



GRSA INTERNATIONAL ATW MAGAZINE

IGA'S 100 WEEKS

At the N°1 spot

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WINNER 2024

MIAMI OPEN WINNER 2024

MONTE CARLO WINNER 2024

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The Miami Open didn't disappoint, an amazing venue, weather and tournament. Monte Carlo's red carpet was in all it's glory. Barcelona set the way for the Madrid Open and Novak moves past Federer.... but that's not all!

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

Miami Open 2024: Sinner Triumphs and Star-Studded Spectacle

The 2024 Miami Open, a prestigious hardcourt tennis tournament, unfolded against the vibrant backdrop of Miami Gardens, Florida. This 39th edition of the combined men's and women's event showcased thrilling matches, unexpected exits, and celebrity sightings. Let's dive into the highlights of this sun-soaked sporting extravaganza.



Prize Money and Points Breakdown:

Singles Winner: \$1,100,000 / 1000 points

Finalist: \$585,000 / 650 points

Semi-finalist: \$325,000 / 400 points

Quarter-finalist: \$185,000 / 200 points

Doubles Winner: \$447,300 / 1000 points

Doubles Finalist: \$236,800 / 600 points

It wasn't the tournament result that Alcaraz, Medvedev or even Fritz was expecting, they all fell short and even though they were looking in form, two players held the key to reaching the final of this very colourful event.

Alcaráz dipped out in the quarter finals losing to Grigor Dimitrov in just an hour and a half.

6-2, 6-4 was the the final result with Carlos speaking highly of Grigor instead of just dishing out a list of excuses, he looked great against Musetti but he was simply outplayed by Dimitrov.

The exit that might have seemed rather unexpected was Taylor Fritz, he'd been in top form and looked pretty convincing in his last tournament but something wasn't quite right as he exited at a very early stage to Thiago Seyboth Wild.

Casper Rudd seemed to be getting his form back with wins against Luca Van Assche and Alejandro Davidovich Fokina, but that was as far as he'd go as Nicolas Jarry would test him to the limit in a close to two hour match that would see Casper going home and Nicolas through to the next round and a meeting with last year's winner Daniil Medvedev. That match wasn't as long and even though he seemed to get steamrolled in the first set, he fought back in the second to take it to a tie-break, it was just too much for Nicolas and the number 3 seed took the win. Unfortunately, the wins ended there for Daniil, Sinner was just too much Sinner.

2024 Miami Open Men's Singles winner Jannik Sinner, third time's lucky!

Jannik Sinner, the rising star from Italy, finally claimed his moment of glory at the Miami Open, marking his third appearance in the final with a resounding victory over Grigor Dimitrov. In a commanding performance, Sinner outplayed Dimitrov with a scoreline of 6-3, 6-1, securing his maiden Miami Open Men's Singles title at the iconic Hard Rock Stadium.

This triumph adds to Sinner's stellar season, where he has already clinched titles at the Australian Open and Rotterdam, cementing his status as a force to be reckoned with in the tennis world. With a remarkable record of 22 wins and only 1 loss this season, Sinner's ascent to the top ranks of men's tennis seems unstoppable, as he is set to claim the World No. 2 spot in the rankings.

Reflecting on his victory, Sinner expressed gratitude towards Dimitrov and the tournament, highlighting the special significance of the Miami Open in his career. Despite previous disappointments in finals past, Sinner's perseverance and dedication have finally paid off in the Magic City.

The 22-year-old showcased his prowess on the court with a clinical performance, breaking Dimitrov's serve twice in each set to seal the match in just over an hour. His dominance was evident as he won an impressive 88% of first-serve points, leaving Dimitrov with no room to stage a comeback.

Dimitrov, gracious in defeat, acknowledged Sinner's exceptional form, praising his focus, determination, and precision in every shot. Despite falling short of capturing his second Masters 1000 title, Dimitrov showcased his prowess by defeating formidable opponents throughout the tournament, solidifying his return to the Top 10.

Looking ahead, Sinner remains focused on further honing his skills, particularly on clay courts where he has historically faced challenges. With the clay season looming, Sinner is determined to make his mark, especially at tournaments like Rome, where the support of his home crowd fuels his ambition.

As the new Miami Open champion, Sinner's journey is far from over, with fans eagerly anticipating his continued rise in the tennis world. With his unwavering determination and relentless pursuit of excellence, Sinner is poised to leave an indelible mark on the sport for years to come.



A TALE OF TWO CITIES

In a remarkable turn of events, Danielle Collins, the American tennis sensation, has orchestrated a victory march that spans two iconic cities: Miami and Charleston.

Her journey from a rocky start to an astonishing resurgence has captivated fans and left the tennis world in awe.

A Rocky Beginning

The 2024 season didn't bode well for Collins. She stumbled, losing three out of five matches Down Under, including a defeat at the hands of World No.1 Iga Swiatek.

Speculation arose when Collins announced her impending retirement at the season's end. Some attributed it to a mere "bad day at the office." In Abu Dhabi, she qualified but fell to No.4 seed Elena Rybakina, leaving her record at an uncertain 3 - 4. Yet, Collins remained resolute in her decision to exit professional tennis on her own terms, even as she battled rheumatoid arthritis — a deeply personal challenge that influenced her choice.

A Stunning Turnaround

Fast forward two months, and Collins finds herself in an unfathomably different place. Her meteoric rise includes an impressive 13-match winning streak, securing back-to-back titles in Miami and Charleston. The American powerhouse has now claimed 22 victories this year, matching the likes of Swiatek and Rybakina on the Hologic WTA Tour. Her most recent triumph came at the Credit One Charleston Open, where she dispatched No.4 seed Daria Kasatkina in a swift and emphatic 6-2, 6-1 victory lasting just 77 minutes.

A Personal Journey

Collins' journey isn't solely about tennis. Back in January, she candidly shared her decision to retire due to rheumatoid arthritis, a condition that affects her ability to conceive. Her desire to embrace motherhood transcends the sport, and she remains steadfast in her resolve. Despite the afterglow of her recent victory, Collins reaffirms that retirement is still on the horizon. With her unique set of challenges, this remains a deeply personal choice, one that extends far beyond the confines of the tennis court.

Collins' story is one of resilience, determination, and her passionate pursuit of personal fulfilment. As she continues her remarkable march, we await more entertaining tennis, celebrating her victories both on and off the court.



NOVAK DJOKOVIC SURPASSES ROGER FEDERER

Last season, tennis icon Novak Djokovic once again defied age stereotypes, showcasing his mastery on the court by clinching victory in three out of the four Grand Slam tournaments.

At the onset of this month, Djokovic made history yet again, breaking the record for the oldest player to claim the top spot in the ATP rankings at the age of 36 years and 321 days. Surpassing Roger Federer's previous record set in 2018 at 36 years and 320 days, Djokovic reaffirmed his status as a tennis legend.

Djokovic joins an elite group of men's tennis players who have attained the No. 1 ranking in their 30s, as reported by Tennis.com. Alongside Federer, Andre Agassi, Rafael Nadal, John Newcombe, Jimmy Connors, Ivan Lendl, and Andy Murray, Djokovic's achievement underscores the enduring brilliance of veteran players in the sport.

As Djokovic prepares for the upcoming French Open, recent performances at the ATP Masters 1000 event in Indian Wells and the Australian Open have provided both triumphs and setbacks. Despite an early exit in Indian Wells to Luca Nardi and a loss to eventual champion Jannik Sinner in the Australian Open, Djokovic remains focused on his pursuit of excellence.

The Monte-Carlo Masters looms next on Djokovic's agenda, with the first round set to commence on Tuesday. With the French Open slated to begin on May 20, Djokovic will undoubtedly aim to add to his impressive tally of 24 Grand Slam titles, the most by any male player in tennis history. With competitors like Rafael Nadal and the retired Roger Federer close behind, Djokovic's quest for further glory promises to be a captivating spectacle on the tennis stage.





ROLEX MONTE-CARLO MASTERS



Stefanos Tsitsipas, the Greek maestro, stamped his authority once more on the hallowed courts of the Rolex Monte-Carlo Masters, capping off an illustrious week with a commanding victory over Casper Ruud. With a resounding 6-1, 6-4 triumph, Tsitsipas etched his name on the trophy for the third time in four years, solidifying his reign in the Principality.

Known for his prowess on the Monte-Carlo clay, Tsitsipas dazzled the crowd gathered at Court Rainier III with his masterful display of tennis. With unwavering confidence, he unleashed thunderous forehands that forced Ruud deep into the court, while his strategic advances capitalized on the Norwegian's vulnerable position.

In a match lasting one hour and thirty-seven minutes, Tsitsipas joined an elite league of players to clinch three or more Monte-Carlo titles, alongside legends like Rafael Nadal, Bjorn Borg, Thomas Muster, and Ilie Nastase. Overwhelmed with emotion, the Greek collapsed in jubilation before embracing his opponent and team, acknowledging the arduous journey that led to this momentous victory.

Reflecting on his triumph, Tsitsipas expressed gratitude to his support system and credited divine intervention for his success. "The third time is even more special," he remarked, basking in the euphoria of his achievement.

Despite entering the tournament with a modest record, Tsitsipas showcased his mettle by dispatching top contenders Alexander Zverev and Jannik Sinner en route to the title clash. His victory over World No. 10 Ruud marked a significant milestone, as it signaled his resurgence on the ATP circuit.

From the onset of the final, Tsitsipas dominated proceedings, asserting his dominance with penetrating forehands that left Ruud scrambling. With enviable focus, he weathered challenges and capitalized on crucial opportunities to secure victory.

Ruud, despite his valiant efforts, struggled to match Tsitsipas's intensity, succumbing to the Greek's relentless onslaught. Despite flashes of brilliance, he faltered at pivotal moments, unable to disrupt his opponent's rhythm.

In a display of resilience, Tsitsipas saved all eight break points he faced, showcasing his mental fortitude under pressure. With this triumph, he leveled the head-to-head series against Ruud and reclaimed his position among the ATP elite.

As Tsitsipas ascends to No. 7 in the rankings, Ruud's commendable run sees him rise to No. 6, marking a significant milestone in his career. While the Norwegian fell short of his title aspirations, his stellar performance reaffirms his status as a formidable force on the ATP tour.

In the annals of Monte-Carlo history, Tsitsipas's name shines bright, a testament to his enduring legacy on the clay courts of the Principality. With his eyes set on future conquests, the Greek virtuoso reaffirms his status as a perennial contender in the world of tennis.





In the quiet confines of her Miami apartment, Iga Swiatek lay nestled in bed when the seismic news shook her world: Ashleigh Barty, the indomitable force reigning atop the tennis realm for three consecutive years, had decided to hang up her racket at a mere 25 years of age.

"It was surreal," Swiatek recounted to the press, casting her mind back to that pivotal moment over two years ago. "The possibility of claiming the World No. 1 spot—it felt almost like a dream. I never envisioned it unfolding this way."

With Barty relinquishing her throne and requesting an immediate removal from the rankings, Swiatek found herself on the brink of ascension, trailing the Australian by a daunting margin of over 2,200 ranking points. A single victorious match stood between the 20-year-old Polish sensation and tennis immortality.

"It was an emotional whirlwind," Swiatek admitted, reflecting on the tumultuous aftermath of Barty's retirement bombshell. "Tears flowed freely, and confusion gripped me tightly."

Yet, amidst the chaos, Swiatek found clarity. Fast forward to the present, and Monday marks a remarkable milestone: 100 weeks reigning as the undisputed queen of the Hologic WTA Tour.

A Century of Dominance

A century—100 weeks—is an epoch in the ever-evolving tapestry of tennis. Consider the rapid evolution of the Internet, barely scratching the surface of 50 years, yet profoundly shaping our daily lives. Similarly, in the realm of professional tennis, where careers flicker like shooting stars, 100 weeks represents an eternity.

"No doubt about it," chimed in the venerable Martina Navratilova, her voice laden with awe. "How many can boast such longevity at the summit of the sport?"

In an era defined by fleeting success and transient reigns, Swiatek's enduring dominance stands as a testament to her unwavering resolve and unparalleled skill. As she continues to etch her name in the annals of tennis history, Swiatek's reign shows no signs of waning, a beacon of inspiration for generations to come.

As the WTA Tour celebrates its 50th year of compiling rankings, only a select cadre of elite athletes have etched their names in the annals of tennis history, gracing the apex of the sport for 100 weeks or more. Joining this illustrious Hall of Fame is none other than Iga Swiatek, whose meteoric rise to tennis royalty culminates in this prestigious accolade.

Amongst the luminaries of the sport, Swiatek's name now resonates alongside the likes of Steffi Graf, Martina Navratilova, Serena Williams, Chris Evert, Martina Hingis, Monica Seles, Ashleigh Barty, and Justine Henin—a pantheon of greatness that epitomizes consistency, focus, and unwavering hunger for excellence.

"It signifies more than just fleeting success," remarks Chris Evert, herself a stalwart of the sport. "It embodies a relentless pursuit of greatness, an unyielding commitment to maintaining the highest standards over an extended period."

At a mere 22 years and 326 days, Swiatek joins an elite club as the fifth youngest player to achieve this remarkable feat. With four Grand Slam singles titles already adorning her illustrious career, she stands poised to add another crown to her collection at Roland Garros in June, where she is undoubtedly the favourite.

A Testament to Tenacity

Reflecting on her journey, Swiatek's ascent from the periphery of the rankings to tennis supremacy is nothing short of extraordinary. Commencing the 2022 season ranked No. 9, her trajectory seemed unassuming, with sporadic glimpses of brilliance punctuating her career.

Yet, a transformative period of four months saw Swiatek ascend to unprecedented heights, embarking on a relentless streak of flawless tennis that left the tennis world in awe. It commenced in Doha, where she vanquished a trifecta of Top 10 players en route to clinching the title—a harbinger of her impending dominance.

The Sunshine Double, a rare feat achieved with aplomb in Indian Wells and Miami, solidified her claim to the upper echelons of the sport. Victories over formidable opponents such as Aryna Sabalenka, Maria Sakkari, Petra Kvitova, and Naomi Osaka underscored her indomitable spirit and insatiable hunger for success.

Undeterred by the weight of expectations, Swiatek continued her triumphal march, securing titles in Stuttgart and Rome with consummate ease, extending her winning streak to an astonishing 28 matches.

As she basks in the glory of her achievements, Swiatek epitomizes the epitome of resilience, determination, and unyielding ambition—a beacon of inspiration for aspiring athletes the world over. Her journey serves as a testament to the power of perseverance and the boundless potential of human endeavor.



As Swiatek's dominance surged, her triumphs at Roland Garros served as a testament to her unparalleled prowess on the red clay. Over the course of her last four victories at the iconic French Open, she vanquished a quartet of future Top 10 luminaries—Gauff, Daria Kasatkina, Pegula, and Zheng Qinwen—a testament to her unwavering resolve and undeniable talent. With her second title in three years, Swiatek solidified her status as a force to be reckoned with on the grandest stage of them all.

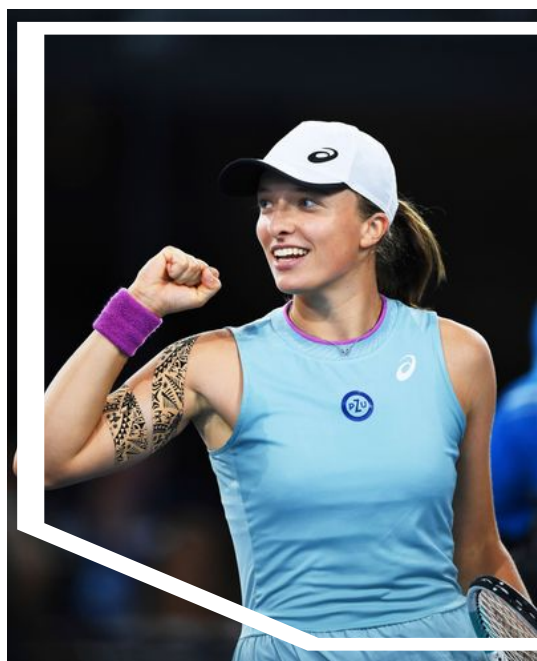
However, the transition to the grass courts of Wimbledon proved to be a formidable challenge for the Polish prodigy. Despite dispatching two qualifiers with ease, Swiatek's campaign came to an abrupt halt at the hands of Alize Cornet, signaling a rare setback in her otherwise illustrious journey.

Yet, throughout her remarkable run, Swiatek remained unfazed by the burden of expectation that accompanies the mantle of World No. 1. Instead, she thrived under the pressure, drawing inspiration from the lofty standards she had set for herself.

Her unprecedented streak of 37 consecutive match wins reverberated across the tennis world, a feat not witnessed since the era of Martina Hingis some 25 years earlier—a testament to her unparalleled dominance and unwavering commitment to excellence.

Amidst the relentless pursuit of success, Swiatek's journey was not without its challenges. The glare of the spotlight intensified, as every opponent sought to etch their name in the annals of tennis history by toppling the reigning queen. Yet, Swiatek's indomitable spirit and insatiable hunger for victory propelled her to new heights, culminating in a triumphant victory at the US Open and securing her rightful place as the year-end World No. 1.

As Martina Navratilova aptly remarked, the path to greatness is fraught with challenges, but Swiatek's unwavering determination and unyielding resolve serve as a beacon of inspiration for generations to come. In a sport where success is fleeting and rivals abound, Swiatek's reign at the summit is a testament to her enduring legacy and her continued commitment to excellence.





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In the Room

With Richard Parnell

What have you done today to further the art of stringing

This month's thoughts, in the room, are to do with the art of stringing and how we can all give back and help further the recognition of stringing as an integral part of tennis and any other racket sport.

As we all know, stringing is an all important part of racket sports and to not put a too fine point on it, without stringing, those sports cease to exist.

Stringing is also an integral part of any tournament, no matter how big or small, and although the stringers never get any recognition, they are an irreplaceable cog in the wheel.

What can we all do to gain recognition for stringing? Well, one massive step forward is to support GRSA in its quest to make stringing more mainstream. Most racket sport enthusiasts don't realise what goes on behind the scenes at all major tournaments. GRSA is fighting to show this backroom content, with plans for 2 Grand Slams to open their stringing service to us. Watch this space for more information.

By supporting the GRSA certification efforts, each and every stringer will have the opportunity to improve through study and by taking workshops with our experienced instructors. A two-day workshop can open a stringer's eyes to the possibilities that there are for improvement. The art of stringing is constantly evolving and any stringer that believes that he or she has mastered the art is on a slippery slope backwards. I have been stringing for over 50 years, with over 30 of those at ATP or WTA levels) and still manage to improve my skills through interaction with other stringers. By offering both presential and online courses, it has never been easier to improve with GRSA. Education is key.

I often see gaps in a stringer's knowledge even at the highest level, the GS Stringing room. This can happen because the stringer has an amazing technique, is quick and can stand for hours knocking out rackets, however, being a stringer also means knowing about strings and their interaction with the racket and the player, not to mention the customising side of being an expert. By not necessarily having taken certification exams, there are gaps that are only evident when a player needs specific advice, and the wrong information is passed on. Certification solves this problem.

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. Have you maintained your yearly membership and proudly present an up to date certificate? The only way change can be introduced is by all working together with the same aims and goals.

How can tournaments charge a brand for the right to be the official stringer of an event when they can't hold the event without a stringing service?

In a perfect world, the events should be paying the brands to give a professional service in accordance with the quality of the event they are putting on.

Having an association that is representing stringers and fighting for recognition of their craft can only be a positive influence in an industry that has been too long without a voice.

Be part of the change and get certified.

Please send any thoughts to: online@grsa-international.com

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FUN FACTS

I have always tried to be true to myself, to pick those battles I felt were important. My ultimate responsibility is to myself. I could never be anything else.

Arthur Ashe

1 **Badminton** made its Olympic debut at the 1992 games, and it was seen on television by over 1.1 billion people.

2 **Padel** is one of the fastest-growing sports in the world in terms of active participation. According to the governing body, the International Padel Federation (FIP), padel is now played by around 25 million people around the world, with the game enormously popular at a grassroots and professional level in countries such as Mexico, Argentina and Spain. FIP estimates that there are courts in more than 90 countries.

The game is more popular than tennis in Spain, with more than 20,000 courts in operation, while in countries like Sweden, Italy and the UK there has been a huge increase of people playing due to an expansion in courts being built.

3 **Racquetball** originated in the United States in the 1950s. It was created as a modification of several other racket sports, combining elements of squash, handball, and paddleball.

4 **Ping-Pong Diplomacy** was used by China and US in 1971 to develop diplomatic relations where friendship matches took place throughout the US between the two countries' national teams. It was one of the biggest news items at the time in the US with countless media features including the US team being featured on the cover of Time Magazine. Ping Pong Diplomacy in 1971 is the only time in the history of table-tennis where table-tennis became a mainstream media story. The US and Chinese national teams played friendship matches in sold-out arenas throughout the US. FTTA Head Coach Shashin Shodhan played one of the Chinese World Champions at Stanford University celebrating the 25th anniversary of Ping-Pong Diplomacy.

Stringer Solutions

with Richard Parnell

Cross string tension & its effects?

In **Stringer Solutions** we have often spoken about the fact that during the stringing process there are certain actions that are personal choices, where one isn't better than the other, just different. The choice of cross string tension is not one of these & it will have a real effect on the outcome & playability.

Let's look at one of the most misunderstood parts of stringing.

The choice of cross string tension, whether it should be lowered, raised, or kept the same and the reasons for each of these choices.

Here is what will be covered about cross string tension & its intricacies.

- Misconceptions
- Monofilaments
- Single Core, multifilament or natural gut
- Feel & increased power
- Spin pattern rackets
- Tension change for different constructions

Misconceptions

Let's tackle one of the biggest misconceptions straight away.

Cross strings should be strung with less tension because they are shorter.

This is the most common reason given for lowering cross string tension.

The fact that the cross strings are shorter, is true, and for this reason need less tension, is not true. The mains are tensioned at reference tension one by one, with the only friction involved, being the string going through the grommets. The crosses, however, are weaved through the mains with the subsequent friction, which lowers the actual tension considerably. Some measurements have shown there is a 40% decrease on the cross string actual tension due to this friction and for this reason the cross strings are already at a lot lower tension than the mains.

This lower actual tension is not dependent on string type, construction, or gauge, it is a fact of life and will happen with any string. Actual tension will always be lower than reference tension due to many factors including stringer technique.

**** Reference tension is the tension showing on the machine display.**

**** actual tension is the tension contained in the string bed once the stringing process is finished.**

Cross string tension can increase or decrease main string movement and depending on the string construction and type, this can be considered positive or negative movement.

What is positive or negative movement?

Positive movement – is string movement that has a beneficial effect on how a string bed reacts and helps add or increase a positive effect.

Negative movement – is string movement that doesn't add anything positive to a string bed and in fact, lowers performance.

Monofilaments

Firstly, let's look at monofilaments and string movement.

Monofilament main strings, through their movement which creates snap back and which in turn, leads to improved spin on the ball. This can be considered as positive movement because we have created additional spin through the snap back. If we change the tension on the cross strings we can increase or decrease the string movement. One of the best characteristics of monofilament strings is their spin enhancing qualities, if we lower the tension on the crosses we will, in effect allow the main strings to move more freely and increase snap back. If we raise the cross string tension we will be decreasing the snap back and lowering the spin potential.

The lowering or raising of the cross string tension would also affect, in a small way, the power of the string bed. By lowering the cross string tension we are allowing the mains to flex more, pocket the ball more and absorb less energy. By raising the cross string tension we would achieve the opposite.

Single Core, Multifilament or Natural Gut

Non-monofilament synthetic main strings, both single or multi core, through their natural movement, don't create snap back, and for this reason doesn't lead to improved spin on the ball & can definitely be considered as negative movement. We have string movement, but this only leads to loss of accuracy as the string is moved by the incoming ball. Another negative side of string movement with this type of string is having to constantly straighten the strings after each rally or shot. If we raise the tension slightly on the cross strings, we can decrease the string movement. This raising of cross string tension can mean that a player who is using a slightly more open string pattern, doesn't have to change racket.

By raising the tension, we will also reduce the power potential of the string bed as we will be allowing it to flex less. The lowering or raising of the tension is, usually, by not more than 1 or 2 Kgs (4 – 5 lbs).

Feel & Increased Power

When fine tuning the tension for a player, cross tension can help you arrive at the perfect fit. I have often had feedback from players that confirm that they like the “feel” of the string bed but could do with a little more power. By lowering the cross tension by 1 Kg you have the same “feel” but a little additional length on the shots.

Spin Pattern Rackets

With the introduction of rackets with the hyper open string patterns, also known as Spin frames, we have another reason to look at cross string tension. One of the main contributions that cross strings provide to a strung racket affects the shape of the frame. When the mains are installed, the racket head becomes slightly shorter and wider and once the cross strings are installed, this is reversed and the racket head returns to its original shape. If there are too few cross strings to make this happen, then extra tension has to be added to the crosses to “help” the racket head regain its normal shape. I have seen up to 5 Kgs added to the crosses to bring the head back into shape. This can be done by trial and error as you will “feel” whether the racket has regained its shape by how easily it comes out of the machine when all the crosses are installed.

Certain normal string pattern rackets have very flexible heads and if you lower the cross string tension, the racket head stays wider and can get stuck against the machine supports.

Tension change for different constructions?

I don't recommend changing tensions on the cross string just because you are using a hybrid made up of different string constructions. If we always consider a hybrid as the union of two different strings to create a unique feel then by changing tension because of one of the strings is not looking at the interaction between the two strings as one. Certain strings lose more tension than others, however, this doesn't mean that we should raise the tension on that string to make up for the tension loss, rather we should see how the strings interact as a unit taking that difference of tension maintenance as a feature of that unit. Certain monofilaments have massive initial tension loss, this doesn't mean that we should decrease the tension of the other string to counteract this feature.

I believe in starting any restring with the same tension on both mains and crosses, which gives me a certain feel and power. If I then want to accentuate something, whether it's power, string movement or any other characteristic then I will make adjustments accordingly.

Another stringer may use a lower tension on the crosses as standard and then adjust from there. Either way is correct and will depend on the stringer, however, whichever way you choose, you must be consistent.

Remember – The difference is in the small details

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

Martin Mann - GRSA WORKSHOP

GRSA customising workshop held on 7/4/2024 at P.R.S. HQ

Attendees: Dominik Baumann and Benjamin Müller .

Content: pallet changing / perfect identical gripping of a set of 3 rackets / base and overgrip

Theory and practical parts: how it does effect the racket and the players game

Final task of the day: customise a set of rackets to specs on spot

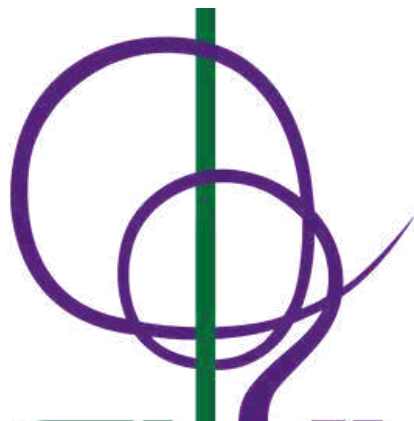
Benjamin Müller also passed his Certified Pro Master exam with flying colours





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NICOLAS IONESCO

GRSA workshop help at the **Tennis Giant Headquarters** in Montréal, Canada

3 attendees all passing and receiving their **Pro Master Stringer Certification:**

Jing Xiao

Alexandre Marcassa

Jason Nguyen

Practical/Written - **Passed**

Gripping/build up - **Passed**

Bumpers/grommets - **Passed**



Jason and Alex are aiming for the next level of certification and are hopeful to be part of the 2024 Montreal Open string team.



NEXT WORKSHOP IN MAY - CONTACT NICO FOR MORE INFORMATION
team.cn@grsa-international.com

TENNIS GIANT



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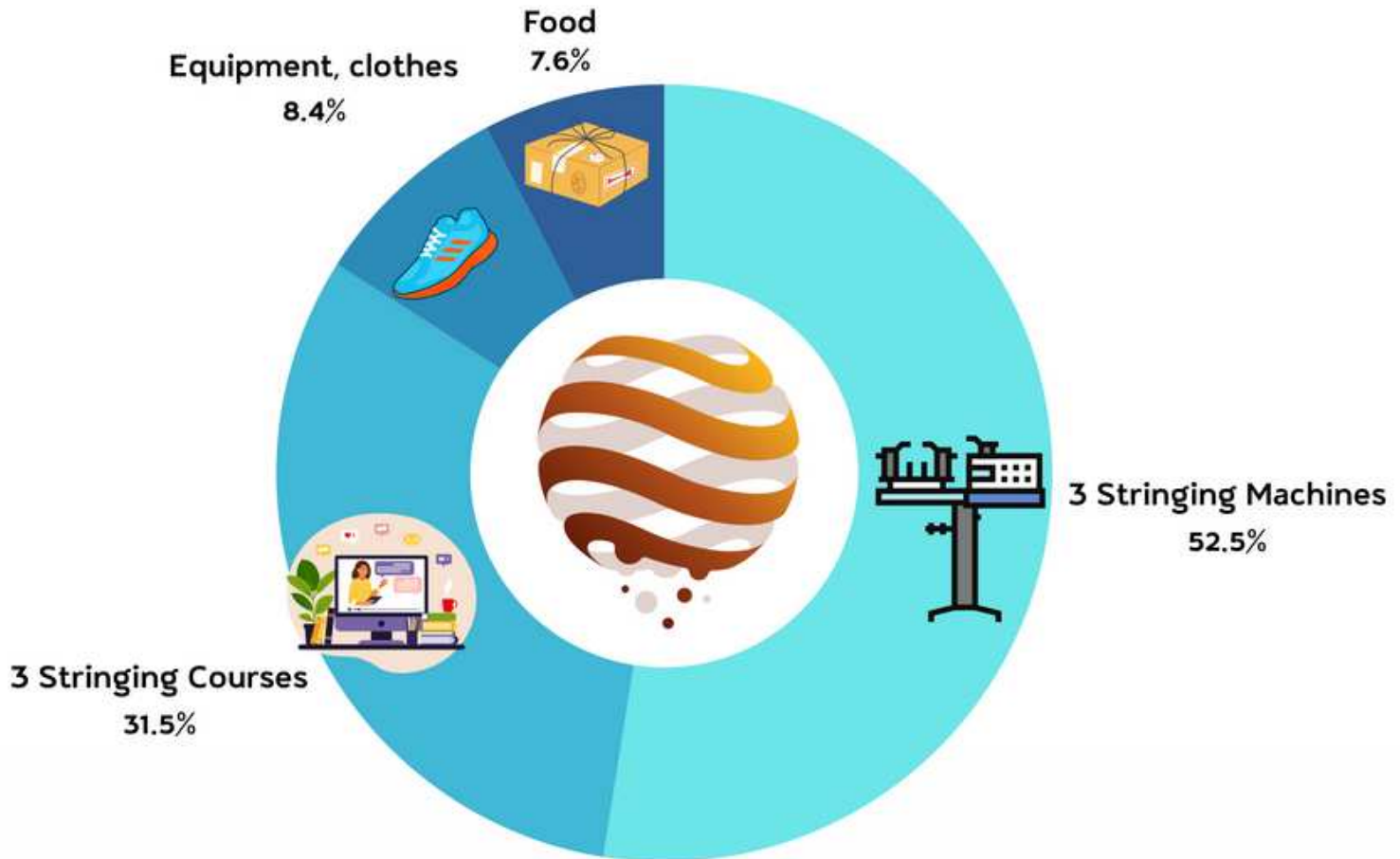
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NICK DOWN
Talks

Standard Closed-Throat Rackets

If not all brands, most, have their own version of a standard closed-throat racket. They make up about 25 per cent of squash rackets.

They have no bridge, usually longer main strings in the center and a shaft that only splits to form the head.

The number of knot holes varies between models. This means, that because they, more often than not, have 14 mains, they must be strung from the top down (crosses head to throat), using a suitable around the world (ATW) method if using 1 piece of string.

Some models have a different number of mains than 14 but they all start at the top. Sadly, they are usually strung up from the throat at the factories, regardless of brand. Even, what is thought by many to be a premium brand with premium string, as a selling point, still strung up from the throat; in my view, a complete waste of a good set of string!

My example, in the photographs is an Unsquashable Aero-Speed. My stringing instructions will use a 2 piece method with 4 knots, because this model has enough knot-holes as standard.

Around The World (ATW) 1 piece methods, with only 2 knots, may be the best option for some rackets. However, there are many examples of ATW methods and that is likely to, if it hasn't already, be written about as a separate subject. Many professional players currently use this type of racket.

Often Closed-Throat Rackets are incorrectly called Open-Throat Rackets. This mistake is made by many people in the industry. To me, it is a simple concept. I will also say that properly trained and qualified stringers will not make the same mistake.



Nick's Nugget

Starting clamps instead of starting knots mean that if you discover a mis-weave, you can deal with it, with the least impact on your finished string job.

The center main strings are usually longer than the standard open-throat rackets, and the longer strings travel over the area that would be the open area if there was a bridge. However, the throat is below the stringbed at the point where the throat end of the string reaches the throat area of the head.

In the case of open-throat rackets it's a bridge, in the case of closed throat rackets, it's the head. The best example of a closed-throat racket is the old wooden rackets with a single point of contact between the shaft and a smaller head. Of course the terminology didn't get used then, until, some brands produced the wooden version of Open-Throated Rackets, still with a small head, but a shaft that splits, has two points of contact with the head, a bridge and an open area at the throat. At the time, the advertising was all about "opening the throat". Some of those brands have forgotten and now some of their descriptions are wrong.

Instructions:- 2 piece

Start at H.

LH1 to LT1, RH1 to RT1, LT1 to LT2, LT2 to LH2, LH2 to LH3, LH3 to LT3, RT1 to RT2, RT2 to RH2, RH2 to RH3, RH3 to RT3, RT3 to RT4, RT4 to RH4, RH4 to RH5, RH5 to RT5, RT5 to RT7, RT7 to RH6, LT3 to LT4, LT4 to LH4, LH4 to LH5, LH5 to LT5, LT5 to LT7, LT7 to LH6, LH6 to LH8, LH8 to LT9, RH6 to RH8, RH8 to RT9, RT9 to RT6 and tie-off.
LT9 to LT6 and tie-off.

(Crosses)

Knot holes at LH5, RT4

Or RH5, LT4.

18 Cross Strings

1st; either LH7 or RH7

Last; either RT6 or LT6.



NEXT MONTH:- Dunlop Custom Rackets with interchangeable handles.

Renowned Indian squash ace, Saurav Ghosal, has declared his immediate departure from the professional squash circuit, marking the end of an illustrious career that has left an indelible mark on the sport.

Hailing from Kolkata, Ghosal etched his name in the annals of Indian squash history as the sole Indian male to break into the world's top 10, achieving this remarkable feat back in April 2019 and maintaining his lofty position for a commendable six-month stint.



Since his debut on the Professional Squash Association (PSA) scene in 2003, Ghosal has captured the imagination of fans worldwide, clinching an impressive tally of 10 PSA titles and reaching an impressive 18 finals. The 37-year-old maestro notched up an impressive 281 victories out of 511 matches on the PSA Tour.

Ghosal's swansong in the PSA realm came at the 2024 Windy City Open, where he bowed out gracefully in the last 64 to USA's Timothy Brownell.

Beyond the confines of the PSA Tour, Ghosal orchestrated historic triumphs for India, steering his nation to gold medals in the team events at the 2014 and 2022 Asian Games editions. Additionally, he secured two silver medals in the singles event and struck gold alongside compatriot Dipika Pallikal Karthik in the mixed event at the 2022 WSF World Doubles Squash Championships.

Ghosal's achievements on the international stage extend to the Commonwealth Games, where he clinched silver in the mixed doubles event in 2018 and bronze in both mixed doubles and singles events in 2022, etching his name as the first Indian male to medal in squash singles at the Commonwealth Games.

The Kolkata-born star boasts an unparalleled record of 13 Indian Nationals titles, with his most recent triumph coming in 2020.

Reflecting on his storied journey, Ghosal expressed heartfelt gratitude to his support system, mentors, coaches, sponsors, and devoted fans who have propelled him to greatness. He also pledged to give back to the sport by nurturing budding talent across India and potentially organizing prestigious PSA events in the future.

SCO



EGY

Scotland's Alison Thomson clinched a nail-biting victory over local favourite Tessa ter Sluis in a riveting five-game showdown to seize the BRESS Breda Open title, while Egypt's Yassin Elshafei emerged triumphant in the men's division.

The Dutch No.3 seed, ter Sluis, had powered past the formidable American wildcard Laila Sedky in the semifinals and aimed for her maiden Challenger Tour championship. However, standing in her path was reigning Scottish national champion Thomson, the No.2 seed, who had conceded only one game en route to the final.

Both players boast career-high rankings within the top 70 globally, and they engaged in an intense battle for nearly an hour with the coveted trophy on the line. Thomson secured a one-game lead twice, clinching the first and third games, but ter Sluis rallied back twice, forcing a decider by claiming the fourth game 11-7 after trailing 5-3. Despite holding a 7-6 lead in the fifth game, ter Sluis couldn't seal the deal as Thomson rallied to reel off five of the next six points, clinching victory.

In the ensuing all-Egyptian final, top seed Elshafei squared off against No.3 seed Mohamed Nasser. While Elshafei had cruised to a comfortable 3-0 win in their sole prior encounter on the PSA Tour at last year's Hyder Trophy, he faced a tougher challenge this time, needing four games and 55 minutes to secure the win.

Elshafei's triumph marks his first title of the season and his sixth overall in his PSA career.

Match Results:

Alison Thomson (SCO) def. Tessa ter Sluis (NED)
3-2: 11-6, 3-11, 11-9, 7-11, 11-8 (Duration: 50 minutes)

Yassin Elshafei (EGY) def. Mohamed Nasser (EGY)
3-1: 11-8, 11-8, 6-11, 11-9 (Duration: 55 minutes)



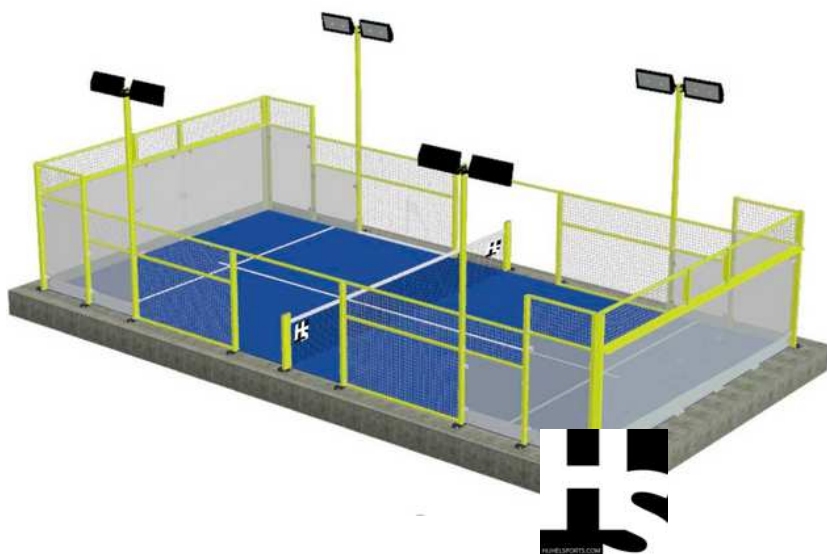
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Coello and Tapia, the dynamic Spanish-Argentinian partnership, staged a remarkable comeback to claim the title in the inaugural Premier Padel tournament in Puerto Cabello, Venezuela.

Despite a lengthy interruption due to rain, the grand final of Premier Padel in Puerto Cabello proceeded, with Coello and Tapia showcasing their resilience.

After dropping the first set 2-6, Coello and Tapia rallied to secure victory by clinching the next two sets with scores of 6-3 and 6-4, capturing their third title of the year.

In a notable development, Ale Galán bid farewell to his former partner Juan Lebrón, opting to forge a new alliance. Galán teamed up with the promising Chingotto, only to be defeated by the world's number one duo in the final.



Agustín Tapia has kicked off the season in spectacular fashion alongside his partner Arturo Coello, securing victory in three out of four Premier Padel competitions and reaffirming their dominance in the padel sphere.

In a significant development, Tapia has opted to extend his contract with the renowned racket brand NOX. The new agreement is set to remain in effect until 2028, solidifying the longstanding partnership between the Argentinian player and the brand.

In a press release, NOX expressed their delight at the contract extension, stating, "We are thrilled to announce the continuation of our partnership with Agustín Tapia until 2028. This renewal further cements the successful collaboration between the player and our brand."

Tapia himself expressed gratitude towards NOX, emphasizing the brand's unwavering support throughout his journey in the padel world. "NOX has always been by my side, like a family, offering support during both the highs and lows of my career. I am immensely grateful to the brand and to Jesús Ballvé," Tapia remarked.

With optimism for the future, Tapia voiced his confidence in achieving further success, both on the court and in contributing to the growth and development of the NOX brand. "I am convinced that many triumphs lie ahead for us, and I am fully committed to elevating NOX to the pinnacle of the padel world," he affirmed.



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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**The Longest Day Pickleball Fundraiser****EID:** 1481 **PRICE** USD 50**Organizer:** Martin Herman**EVENT - TOURNAMENT****Starting:** June 01, 2024 to June 02, 2024**City:** Tupelo, MS, USA**Home Club:** Tupelo Area Pickleball**Registration Deadline:** May 29, 2024 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 1**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**

The Journey Continues

Pickleball, the fastest-growing sport in America, is now poised to become the country's most sought-after export, marking the dawn of a new era. Pickleball Kingdom, renowned as the nation's premier and largest indoor pickleball facility provider, has achieved a significant milestone by becoming the world's inaugural international indoor pickleball franchise company.

In a groundbreaking move, Pickleball Kingdom has forged a partnership with Franchise India Group, a prominent leader in introducing US brands to the Middle East market. Under this collaboration, Pickleball Kingdoms will initially debut in Dubai, India, and Abu Dhabi, with plans to expand throughout the UAE in the near future.

Ace Rodrigues, Founder and CEO of Pickleball Kingdom, expressed his elation, stating, "This is a realization of a longstanding dream. Global expansion has been part of our vision since day one, and now it's materializing. Currently, we have over 140 locations queued up across the United States. With this partnership, we anticipate nearly doubling that figure almost instantly. And this is just the beginning."

Gaurav Marya, Chairman of Franchise India Group, shared his excitement about the collaboration, remarking, "Pickleball is capturing the world's attention, and Pickleball Kingdom is at the forefront of this movement. We are thrilled to join forces with them and spearhead this international expansion."

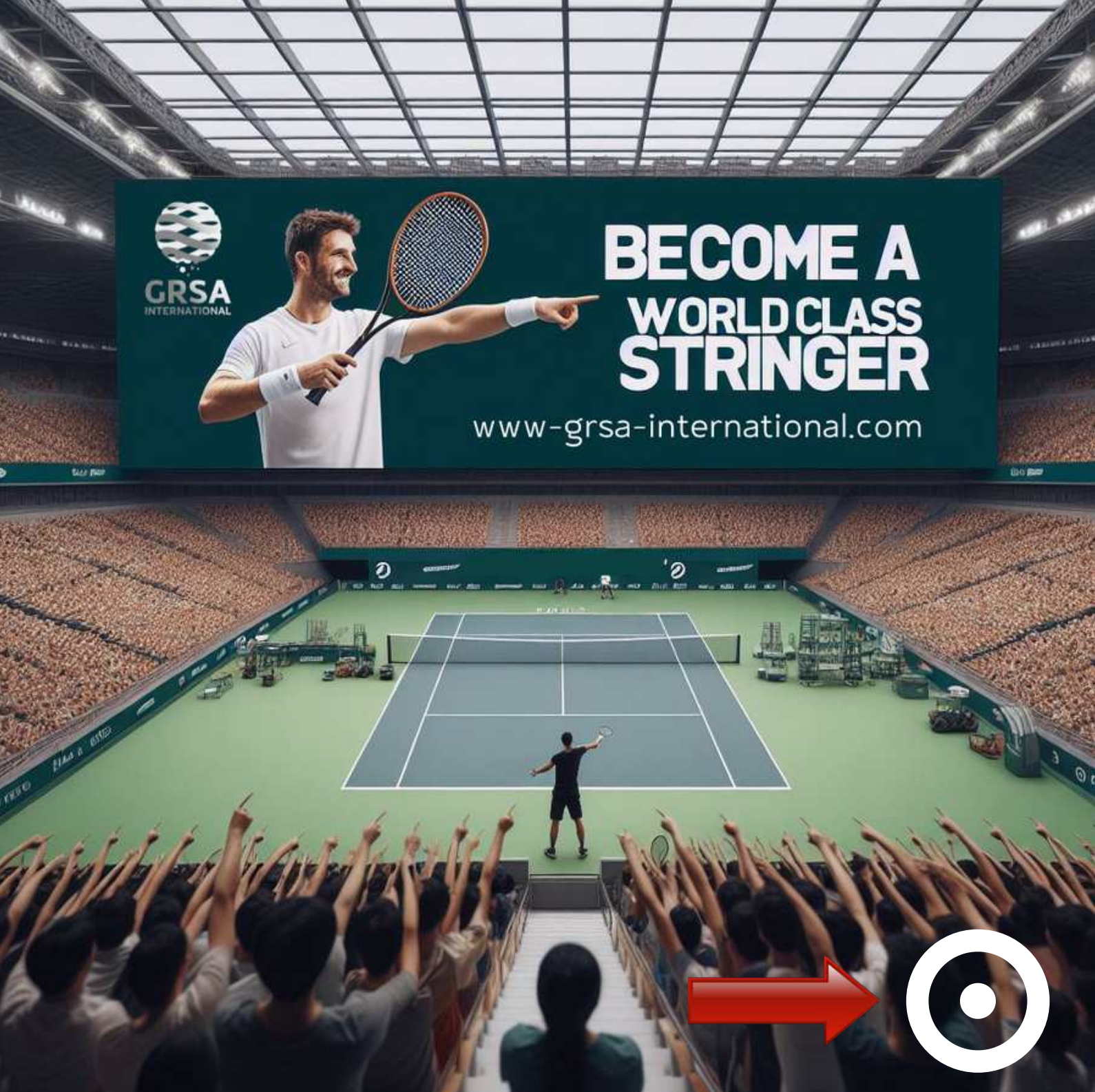
Franchise India Group is now inviting applications from interested individuals to participate as franchisees in this global endeavor. Venus Barak, CEO of FranGlobal, emphasized the importance of partnering with experienced business professionals who recognize the significance of being early market entrants. Each territory slated for expansion will have carefully selected stakeholders to ensure successful growth.

Pickleball has witnessed an astonishing growth rate of over 224% in the last three years, resulting in an estimated 36.5 million pickleball enthusiasts in the United States alone. Surprisingly, 45% of them express intentions to increase their pickleball involvement over the next year, according to YouGov. The primary complaint across the board remains the scarcity of courts to accommodate the escalating demand.

Rob Streett, COO of Pickleball Kingdom, highlighted the strategic significance of the partnership with Franchise India Group, citing it as a means to rapidly amplify the brand's presence and impact in the Middle East. He affirmed that the expansion plan is being executed with precision and purpose, with the current phase marking just the beginning.

CEO Ace Rodrigues concluded with a resolute declaration, stating, "The time for global expansion has arrived. We are poised to make our mark on the international stage. Within five years, we aim to establish our presence in every country worldwide. One of our core values asserts that 'Pickleball is beneficial for physical, social, and spiritual well-being.' I eagerly anticipate hearing 'Welcome to the Kingdom!' uttered in every language across the globe. Teammates, brace yourselves, for the Kingdom is on the horizon!"





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Who is Thaddea Lock?

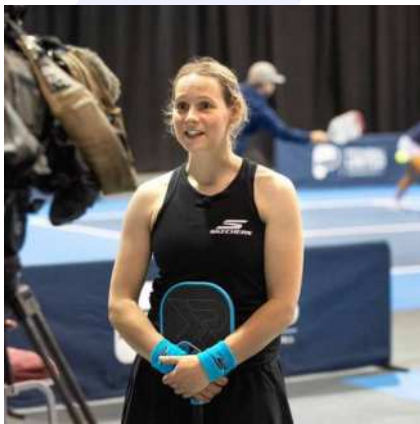
Thaddea Lock embarked on her pickleball journey in October 2018 during a visit to friends in Kansas, USA. Introduced to the sport by her friend "Lucy," Thaddea joined in the fun with a local mum's group and immediately caught the pickleball bug.

Upon returning home to London, she was determined to continue playing and sought out local clubs. Despite her limited experience, Thaddea reached out to a nearby club and expressed her eagerness to dive deeper into pickleball.

When asked about her skill level, Thaddea found herself navigating unfamiliar territory with terms like "5.0 level." Seeking guidance from her friend Lucy, she was advised to claim a 5.0 level, unaware of its significance at the time.

Surprising both herself and the London club, Thaddea's claimed skill level raised eyebrows, with jests about her potentially being the top female player in the UK. She quickly clarified her novice status, having only played a handful of times.

The revelation of Lucy Kovalova's identity, the reigning number-one female player globally at the time, added an unexpected twist to Thaddea's introduction to the sport.



In May 2019, Thaddea made her tournament debut at the Scottish Open and swept the women's singles, women's doubles, and mixed doubles titles. She continued her winning streak at the English Open the following month, securing the same three titles.

Thaddea attributes her early success to her tennis background, emphasizing the importance of finesse over power in pickleball. She stresses the significance of soft drop shots, or "dinks," in setting up winning opportunities.

The 2023 English Open marked a pivotal moment for Thaddea and the UK pickleball scene, showcasing the sport's growth with its largest indoor tournament outside North America. Her partnership with Skechers underscored her rising profile in the sport.

Despite her demanding job at Wimbledon, Thaddea approached the tournament with a relaxed mindset, leading to unexpectedly strong performances against top international players. Her experience highlighted the vibrant pickleball community in the UK and Europe.

In her spare time, Thaddea coaches pickleball, aiming to nurture the sport's popularity and competitiveness in the UK. She envisions a future with more dedicated pickleball facilities to accommodate the growing demand for the sport.

Thaddea's ambition is clear: to elevate pickleball in the UK, both in terms of participation and competitive standards, aspiring to compete with the best players in America.

CAROLINA MARIN MAKES IT 7 TITLES IN A ROW AT THE 2024 EUROPEAN BADMINTON CHAMPIONSHIPS

Carolina Marin continues to assert her dominance in European badminton.

The Spanish powerhouse secured her seventh consecutive continental title at the 2024 European Championships held in Saarbruecken, Germany. In a thrilling women's singles final, Marin faced off against perennial Scottish rival Kirsty Gilmour, emerging victorious with scores of 21-11, 21-18. This marked the fourth encounter between the two in the European Championships final, with Marin prevailing once again.

Marin's remarkable seventh consecutive triumph caps off a decade-long reign, complementing her previous titles from 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2021, and 2022.

Throughout the match, the 30-year-old Marin displayed her prowess, particularly evident in her commanding performance in the first game, which she claimed 21-11. Despite Gilmour's resilience, Marin maintained a narrow lead throughout the second game.

Gilmour mounted a comeback, narrowing the gap to one point at 14-13 before leveling the scores. However, unforced errors proved costly for Gilmour, allowing Marin to secure yet another victory. This triumph adds to Marin's successful streak this season, following her wins at the All England Open and the Swiss Open.



In other badminton news...

Danish badminton star Anders Antonsen showcased his prowess ahead of the upcoming Thomas Cup Finals in Chengdu, claiming gold at the European Championships in a spectacular fashion.

Ranked fourth globally, Antonsen delivered a commanding performance against French competitor Toma Popov, securing victory with scores of 21-18, 21-13 in the final held in Saarbrücken, Germany.

This triumph held particular significance for Antonsen as it avenged his compatriot Viktor Axelsen's unexpected defeat to Popov in the semifinals the day prior.

For Antonsen, this victory marked his second European Championships gold, following his previous win in 2021. Additionally, it added to his impressive tally of three individual titles this year, including victories at the Malaysian Open and Indonesian Masters in January.

Expressing his satisfaction with his performance, Antonsen described the win as a "big relief" and emphasized the importance of maintaining his good form throughout the year.

The success extended beyond Antonsen as Danish veterans Kim Astrup and Anders Skaarup Rasmussen clinched the men's doubles title, defeating their younger teammates in the final.

Looking ahead to the Thomas Cup, Denmark boasts a formidable team, featuring Antonsen, Axelsen, Astrup, Rasmussen, Rasmus Gemke, Magnus Johannesen, Rasmus Kjaer, Frederik Sogaard, Daniel Lundgaard, and Mads Vestergaard.

In the European Championships, Denmark narrowly missed out on claiming a third title, with their mixed doubles pair suffering defeat in the final.

Meanwhile, in the women's singles, Carolina Marin of Spain continued her dominance, securing her seventh consecutive European crown with a commanding victory over Scotland's Kirsty Gilmour.

The tournament also saw French duo Margot Lambert and Anne Tran emerge victorious in the women's doubles final.



THOMAS CUP TITLE DROUGHT

Datuk Rashid Sidek, a revered figure in Malaysian badminton, never imagined that the country would face such a prolonged Thomas Cup drought.

As a member of the national squad that clinched the Thomas Cup in 1992, Rashid expressed his disappointment at Malaysia's inability to reclaim the prestigious title. Despite badminton's popularity and the abundance of talented shuttlers, Malaysia has struggled to bring home the coveted Cup.

Reflecting on the glory of lifting the Thomas Cup, Rashid emphasized its profound impact on Malaysia. He recalled how the nation was swept with enthusiasm for badminton, with people of all ages eager to play the sport. Rashid hopes that Malaysia can once again secure the Thomas Cup, recognizing the positive influence it has on the country.

Rashid reminisced about the pivotal role played by the Sidek brothers, Razif and Jalani, in Malaysia's victory in 1992. Together, they defeated Indonesia in the final, securing Malaysia's fifth Thomas Cup triumph.

However, since 1992, Malaysia has faced disappointment, finishing as runners-up on four occasions. Rashid acknowledged the challenges ahead for Malaysia in the 2024 Thomas Cup Finals, recognizing the need for a balanced squad comprising strong singles players and doubles pairs.

While Denmark and Indonesia are considered favorites for the title, Rashid highlighted the potential for surprises, citing India's unexpected victory in the 2022 edition.

Looking ahead to Malaysia's campaign in the 2024 Thomas Cup, Rashid emphasized the importance of a well-rounded team, featuring players like Lee Zii Jia and former world men's doubles champions Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik.

Despite the tough competition, Rashid remains hopeful for Malaysia's success, but acknowledges the formidable task ahead.



KENTO MAMOTA BIDS FAREWELL



Two-time world champion Kento Momota announced his retirement from international badminton in April, bidding farewell to the sport at the age of 29. His decision comes in the wake of a life-altering car accident four years ago, which left an indelible mark on his career trajectory.

Once hailed as badminton's undisputed king, Momota's reign saw him clinch an impressive 11 titles in 2019, a testament to his unparalleled skill and dominance on the court. However, tragedy struck in January 2020 when a fateful car crash marred his triumphant victory at the Malaysia Masters, casting a shadow over his illustrious career.

Despite valiant efforts to reclaim his former glory, Momota grappled with the lingering effects of the accident, including double vision, which hampered his performance on the court. Though he managed to secure two more titles, the relentless pursuit of excellence proved to be an uphill battle.

In a heartfelt address to the press in Tokyo, Momota reflected on the tumultuous journey that led to his decision to retire from international competition. "There were a lot of tough times after that traffic accident," he conceded, acknowledging the arduous path he traversed in his quest for redemption.

Despite the challenges he faced, Momota expressed gratitude for the unwavering support of those around him, emphasizing his desire to promote badminton in Japan and inspire future generations of athletes.

While his dreams of competing at the Paris Olympics may have been dashed, Momota remains steadfast in his commitment to his country and his sport. He urged his Japan team-mates to learn from his experiences and approach the Olympic stage with unwavering determination and focus.

As Momota bids farewell to the international stage, his legacy as one of badminton's greatest champions endures, a testament to his resilience, perseverance, and exemplary spirit in the face of adversity.

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