needs.

Remember — the difference lies in the small details.

Got any personal tips to share with your fellow stringers? Send them in and see your ideas featured in the Stringer Solutions section of GRSA ATW Magazine.



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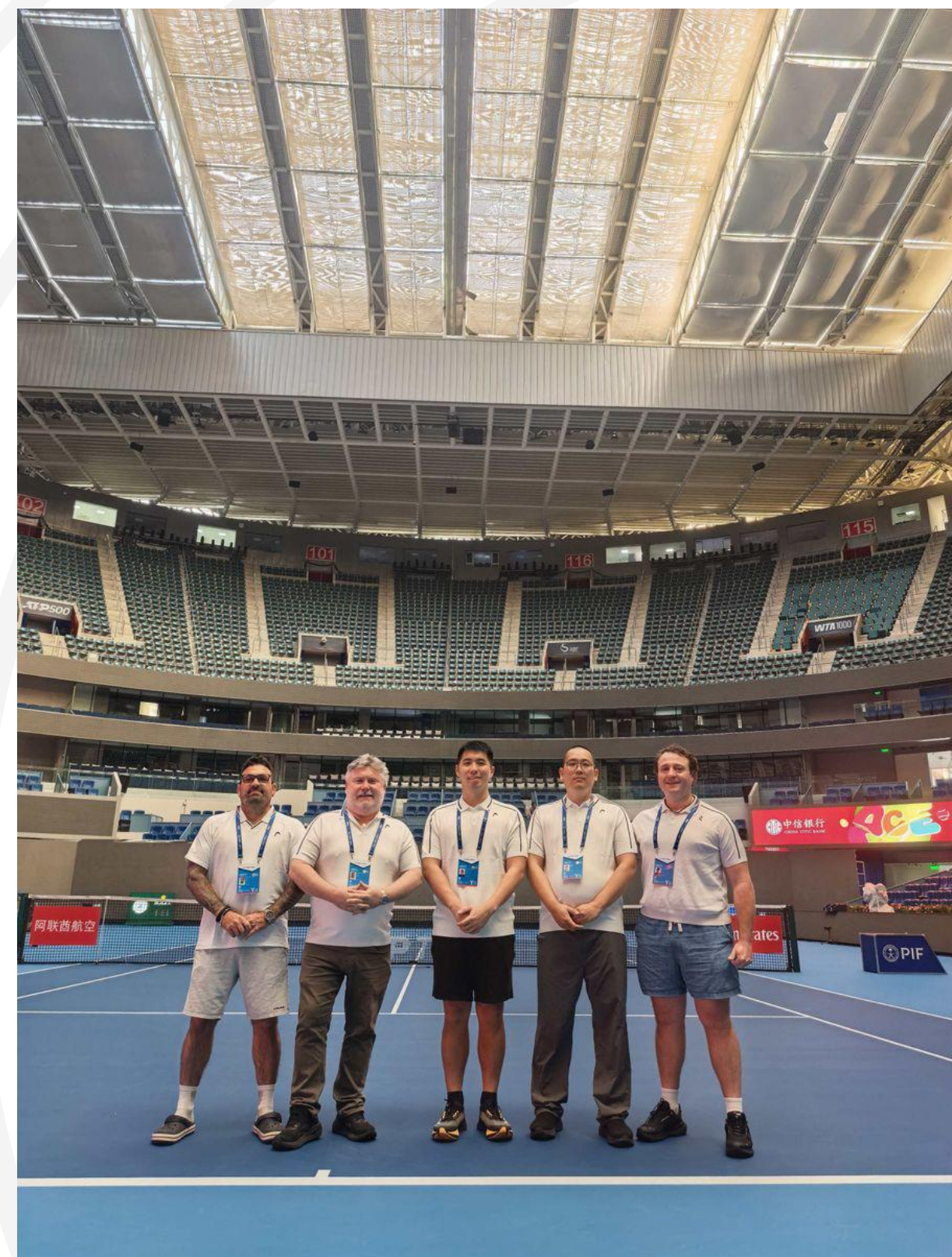
The stringing service for the 2025 China Open was a resounding success, characterized by efficiency, precision, and high player satisfaction. The team successfully completed a significant volume of rackets under intense time pressure and high demand on quality.

The service was supported by a highly skilled team of stringers from China, Germany, England and Singapore, representing the Head International Stringing Team. The total number of rackets strung was slightly over 2000. We had a total of 10 stringers and 2 service managers who oversaw the entire service.

The HEAD International Stringing Team for the China Open (ATP 500, WTA 1000) 2025 comprised of the following members:

Service manager: Richard Parnell (President of GRSA International)

Assistant service manager: Martin Mann (GRSA Europe Chief Instructor)
Manage the workflow, quality control, player liaison and all players' requests.





Beijing Workshop by GRSA INTERNATIONAL



One of the visions of GRSA is to foster the growth of the racket sports community by providing high-level education on modern stringing techniques, equipment, and business practices. Racket stringing workshops are designed with the aim to bridge the gap between enthusiastic amateurs and the rigorous standards of professional tournament stringing.





We were very happy to have the 12th pro stringer certification workshop this year in Beijing, China, right after the China Open. We also had the privilege of having GRSA President, Richard Parnell to be with us, sharing his insights and experience. His keynote speech on the aggregation of marginal gains was extremely well received.





It was also a time where we showed appreciation for the support of our members as we extended an invitation to all members to attend this year's Annual Global Stringers Conference, something that a number of people have taken advantage of and will be joining us.



RN Parnell International S.L

Here's a breakdown of the network

Parnell Knot - 2012, Parnell Academy - 2016, Parnell Language Services - 2016



In 2022 GRSA was launched



Please contact us for more information about any of our services.

In 2024



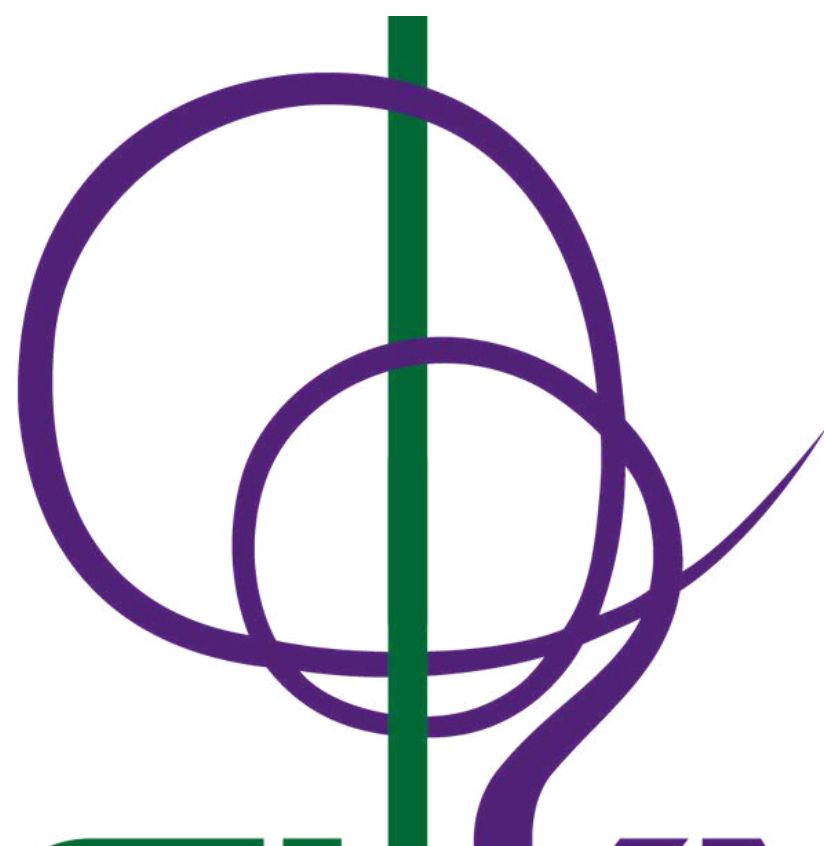
In 2025





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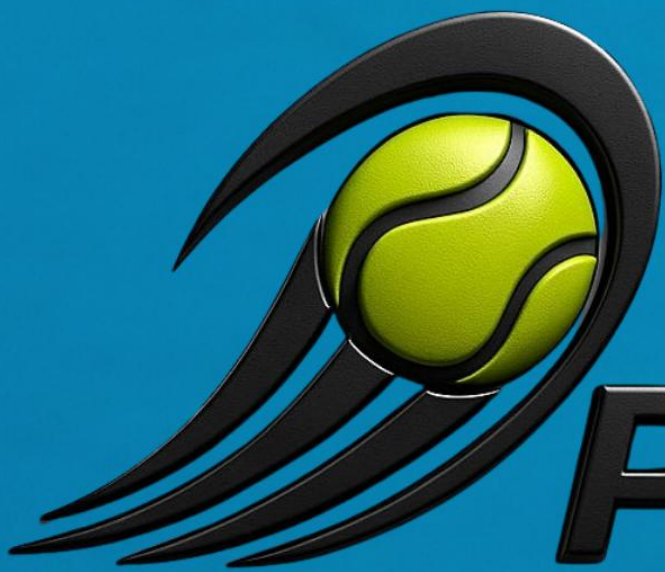
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NEWS FOR ALL GRSA MEMBERS

GRSA International teams up with Tennispro.fr to serve members a Europe-wide boost

GRSA International is delighted to announce a new collaboration with Tennispro that delivers immediate value to GRSA members across Europe. From today, GRSA members can enjoy 10% off at Tennispro.fr, covering everything from rackets to accessories and much more, unlocking savings at one of the continent's leading racket-sport retailers.

For GRSA members, this partnership dovetails neatly with the association's core promise: to educate, connect and champion the global stringing and racket-sport community. Membership already opens the door to the monthly GRSA ATW Magazine, access to the GRSA A-Z of Stringing Guide, exclusive partner discounts, certification exams and diplomas, and participation in the annual GRSA conference, all part of a fully digital membership built to minimise waste and maximise reach.

On the retail side of the net, TennisPro brings serious clout. Founded in 1981 and headquartered in Entzheim, the company has grown into a major force in European racket-sport retail, with a deep online catalogue and a recognised bricks-and-mortar footprint. That blend of e-commerce breadth and specialist expertise makes Tennispro a natural fit for GRSA's community of stringers, coaches and avid players who demand choice, speed and sharp pricing.

The collaboration isn't just about savings at checkout. Workshops in France will commence soon, powered by Tennispro, GRSA-certified instructors working for TennisPro will be bringing a hands-on learning opportunity to the French stringers community. Expect practical sessions focused on modern stringing methodology, player racket customisation and the latest trends being used in tennis, padel and other racket sports. It's an on-court extension of GRSA's education mission to "increase product knowledge and stringer education... globally."

Why this matters: stringers are an athlete's quiet advantage. The right strings, the right tension, the right setup, delivered by a trained, certified professional, can unlock performance, protect players from overuse injuries, and keep business running efficiently in clubs and pro shops alike. Through GRSA, members sharpen those skills with structured learning and certification; through Tennispro, they gain everyday access to the machines, strings and accessories that make the difference.

In short, GRSA members now have more value at purchase and more learning at hand. Whether you're prepping frames for league night, or chasing marginal gains for competing juniors, the GRSA × Tennispro.fr partnership is designed to elevate your everyday.

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The Wait Is Nearly Over...

Here's What Is Happening And Who Will Be There!

The wait is nearly over — the Second Annual Stringer's Conference kicks off Thursday, 13th November, running through Sunday, 16th November 2025, at the Wyndham Grand Costa del Sol.

After last year's incredible debut, which united passionate stringers and racquet technicians from every corner of the world, this year's edition is set to be even bigger, better, and truly unforgettable.

Industry Giants Take the Stage

Get ready to learn from and connect with some of the most respected names in the racket sports industry — the experts shaping the future of stringing and equipment technology.

With only days left, this is your final call to be part of an event that promises to educate, inspire, and energise every attendee.

- **Ron Rocchi**, legendary tour stringer and Wilson's Global Innovation Director, will share his unparalleled expertise and unique perspective on the evolving demands of the professional circuit.



- **Denis Fabian**, representing HEAD, brings with him a wealth of knowledge from one of the most recognisable brands in racquet sports, offering delegates insights into performance, technology, and the future of stringing.

- Representatives of from ERT300 Tennis Computer, will also be joining us. Their presence ensures delegates have the opportunity to explore the science behind string tension and racket diagnostics.



We will also be joined by Carl-Philipp from MSV, Richard Groenwold from Genesis, plus Jenny Stokes from JVC Stringer, all ensuring that this year's programme is filled with industry leaders ready to share their stories, strategies, and secrets for success.

2025

13th to the 16th, NOVEMBER 2025
Mijas, Málaga (Spain)

2nd ANNUAL GLOBAL STRINGERS CONFERENCE

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excellence through education

UPDATE

FINAL CHANCE TO JOIN US

This conference is designed to empower attendees with practical knowledge they can immediately apply to their businesses and careers. From technical demonstrations to hands-on workshops, every session has been carefully curated to maximise learning and engagement.

Highlights include:

- Scaling your business – Gain insights from seasoned professionals who have built thriving enterprises, learning how to grow sustainably in a competitive market.
- Advanced techniques – Explore the latest developments in stringing, diagnostics, and equipment care, ensuring you stay ahead of the curve.
- Interactive presentations – Engage with leading experts in sessions that blend theory with practical demonstration.

Whether you are just starting out or have decades of experience, there is something here for everyone, and the value of the knowledge shared cannot be overstated.

A Community Like No Other

Of course, the Stringer's Conference is not only about education. It is also about community, connection, and celebration. Last year's event proved the strength of the GRSA International network, with friendships and collaborations formed that continue to grow today.

This year we are taking it even further, with evening dinners, cocktail receptions, and a spectacular gala event. Delegates will enjoy entertainment, surprises, and the chance to relax and unwind in the company of like-minded professionals from all over the world.

And for those travelling with family or partners, there will be a range of optional excursions and wellness activities available, so everyone can make the most of their time in Málaga.

With demand already high and tickets limited, this year's Stringer's Conference is shaping up to be the most anticipated gathering in the racquet sports calendar. The combination of world-class speakers, invaluable learning opportunities, and an unforgettable social programme ensures it will be an experience like no other.

We cannot wait to welcome you back – or indeed to welcome you for the first time – to Málaga this November. Together, we will celebrate the craft of stringing, push the boundaries of innovation, and continue to build a truly global community.



BOOK NOW
Registration Closes Soon

Activities and Excursions for Families and Guests

This November, the GRSA International Stringer's Conference promises not only an unmissable professional experience but also an opportunity for families and partners to enjoy the very best of Andalusia. Whether you're arriving a few days before the conference or looking to fill your days while your partner is attending workshops, there is a rich programme of activities to choose from, both within the resort and further afield.

Excursions Before the Conference

For those arriving ahead of the official conference start on Thursday, 13th November, a range of guided day trips will be available:

- Monday, 10th November: Gibraltar or Ronda & Setenil
- Tuesday, 11th November: Caminito del Rey, Gibraltar, Ronda, or Tangier (Morocco)

Please note that Sunday, 9th November will not feature organised tours.

Excursions During the Conference

Throughout the conference, why not visit some of the most beautiful cities in Spain:

- Granada – €90 per person, including entrance, guide, coach transport, and a visit to the Alhambra Palace (limited places available).
- Seville – €78 per person, including entrance to Seville Cathedral and the Giralda Tower.
- Córdoba – €78 per person, available on Thursdays, including guide and entrance to the Mezquita and Synagogue.

Additional options include tours to Gibraltar, Caminito del Rey, Tangier, Ronda, Nerja & Frigiliana, and Mijas & Marbella.

Activities at the Hotel (FOC for Guests)

Guests staying at the Wyndham Grand Costa del Sol can enjoy a wide selection of complimentary daily activities. The hotel's entertainment programme features:

- Fitness classes such as Pilates, Yoga, Aqua Fitness, and Water Polo.
- Sports and competitions including Archery, Air Rifle Practice, Ping Pong, Pool, and Darts.
- Leisure activities like Sangria demonstrations, Bingo, French Boules, and Quizzes.

These activities are designed for hotel guests and included free of charge, offering plenty of fun ways to relax and stay active.

Registration Closes on the 6th of November
Join Us & Share Expertise and Knowledge

Wellness & Relaxation

For something more indulgent, the hotel's Wellness Centre offers a wide menu of treatments:

- Massages from €35 (25 minutes Swedish holistic) up to €120 (90-minute Cleopatra ritual with aromatherapy oils).
- Luxury facials such as the Antistress massage (€45) and Lifting Agestop (€85).
- Body rituals, scrubs, wraps, manicures, pedicures, and hairdressing services are also available.

To book, email wellnesscentre@wyndhamcds.com.

Balinese Bed Experiences

For those who want to elevate their poolside experience, Wyndham offers several Balinese bed packages:

- VIP Pool Experience – €50, including a Balinese bed, mineral water, fruit platter, towels, and optional waiter service.
- Recline & Dine Experience (Adults only) – €80, including a 2-course lunch at Mediterraneo Pool Terrace.
- Family Recline & Dine – €100 for 2 adults + 2 children, with a 2-course lunch at Safari Restaurant.

Reservations can be made via Restaurant.Booking@WyndhamCDS.com.

Adventure in the Sierra de Mijas

For a dose of adrenaline, families can also book buggy and quad tours through the Sierra de Mijas, an unforgettable way to explore the Andalusian countryside.

With so many options – from cultural city tours and Moroccan day trips to wellness indulgences and adventurous buggy safaris – there's truly something for everyone. While you're attending the conference, rest assured your loved ones will be experiencing the very best of southern Spain.

BOOKING CONTACTS

- ➡ To book excursions: excursions@wyndhamcds.com
- ➡ To book wellness treatments: wellnesscentre@wyndhamcds.com
- ➡ To book Balinese Beds: Restaurant.Booking@WyndhamCDS.com



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STRING PATTERN 18/20

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talks about the

SIDE BY SIDE PATTERN

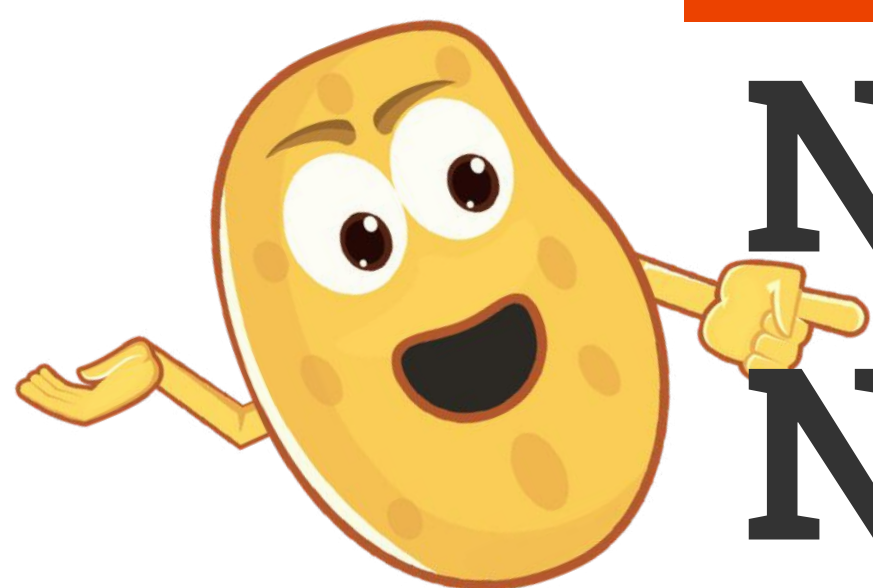
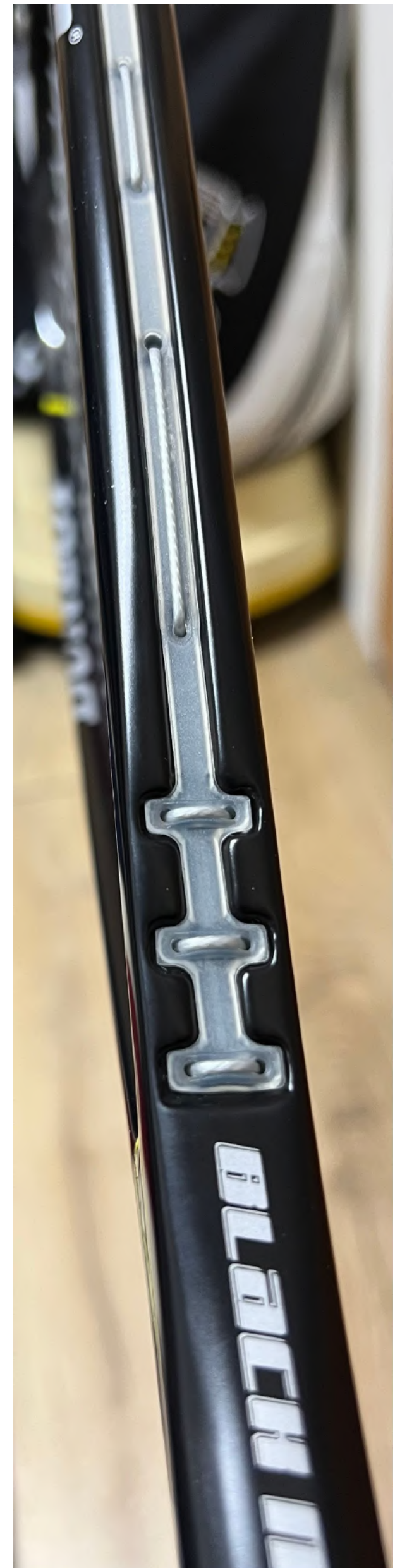


This month's pattern from the list of Non-standard rackets is about side by side grommets, usually a fan pattern, as in this example. It has been used quite extensively in the past, Dunlop, Slazenger and Browning, to name a few, but I'm pretty sure, it is presently discontinued by the brands. There is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

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

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

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



Nick's Nugget

HEAD's AFP squash rackets may be strung with straight strings or a fan pattern with the same bumper and grommets

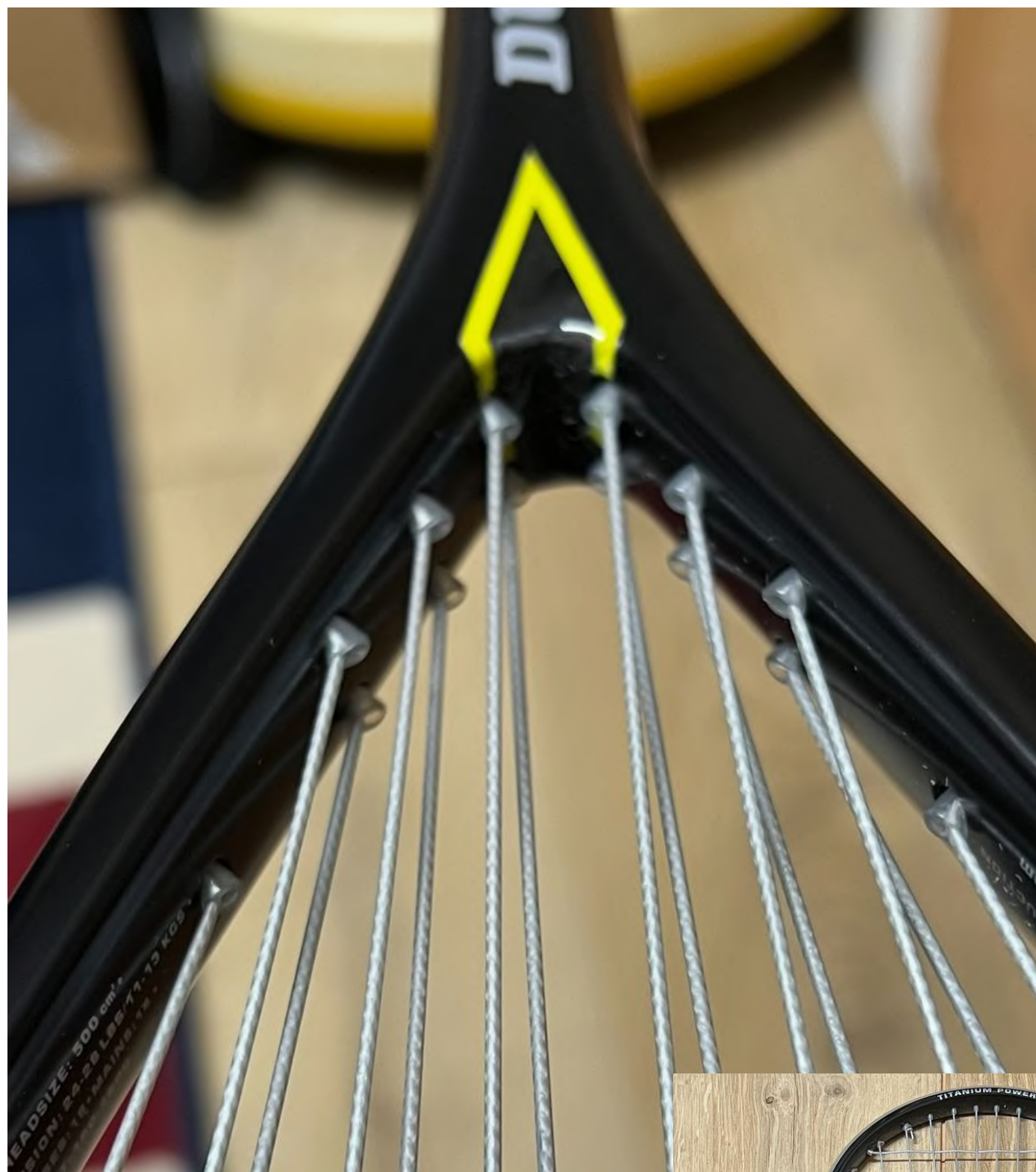
Mains

1LH to 1LTLOW
 1LTLOW to 1LTHIGH
 1LTHIGH to 2LH
 2LH to 3LH
 3LH to 2LTLOW
 1RH to 1RTHIGH
 1RTHIGH to 1RTLOW
 1RTLOW to 2RH
 2RH to 3RH
 3RH to 2RTHIGH
 2RTHIGH to 2RTLOW
 2RTLOW to 4RH
 4RH to 5RH
 5RH to 3RTHIGH
 3RTHIGH to 3RTLOW
 3RTLOW to 7RH
 2LTLOW to 2LTHIGH
 2LTHIGH to 4LH
 4LH to 5LH
 5LH to 3LTLOW
 3LTLOW to 3LTHIGH
 3LTHIGH to 7LH
 7LH to 10LH
 10LH to 4LT
 (Hold SS with starting clamp on outside of frame)
 7RH to 10RH
 10RH to 4RT
 Tie-off SS at 5LT after 1st few crosses.

Crosses

1st cross is at 5RT (ensure cross goes over the 1st main)
 Last cross is at 6LH and tie-off at 4RH.

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



**Listen to my
 playlist on Spotify**



EMAIL ME AT: **nick@grsa-international.com**

Victor Crouin Hits Career-High as Coll, Weaver & Gawad Surge Up the Rankings

French star Victor Crouin has climbed to a career-best World No.6, marking another milestone in his steady rise through the PSA rankings. The 25-year-old’s stellar form in the opening months of the 2025/26 season has seen him outplay several top names, signalling that he’s ready to challenge the very elite.

Crouin’s run to the semi-finals of the CIB Egyptian Open, coupled with victory at the Open Squash Classic and a final appearance at the Silicon Valley Open, has powered him past former World No.1 Mohamed ElShorbagy, who slips to No.8. It’s a reward for Crouin’s consistency and tactical maturity — traits that have made him one of the circuit’s most watchable players.

WORLD RANKINGS	
1	Nouran GOHAR (EGY)
2	Hania EL HAMMAMY (EGY)
3	Amina ORFI (EGY)
4	Olivia WEAVER (USA) 1
5	Nour ELSHERBINI (EGY) 1
6	Sivasangari SUBRAMANIAM (MAS)
7	Tinne GILIS (BEL)
8	Satomi WATANABE (JPN)
9	Amanda SOBHY (USA)
10	Georgina KENNEDY (ENG)
11	Fayrouz ABOELKHEIR (EGY)
12	Nele GILIS (BEL)
13	Salma HANY (EGY)
14	Nada ABBAS (EGY) 1
15	Farida MOHAMED (EGY) 1
16	Sana IBRAHIM (EGY) 2
17	Rowan ELARABY (EGY) 3
18	Jasmine HUTTON (ENG) 1
19	Rachel ARNOLD (MAS)
20	Melissa ALVES (BRA)

Coll on the Charge

Meanwhile, Paul Coll is back to World No.2, rediscovering the form that once made him World No.1. The Kiwi has been in commanding touch, claiming the London Classic and Qatar Classic, before finishing runner-up at the U.S. Open. With Diego Elias still out injured, Coll has seized the opportunity to strengthen his hold near the summit.

Gawad’s Golden Return

Another major mover is Karim Abdel Gawad, who returns to the top four for the first time since 2020. His triumph at the Silicon Valley Open, followed by a semi-final in Philadelphia, has seen him leapfrog Joel Makin. The former World Champion appears rejuvenated — and judging by his recent performances, back to his silky, attacking best.

WORLD RANKINGS	
1	Mostafa ASAL (EGY)
2	Paul COLL (NZL) 1
3	Diego ELIAS (PER) 1
4	Karim Abdel GAWAD (EGY) 1
5	Joel MAKIN (WAL) 1
6	Victor CROUIN (FRA) 1
7	Marwan ELSHORBAGY (ENG) 1
8	Mohamed ELSHORBAGY (ENG) 2
9	Youssef IBRAHIM (EGY)
10	Youssef SOLIMAN (EGY)
11	Eain YOW NG (MAS) 1
12	Aly Abou ELEINEN (EGY) 1
13	Mohamad ZAKARIA (EGY) 2
14	Fares DESSOUKY (EGY) 1
15	Leonel CARDENAS (MEX) 1
16	Jonah BRYANT (ENG)
17	Baptiste MASOTTI (FRA) 1
18	Dimitri STEINMANN (GER) 1
19	Gregoire MARCHE (FRA)
20	Abdulla AL-TAMIMI (QAT) 1

There were also significant climbs for Mohamad Zakaria (now No.13) and Baptiste Masotti (up to No.17), both of whom impressed with deep runs at the U.S. Open.

Weaver Back in the Mix

Across the women's draw, Olivia Weaver has surged back into the top four, overtaking eight-time World Champion Nour ElSherbini. The American's title-winning display in Silicon Valley, followed by another semi-final showing in Philadelphia, has underlined her growing consistency.

For ElSherbini, currently World No.5, it marks her lowest ranking since 2016 — a rare dip for one of the sport's all-time greats.

At the top, the battle for World No.1 is as tight as it gets. Hania El Hammamy has gone unbeaten so far this season, lifting three consecutive major titles — the latest being the U.S. Open in Philadelphia. She's now level with Nouran Gohar on average points, trailing by a mere five total points. A strong showing at the upcoming China Open could see El Hammamy finally claim the top spot for the first time in her career.

Egyptian Depth Shines

Further down the order, Egypt's Nada Abbas, Farida Mohamed, and Sana Ibrahim have all enjoyed upward movement. Ibrahim's third major quarter-final appearance in Philadelphia helped her climb past the injured Rowan Elaraby and Jasmine Hutton, reaffirming Egypt's unparalleled depth in women's squash.



Squash Australia Appointed as National Sales Representative for Access Courts

Squash Media & Marketing (SMM) has announced a landmark partnership with Squash Australia, appointing the national governing body to represent Access Courts sales across the country — a move set to significantly boost grassroots participation in the sport.

The timing could hardly be better. With squash poised to make its long-awaited Olympic debut at Los Angeles 2028 (LA28), and Brisbane preparing to host the Games in 2032, the sport is entering one of its most exciting eras yet.

At the heart of this initiative is Access Courts' new generation of modular squash courts — an innovation designed to overcome traditional barriers of cost, infrastructure, and accessibility. Built for flexibility, rapid installation, and affordability, these courts can be placed virtually anywhere: from urban parks and schools to universities, gyms, resorts, and public spaces.



By reimagining where squash can be played, Access Courts are paving the way for the sport to reach new audiences and communities. Whether it's introducing the game to students or creating vibrant pop-up venues, the concept makes squash more visible, engaging, and inclusive than ever before.

The agreement with Squash Australia is part of SMM's broader strategy to create a global network of regional partners. As the exclusive global sales agent for Access Courts (outside the United States), SMM is working with trusted local organisations to ensure that communities around the world can easily explore, install, and enjoy new squash facilities.

For Australia, this means that clubs, councils, schools, and developers now have direct access to Access Courts through a familiar and trusted national channel. It also ensures that new facility projects — whether indoor or outdoor — are supported locally but connected to a global ecosystem of innovation.

Robert Donaghue, CEO of Squash Australia, said:

“We are excited to be partnering with SMM and Access Courts to bring these innovative modular squash courts to Australia. Like most sports, developing and maintaining facilities is a challenge, but with Access Courts, we now have the opportunity to work with existing court owners, local and state governments, and other sports to integrate squash into new and existing venues — including outdoor spaces that haven't been possible until now.

This partnership aligns perfectly with our strategic vision: more places to play, new places to play, and modern places to play.”

Yannick Wilhelmi Breaks Through with Czech Open Triumph

Switzerland’s Yannick Wilhelmi etched his name into the PSA Squash Tour spotlight with a career-defining victory at the Czech Open 2025, claiming his maiden World Events title after a pulsating five-game final against England’s Declan James.

It was a week of resilience and precision from the 24-year-old Swiss player, who carved his way through a string of formidable English opponents. After dispatching No.2 seed Patrick Rooney in the quarter-finals and overcoming Sam Osborne-Wylde in the semis, Wilhelmi found himself facing a third English challenge — top seed Declan James — in what turned into a dramatic, momentum-swinging final.



A Battle of Nerves and Endurance

Wilhelmi came out firing, punishing James for a sluggish start and taking the opening game in dominant fashion. But the Englishman, fresh from a gruelling semi-final against Balazs Farkas, rediscovered his rhythm to claim the next two games, edging ahead 2-1 and threatening to close out the contest.

Showing remarkable composure, Wilhelmi steadied himself, moving with effortless fluidity and keeping the ball tight to the walls. The Swiss struck back to level at 2-2 with an 11-6 game before clinching the decider 11-7 after 85 minutes of top-class squash.

“Really happy tonight,” said a delighted Wilhelmi. “It was a hard battle with Dec — he played well. I had to dig deep and find answers, and I’m so pleased I managed to finish strong. It’s an amazing feeling.

Big thanks to the whole crew who organised such a great tournament and looked after us so well.”

The result marks Wilhelmi’s first PSA World Events title — and perhaps the start of a new chapter for Swiss squash.

Safy Secures Maiden Title in Women’s Event

Meanwhile, in the women’s Challenger 9 event, Egypt’s Jana Safy celebrated her first ever PSA title, defeating top seed Hayley Ward of South Africa in four games. The 22-year-old Egyptian recovered from a slow start to dominate proceedings, showing both composure and aggression in a sharp 30-minute contest.

Results

Men’s Final
[5] Yannick Wilhelmi (SUI) bt [1] Declan James (ENG) 3-2: 11-3, 7-11, 6-11, 11-6, 11-7 (85m)

Women’s Final
[9/16] Jana Safy (EGY) bt [1] Hayley Ward (RSA) 3-1: 6-11, 11-9, 11-5, 11-8 (30m)

Galán and Chingotto Withdraw from FIP Platinum Lyon

Alejandro Galán and Fede Chingotto, one of the most electrifying partnerships on the padel circuit, have pulled out of the upcoming FIP Platinum Lyon — just weeks after their sensational triumph at the Premier Padel Milano P1.

In Milan, the Spanish-Argentine duo staged a remarkable comeback to defeat Arturo Coello and Agustín Tapia 2–6, 6–3, 6–0. The win didn't just deliver another trophy — it also etched a small piece of history, marking the first time Coello and Tapia had ever lost a set 6–0 on the Premier Padel tour.

That victory also reignited the race for world No.1. Coello and Tapia still lead with 14,100 points, but Galán and Chingotto's total of 12,020 means the gap is down to just over 2,000 points — and the chase is on.

With one P2, one P1, one Major, the Tour Finals, and the World Cup for pairs still to come (the latter carrying the same 2,000 points as a Major), there's everything left to play for. Galán and Chingotto remain in striking distance, and the season promises a thrilling finale.

Their decision to withdraw from Lyon, however, raised eyebrows. The pair had been listed to compete — a chance to add a further 300 points — but when the official draw dropped, their names were conspicuously absent.

In their absence, Martín Di Nenno and Javi Leal take over as top seeds in the men's draw, followed by Francisco Guerrero and Momo González.

On the women's side, Tamara Icardo and Marina Guinart España head the field, with Alejandra Alonso and Lucía Sainz seeded second.

el leu

Did You Know?

Galán and Chingotto's Milan triumph was only their third tournament together since joining forces mid-season — yet it already places them among the most successful new pairings of the year.



Euro Final 8: Italy's Double Bronze Glory

From tears to triumph — Italy closed the FIP Euro Final 8 with two bronzes, celebrating on both the men's and women's podiums.

In the men's bronze final, Aris “Potter” Patiniotis and Marco Cassetta cruised past Van Osptel–Nolten, before Flavio Abbate and Caruso sealed a 6–2, 6–4 win over the Netherlands. “This medal is for my father,” said Alvarito Montiel, his move to Italy having reshaped his career. FIP president Luigi Carraro hailed both teams' spirit, calling the Dutch run “historic”.

Moments later, the women's team followed suit. Pappacena–Marchetti and Orsi–Stellato powered past Belgium in straight sets. Their on-court embrace said it all — Italy once again among Europe's elite.



Coach Marcela Ferrari beamed:

“Two bronzes — with Spain ahead, we're the only country on both podiums. That proves our quality.”

Assistant coach Saverio Palmieri praised the next wave:

“Montiel, Iacovino, Abbate — the future is bright.”

Giorgia Marchetti, one of Italy's standouts, summed it up neatly:

“Padel's at such a high level that every detail counts. But Italy's still there — fighting and shining.”

From Amsterdam to Turin, padel's map keeps expanding — and Italy, bronze in hand, stands proudly at its heart.

Whether you're a seasoned player or just picking up a paddle for the first time, discovering where you can join open competitions is part of the fun in this ever-growing sport. Here are some upcoming dates — and for full details, head over to the Pickleball Global website.

SICILY OPEN**EID:** 2212 FREE**Organizer:** Gianluca Pace**EVENT - TOURNAMENT****Starting:** December 20, 2025 to December 21, 2025**City:** Via Mazara, 115, Marsala, TP, Italia**Tournament Venue:** Marsala Pickleball Team**Registration Deadline:** December 18, 2025 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 2**Siam Pickleball Tournament 2025 presented by Skechers****EID:** 2175 THB 900**Organizer:** Thai Pickleball Association**EVENT - TOURNAMENT****Starting:** December 12, 2025 to December 14, 2025**City:****Tournament Venue:** Greta Resort And Sport Club**Registration Deadline:** November 23, 2025 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 3**Game Set Match Doubles Weekend****EID:** 2039 GBP 35**Organizer:** Michal Cicvak**EVENT - TOURNAMENT****Starting:** January 17, 2026 to January 18, 2026**City:** Leeds, UK**Tournament Venue:** Game Set Match Jccs Leeds**Registration Deadline:** January 04, 2026 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 1**MORE
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Wilson

Dhiren Patel’s Grit Shines Through with Silver at the Pickleball World Cup 2025

It was a day to remember for Indian pickleball as Dhiren Patel powered his way to a silver medal in the 35+ Men’s Singles (5.0) category at the Pickleball World Cup 2025.

In a fiercely competitive draw, Patel impressed with his blend of speed, strategy, and composure. His thunderous serves and sharp net play stood out, reflecting both the poise of experience and the hunger of ambition. Calm under pressure, he fought through intense rallies to earn a spot in the final — a fitting reward for his grit and endurance.

India’s medal momentum began with Vijay Chhabria, who made history by capturing the nation’s first-ever World Cup gold. Soon after, former tennis ace Nitten Kirtane added another glittering chapter to his career, winning the 50+ Men’s Singles (5.0) gold. Together with Patel’s silver, these performances announced India’s arrival as a serious force on the global pickleball stage.



Team India at the Pickleball World Cup 2025

Open Category

Men’s Singles: Aman Patel | Women’s Singles: Amrita Mukherjee
Men’s Doubles: Dhiren Patel & Suraj Desai | Women’s Doubles: Rakshikha Ravi & Sindoor Mittal

Under-16 Category

Girls: Aayra Khanna & Anushka Chhabaria | Boys: Veer Shah & Jeet Sood

50+ Category

Men’s Doubles: Suryaveer Singh Bhullar & Nitten Kirtane | Women’s Doubles: Bela Kotwani & Sujay Parekh

About the Indian Pickleball Association

The Indian Pickleball Association (IPA) is India’s official governing body for the sport, committed to developing and promoting pickleball nationwide. Through major events such as the IPA Nationals, it inspires players across all ages and skill levels. The IPA is affiliated with the Asian Pickleball Association (APA) and the Global Pickleball Federation (GPF).

About Pickleball World Ranking (PWR)

The PWR serves as India’s official national ranking system across singles, doubles, and mixed divisions. It identifies top talent through sanctioned events held weekly across the country, forming the foundation for national team selection at every level — from schools to the elite stage.

Pickleball: From Backyard Hobby to Global Obsession

It began in a suburban backyard, a handful of paddles, a perforated plastic ball, and a borrowed badminton net. A light-hearted family game soon ignited something far bigger. Today, pickleball has exploded into a worldwide phenomenon, uniting generations and communities from Seattle to Sydney, Dubai to Devon. What started as a quirky pastime has become a multi-billion-dollar movement redefining how the world plays.

Part of pickleball's magic lies in its accessibility. The smaller court and slower ball remove intimidation; the rules are easy to grasp, yet the rallies can be electrifying. It's a game where anyone, from teenage newcomers to seasoned retirees, can pick up a paddle and start smiling within minutes. That blend of simplicity and competitiveness makes it more than a sport. It's a social equaliser, breaking barriers of age, fitness and experience.

And now, standing at the front of this wave is Selkirk Sport, a brand built from the ground up to influence how pickleball is played and experienced. According to co-CEO Rob Barnes, "Beyond its accessibility and fun factor, pickleball's rise can be attributed to a combination of social, physical, and structural factors that align with modern lifestyles." He adds: "You only need a paddle, a ball, and a small space to play... one of the few sports where people of all ages, fitness levels and backgrounds can play together."

Selkirk Sport, founded in 2014, anticipated this surge years before the broader public caught on. Its mission? To "elevate the sport through innovation," as co-CEO Mike Barnes puts it — investing in research and development, and creating paddles and gear engineered not just for casual play but for high performance too.

This evolution signals something bigger than sport. It reflects a global shift towards experiences that unite generations and transcend geography. From corporate wellness programmes to pop-up courts in urban centres, pickleball is redefining how we move, meet and compete. For your readers, whether in Lebrija or Ljubljana, Madrid or Melbourne, the story resonates because it intersects with lifestyle, community and a changing leisure culture.

Did you know? The sport's curious name is said to have come from the inventors' dog, Pickles, who delighted in chasing stray balls, proving that even the biggest sporting trends can have the humblest beginnings.

Looking ahead, the path is thrilling but not without its challenges. Infrastructure remains a key hurdle: converting tennis or other outdoor courts, finding urban space, keeping pace with demand. And as the sport professionalises, a major question emerges: how to preserve that grassroots feel, the laughter across generations, the casual afternoon rally, while scaling up globally and commercially.

Whether you're volleying on a rooftop in Tokyo or a seaside court in Marbella, pickleball embodies a universal truth, that joy, movement and connection know no borders. And as this sport continues its meteoric rise, it's clear: the world isn't just watching. It's picking up a paddle and joining the rally. With Selkirk steering innovation and scaling the culture, the next chapter of this global game is already underway.

Popov Powers into History at the French Open

Christo Popov delivered a performance to remember in Rennes, storming past Chi Yu Jen 21–13, 21–7 to become the first Frenchman in 79 years to reach the semifinals of a home tournament. Not since Henri Bellizza graced the court in 1946 has a local men’s singles player made it this far — and Popov’s run has lit up the Glaz Arena.

From the very first rally, the 22-year-old was in command. His crisp shot-making and composure under pressure allowed him to stay comfortably ahead throughout, while Chi’s attempts to fight back only seemed to spur him on.



“I think I was a bit more aggressive and accurate,” Popov reflected. “He made some mistakes and tried to get back into it because I was leading for most of the match.”

A brief spark from the Taipei player at the start of the second game was swiftly extinguished. Popov’s confidence and rhythm never wavered, and he made quick work of closing out the contest.

“Yesterday was about being solid and making it tough for my opponent,” he explained. “Today was about creating the game — creating the opportunities — and going for it.”

Fuelled by a raucous home crowd, Popov’s energy soared.

“It’s amazing to play at home and have the crowd cheer for me, giving me energy and feeding fire in the legs,” he beamed.

Now, the Frenchman turns his focus to Thailand’s Kunlavut Vitidsarn, who edged past Indonesia’s Alwi Farhan 21–14, 16–21, 21–8. The Thai star, currently ranked World No.2, admitted he’s feeling the wear and tear of a long campaign after deep runs at both the Arctic and Denmark Opens.

“I’m very happy and I think this has been a good season,” Vitidsarn said. “I focus on my mentality and my performance... I don’t have any secrets — I don’t know,” he laughed.

The semifinal showdown will be their sixth career meeting, with Vitidsarn holding a slender 3–2 lead. But with home support roaring him on and history within reach, Popov believes this could be his moment.

“I definitely think I can win,” he said with conviction.

French Open Shake-Up: Shi Yu Qi & Liu/Tan Withdraw

The YONEX French Open 2025 has lost two of its biggest names before the first shuttle has even been struck. Top seed and defending champion Shi Yu Qi has withdrawn from the tournament due to a shoulder injury, dashing hopes of a title defence at the Glaz Arena in Rennes.

The reigning world champion, fresh from a runner-up finish at last week's Denmark Open, had been slated to face Wang Tzu Wei in the opening round. His absence triggers a reshuffle in the men's singles draw, with Kunlavut Vitidsarn moving up to face the Chinese Taipei player. The Thai Olympic silver medallist will no doubt recall his defeat to Shi in last year's French Open final — a result he'll now be eager to avenge in spirit if not in person.

With Shi out, the men's singles field suddenly looks far more unpredictable — a potential opportunity for emerging names to make a mark.

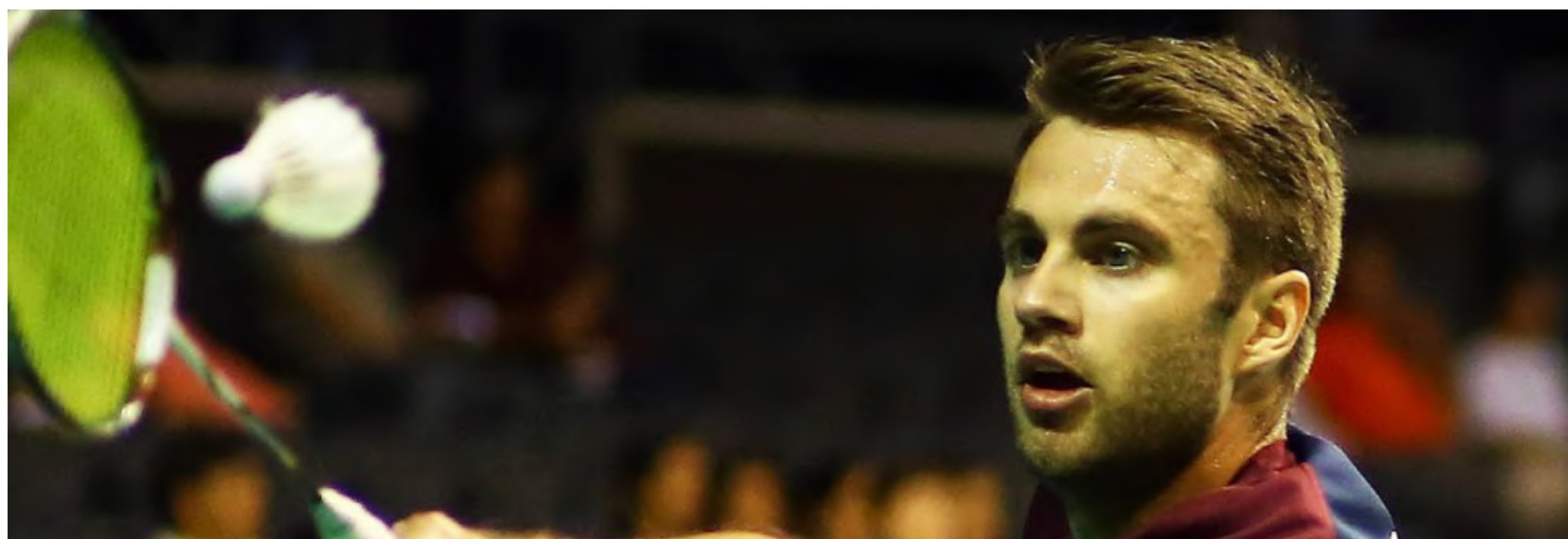
Meanwhile, China suffered a double blow as women's doubles top seeds Liu Sheng Shu and Tan Ning also pulled out. The pair, who exited in the quarterfinals of the Denmark Open, are still managing Liu's lingering injury. Their withdrawal opens the door for Rin Iwanaga and Kie Nakanishi of Japan to take their place in the draw.

Did You Know?

Shi Yu Qi's victory at the 2024 French Open marked his first title in Europe since 2018 — a comeback that helped cement his status as one of China's most consistent men's singles players on the world stage.



Danish Badminton Coach Hit with Four-Year Ban for Courtside Betting



In a shocking breach of integrity, Danish coach Joachim Persson — once a European Championship silver medallist — has been banned from badminton for four years after being caught placing live bets courtside during a match at the Japan Open.

The Badminton World Federation (BWF) confirmed the suspension, citing Persson's lack of cooperation with investigators and his prior history of gambling-related misconduct. The incident took place just two weeks after the Paris Olympics, adding further scrutiny to the sport's post-Games landscape.

According to the official verdict, Persson was filmed by a fellow player while placing bets on his mobile phone during the match. When confronted, he reportedly showed “a mixture of shock and emotion.”

The revelation led to Persson's immediate dismissal by Anders Antonsen, Denmark's current world No. 3 and two-time Olympic quarterfinalist, who had been under Persson's guidance until the scandal broke.

“This decision is a timely reminder that betting on badminton in any capacity will not be tolerated,” the BWF stated, emphasising the responsibility of all players and coaches to report any wrongdoing.

Persson's ban was aggravated by his previous suspension for betting offences, his use of a false-name gambling account, and his access to inside information as an on-site coach. Records from the betting provider revealed that he wagered 9 bets totalling 5,205 Danish krone (£570) during the match, winning seven for a return of 9,821 krone (£1,075).

Once a respected figure in European badminton, Persson's fall from grace serves as a stark warning in a sport striving to preserve its reputation for fairness and integrity.



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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A man with a beard and short dark hair, wearing a white polo shirt, holds a black tennis racket with a white grid pattern in front of his chest. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is dark and filled with various tennis-related items, including shoes, socks, and rackets, arranged in a way that suggests a collection or a museum of tennis gear.

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