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Sabalenka Clinches Third Madrid Crown as Breakout Stars Shine

Aryna Sabalenka continued her love affair with the Spanish capital by capturing a third Mutua Madrid Open title, cementing her dominance at the WTA 1000 event and tightening her grip on the World No. 1 spot.

The Belarusian has now triumphed in Madrid in three of the past five years—2021, 2023 and 2025—preserving her curious streak of winning the event in every odd-numbered year this decade. With this latest victory, she draws level with Petra Kvitová for the most titles at the Madrid tournament.

“This year was just incredible,” said Sabalenka. “Every time I stepped on court, I felt the support from the crowd. It gave me that extra energy and power to fight through everything. Seeing all those posters, especially from the kids, it felt like a dream.”

Stats to Savour

Sabalenka’s red-hot form shows no signs of cooling. She became only the second woman to win both Miami and Madrid in the same season—Serena Williams being the first to achieve the feat in 2013.

With 31 tour-level victories this year, Sabalenka leads the WTA in match wins, pulling clear of Jessica Pegula, who arrived in Madrid as the pace-setter with 27. Remarkably, Sabalenka also saved 40 break points during her title run—the highest tally in a single WTA 1000 event since Maria Sakkari saved 42 in Guadalajara in 2022.



Rising Stars and Notable Performers

Coco Gauff impressed on her way to a first WTA 1000 final on clay, dispatching defending champion Iga Swiatek with a stunning 6-1, 6-1 victory. She joins an elite group of Americans to reach such heights on clay, alongside Serena Williams, Madison Keys and Pegula.



Moyuka Uchijima emerged as the tournament's breakout star. Ranked No. 56, the Japanese player surged into the quarter-finals with her first Top 25 wins, including a statement upset of Pegula. Her performance in Madrid follows another deep run in Rouen, signalling a sharp upward trajectory.

Elina Svitolina extended her unbeaten run on clay to nine matches before bowing out to Sabalenka in the semis, while Marta Kostyuk also pushed the eventual champion to two tight tiebreak sets in the quarters.

Doubles Delight and Comeback Queens

In the doubles, Sorana Cirstea and Anna Kalinskaya proved a formidable pairing, taking down the top seeds in the opening round and ultimately lifting the trophy in a nail-biting final.

Meanwhile, Naomi Osaka celebrated her first title since 2021 by winning the WTA 125 event in Saint Malo as a wild card, marking an encouraging step in her comeback. Hungarian Dalma Galfi also maintained her perfect run on the ITF circuit, securing her second straight WTA 125 title in Vic to extend her winning streak to 10 matches.

RED CLAY AND REVERIE:

The Rich History of Roland Garros

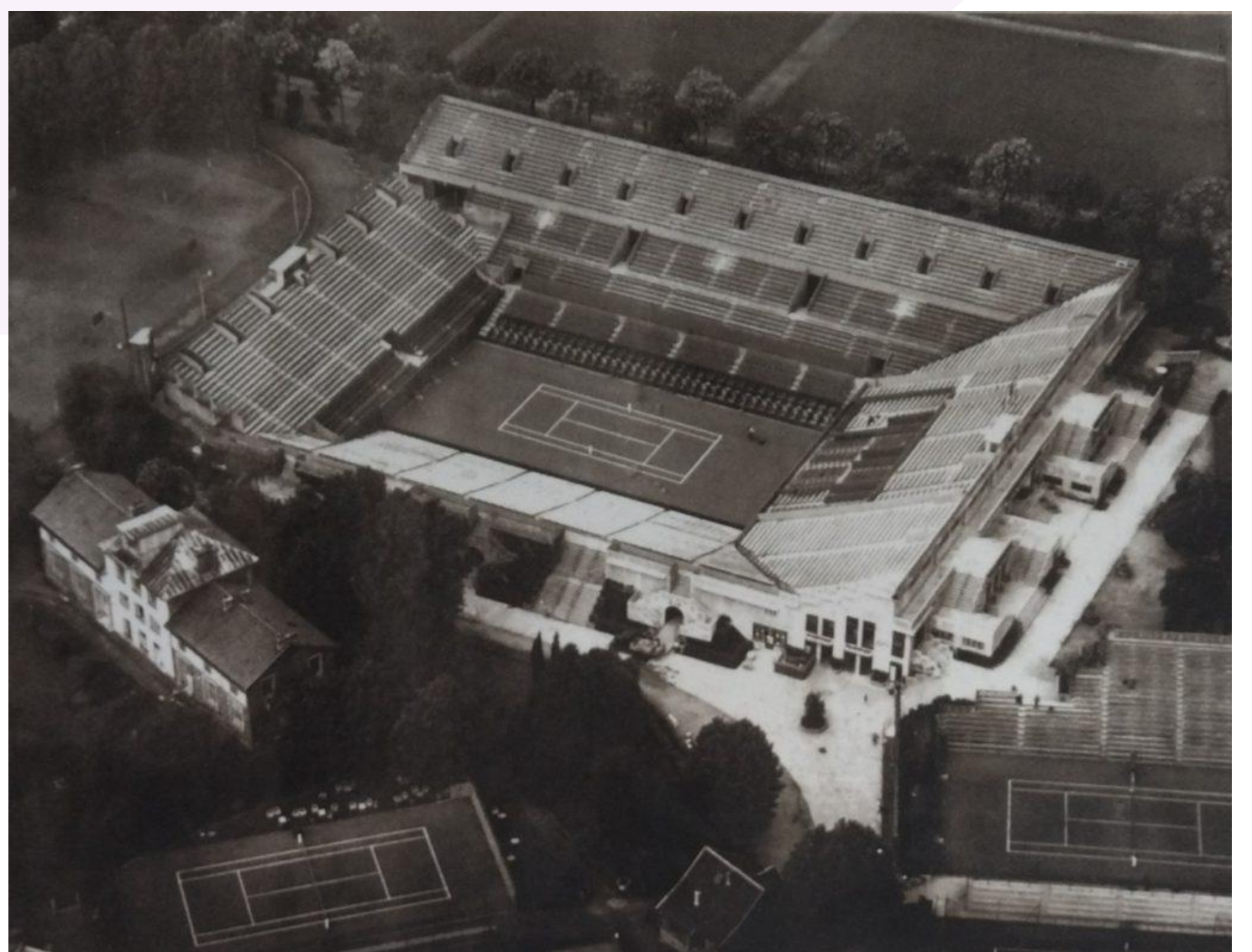


There is something singularly evocative about Roland Garros. The rust-red clay, the grit of long rallies, the piercing cries of effort from players stretching to their limits — all set within the leafy elegance of Paris's 16th arrondissement. Roland Garros is not just one of the four Grand Slams; it is a crucible of endurance and artistry, the stage where legends are made and reputations are weathered under the Parisian sky.

A Foundation of Clay and Character

The tournament that we now know as Roland Garros began life in 1891 as the *Championnat de France*, and was initially open only to players who were members of French clubs. It wasn't until 1925 that it became an international championship, opening its doors to the world and earning a place among the game's most prestigious events.

In 1928, the tournament moved to its current home a stadium complex built specifically for France's victorious Davis Cup team of the 1920s, spearheaded by the famed 'Four Musketeers': Jean Borotra, Jacques Brugnon, Henri Cochet, and René Lacoste. The facility was named after Roland Garros, a pioneering aviator and World War I hero, symbolising courage and innovation values the tournament has long upheld.



Surface of Struggle and Style

Roland Garros is the only Grand Slam played on clay, a surface that tests patience, technique, and physical resilience. Unlike the fast-paced grass of Wimbledon or the hard courts of the US and Australian Opens, clay slows down the ball and elongates rallies. It favours baseline play, top-spin heavy shots, and tactical nous. Over the decades, this distinctive surface has crowned champions who master not just power but guile and tenacity.

Golden Eras and Legendary Rivalries

The history of Roland Garros is studded with names that echo through tennis lore. In the post-war era, Björn Borg dominated with icy poise, winning six titles between 1974 and 1981. His effortless movement and heavy topspin heralded a new approach to clay court play, inspiring generations to follow.

The 1980s and '90s brought charismatic champions like Ivan Lendl, Gustavo Kuerten, and Jim Courier, each adding their own flair to the Parisian courts. For the women, Chris Evert's mastery of the red dirt — with seven Roland Garros titles — remains a benchmark, while Steffi Graf dazzled with a game as versatile as it was dominant.

One of the most storied matches came in 1984, when a 25-year-old John McEnroe, undefeated that year, met Ivan Lendl in the final. McEnroe took a two-set lead with his customary flair and net play, only to see Lendl claw back with relentless defence and mental resolve, eventually winning his first Grand Slam in five sets. It was a symbolic shift in the sport's momentum and a testament to the unforgiving nature of Roland Garros.



The Modern Era: Nadal's Reign and the Rise of New Champions

The Age of Nadal: A Reign Unmatched

If Roland Garros were a kingdom, Rafael Nadal would be its undisputed monarch. His record 14 titles from 2005 to 2022 is a feat of almost mythical proportions, never before seen at a single Grand Slam and unlikely to be replicated. His dominance on clay is not just statistical but spiritual; no player has matched his blend of explosive topspin, court coverage, and psychological fortitude under pressure in Paris.

From his first title as a teenager in 2005, when he defeated Mariano Puerta in the final, to his masterclass over Novak Djokovic in the 2020 final during a pandemic-affected autumn edition, Nadal's career at Roland Garros has been a near-constant narrative of resilience and supremacy. His epic 2013 semi-final against Djokovic a 9–7 fifth-set thriller is often cited as one of the greatest matches ever played on clay.

Nadal's career win-loss record at Roland Garros stands at 112–3 as of 2024, a testament to his unparalleled consistency and dominance on the Parisian clay.

The Modern Women's Renaissance

On the women's side, recent years have witnessed a generational shift. Poland's Iga Świątek emerged in 2020 with a breathtaking, unseeded run to the title, sweeping aside her opponents with power, intelligence and a calm far beyond her years. That year, she did not drop a single set a feat repeated by only a select few.

Roland Garros has also seen recent triumphs by players like Barbora Krejčíková, who won both the singles and doubles in 2021 — evoking memories of Martina Navratilova's all-court excellence — and Simona Halep, whose 2018 victory marked a redemptive peak after years of near-misses.



Clashes that Defined Eras

The Parisian clay has staged battles that became instant classics each telling a story of transformation, rivalry, or redemption. Consider the 2009 final, where Roger Federer, long haunted by Nadal in Paris, finally claimed the Coupe des Mousquetaires after the Spaniard's shock loss to Robin Söderling. The tears, the emotion, the symmetry of Federer finally completing the career Grand Slam it was a moment of rare poetic justice.





More Than a Tournament

Roland Garros is not just about results. It is about the atmosphere of Philippe-Chatrier, the tension of a rain-interrupted quarter-final, the roars from the French faithful on Suzanne-Lenglen, the heartbreaks and comebacks, the artistry and attrition. It's the only Slam where you'll see a drop shot met with a knowing murmur from the crowd, a subtle nod to tennis as an aesthetic as much as a sport.

As each May turns to June, Roland Garros stands as a reminder of tennis's most enduring values: grace under pressure, defiance in difficulty, and the relentless pursuit of excellence.



Roland Garros Bids Emotional Farewell to the ‘King of Clay’

Rafael Nadal was given a hero’s send-off at Roland Garros as the French Open honoured its greatest ever champion in a moving tribute on Court Philippe Chatrier.

The 38-year-old Spaniard, who officially retired in November 2024, was celebrated in front of a packed stadium, where fans in coordinated T-shirts formed a message across the stands: “14 RG, Rafa” — a nod to his record-breaking haul of 14 French Open titles.

Nadal, whose love affair with Parisian clay began in 2005, leaves behind a staggering legacy: 112 match wins and just four defeats at Roland Garros. His final competitive appearance came in the 2024 tournament, where he fell in the opening round to Alexander Zverev.

“It’s hard to put into words... I’ve played on this court for 20 years. I’ve experienced pain, victory, and defeat. So many emotions,” Nadal told the crowd, visibly moved after watching a montage of his greatest Roland Garros moments.



Among those in the stands were his family, close friends, and members of his former coaching team — including his uncle and long-time mentor Toni Nadal.

“This court is without a doubt the most important one of my career,” Nadal said to huge applause. “My story here began in 2004 when I could barely walk due to a foot injury. I climbed to the top of the stadium, looked down and dreamt of playing here.”

That dream was realised the following year when, aged just 19, he won his first French Open title, beating Mariano Puerta in the final.

Adding to the poignancy of the occasion, Nadal’s fiercest rivals, Novak Djokovic, Roger Federer, and Andy Murray — walked out to join the tribute, greeted by a thunderous ovation.



“All those years competing fiercely... It’s incredible how time changes things,” Nadal said, addressing the trio. “There was always pressure and tension between us, but it was respectful. We pushed one another to the limit and it helped us grow. It means the world to me that you are all here.”



Although Nadal concluded his professional career at the 2024 Davis Cup Finals in Málaga, the absence of a farewell in Paris had left a void. French Tennis Federation president Gilles Moretton revealed he and tournament director Amélie Mauresmo had visited Nadal in December to plan a celebration befitting his unmatched achievements.



As a final gesture, Nadal was presented with a commemorative trophy bearing his footprint set in clay, a lasting symbol of his extraordinary imprint on the tournament.



With 14 titles at a single Grand Slam, Nadal’s Roland Garros legacy eclipses even Margaret Court’s 11 at the Australian Open. His place in the sport’s pantheon isn’t merely secure, it’s untouchable.

Paolini Makes History with Rome Double as Italian Tennis Shines

Jasmine Paolini etched her name into Italian tennis history with a rare and remarkable double triumph at the Italian Open, becoming the first woman since Monica Seles in 1990 to lift both the singles and doubles titles in Rome.

Teaming up with veteran Sara Errani, Paolini capped a stunning week by defeating Veronika Kudermetova and Elise Mertens 6-4, 7-5 in the doubles final. The Italian pair, who famously secured Italy's first Olympic gold medal in tennis last year in Paris, rallied from 0-4 down in both sets to defend their title in dramatic fashion on home soil.

Their success followed Paolini's milestone singles victory the previous day, when she dispatched former US Open champion Coco Gauff in straight sets to become the first Italian woman to win the Rome singles crown since Raffaella Reggi in 1985.

"I've dreamed of this moment since I was a child," Paolini said, after sealing match point with a forehand winner on a sun-drenched Centre Court. "To do it here, in front of the Italian crowd, is unforgettable."

Only two women have ever completed the singles and doubles double at a WTA 1000 event Paolini now joins Vera Zvonareva, who achieved the feat at Indian Wells in 2009.

With Jannik Sinner due to face Carlos Alcaraz in the men's final, Italian hopes were high for a clean sweep at the Foro Italico — a potential trio of titles that would underline the nation's blossoming stature in world tennis.



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USTA Unveils \$800 Million Modernisation Plan for US Open Site



The USTA has announced a landmark \$800 million overhaul of the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, promising a “top-to-bottom” transformation of the iconic Arthur Ashe Stadium alongside the creation of a cutting-edge player performance centre.

Set for completion by the 2027 US Open, the sweeping renovations will be carried out in phases to ensure the tournament remains unaffected in the interim years. According to the USTA, the project will be entirely self-funded, marking the largest single investment in the history of the US Open.

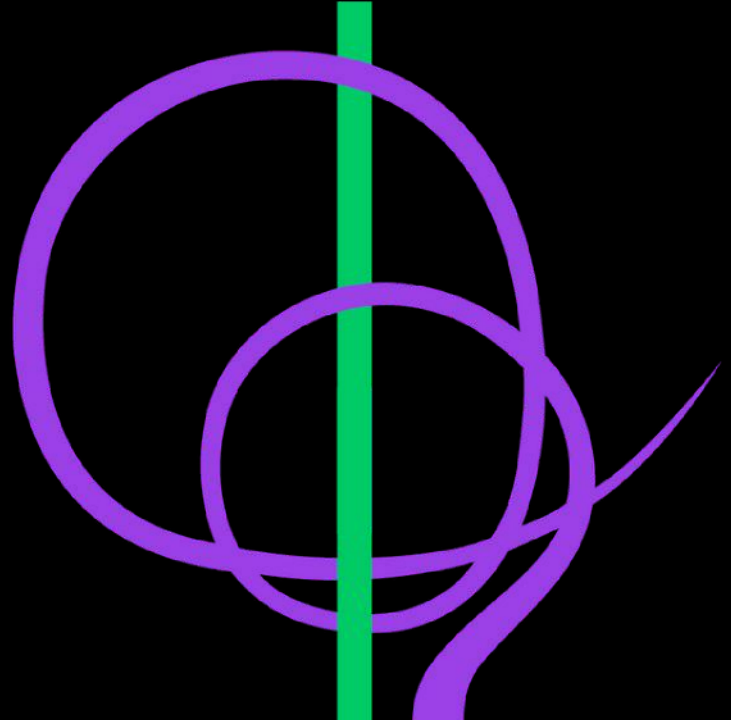
“This project enables us to maintain the greatest stage in tennis – Arthur Ashe Stadium – and modernise it for the next 25 years,” said USTA CEO and Executive Director Lew Sherr. “It also provides us the opportunity to give the players that compete in that stadium an unparalleled space to perform at their best, with a higher level of luxury and comfort off the court.”

The planned upgrades to Arthur Ashe Stadium, already the largest tennis venue in the world by capacity, include a striking new grand entrance, 2,000 additional courtside seats, and two new luxury suite levels. Concourses, retail outlets, and dining facilities will also receive significant enhancements.

In addition, a two-storey, \$250 million player performance centre is set to be built, offering expanded fitness zones, warm-up areas, and revamped locker rooms designed to deliver a “spa-like experience.” The centre will also feature upgraded indoor dining options exclusively for players.

Four-time US Open champion John McEnroe reflected on the sport’s evolution, recalling the spartan conditions of his era. “Back in our day, we’d be like, ‘What the hell is this?’” said the 66-year-old. “To see the level the USTA is going to for the US Open... I know the players are going to be absolutely thrilled.”

The new initiative follows a \$600 million renovation concluded in 2018, which saw the opening of the 14,000-plus seat Louis Armstrong Stadium with a retractable roof. With record attendance exceeding one million and the main draw recently extended to 15 days, the US Open continues to push new boundaries both on and off the court.



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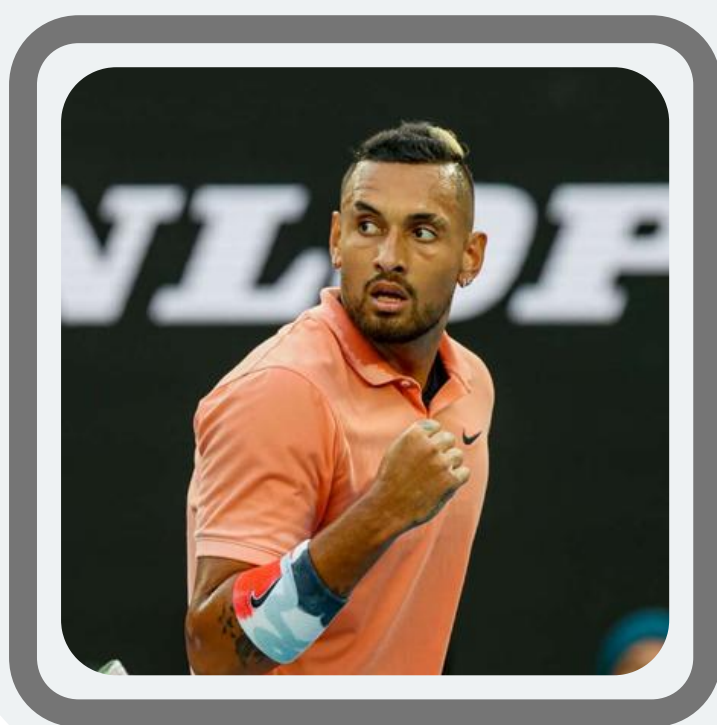
Star-Studded Field Confirmed for Queen's Club Championships

A glittering cast of talent has been confirmed for this year's Queen's Club Championships, with six of the world's top 10 men's players set to feature on the prestigious grass courts in west London.

Taylor Fritz, Holger Rune, Lorenzo Musetti and Alex de Minaur have joined the line-up for the ATP 500 event, which runs from 16–22 June. They will compete alongside British number one Jack Draper and two-time Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz, both of whom were announced as early entrants late last year.

Defending champion Tommy Paul returns to Queen's, looking to replicate his 2023 triumph, while Italy's Matteo Berrettini – a two-time winner at the event – and 2014 champion Grigor Dimitrov of Bulgaria will also challenge for the title once again.

Former Wimbledon finalist Nick Kyrgios is slated to make his return, alongside fellow Americans Frances Tiafoe and Sebastian Korda, bolstering a strong international field.



Italy's Musetti will be hoping to go one better after finishing runner-up to Paul in last year's final. De Minaur, currently ranked ninth in the world, also has unfinished business on London grass, having fallen to Alcaraz in the 2023 final.

This year's edition will also shine a spotlight on the sport's next generation, with Czech teenager Jakub Mensik—winner of the Miami Open earlier this year—and French 21-year-old Giovanni Mpetshi-Perricard both set to make their Queen's debuts.

For the first time since 1973, Queen's will also stage a women's event in the week preceding the men's draw. British number one Katie Boulter and 2021 US Open champion Emma Raducanu headline the field, marking a significant step forward for the tournament's expansion.

In a broader call to action, leading British players including Draper, Boulter, Alfie Hewett, Gordon Reid and Lucy Shuker have written to the UK Prime Minister, urging the government to sustain investment in tennis, padel and multi-sport facilities across the country. The letter emphasised the need to provide “every community across our nation” with the chance to play, stay active, and help develop the next generation of British talent.

DID YOU KNOW?

Accepting your defeats is equally as important as accepting your victories. Each defeat teaches you something new, so accepting them allows the lesson to be learnt, instead of living in denial about it.

Unknown

Frustration plays a huge part in sport, knowing you made mistake, knowing you could have done something better, or even knowing you lost your cool... but who's the GOAT of keeping their cool on the tennis court? In all of the years Nadal was on the professional circuit, he has never broken a racket in anger on the court, but who are the top breakers?

1

Marat Safin

Estimated Rackets Broken: Over 1,000 during his career.

Notable Incident: In 1999 alone, he reportedly smashed 48 rackets.

Quote: "I was young. I was stupid."

2

Goran Ivanišević

Estimated Rackets Broken: Over 300.

Notable Incident: At the 2000 Samsung Open in Brighton, he broke all three of his rackets during a match, leading to a default due to lack of equipment.

3

John McEnroe

Estimated Rackets Broken: Approximately 78.

Notable Incident: His infamous outburst at Wimbledon in 1981, where he shouted his now infamous "You cannot be serious!"

4

Serena Williams

Estimated Rackets Broken: Around 72.

Notable Incident: During the 2018 U.S. Open final against Naomi Osaka, she smashed her racket, which was later auctioned for nearly \$21,000



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In 2024



In 2025



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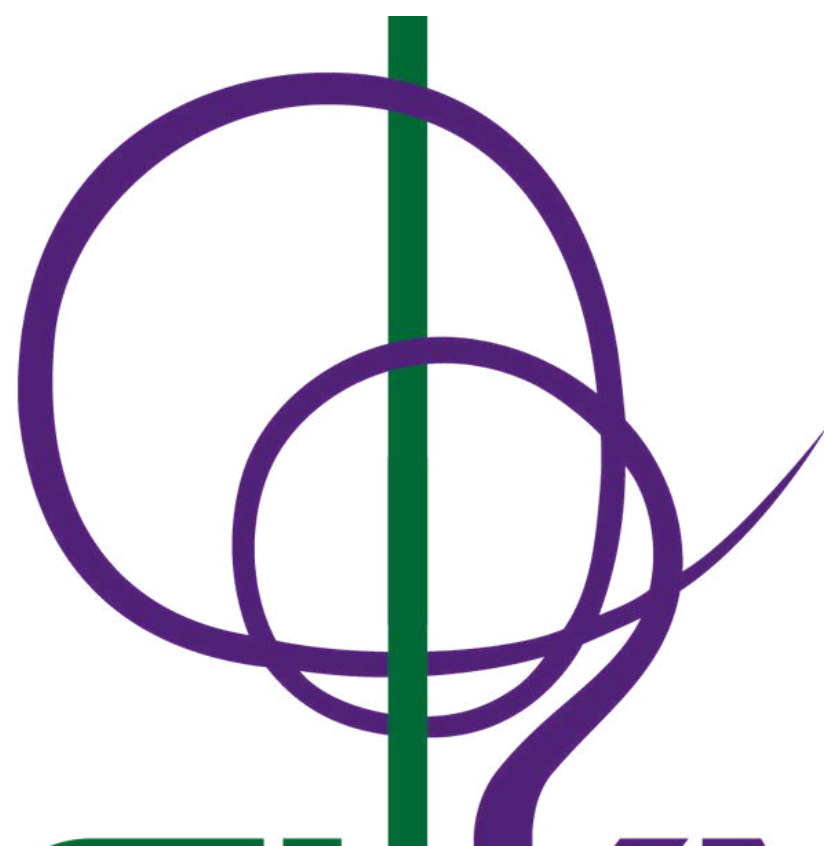
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GRSA WORKSHOP HANGZHOU

GRSA successfully conducted the fifth Pro Stringer workshop in Hangzhou, China.

Similar to previous workshops, about half of the participants are tennis enthusiasts while the other half are involved in the tennis industry. All came with the eagerness to further their knowledge in tennis equipment and understand the importance of racket stringing.

This workshop was extra special as we were hosted by Manta Squash Club. We had three squash players who also came to this workshop to learn the fundamentals of racket stringing. We also had participants who attended similar training workshops from other associations.

During their communication with us, they realised the difference in teaching and training methodologies in our training. Our primary goal is to teach the proper fundamentals in stringing. We recognised the fact that everyone has different proficiency and habits, our instructors give the best solution for each individual's routines, and offer suggestions on how to improve their current skill level. We are well aware that stringers' training is not just a simple copy of the instructor's own stringing methods. Everyone has stringing methods and routines that suits them best.

This being the fifth workshop we've conducted in China, we have continuously deepened our teaching philosophy and worked on the feedback from trainees.

We would like to express our deep appreciation to Hangzhou Manta Squash Club for welcoming us to their club and offering seamless logistical support for this workshop.









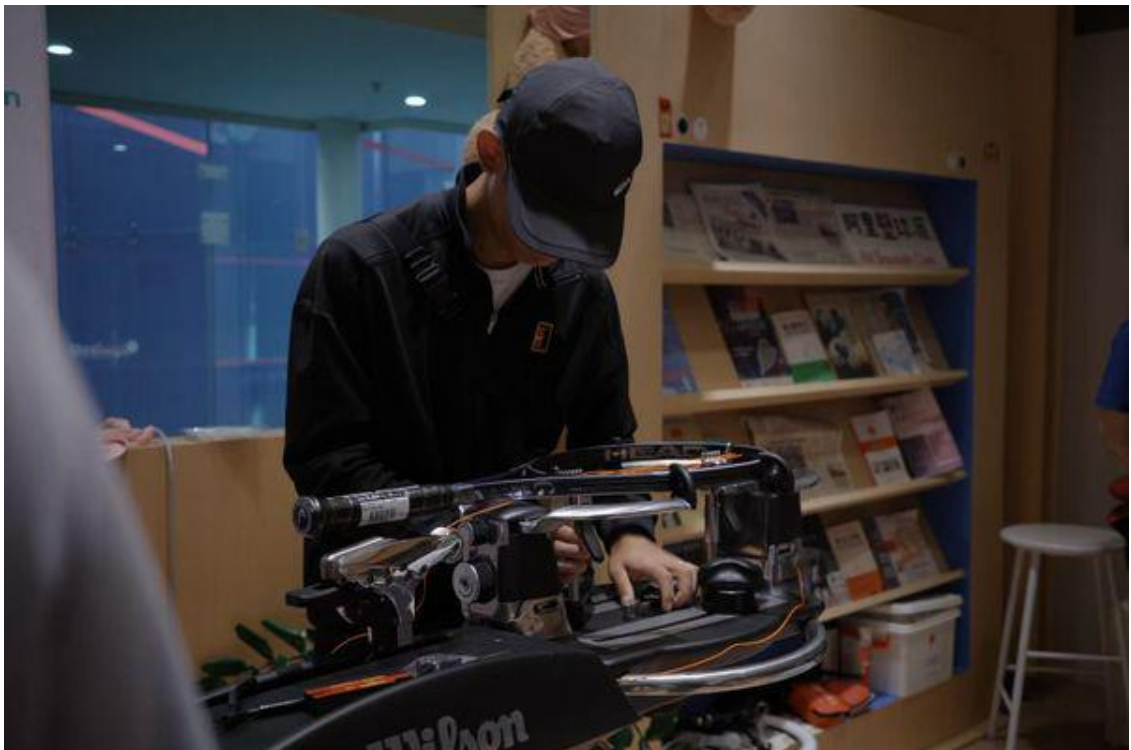
Chief Instructor for Asia Kenneth Leong



Instructor - China - Ren Jiachen



HANGZHOU





GRSA穿线师培训班来到了第五期，学员的热情仍然影响着我们，高铁一路从北京南下经过无数的水网来到了杭州，本次培训班是我们第一次来到中国著名的包邮区（江浙沪）我们一共收获了7名学员和5位仅考试的学员如同往期一样有一半的学员是深度的网球爱好者，最特别的是本次培训班迎来了三位壁球玩家，她们希望通过学习穿线同时去理解壁球拍穿线。

本次培训班最有意思的事情是，我们分学员有从其他培训机构学习过，和我们交流中体会到了我们培训中教学和训练方法的不同，我们的培训班在上传授穿线中要杜绝的错误理念，我们不生产相同的穿线师，每个人的熟练度不同，惯用手不同，我们的培训讲师针对每个学员的操作给出最优解，我们深知穿线培训不仅仅是将讲师自己的穿线方法简单的复制在学员的身上，每个人都有最适合他的穿线方式方法。

GRSA穿线师培训班杭州站（江浙沪）是我们开展培训的第五期，在此过程中我们不断的深化我们的教学理念和实操，进过五期的培训经验和学员们的反馈，我们再培训中开始增加球拍，球线的理论知识。

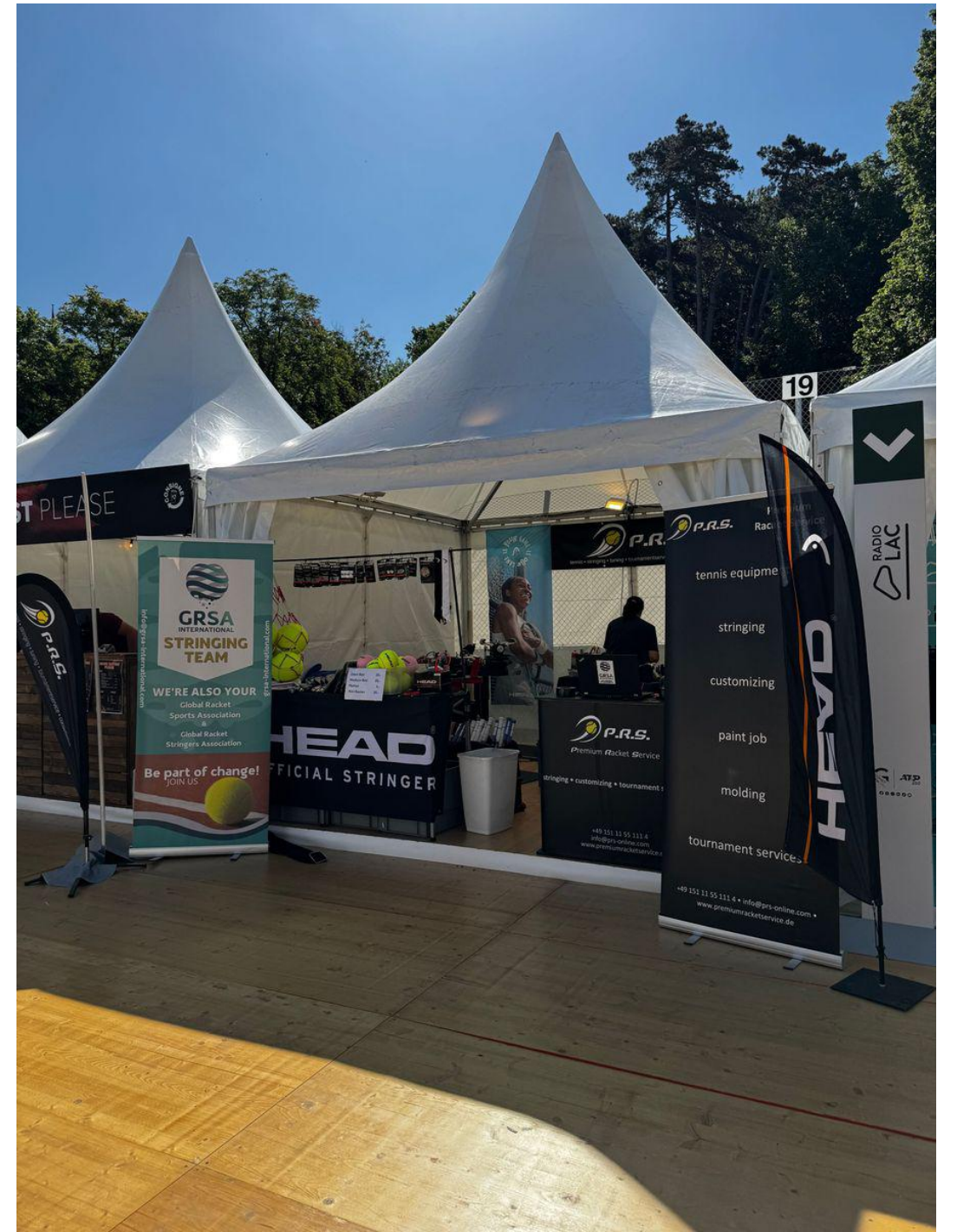
本次的GRSA穿线师培训班杭州站讲师由ken担任，本次特别感谢杭州曼塔壁球对我们的场地支持和后勤支持在这里非常感谢。





PRS & GRSA STRINGING TEAM AT THE GONET GENEVA OPEN 2025





GRSA and PRS were back at the Gonet Geneva Open this year. Another great spectacle of tennis with some very special guests.

The weather again played its part in changing the timetables slightly, but all matches took place, and the stringing team made sure the workload was looked after, as always, in the best possible way and in a professional manner.

486 rackets strung

Highest tension: 29

Lowest tension: 16,5

Team: Danielle Mann , Tine Eiwanger, Karina Turzer, Isabelle Bergmann, Dominik Baumann, MJ Greebe, Gianluca Coloma Heck and Martin Mann

Winner: Djokovic

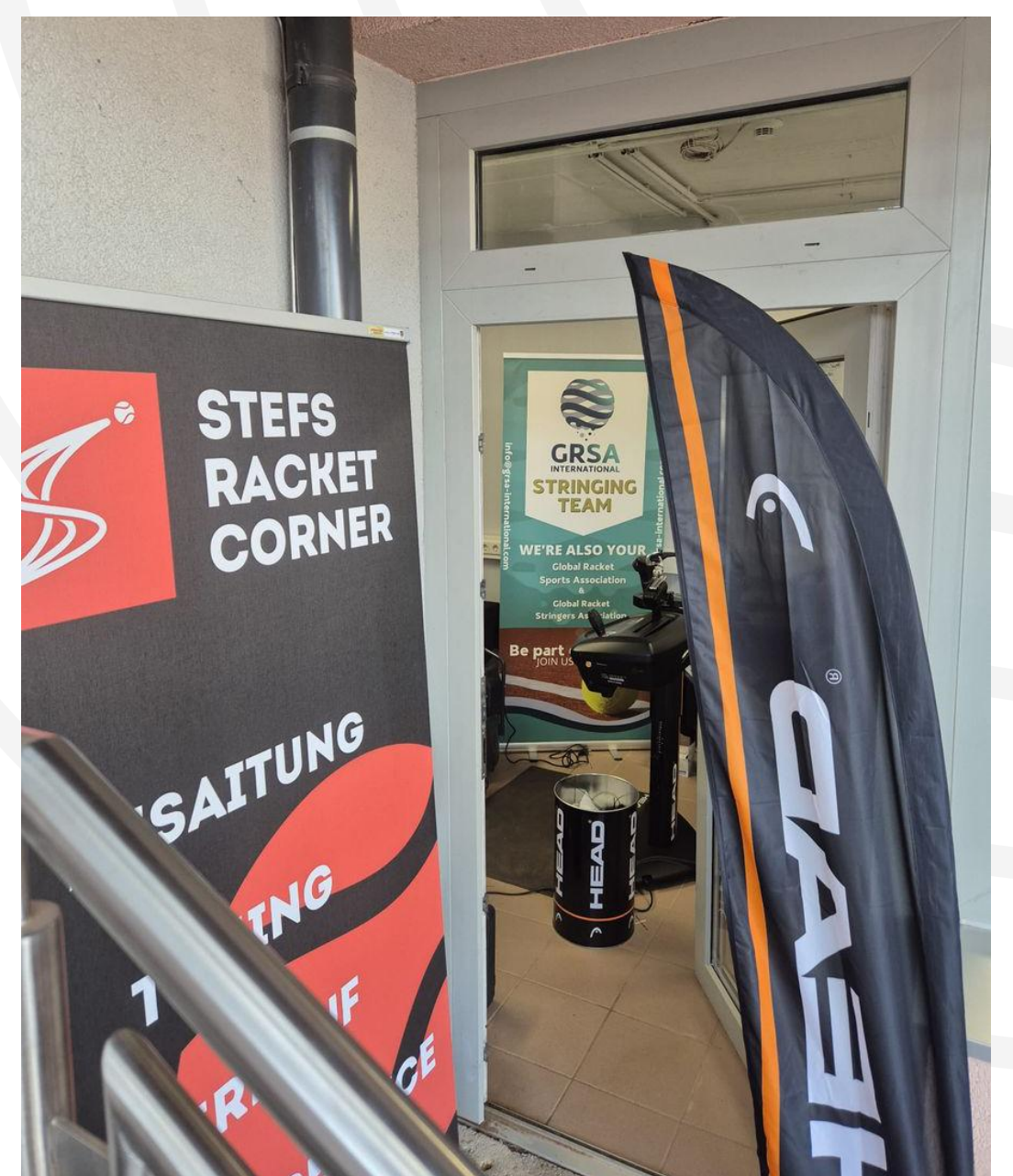
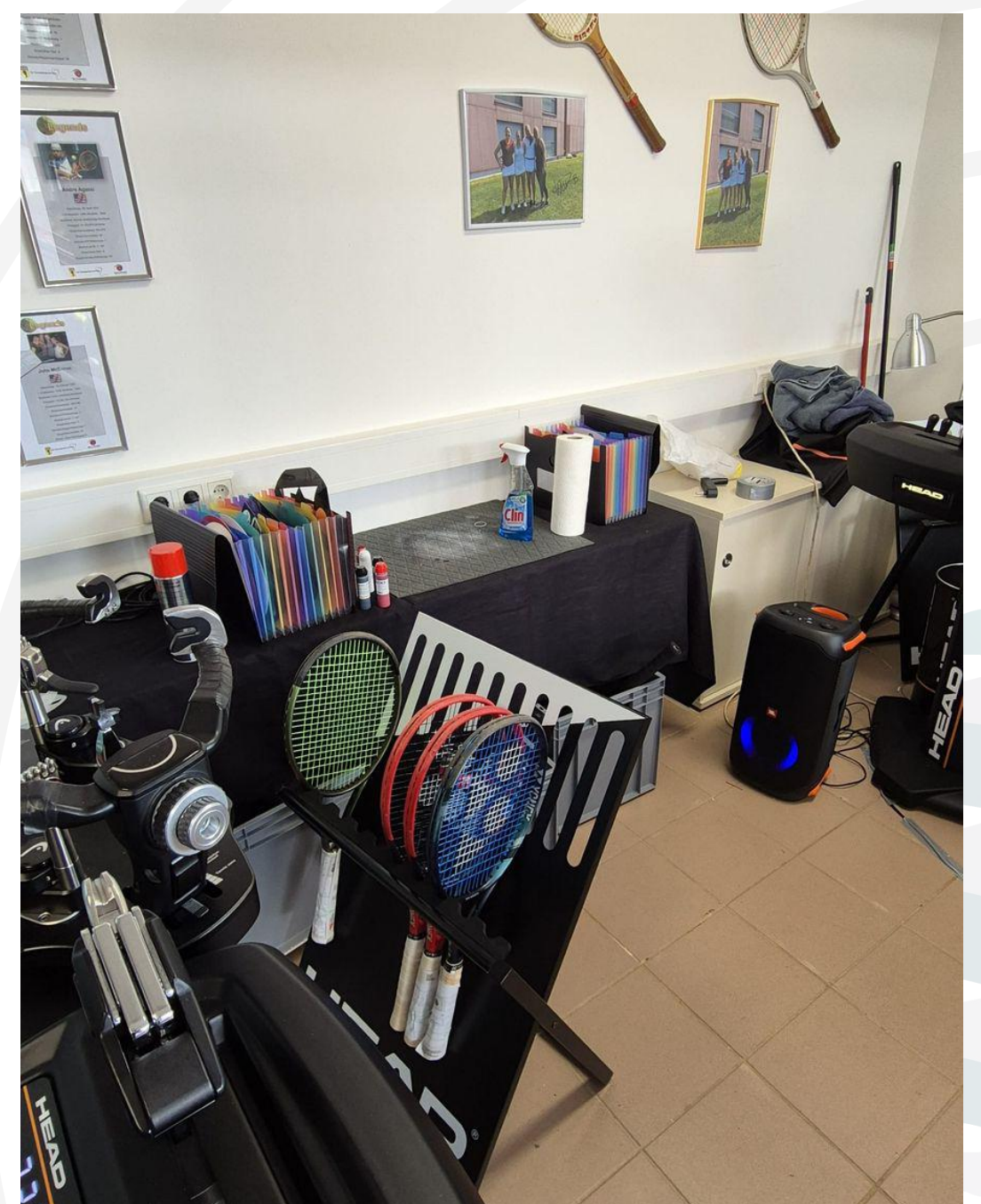
Runner up: Hurkacz

As always, a huge thank you to **HEAD** for their support and trust in the PRS & GRSA Stringing teams.



41st Panaceo ITF Junior Cup (J200) – International Youth Tennis in Villach

The 41st edition of the Panaceo ITF Junior Cup (J200) in Villach brought together an impressive field of 639 young athletes from 56 nations, showcasing top-level international youth tennis. This year marked a special milestone as it was the first tournament to feature stringing services organized by Stefs Racket Corner in collaboration with GRSA International.





A special thanks goes to Gianluca Coloma Heck for his excellent support and professional work on the stringing team. Over the course of the tournament, a total of 100 rackets were strung. The highest string tension recorded was 28/28 kg, while the lowest was 20/19 kg, reflecting a wide range of player preferences.

The event was further highlighted by the visit of Goran Ivanisevic, former Wimbledon champion, former World No. 2, and ex-coach of Novak Djokovic. He attended the tournament to support his son, Emanuel Ivanisevic, who was competing in the draw.

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.

Cross string tension & its effects... continued

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

Negative movement - 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 create snap back and 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).

BOOKING OPENS SOON

FOR THE 2ND ANNUAL GLOBAL STRINGERS CONFERENCE

There are many benefits from booking early, but the most important one is to ensure you have a place!

We are in the same beautiful resort, and have been able to secure 2 wonderful work areas that will give us more movement, space and access for everyone wishing to attend.

INCLUDED

- Workshops
- Activities
- Social Events
- Evening Get-Togethers
- Gala Dinner - Entertainment

ALSO INCLUDED

- Brand Giants
- Brand Opportunities
- Market Leading Education
- Personalised Support

Check out the information below as to who will be joining us this year, more information will be coming soon to all GRSA Members, they have the first option to book, so if you're looking to attend this year's event, make sure you're a GRSA member..... or you might not get a space!

2025

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

2nd ANNUAL GLOBAL STRINGERS CONFERENCE

IMPROVE YOUR SKILLS - MEET OTHER PROFESSIONALS - RAISE YOUR CERTIFICATION LEVEL

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INFORMATION**

Advanced
Stringing
VIP Speakers
Workshops
+ More

Knowledge is power
excellence through education

GRSA International Returns to Málaga for a Bigger and Bolder Conference in 2025

After the roaring success of last year's inaugural gathering, GRSA International is thrilled to announce that its second annual conference will once again grace the sun-drenched shores of Málaga, Costa del Sol. Set for Thursday, November 13th through Sunday, November 16th, 2025, this year's event promises to be larger, more dynamic, and more memorable than ever before.

Building on the momentum of 2024, the GRSA International conference has expanded its program with an extra day of events, offering attendees even greater opportunities to network, learn, and celebrate. The agenda is packed with an exciting lineup of new presentations and hands-on workshops that will delve deeper into the industry's future. Attendees can look forward to unparalleled access to some of the brightest minds and biggest influencers in global racket sports.

Among this year's highly anticipated highlights are our VIP star speakers: Ron Rocchi of Wilson, whose innovations have shaped the game at the highest levels, and Dennis Fabian of HEAD, a visionary force behind some of the most celebrated advancements in racket technology. Their insights will offer an exclusive look behind the curtain of the industry's leading brands — **an opportunity not to be missed.**

In a special nod to loyalty, returning GRSA members will be treated to an exclusive surprise that celebrates their continued commitment and community spirit. This added touch ensures that those who helped build the foundation of this annual tradition feel especially valued. Keep your eyes peeled for updates....we've got your back, you know who you are!

Evenings in Málaga will be just as inspiring as the days, with sumptuous dinners each night, capped off by a spectacular gala dinner, this year again sponsored by Wilson, that will outshine even last year's unforgettable affair. Plus, attendees and their families can look forward to a range of engaging activities specially curated for plus-ones and children, ensuring that the GRSA experience is one the whole family can enjoy.

Adding to the excitement, a team-building sports day will bring members together on the courts for tennis, paddle, and pickleball, fostering not just competition but camaraderie.

You asked, and we listened! It will be a day to remember for all!



As tradition demands, the coveted GRSA goodie bag will return, bigger and better, loaded with exclusive gifts and surprises that will keep spirits high throughout the event.

Ticket prices and the stunning venue details will be announced shortly, but one thing is certain: the second annual GRSA International Conference will be the must-attend event of 2025.

Prepare to rub shoulders with industry titans, absorb world-class insights, and make memories under the Mediterranean sun. Málaga awaits!

HEAD®

Dennis Fabian (HEAD)

Dennis Fabian serves as HEAD's Global Business Manager for Racquets, Bags & Accessories (Strings, Grips & Machines). He has been part of the tennis industry for decades, drawing on experience as a professional stringer and a player relations manager working closely with athletes. Dennis has played a leading role in product innovation at HEAD – he was instrumental in developing several of the company's best-selling strings (such as the Hawk Power & Lynx Tour polyester string) and helped engineer advanced tools like HEAD's 3-in-1 & 4-in-1 racket diagnostics machine and the company's state-of-the-art stringing machines, notably and most recently the HEAD x Parnell Knot machine. Through these achievements, Dennis has established himself as a key figure in racket technology development, and he frequently shares his expertise with the wider industry at events and conferences like GRSA International's conference.



Wilson®

Ron Rocchi (Wilson)

Ron Rocchi is Wilson Sporting Goods' longtime racket technology guru, currently serving as the Advanced Innovation and Player Insight Manager for Wilson's tennis division. With a career at Wilson spanning nearly three decades, Ron has been at the forefront of customizing and designing rackets for many of the sport's top players. Notably, he has designed Serena Williams's Wilson performance rackets since she turned professional in 1995, Federer since juniors and numerous greats such as Del Potro, tailoring equipment to meet the exacting needs of one of the game's greatest champions. Rocchi's hands-on innovation extends to countless touring professionals' rackets, and his contributions have helped shape some of Wilson's most iconic tennis frames. Widely regarded as an all-around equipment expert, he is known for sharing invaluable insights into racket customisation and technology at major industry gatherings.



Having both Dennis and Ron at the Conference this year is an honour and privilege as key GRSA partners through HEAD and Wilson.

NICK DOWN Takes on the

Prince O3 Speedport

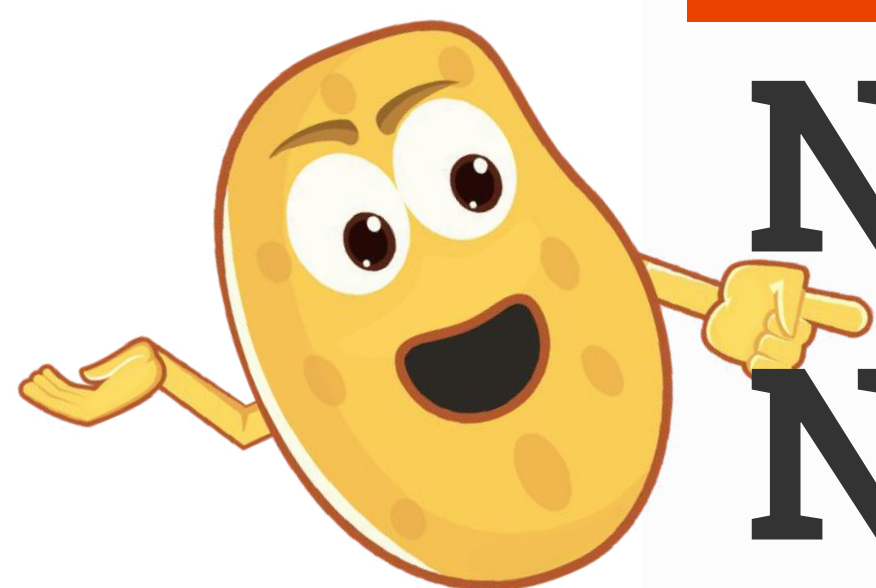
Very similar to last month's Prince O3 pattern this month I am going to re-visit the Prince O3 Speedport Pattern; it has been around for years and recently got used again. There are several models that use this pattern, and I regularly see them. For the purpose of this article I have used the Prince Speedport Tour, it is similar to last month's Prince O3 Black (which is silver). It is the same as the O3 Speedport Black (which is Black this time)

There are similarities in that the throat still has a powering and there are 16 mains and 16 crosses. This time the racket has Speedports (rectangles) not O-Ports (ovals).

There are no double-barrelled grommets on each side of the head, but with this pattern there are 2 shared holes on each side. (They are in the same position as last month's double-barrelled grommets).

It is still necessary to finish up with a hard weave around on the ring and the bottom cross.

You need to be careful that you don't crossover on the outside of the frame, especially near the shared holes.



Nick's Nugget

Don't weave unnecessary string through the mains, it can create extra wear on string, leading to early breaks.

(2 Piece)

Mains:-

LH1(Speedport LH1-right side) to below ring

Above ring to LH2(Speedport LH1-left side).

RH1(Speedport RH1 left side) to above ring

Below ring to RH 2(Speedport RH1 right side).

RH2(Speedport RH1 right side) to RH3(Speedport RH2 left side)

RH3(Speedport RH2 left side) to above ring

Below ring to RH4(Speedport RH2 right side)

LH2(Speedport LH1 left side) to LH3(Speedport LH2 right side)

LH3 (Speedport LH2 right side) to below ring

Above ring to LH4(Speedport LH2 left side)

LH4(Speedport LH2 left side) to LH6

LH6 to below ring

Above ring to LH7(Shared hole)

RH4(Speedport RH2 left side) to RH6

RH6 above ring

Below ring to RH7(Shared hole)

RH7(Shared hole) to RH9

RH9 above ring

Below ring to RH12(Shared hole)

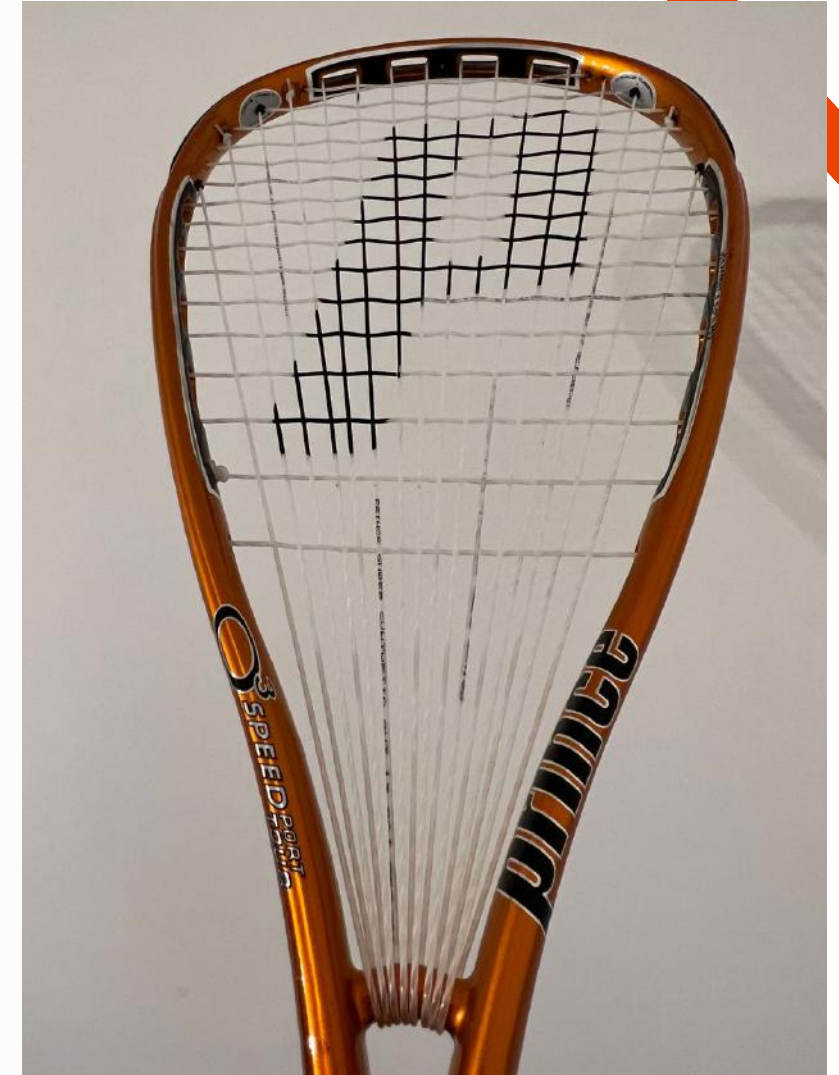
Tie off at RH9.

LH7 (Shared hole) to LH9

LH9 to below ring

Above ring to LH12(Shared hole)

Tie off at LH9.



Crosses:-

Start at LH5(tie off is LH6) (soft weave to ensure a hard weave at the bottom cross).

Then weave all crosses (16 in Total) ensuring that you finish with a hard-weave at the bottom, then tie off at LT2.

There should be alternating mains at the powering and a hard-weave at the bottom cross and no crossovers!

If the Speedports don't line up correctly, you didn't start on the correct side, as instructed above.

Next month; the Prince EXO3 Pattern.

EMAIL ME AT:

nick@grsa-international.com

Listen to my playlist on Spotify



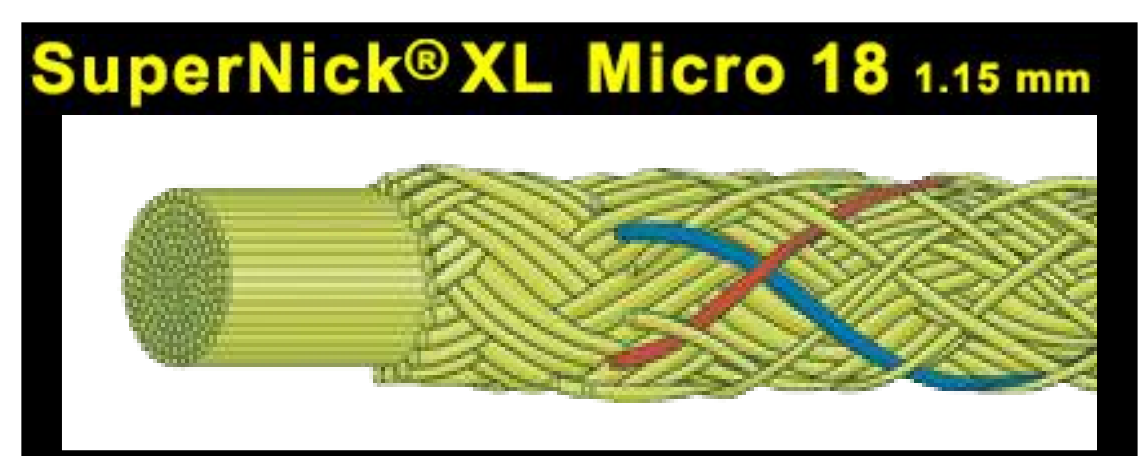
ASHAWAY'S MULTILAMENT DESIGNS - FOCUS ON SQUASH STRINGS

May is World Championship month for the professional squash community and this year's event was staged in Chicago, Illinois. The world's top 128 men's and women's players faced off in their respective draw on the PSA Tour's glass exhibition court. What type of Ashaway strings were its sponsored players using in their rackets?

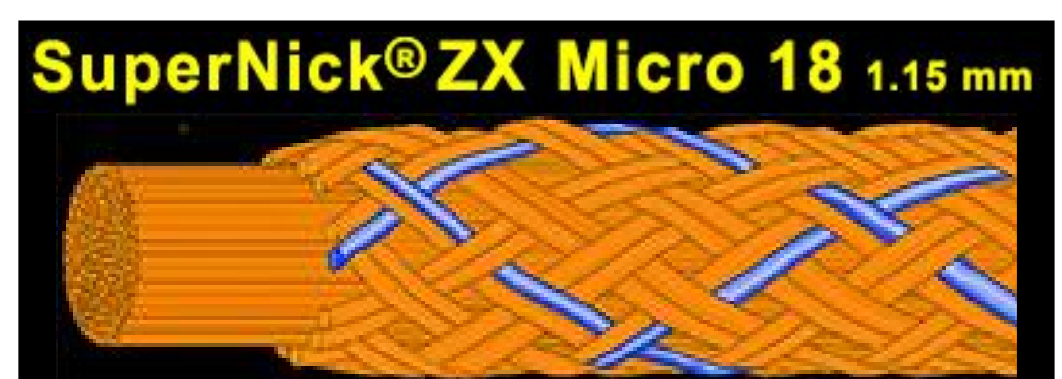
For the most part professional players choose to exclusively use multifilament strings in either 17 (1.25mm) or 18 (1.15mm) gauge. Monofilament strings are simply too smooth and slippery to achieve the necessary feel and control of the ball for the grueling front court play required in high-level squash. 16 gauge (1.30 mm) strings are generally considered too thick to provide enough feel and 19 gauge (1.10mm) are generally considered not to be durable enough for demanding professional play.

In general, there are 3 main types of multifilament squash string designs – **Multifilament Nylon**, **Multifilament Nylon/PEEK** and **Multifilament Polyurethane**. Let's take a look at each of these string designs in more detail.

Multifilament Nylon is Ashaway's original squash string design. This type of string is constructed with a multifilament nylon core (from hundreds of tiny nylon filaments) that provides precise feel, soft power and excellent overall playability. This core is encapsulated in a braided multifilament nylon wear layer for increased durability. This braided layer also provides a textured surface that enhances spin and control of the ball, absolutely necessary when working the ball around the front court. Ashaway's most famous multifilament nylon strings are SuperNick XL (1.25mm or 17 gauge) and SuperNick XL Micro (1.15mm or 18 gauge).

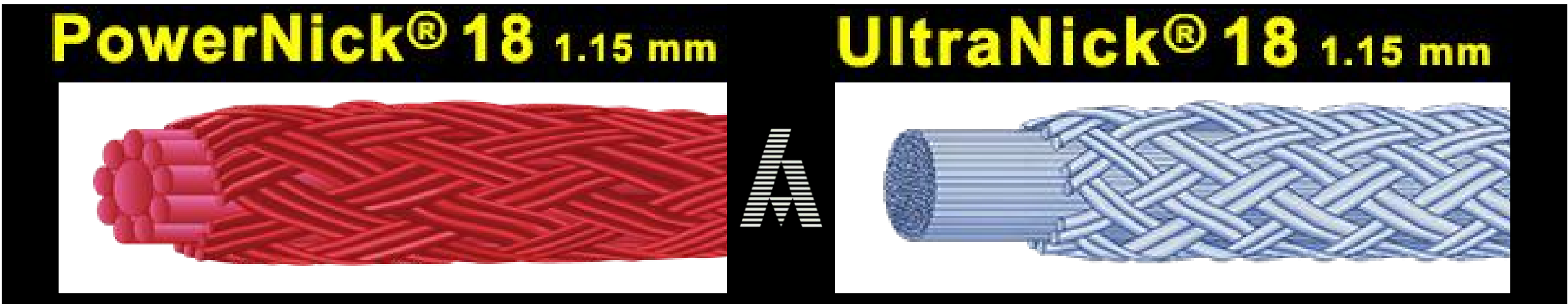


Ashaway's **Multifilament Nylon/PEEK** designs come in two different constructions. One design is an evolution from the original SuperNick design, where the traditional multifilament nylon core is encapsulated with a braided PEEK wear layer. These PEEK filaments provide a tougher, stiffer textured surface that improves durability and control of the ball. Combined with the excellent soft feel of the nylon core, the resulting string design creates the more resilient and durable SuperNick ZX (1.25mm or 17 gauge) and SuperNick ZX Micro (1.15mm or 18 gauge) products.





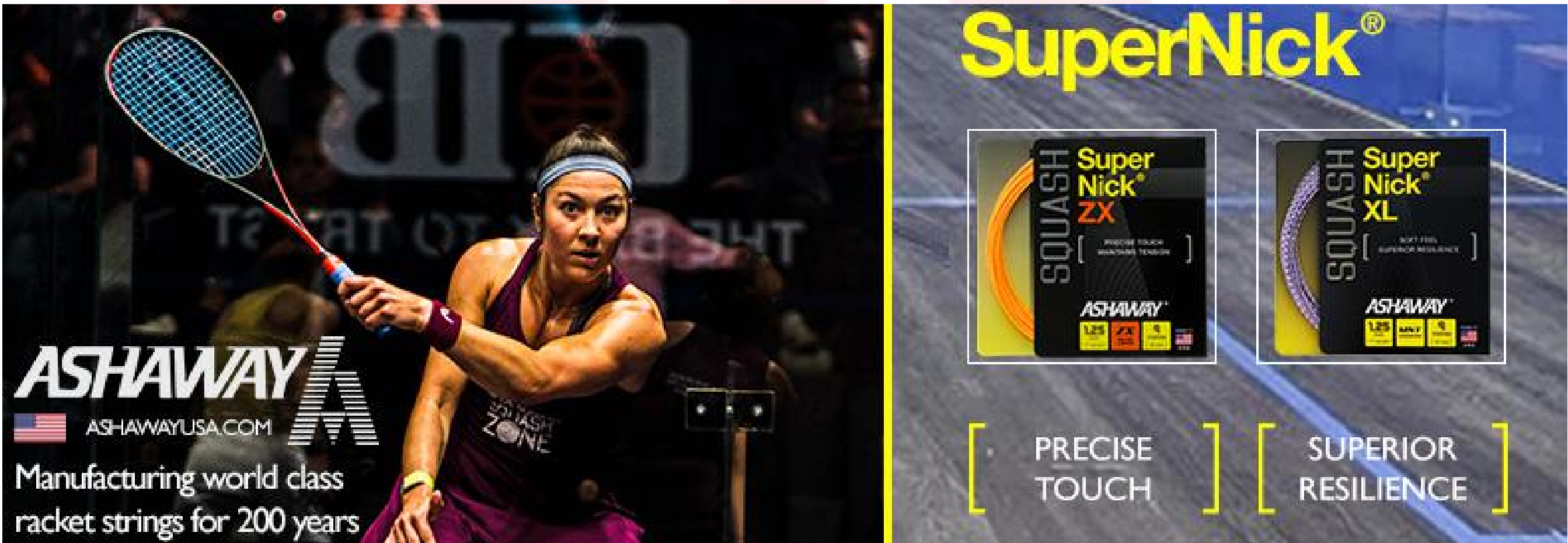
The second design features PEEK fibers in a multifilament core encapsulated with a typical braided multifilament nylon wear layer. This string design turns out to be the most popular with professional players because the PEEK core provides a stiffer, more durable product, which also is very powerful, in a thin 1.15mm gauge. The most well-known of these strings are PowerNick 18 red (1.15mm or 18 gauge) and UltraNick 18 blue (1.15mm or 18 gauge).



Ashaway’s most recent development in multifilament string design is the popular MultiNick 18 product (1.15mm or 18 gauge), which is also used by many touring professionals. This string features a **Multifilament Polyurethane** design that provides good durability and feel of the ball, even with its very smooth surface. This solid multifilament nylon string (composed of thousands of tiny nylon filaments) is created by processing these filaments in a matrix of urethane. The resulting string provides a soft, cushioned multifilament feel for an all court game, with the urethane finish adding a good grip for excellent ball control.



Next month we'll be speaking to **Nick Down, GRSA's Global Squash Manager**, and we'll get his feedback and insight into what people are using and why... if he doesn't know, who will?



On Tour with the PSA: Physio Laurence Lawrence Shares Life Behind the Scenes

With grueling match schedules, long-haul travel, and the relentless demands of elite competition, the modern squash circuit is as much a test of endurance as it is of talent. For the athletes of the PSA World Tour, physios are a vital lifeline none more so than Laurence Lawrence, whose expertise and energy have quickly made him a valued member of the travelling team.

In this exclusive interview, Laurence opens up about how he got started in squash, the realities of life behind the scenes, and what it means to be part of an athlete's recovery journey. From learning on the job to supporting the US Squash team on the world stage, he shares a unique perspective from the treatment table.

A Call from the Past

"It's been just over a year since I started working with the PSA my first tournament was the Men's Houston Open in February 2024," Laurence recalls.

"I actually got into squash thanks to Derek Ryan, the PSA's head physio. I did work experience with him in Ireland while I was still at school, and ten years later he reached out asking if I could help out at some events. And that was that fast-forward to January 2025, and here I am.

"I really owe him a lot. He often thanks me for stepping in when he's unavailable, but honestly, it's been massively beneficial for my own career too."

The Joy of the Job

Ask Laurence what makes his role so enjoyable, and the answer comes easily.

"It's a fantastic job. You need to be flexible and adaptable, and I love that. I'm very sociable and I enjoy getting to know people, which is a big part of why I love what I do. Sitting behind a desk never appealed to me this job brings you into contact with so many fascinating individuals.

"Understanding athletes beyond the court—their backgrounds, motivations, and personal stories—is one of the real perks. It's something I'm truly grateful for."

Learning the Game, One Movement at a Time

A self-confessed newcomer to the sport, Laurence has embraced the challenge of learning squash from the inside.

“I’ve started focusing on a specific aspect of player movement at each tournament to deepen my understanding. In Singapore, it was lunge recovery; in Hong Kong, I looked at the trail leg.

“I’m fascinated by biomechanics—understanding how athletes move and how that relates to injury. Watching matches with referees or long-time squash watchers has been so helpful. I ask them loads of questions, and they’re always generous with their insights. I learn something new every time.”



Ironman Ambitions and Jet-Lag Workouts

What’s the most difficult part of the job? Laurence answers with a smile.

“Trying to fit in Ironman training! Some tournaments are so full-on that finding time to train especially with jet lag is a real challenge. Getting up early enough for a three-hour bike ride before a packed day on tour was tough, but I try not to let my own goals slip through the cracks.”

Gratitude at Every Gate

Despite the intensity of tour life, Laurence hasn’t lost his sense of wonder.

“Stepping off a plane in a new country still gives me a buzz. I know for some people, constant travel can become routine but every time I see a ‘Welcome to Singapore’ or ‘Welcome to San Francisco’ sign, it reminds me not to take this opportunity for granted. I really hope that feeling never fades.”

From injury rooms to international arenas, Laurence Lawrence’s journey is one of curiosity, commitment, and connection. And for squash players across the globe, it’s a journey that helps keep their careers on track—one match, one muscle, one movement at a time.



Ali Farag Announces Retirement from Professional Squash

Four-time World Champion and former World No.1 Ali Farag has announced his immediate retirement from professional squash, drawing the curtain on one of the most illustrious careers the sport has ever witnessed.

Farag, ranked World No.2 at the time of his retirement, leaves a legacy matched by few. He is one of only two Egyptian men—alongside Amr Shabana—to have captured the PSA World Championship title four times. His announcement comes just days after reaching a fifth World Championship final, where he was narrowly defeated by current World No.1 Mostafa Asal in Chicago.

The Harvard graduate spent 238 weeks at the summit of the PSA World Rankings between March 2019 and March 2025, the fifth-longest tenure in men's squash history, trailing only Jahangir Khan, Jansher Khan, Peter Nicol and Geoff Hunt. His 46 PSA titles place him sixth on the all-time list of men's winners.

Farag's breakthrough came in 2017 at the U.S. Open, a night forever etched in squash folklore as he and his wife, Nour El Tayeb, claimed the men's and women's titles respectively—becoming the first married couple to win a major sports event on the same day. They repeated the feat at the 2023 Manchester Open, this time with their newborn daughter, Farida, present at the trophy ceremony.



Over the years, Farag amassed titles across the globe, including the British Open (2023), PSA World Tour Finals (2024), three CIB Egyptian Opens, four Tournament of Champions crowns, and three Qatar Classics. He won the El Gouna International three times, the Windy City Open twice, and lifted the Paris Squash title in 2023. In total, he contested 81 PSA finals, winning 57 per cent of them, and triumphed in 445 of his 553 matches.

A popular figure on tour, Farag was honoured with the PSA Spirit of Squash Award seven times in the last eight years. He also played a key role in Egypt's dominance on the world stage, helping the national team to four World Team Championship titles between 2017 and 2024.

Reflecting on his decision, Farag said:

"I always knew this day would come and I knew it would be very emotional. And it is, but in a good way. Ever since Covid, I began to ask myself 'What's next?' I've achieved everything I dreamed of in squash, but I'm also a husband and a father now. I've missed too many moments, school pickups, bedtime stories, the simple things. It's time to be fully present for them."

"I'm walking away at the perfect time. Squash is in a fantastic place and the level across both the men's and women's game has never been higher. I'll always be there, if not as a player, then as a fan and supporter."

PSA Chief Executive Alex Gough praised Farag's impact:

"Ali has been a true ambassador for the sport, combining brilliance on court with grace and humility off it. His contribution as PSA Men's President was equally vital. He departs with our deepest thanks and best wishes for the future."

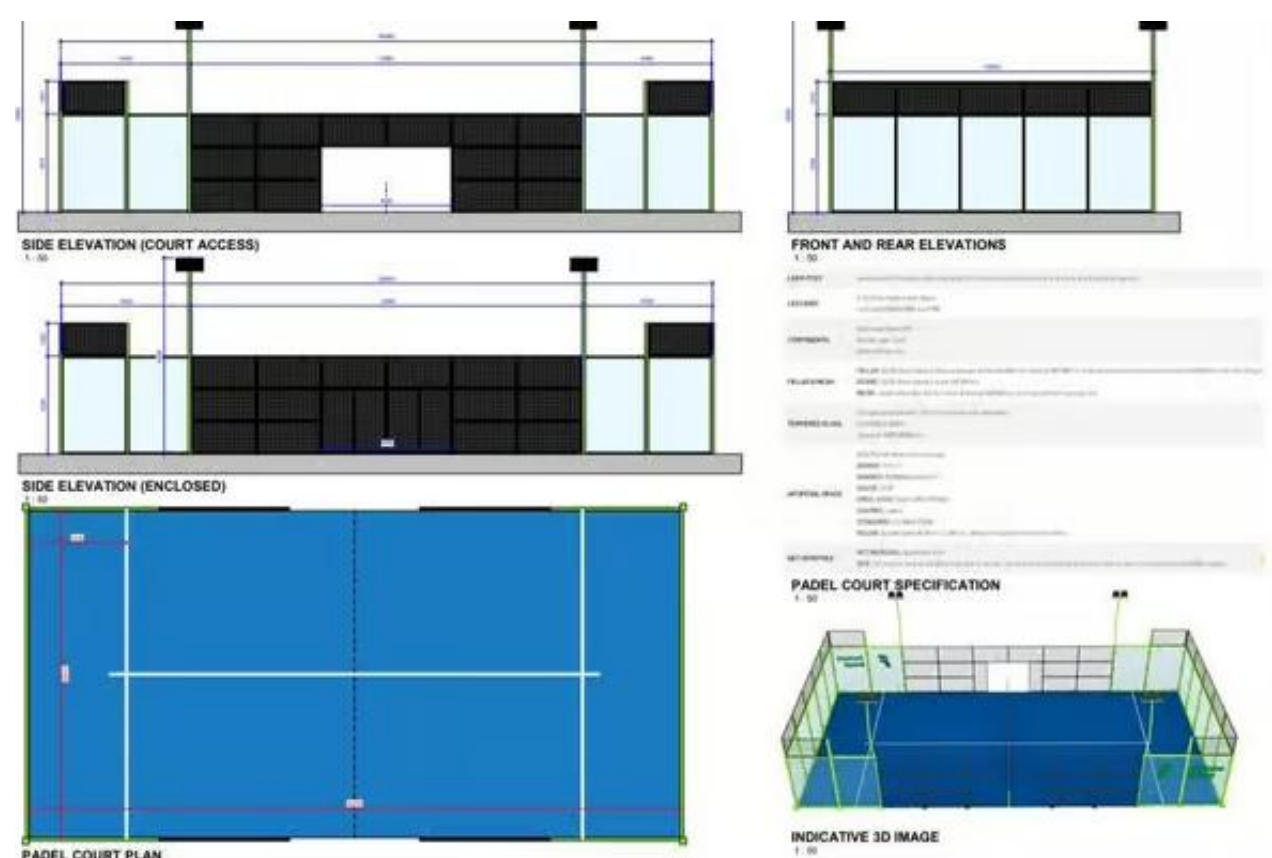
Following his retirement, Farag has officially withdrawn from the upcoming GillenMarkets British Open in Birmingham. His No.2 seeding will pass to Peru's Diego Elias, while England's Simon Herbert has been drafted into the main draw.

Blackpool Set to Welcome First Indoor Padel Facility as Planning Application Lodged

Blackpool could soon play host to its first dedicated indoor padel tennis facility, with plans now submitted to transform a disused industrial unit into a cutting-edge venue for one of the world's fastest-growing sports.

Just Padel Blackpool, trading as Padel Blackpool Ltd, has submitted a planning application to convert Unit 1C on the Squires Gate Industrial Estate (FY4 3RN) into a purpose-built indoor centre featuring six professional-standard courts. The venue would also include changing facilities, a reception area, and a relaxed social space, creating a year-round hub for sport and community.

Located opposite Blackpool Retail Park, the site benefits from high visibility and strong transport links, offering a promising new use for an underutilised corner of the estate.



The project has been designed by Preston-based Studio FRI Limited, a practice known for its work in architecture, planning, and the creative reuse of existing buildings. With a focus on breathing new life into vacant spaces, Studio FRI has worked in close collaboration with the client to develop a layout that's both visionary and practical.

This proposed facility builds on the success of Just Padel Preston—Lancashire's first indoor padel centre—which has become a local favourite among casual players, schools, and community groups alike.

“Padel is one of the most accessible sports out there,” said a spokesperson for Padel Blackpool Ltd. “It’s fun, social, easy to pick up—and this new venue will open the doors for more people in Blackpool to stay active, meet others, and enjoy something new.”

If approved, the centre would be the only indoor padel venue in Blackpool, filling a key gap in the borough's sporting landscape. Courts would be available to book 24/7 via the Playtomic app, accommodating everyone from early risers to late-night players, including shift workers and families with busy schedules.

Importantly, the proposal includes strong community outreach, with plans to collaborate with local schools, run women's sessions, provide affordable access, and ensure broad community engagement.

The planning application is currently under review by Blackpool Council. If given the green light, construction could commence in the near future—reviving a dormant site and serving up a fresh new chapter for sport in Blackpool.



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Wilson

Madrid to Host Opening Stages of Revamped European Padel Competition

The International Padel Federation (FIP) has confirmed that the first two phases of its newly formatted European national team competition will take place in Madrid this July.

The updated structure replaces the former European Championship and introduces a three-phase format. Both the opening and intermediate stages will be contested between 7 and 13 July at the PadelG24 Club in Madrid, a modern venue boasting 17 indoor courts.

FIP has outlined how the competition will unfold:

The 2025 edition will feature 40 national teams in both the men's and women's tournaments. In the first phase, held across the initial four days, lower-ranked nations will battle for just four spots in the next stage.

PHASE 1

MEN'S

01. EUROPEAN TEAM

02. EUROPEAN TEAM

03. EUROPEAN TEAM

04. EUROPEAN TEAM

05. EUROPEAN TEAM

06. EUROPEAN TEAM

07. EUROPEAN TEAM

08. EUROPEAN TEAM

09. EUROPEAN TEAM

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19. EUROPEAN TEAM

20. EUROPEAN TEAM

21. EUROPEAN TEAM

22. EUROPEAN TEAM

23. EUROPEAN TEAM

24. EUROPEAN TEAM

WOMEN'S

01. EUROPEAN TEAM

02. EUROPEAN TEAM

03. EUROPEAN TEAM

04. EUROPEAN TEAM

05. EUROPEAN TEAM

06. EUROPEAN TEAM

07. EUROPEAN TEAM

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22. EUROPEAN TEAM

23. EUROPEAN TEAM

24. EUROPEAN TEAM

Albania,
Andorra,
Armenia,
Azerbaijan,
Bulgaria,
Cyprus,
Czechia,
Georgia,
Greece,
Ireland,
Israel,
Kosovo,
Luxembourg,
Malta,
Moldova,
Montenegro,
North
Macedonia,
Norway,
Romania,
San Marino,
Slovakia,
Slovenia,
Türkiye,
Ukraine,
Vatican City

These four qualifiers will join the European teams ranked 5th to 16th in the second phase, scheduled for days five to seven. From there, only four teams will progress to the final phase.

PHASE 2

MEN'S

01. NETHERLANDS

02. SWEDEN

03. GREAT BRITAIN

04. GERMANY

05. BELGIUM

06. DENMARK

07. AUSTRIA

08. POLAND

09. MONACO

10. SWITZERLAND

11. HUNGARY

12. CROATIA

13. Q PHASE 1

14. Q PHASE 1

15. Q PHASE 1

16. Q PHASE 1

WOMEN'S

01. SWEDEN

02. NETHERLANDS

03. GERMANY

04. DENMARK

05. BELGIUM

06. GREAT BRITAIN

07. SWITZERLAND

08. FINLAND

09. ESTONIA

10. HUNGARY

11. POLAND

12. LITHUANIA

13. Q PHASE 1

14. Q PHASE 1

15. Q PHASE 1

16. Q PHASE 1

These four qualifiers will join the European teams ranked 5th to 16th in the second phase, scheduled for days five to seven. From there, only four teams will progress to the final phase.

Spain, Italy, Portugal, and France, the continent’s top four ranked nations, will await the four successful teams in the final phase, which will feature two groups of four. The top two from each group will advance to the semi-finals.

While the opening stages are locked in for Madrid, the dates and venue for the final phase are yet to be announced.

This new format aims to increase competitiveness and provide a clear pathway for emerging nations, while preserving elite-level showdowns among Europe’s best.

FINAL 8

MEN’S

- | | | | | |
|----|---|----------|----|-----------|
| 01 |  | SPAIN | 05 | Q PHASE 2 |
| 02 |  | ITALY | 06 | Q PHASE 2 |
| 03 |  | PORTUGAL | 07 | Q PHASE 2 |
| 04 |  | FRANCE | 08 | Q PHASE 2 |

WOMEN’S

- | | | | | |
|----|---|----------|----|-----------|
| 01 |  | SPAIN | 05 | Q PHASE 2 |
| 02 |  | ITALY | 06 | Q PHASE 2 |
| 03 |  | FRANCE | 07 | Q PHASE 2 |
| 04 |  | PORTUGAL | 08 | Q PHASE 2 |

HEAD PARTNERS WITH PORTICO SPORT TO SUPPORT PADEL'S GLOBAL GROWTH

HEAD Padel is making a fresh commitment to driving innovation and growth in the world of padel. The new strategic partnership with Portico Sport, a leading international manufacturer of premium padel courts, will help to support the global growth of padel.

As part of this partnership:

- Portico Sport will market exclusive padel courts with HEAD's iconic branding.
- Customers will receive a premium package of HEAD products and accessories, offering added value for players and club owners alike.
- Portico Sport and HEAD will support court growth on a global scale while offering countries a range of padel equipment.

Based in Spain, Portico Sport is one of the leading international builders of Premier Padel courts and canopies, with 100% in-house design and manufacturing. The company has more than 15 years of experience in the industry, with a presence in over 35 countries, and has installed more than 4,000 courts.

Guillermo Maldonado, Director at Portico Sport, says: "As a padel court builder, at Portico Sport, we are committed to delivering top-tier infrastructure solutions that elevate the playing experience and drive the global expansion of padel. Partnering with HEAD, a company renowned for its innovation and performance, represents a step forward in our mission. By combining our expertise in padel court construction with HEAD's leadership in padel equipment, we are offering a truly comprehensive solution for clubs and players worldwide. This collaboration strengthens our international presence and also plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of padel as a global sport."

Ottmar Barbian, Executive Vice-President Racquetsports and Wintersports at HEAD, says: "We're delighted to be announcing a partnership with Portico Sport that allows us to extend our passion for innovation and performance beyond equipment and into the infrastructure of the game itself. The agreement will complete our 360° approach as a padel specialist. With Portico's global distribution and expertise in the industry, we will make an excellent team across the globe."

The image shows the HEAD logo in a bold, sans-serif font. The word "HEAD" is in all caps. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located at the top right of the letter "D".

LEADING BUILDERS OF PREMIER PADEL COURTS AND INSTALLATION OF CANOPIES GLOBALLY

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It doesn't matter if you're an experienced player or just starting out, knowing where you can go to take part in open competitions is part of the fun of this forever growing sport, so here are some of the dates, visit the Pickleball Global website for more info.

FAVIGNANA Pickleball Open Tournament

EID: 2025 **PRICE** EUR 50

Organizer: Alberto Paglialunga Paradisi

EVENT - TOURNAMENT

Starting: October 04, 2025 to October 05, 2025

City: Favignana, Island of Favignana, Favignana, TP, Italia

Tournament Venue:

Registration Deadline: August 31, 2025 (OPEN)

Tier Level: 1

1. Mittelhessen International Open Solms

EID: 1910 **PRICE** EUR 30

Organizer: Sascha Sandermann

EVENT - TOURNAMENT

Starting: September 20, 2025 to September 21, 2025

City: Stadionstraße 10, 35606 Solms-Burgsolms, Deutschland

Tournament Venue: Tv 1906 Burgsolms

Registration Deadline: September 08, 2025 (OPEN)

Tier Level: 1

IPT PIATTO DI BIELLA DUPR TOURNAMENT

TEAM AND SINGLE

EID: 2000 **PRICE** EUR 30

Organizer: Tour IPT

EVENT - TOURNAMENT

Starting: July 26, 2025 to July 27, 2025

City: Via Frazione Malina, 5, 13844 Piatto BI, Italia

Tournament Venue: Italian Pickleball Tour

Registration Deadline: July 19, 2025 (OPEN)

Tier Level: 3

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Smash Squad Crowned Champions of Inaugural LawStrings Pickleball Premier League – Lawyer’s Edition

New Delhi – Smash Squad emerged victorious at the first-ever LawStrings Pickleball Premier League – Lawyer’s Edition, defeating Legal Pickle in a gripping final to lift the Gold Cup at the Rackonnect Exclusive Padel Pickle Park (REPPP) in Mehrauli. The unique event, bringing together legal professionals from across India, was held under the auspices of the Indian Pickleball Association (IPA).

The champions, owned by Senior Advocate Sonia Mathur and captained by Advocate Nachiketa Vajpayee, remained unbeaten throughout the eight-team competition. Their winning side featured Sparsh Duggal, Rishabh Rela, Pallavi Kumar, Sanjivani Pattjoshi, and Angad Baxi.

“It is one of the greatest feelings to be crowned as champions, while being undefeated during the entire tournament,” said Vajpayee after the triumph.



Legal Pickle, guided by Advocate Shrey Sharawat, finished runners-up and took home the Silver Cup. Net-workers, led by Senior Advocate Haripriya Padmanabhan, secured third place and the Bronze Cup.

In the final standings, Lex Saviours of Advocate Praveen Kumar came fourth, followed by Amicus Aces (Senior Advocate Guru Krishnakumar) in fifth. Supreme Strikers (Senior Advocate Rupesh Kumar) ended in sixth place, while Pickle Pleadors and Sood’s Smashers, captained by Senior Advocates Dr S. Muralidhar and Vivek Sood respectively, rounded out the table.

The event fused sport and the legal profession in an engaging showcase of athleticism and fellowship. The success of the inaugural edition has sparked calls from participants to shift the next season to October, when conditions are cooler.

Tournament organiser Shubham Malhotra, founder of LawStrings Management, reflected on the enthusiasm with optimism. “LawStrings Pickleball League was an unplanned blessing,” he said. “After seeing such a huge response and love from the legal fraternity, we’ve already begun planning for Season 2. I promise, it will be even bigger.”

The Picklr Heads to Japan as Pickleball's Global Boom Continues

The Picklr, the world's largest indoor pickleball club network, is expanding into Japan with plans to open 20 venues over the next five years. The move comes via a new partnership with Nippon Pickleball Holdings, the leading force in Japanese pickleball.

This international step marks another milestone in CEO Jorge Barragan's ambitious growth strategy. With over 20 million players in the U.S. and participation surging 223% in just three years, pickleball has cemented its status as the fastest-growing sport in North America.

Currently boasting 40 clubs across the U.S. and Canada, The Picklr aims to double that number by year's end. More than 500 franchises have already been sold, spanning North America and now Japan. Each facility offers memberships with access to court reservations, coaching clinics, leagues, and events, typically attracting 500-700 members per club.

Japan's first Picklr site is set to open in the Tokyo metro area, with further venues planned nationwide in mixed-use spaces. Barragan views Japan as a springboard into the wider Asian market, citing the country's strong affinity for racket sports and focus on wellness and community.

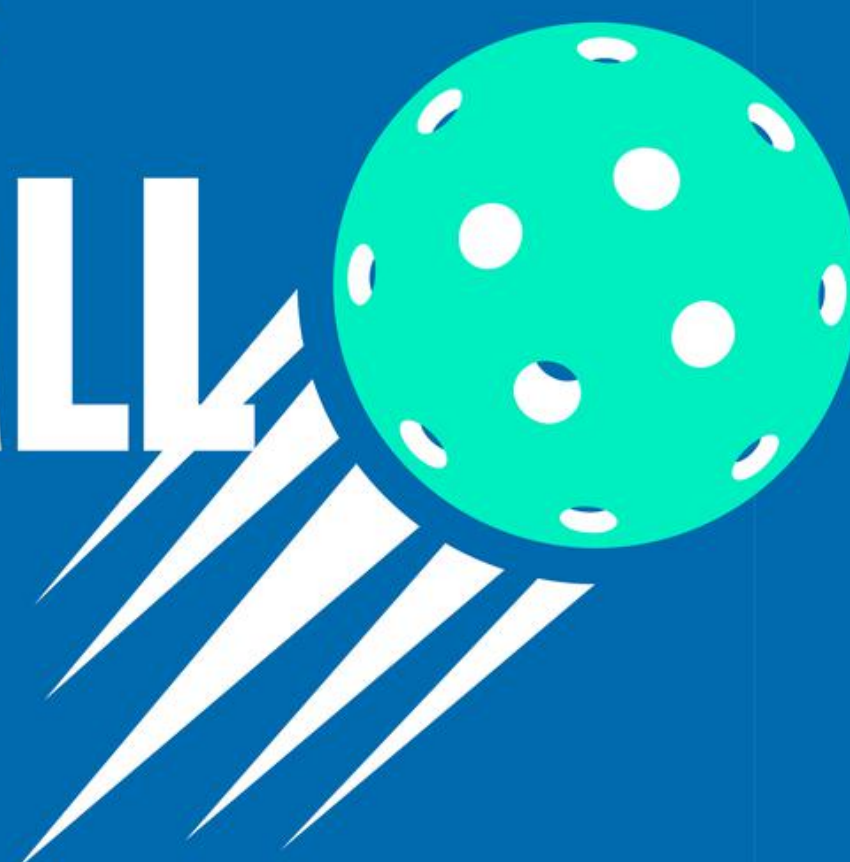
International appetite for pickleball shows no signs of waning. "We're still getting over 220 franchise leads a month," said Barragan, "and we haven't seen that slow down." Professional circuits are also expanding globally, with the United Pickleball Association announcing new tournaments in Australia, India, Canada, Asia and Europe.

As the sport's momentum continues, Barragan believes the rest of the world is just starting to catch the pickleball fever.



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China Dominate Malaysia Masters as Denmark's Top Pair Fly Europe's Flag

China asserted their dominance at the PERODUA Malaysia Masters 2025, claiming four of the five available titles and finishing runners-up in three finals. The only event not to go China's way came in the men's doubles, where Malaysia celebrated a historic all-local final.

Europe's standout performers were Denmark's world number one duo Kim Astrup and Anders Skaarup Rasmussen, who reached the men's doubles semi-finals. The experienced Danes pushed home favourites Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik in a thrilling three-game encounter before bowing out 19-21, 21-17, 15-21. Rasmussen later reflected on social media: "Amazing week here in Malaysia. Came to show WE ARE BACK." The pair will look to continue their resurgence at the upcoming KFF Singapore Badminton Open.



Malaysia's fans were treated to a landmark moment as Man Wei Chong and Tee Kai Wun overcame compatriots Chia/Soh 21-12, 15-21, 21-16 to lift the title, a result that highlighted the host nation's growing depth in men's doubles.

Elsewhere, China reigned supreme. Li Shi Feng dismantled India's Kidambi Srikanth 21-11, 21-9 in a one-sided men's singles final, while Wang Zhi Yi clawed her way back to defeat fellow Chinese shuttler Han Yue 13-21, 21-13, 21-18 in the women's singles.

In mixed doubles, Feng Yan Zhe and Huang Dong Ping triumphed in an all-China contest, seeing off Jiang Zhen Bang and Wei Ya Xin 17-21, 21-14, 21-16. The women's doubles final followed a similar script as Liu Sheng Shu and Tan Ning edged out Jia Yi Fan and Zhang Shu Xian 21-17, 21-18.

With a packed calendar ahead, attention now shifts to Singapore, where many of the world's top names will continue their chase for World Tour glory.

Sport Sector Rallies for Continued EU Funding in 2028–2034 Budget

Brussels – Over 150 organisations from across Europe’s sport and physical activity landscape, including the Badminton Europe Confederation, have come together in a powerful joint statement urging the European Union to safeguard and strengthen sport funding in the upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2028–2034.

This landmark appeal, released on 5 May 2025, calls on EU institutions to recognise sport’s vital contribution to European society and ensure it remains a financial and strategic priority. The statement underscores how sport and physical activity deliver wide-ranging economic, health, and social benefits – and makes the case for sustained investment through key EU programmes such as Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, and EU4Health.

“Badminton Europe has received strong support from the EU over the years, which has enabled us to develop a range of projects that benefit the badminton community across Europe,” said Brian Agerbak, General Secretary of Badminton Europe. “These initiatives have already helped many people take up badminton or continue playing the sport. The importance of the continuing support of EU to the sports world cannot be underestimated.”

The sport sector contributes around 2.12% to the EU’s GDP and employs over five million people. Furthermore, for every €1 invested in grassroots sport, there is a reported €5 return in economic and social value, a powerful reminder of sport’s potential to drive public good. However, stakeholders warn that this impact can only be sustained through long-term, consistent support.

The joint statement outlines five key demands:

- Increased funding for sport and physical activity in the next MFF.
- Continued expansion of Erasmus+ Sport for youth and grassroots engagement.
- Greater integration of sport into EU4Health as a preventive health tool.
- Investment via cohesion policy in sport infrastructure and green innovation.
- Recognition of sport as a strategic economic sector within EU policy.

With signatories ranging from federations and clubs to NGOs and businesses, this united front represents one of the largest advocacy efforts in the history of EU sport policy. As the European Commission, Parliament, and Council prepare to publish their MFF proposals in the coming months, organisations such as FESI and its partners are actively engaging with decision-makers to ensure that sport and physical activity continue to be recognised as a pillar of a healthier, more inclusive, and economically resilient Europe.

Mindset Shift Powers Goh & Lai to Uncharted Heights

The world tour can be relentless. Its rhythm unforgiving, its demands unrelenting. Finding that elusive balance – the precise mental and emotional formula to unlock freedom on court – remains a mystery for many.

But sometimes, it only takes one spark. A mindset shift, a personal milestone, or a renewed sense of purpose. Just ask Malaysia's Goh Soon Huat and Lai Shevon Jemie.

After two Olympic cycles marked by unfulfilled dreams, disappointment, and a steady slide down the rankings, many might have walked away. But the recently married pair found something deeper – in each other, in their faith, and in their fight.

With their Paris 2024 hopes no longer in play, something remarkable has happened. A new chapter, fuelled by freedom and belief, has taken flight.

First, they captured the YONEX Swiss Open 2024 title. Then came triumph on home soil at the PERODUA Malaysia Masters. Now, their stunning run continues with a career-defining victory at the VICTOR China Open 2024, propelling them into their maiden Super 1000 final on the HSBC BWF World Tour.

It was a performance as emotional as it was composed.

"I am Christian, and there is one phrase I always keep in mind: when one door closes, another opens," said Lai. "We've never given up – that's what has kept us going until today."

"Yes, we are playing free. There's less pressure. We're enjoying it more than ever," added Goh.

Their resurgence has lifted them into the top three of the HSBC Race to Finals standings. More significantly, it has reignited their passion and purpose.

"It's surreal," Lai continued. "This is our third final this year – an unbelievable achievement. I've always dreamed of making a Super 1000 final, and I'm almost in tears. I just want to thank my partner for keeping it together today."

"Every match we play now is one less we'll have together in future," she reflected. "So we just want to cherish every moment on court – as long as we stay healthy, you'll be seeing more of us."

Goh summed it up with calm clarity: "It's all down to mindset. We were more comfortable, brave, and stable today. That made the difference – especially in the pressure points."

And with that, a duo many had written off is now soaring, not just chasing victories, but embracing the joy of the journey.



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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