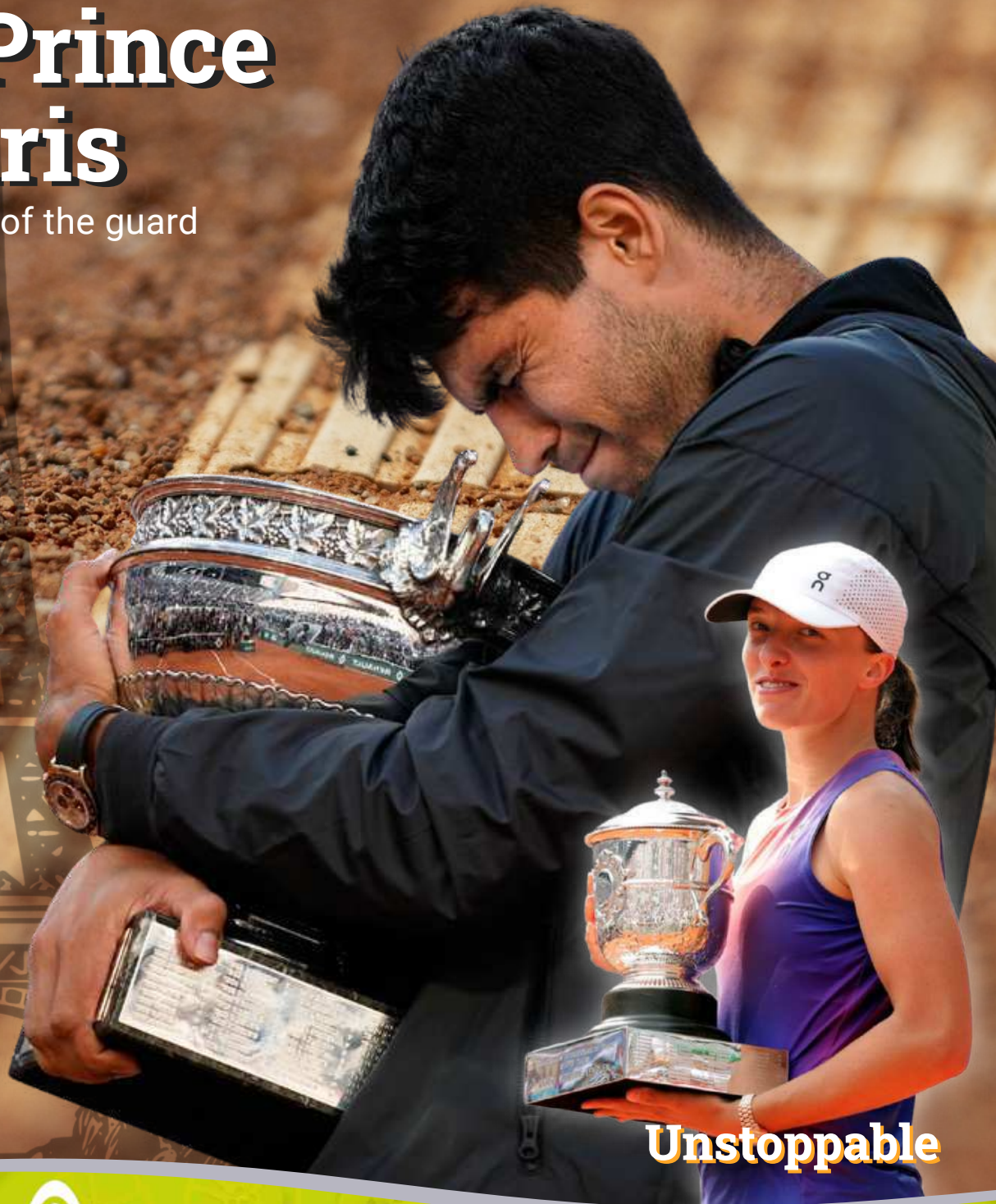




GRSA INTERNATIONAL ATW MAGAZINE

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The changing of the guard



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The HEAD stringing team were back at Berlin, having already been in Geneva, the tournament in Berlin was quite a mix of bad weather and surprises. PRS & GRSA powered the Official HEAD Stringing team with a special reveal included.

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This month Nick is taking on the task of explaining the PRINCE EXO3 TOUR. We also look at some of the standout news from around the world.

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Big names, big changes and big games

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

Changing of the Guard at Roland Garros

Spain's Carlos Alcaraz made a significant mark in tennis history by winning Roland Garros, becoming the youngest player in the professional era to secure three Grand Slam titles across three different surfaces.

Alcaraz, 21, triumphed over Germany's Alexander Zverev with a score of 6-3, 2-6, 5-7, 6-1, 6-2, adding the French Open to his previous victories at the 2022 US Open and 2023 Wimbledon.

"We suffered a lot with the injury in the previous weeks," said Alcaraz during the awards ceremony, where he received the trophy from Sweden's Bjorn Borg, a five-time champion of the tournament. "I am very grateful to the people I have around me, they make me improve as a player and as a person as I grow. I call them a team, but they are family. I'm lucky to have part of my family here. When I got out of school I would run to turn on the TV at home to watch this tournament, and now I have this trophy."

In a grueling four-hour, 19-minute final, the 27-year-old Zverev still has yet to win any of the four major tennis tournaments.

For those who relish statistics: has anyone ever started a Grand Slam final with two consecutive double faults? That's precisely what Zverev did in the first game, which allowed Alcaraz to seize an early psychological advantage. At 40-40, Alcaraz attacked with a fierce forehand return and finished with a low cross-court backhand volley. Moments later, he clinched the game.

This strategy was deliberate. After winning the coin toss, Alcaraz chose to receive, aiming to break Zverev's serve from the outset. However, Alcaraz himself faltered in his first service game, something he had experienced in earlier matches of the tournament.

Alcaraz quickly recovered, breaking in the fifth game. Although he had Zverev serving at 2-4 and 15-40, he couldn't close out that game.

Nonetheless, Alcaraz displayed greater confidence and freedom compared to his tentative start in the semi-final against Italy's Jannik Sinner. He experimented with a variety of shots against Zverev, and despite the increasingly windy conditions, he secured the first set 6-3 with a stunning cross-court forehand that left Zverev unable to respond.

The wind became a crucial factor, kicking up dust and altering the ball's trajectory. In one such gust, Alcaraz missed a forehand badly, sending the ball into the stands, and subsequently lost his serve. Zverev defended his serve at 3-2 to go up 4-2. Alcaraz's inconsistency, including a double fault, handed Zverev a 5-2 lead, and the German took the set 6-2 with some high-quality play.

Alcaraz shook off his frustration and regained his rhythm in the third set, even enjoying the game again. He saved a break point at 4-2 with a clever drop-shot and backhand passing shot combination. Despite the fierce wind on the clay, he appeared poised to take the third set. However, Zverev fought back, breaking Alcaraz's serve and narrowing the gap to 5-4.

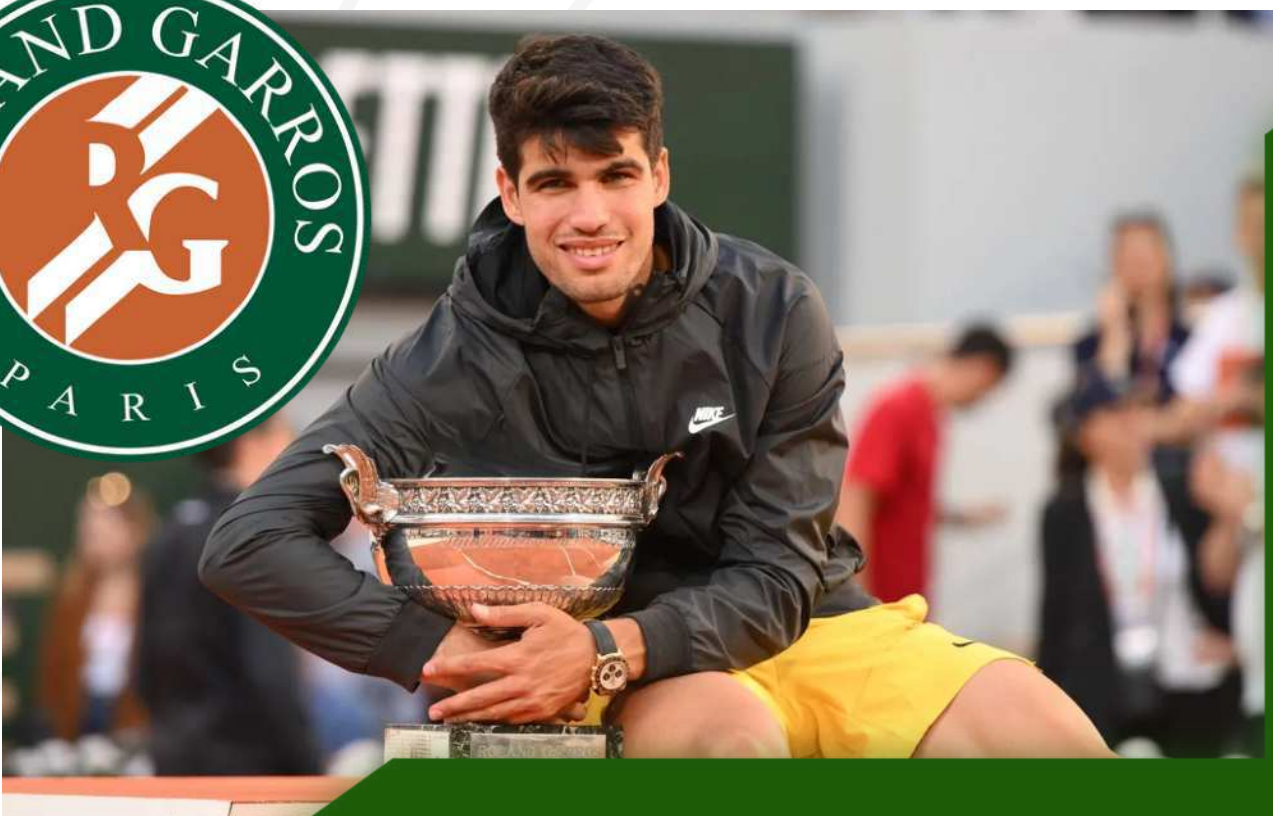
The final was marked by inconsistency. Both players produced some brilliant points, but frequent errors dominated. Alcaraz's service faltered again, allowing Zverev to serve for the set at 6-5. The German played high, looping balls to unsettle Alcaraz in the wind and succeeded, taking the set 7-5.

Zverev had been in a similar situation before, notably in the 2020 US Open final where he led Dominic Thiem by two sets to none but ultimately lost. Would history repeat itself in Paris?

Alcaraz broke Zverev's serve for a 2-0 lead and continued with a well-executed backhand drop shot to go up 4-0. Despite receiving medical treatment for a leg issue, Alcaraz's determination was evident as the match progressed to a fifth set.

In the decisive set, Alcaraz's competitive spirit shone through. With the court now mostly in shadow, he managed to put Zverev on the defensive. Even though the crowd largely supported the Spaniard, Zverev maintained a sour and tense demeanor. Ultimately, Alcaraz's tenacity paid off, and the victory, which the stadium's inscription claims is for "the most tenacious," was his.

Alcaraz's Roland Garros win is a significant milestone. His support team, including coach Juan Carlos Ferrero, played a pivotal role. Ferrero, who was the last Spaniard to win Roland Garros in 2003 before Rafael Nadal's era of dominance, witnessed Alcaraz take up the mantle. With Nadal possibly making his final appearance in the French Open in 2025, Alcaraz's victory hints at a new chapter for Spanish tennis.



Who can stop Iga?

Iga Swiatek is solidifying her status as the Queen of Clay. The 23-year-old Pole secured her fourth French Open title, decisively defeating Italy's Jasmine Paolini with a score of 6-2, 6-1.

This victory places Swiatek among the top five winningest women's players in Paris, surpassing legends such as Serena Williams and Monica Seles. Chris Evert currently holds the record with seven titles at the French Open.

Swiatek's path to the 2024 championship was mostly smooth, with a significant challenge arising in the second round against former Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka. Swiatek faced a match point against Osaka's powerful play but managed to secure the win in three tightly contested sets.

"I was almost out of the tournament in the second round, so thank you guys for staying behind my back and cheering for me," Swiatek said after her win. "I also needed to believe that this one was going to be possible. It has been a very emotional tournament, so thank you for supporting me."



Following her hard-fought victory over Osaka, Swiatek advanced past her subsequent opponents with ease, dropping only two games in both the Round of 16 and the quarterfinals. She then dominated American Coco Gauff in the semifinals, securing her third consecutive French Open final appearance.

Swiatek's dominance on clay is further exemplified by her recent victories at the Madrid and Rome tournaments, making her the first woman since Serena Williams in 2013 to win all three major clay-court events in the same season.

During the post-match ceremony, Swiatek was joined by two tennis icons, Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova, each of whom has won 18 Grand Slam singles titles. Evert remarked before this French Open that she believes Swiatek has the potential to surpass her record of seven championships in Paris.

Swiatek will now transition to the grass courts of London, where she will enter Wimbledon as the top seed in singles play. Her best performance at the All England Club came in 2023 when she reached the quarterfinals. She previously won the junior Wimbledon singles title in 2018.

Jasmine Paolini, despite her defeat, will also carry significant momentum into the grass-court season. Currently ranked world No. 15, Paolini is set to break into the top 10 in the new rankings.

Murray honours, and record pot!



Wimbledon has announced a record prize fund of £50 million (\$63.94 million) and outlined plans to honor Andy Murray if this year's tournament marks his farewell.

The total prize money has increased by 11.9%, or £5.3 million, compared to last year, and is now double what was offered in 2014. The men's and women's singles champions will each receive £2.7 million, up from £2.35 million last year. First-round losers will also see an increase in their earnings, receiving £60,000, which is £5,000 more than in 2023.

The runners-up in the singles competitions will be awarded £1.4 million each. The grass-court Grand Slam is scheduled to take place from July 1-14, with Carlos Alcaraz from Spain and Marketa Vondrousova from the Czech Republic as the defending champions.

Last year, Wimbledon reported a turnover of £380.2 million and an operating profit of £53.8 million. Debbie Jevans, chair of the All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC), highlighted the need to balance financial support for players who rely on prize money to cover costs such as coaching, travel, and expenses, with the rewards for top-level players.

"Interest in attending Wimbledon has never been greater, with unprecedented demand for tickets through our public ballot and corporate hospitality," said Jevans. "A thriving, successful Championships gives us the opportunity to give back: to the sport, to our local community, and to strategically invest for the future."

Jevans also announced that the prize pot for wheelchair competitions has been set at £1 million to reflect their growing popularity, with the singles and doubles draws expanding to include 16 players and eight teams respectively.

This year's tournament might be the last for 37-year-old Andy Murray, a former world number one whose 2013 victory made him the first British Wimbledon men's singles champion since Fred Perry in 1936. Murray also claimed the title in 2016. AELTC chief executive Sally Bolton stated that they have flexible plans in place to honor Murray, depending on his decision.

"We are ready and prepared but ultimately it's Andy's decision and we will very much be led by him, and we can amend our plans accordingly," Bolton said. "We're clear about what we want to do but it's really important that this is Andy's call."

Nadal to miss Wimbledon

Rafael Nadal has confirmed he will not be participating in Wimbledon this year to focus on the upcoming Paris Olympics, which will be held on the clay courts of Roland Garros. The announcement follows a recent statement by Spanish tennis officials that the 14-time French Open champion will partner with Carlos Alcaraz at the Olympic Games in Paris.

Nadal, now 38, was ousted in the first round at Roland Garros last month and hinted at the time that he would likely skip Wimbledon, traditionally played on grass. He has previously claimed Wimbledon titles in 2008 and 2010. The injury-prone Spaniard, currently ranked 264 in the world, acknowledged after his loss to eventual runner-up Alexander Zverev in Paris that switching from clay to grass would not be a "smart" move.

"It looks difficult to make a transition to grass, having the Olympics again on clay," Nadal remarked at the time.

The former world No. 1, who secured the Olympic singles title in Beijing in 2008, made a return to competition in April after being sidelined for most of the past 16 months due to injuries. On Thursday, he confirmed via social media that he would not travel to London for the third Grand Slam event of the year.

"During my post-match press conference at Roland Garros I was asked about my summer calendar and since then I have been practising on clay," Nadal tweeted. "It was announced yesterday that I will play at the summer Olympics in Paris, my last Olympics."

He continued: "With this goal, we believe that the best for my body is not to change surface and keep playing on clay until then. It's for this reason that I will miss playing at the Championships this year at Wimbledon. I am saddened not to be able to live this year the great atmosphere of that amazing event that will always be in my heart, and be with all the British fans that always gave me great support. I will miss you all."

Nadal, who won the Olympic doubles title with Marc Lopez at the 2016 Rio Games, plans to prepare for Paris at the Bastad clay court tournament in Sweden, which begins on July 15. The veteran, second on the all-time list of men's Grand Slam winners behind Novak Djokovic, will team up with Alcaraz, the newly crowned French Open champion and reigning Wimbledon champion, for the doubles event at the Olympics. Both players will also compete in the singles tournament in Paris, which starts on July 27.

Nadal, who holds a 7-5 win-loss record this year, mentioned before the French Open that there was a possibility he might not return to Roland Garros in the future, but he emphasized that he remains "100% open" to continuing his career.

With the absence of Novak too, this year's event will no doubt be as entertaining as always but missing some key players that always show up for this iconic tournament.

LTA NEWS

The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) has entered into a significant four-year partnership with Tennis Channel to deliver comprehensive coverage of the UK grass court events at Nottingham, Birmingham, The Queen's Club, and Eastbourne until 2027.

Under this partnership, Tennis Channel will acquire exclusive rights to broadcast matches from every court at these events, encompassing both singles and doubles competitions at the tour level. The coverage will kick off on June 10 at the Rothesay Open in Nottingham and will extend to all grass court events over the next four years.

Tennis Channel, renowned for its innovative approach to sports broadcasting, is committed to expanding its audience in Great Britain. The channel has been the fastest-growing pay-TV network in the U.S. over the past decade and aims to replicate this success in the UK. In addition to event coverage, Tennis Channel will also produce supplementary content focused on British tennis and other initiatives to elevate the sport's profile.

The collaboration between LTA and Tennis Channel was facilitated by Spring Media. Meanwhile, the BBC will also offer coverage of the 2024 summer grass court events. This includes streaming the Rothesay Open in Nottingham (featuring the ATP Challenger event) and the Rothesay Classic in Birmingham on iPlayer and digital platforms. The cinch Championships at The Queen's Club and the Rothesay International in Eastbourne will be broadcast on BBC network television and digital services.

Additionally, the Lexus Ilkley Trophy and Lexus British Open Roehampton will be available on the LTA's own channels, ensuring that fans can follow all British events and the progress of local players on the grass courts throughout the summer.

Chris Pollard, Managing Director of Commercial & Operations at the LTA, expressed enthusiasm about the partnership: "The Tennis Channel have a proven track record in the USA, and we're excited to be partnering with them to bring their same high-quality coverage to fans in Britain. We're looking forward to working with them to deliver a great offering for fans who want the widest possible coverage of our events. We are also very pleased to once again be partnering with the BBC to ensure that all our tour events are available free-to-air and deliver visibility for tennis, during what will be a busy summer of sport."

Andy Reif, Senior VP of Programming and International at Tennis Channel, echoed these sentiments: "The grass court season is such a special time of year for British tennis fans. Everyone at Tennis Channel is so excited to be able to showcase these amazing LTA tournaments and bring our expert, round-the-clock coverage to Nottingham, Birmingham, Queen's and Eastbourne - from the first ball to the last."

British Tennis Flying

Katie Boulter and Jack Draper delivered outstanding performances in June by securing titles in Nottingham and Stuttgart, respectively. This marked the first time in 53 years that both a British woman and man have clinched tour-level titles on the same day.

Boulter successfully defended her Nottingham Open title after an intense 3-hour and 13-minute match against Emma Raducanu, which she won in a comeback fashion. She then went on to defeat former world No. 1 Karolina Pliskova in a thrilling final, 4-6, 6-3, 6-2. Earlier on the same day, Draper claimed his first ATP title at the Stuttgart Open by overcoming Italy's Matteo Berrettini in a hard-fought match, 3-6, 7-6 (5), 6-4, achieving a milestone in his promising career. The last time a British man and woman won titles on the same day was in 1971 when Roger Taylor and Ann Jones both triumphed.

Boulter's victory in Nottingham adds to her collection of three WTA titles, two of which she has won this year, including her first WTA 500 event in San Diego in March. Interestingly, she achieved both of these titles on the same days that her boyfriend, Alex de Minaur, secured his own victories. De Minaur won in 's-Hertogenbosch by defeating Sebastian Korda 6-2, 6-4, maintaining an impressive form throughout the week.

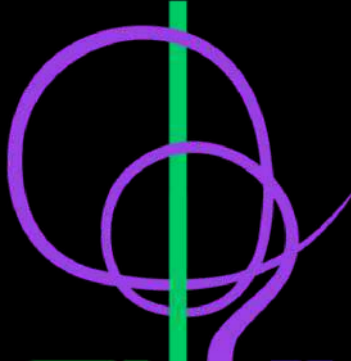
The Nottingham Open faced severe weather disruptions, causing Boulter to play five sets on Sunday alone, winning four of them. She overcame a one-set deficit against Raducanu overnight, returning with determination to dominate the exchanges with her serve and forehand, eventually winning 6-7 (13), 6-3, 6-4. In the final against Pliskova, who also played six sets on Sunday, Boulter initially appeared fatigued but managed to take control of the match, forcing herself inside the baseline and dictating play to secure the victory.

A year after her breakthrough at Nottingham, where she won her first title as a wildcard ranked No. 126, Boulter, now 27, has established herself as a formidable player on the world stage. This year has been the best of her career, solidifying her position in the top 100 and making her a significant contender throughout the grass court season and beyond.

Three weeks after an early exit at the French Open, Draper showcased his resilience by excelling in his first week on grass this season. His week of stellar performances culminated in his victory over Berrettini in Stuttgart. Already set to surpass Cameron Norrie to become the British No. 1, Draper, at 22, will now also achieve a career-high ranking, reaching around No. 31.

"I've been doing all the right things for a long time now," Draper said. "The results haven't necessarily shown that. But I've been working so hard behind the scenes, doing all the right things on and off the court, and it's testament to my perseverance and the amazing people I have around me, supporting me every single day. It means the world to me.

"The power of belief, especially in tennis, is a huge thing. Being able to come and win against top players, that's so important. This win will give me a massive confidence boost and hopefully I can keep going and being really tough to beat and I can remember this for a long time."



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Queens' Shocks & Slips

Holger Rune, the seventh seed, faced an unexpected early exit at the Queen's Club Championships, falling to Australian Jordan Thompson in a 4-6, 7-6(4), 6-3 first-round upset. The 21-year-old Dane managed to claim the first set, breaking the tie at 4-4, but Thompson, ranked 43rd in the world, elevated his game to take a tight second set to a tiebreak. Thompson's clinical performance in the tiebreak forced a decisive third set.

In the final set, Thompson quickly established a 3-0 lead and maintained his momentum to secure the victory over the 15th-ranked Rune. This win also marked an end to Thompson's five-match losing streak.



Rune, who reached the quarter-finals at Wimbledon last year, has struggled in recent Grand Slam events, bowing out in the second round of the Australian Open in January and the fourth round of the French Open earlier this month. The Wimbledon tournament is scheduled to run from July 1 to July 14.

Milos Raonic triumphed over home favourite Cameron Norrie with a 6-7 (6-8), 6-3, 7-6 (11-9) victory at the Queen's Club in London on Monday, advancing to the second round of the grass-court competition.

Norrie claimed the opening set in a tense tiebreak, as both players showcased their serving prowess—a pattern that persisted throughout the match. Raonic managed the sole break of the entire contest in the second set, leveling the match and setting up a decisive third set.



The final set saw both players relying heavily on their serves, resulting in another tiebreak to determine the winner. Raonic's performance was marked by an impressive 47 aces, highlighting his formidable serving ability, while Norrie contributed 12 aces of his own.

"It's an incredibly difficult match," Raonic remarked after securing the victory. "Got lucky to get through, obviously the serve helped me a lot today."

Francis Tiafoe was another to be given his marching orders very early in the tournament, but only due to having to retire, even though it was a close match and he looked to be on the backfoot. The slippery courts have again claimed another big name, Rune had already said that the courts were extremely slippery, Francis felt it at a crucial point in the second set, but never seemed to recover and was in obvious pain. This is not the first time and it won't be the last that the courts at Queens test players stability, and even though it's questionable as to the safety of players, everyone is in the same position and they all have to deal with it.

More home crowd dreams were dashed when Dan Evans also had to retire after slipping on court on his opening match. He lost the second 6-3 before an awkward slip at the back of Court 1 cutting short his Queen's campaign, at the same time ending his doubles hopes with the soon to retire Andy Murray.

"That's probably the worst thing you can do on the grass, your body goes one way, and we have all seen that sort of motion before.

You wince if you're watching, and you hope it's not too bad if it's happening to you.

Touch wood, I have been lucky with injuries, and the last one was a difficult one, but coming back, there are positive signs, and there are obviously negatives, as well.

Andy might get another few matches here, and obviously I have not let him down, but I'm not fit to play, hopefully he keeps going in the singles."

Dan Evans - A moment of reflection

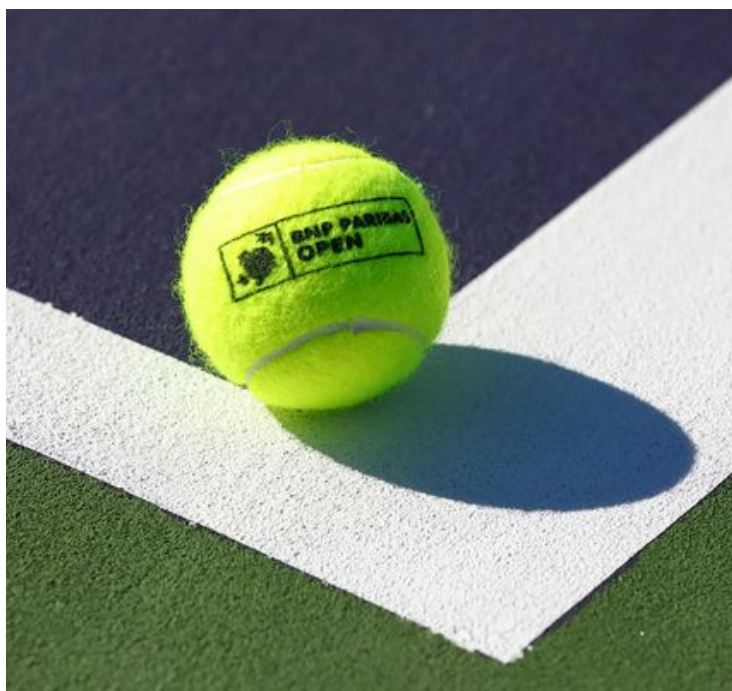


The Tennis Ball Controversy at Indian Wells: A Growing Problem

The recent controversy surrounding tennis balls at Indian Wells has sparked significant debate among players and officials alike. As a starting point for our exploration into this issue, we delve into the perspectives of top athletes who have voiced concerns about the impact of ball quality on their performance and health. Looking ahead, we will shift our focus to examine the intricate details of tennis balls from the manufacturer's perspective, particularly through the lens of HEAD, exploring both the construction nuances affecting ball performance and the challenges of maintaining consistency across different tournaments.

The BNP Paribas Open at Indian Wells has always been a pinnacle event in the tennis calendar, drawing top players and enthusiasts alike to its picturesque Californian desert setting. However, recent editions of the tournament have been marred by a contentious issue concerning the tennis balls used on its courts. Critics, including prominent names like Stan Wawrinka, Daniil Medvedev, Emma Raducanu, and Novak Djokovic, have publicly expressed their dissatisfaction with the quality and durability of the Penn balls used at Indian Wells.

The courts at Indian Wells are renowned for their gritty surface, deliberately designed to counteract the dry desert conditions and create a slower playing environment. While this design intent enhances the strategic depth of matches, it also accelerates the wear and tear on tennis balls. Stan Wawrinka vividly illustrated this concern during a press conference, displaying heavily worn balls after just a few rallies, highlighting the severity of the issue. Jessica Pegula echoed similar sentiments, noting that the balls quickly become too fluffy, adversely affecting play consistency.



Impact on Players

Beyond the aesthetic and gameplay concerns, the rapid degradation of tennis balls at Indian Wells has raised significant worries about player safety and performance consistency. Emma Raducanu, who has navigated her career through injury recoveries, emphasized the challenges posed by inconsistent ball conditions. The variance in ball quality between tournaments also presents a notable hurdle for players like Taylor Fritz and Jessica Pegula, who must adapt their game strategies between the Penn balls at Indian Wells and the Dunlop balls used at subsequent events like the Miami Open.

Novak Djokovic has proposed a potential solution to this issue, advocating for a uniform tennis ball type across all tournaments. Such a measure, he argues, would streamline player adaptation and mitigate injury risks associated with abrupt changes in ball characteristics.



The Fluffiness Issue

One of the central points of contention revolves around the "fluffiness" of the balls. According to Jessica Pegula and other players, the balls lose their ideal consistency early in matches, forcing adjustments in playing styles and increasing physical strain on players. This phenomenon, they argue, is not exclusive to Penn balls but a broader issue affecting tennis balls across different brands and tournaments.

Possible Solutions

Looking ahead, the debate around tennis ball consistency and performance remains unresolved. As we continue our series of articles, we will delve deeper into these issues from a manufacturer's perspective, particularly examining the construction and material choices influencing ball fluffiness and durability. Furthermore, the challenge of maintaining consistency in ball behavior across diverse environmental conditions poses a complex puzzle for tennis authorities and equipment manufacturers alike.

As we look forward to future articles, it becomes evident that the issues of fluffiness and ball consistency are pivotal in the realm of professional tennis. The variability in ball performance due to factors like construction materials and environmental conditions presents ongoing challenges for players and tournament organizers alike. These topics will be thoroughly explored, shedding light on the complexities that shape the game at its highest levels and offering insights into potential solutions for enhancing player experience and maintaining fair competition across diverse playing environments.

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Another Blow for Andy

If things weren't already testing for Murray, along comes something else to add to the mix.

On the Wednesday, the final phase of Andy Murray's illustrious career took a dramatic twist as he was compelled to withdraw from his second-round match at Queen's Club due to a back injury. Trailing 4-1 to Jordan Thompson, the severity of the injury raises concerns about Murray's readiness for Wimbledon, possibly his final appearance at the iconic tournament.

A five-time champion at Queen's Club, Murray had kicked off his tournament with a hard-fought 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 victory over Alexei Popyrin on Tuesday, marking his first ATP win since an ankle ligament tear during a third-round match at the Miami Open in March. Despite signaling discomfort in his back during the second set, Murray managed to deliver an impressive third set, hinting at significant progress.

However, from the very first serve, it was evident that something was amiss. Murray, known for his agility, did not spring back into his usual split step, remaining stationary as Thompson's slow return of serve passed him for a winner, leaving the crowd in astonished silence.

Murray's movements soon became noticeably restricted, and as the concerned spectators watched quietly, it became apparent that his retirement was inevitable.

Back issues have plagued Murray throughout his career, leading to surgery in 2013 and recurrent difficulties, particularly on clay courts. Following a first-round loss at the French Open last month, he had announced plans to treat his back soreness, a recurring issue he has managed before most clay seasons over the past decade. However, the acute pain he experienced before the Queen's Club match was unprecedented.



"During my pre-match warm-up, I was pretty uncomfortable, and then just before going on the court, I didn't have the usual strength in my right leg," Murray remarked. "It was not a usual feeling. I don't know how many of you were watching, but the first two balls I hit in the warm-up, my right leg, it was so uncoordinated. I had no coordination. Then [my] right leg just was not working properly."

Understandably devastated by his misfortune, Murray swiftly packed up his gear and prepared to exit the centre court at Queen's Club. As he left, the audience, recognising the significance of the moment, gave him a heartfelt standing ovation, honouring the greatest British tennis player of the Open era.

Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz's preparation hit a snag on the Thursday as he fell in the second round of the Queen's Club tournament.

Alcaraz, the defending champion at Queen's and the top seed, was defeated by British No. 1 Jack Draper with a score of 7-6 (3), 6-3.



For Draper, it was a career-defining win, displaying remarkable composure in front of his home crowd.

Last year, Queen's was Alcaraz's sole grass-court preparation before his triumphant Wimbledon debut. This year, however, the Spaniard will head into Wimbledon with only two grass matches under his belt following his French Open victory. Wimbledon kicks off in just 11 days.

Draper's victory snapped Alcaraz's eight-match winning streak while extending Draper's own to seven, having recently claimed his first ATP title in Stuttgart.

In a commanding performance, Draper did not face a single break point. The match was closely contested until the tiebreak in the first set, where Draper surged to a 4-0 lead, eventually taking it 7-3 as Alcaraz netted a return.

The pivotal moment of the second set came in the sixth game when Draper broke Alcaraz's serve with a stunning backhand down the line. Draper then saved a break point to go up 5-2. Although Alcaraz saved three match points to hold his serve, Draper confidently served out the match, celebrating with arms raised in triumph.

"I knew I had to come out here and play really well, and luckily I did that," Draper said on court. He went on to face Tommy Paul in the quarter finals

In other matches on the Thursday, Lorenzo Musetti defeated Brandon Nakashima 6-4, 4-6, 6-4, and will face British wild card Billy Harris in the quarterfinals. Fifth-seeded Tommy Paul secured his place in the next round with a 6-3, 6-4 victory over Alejandro Tabilo.

In the Room

With Richard Parnell

Is painting the Stencil a necessity?

This month's thoughts, in the room, are to do with the painting, or not, of the logo on the stringbed to add a professional touch.

The Tour players have a logo painted because they are paid by that brand and as such, promote the brand whenever possible and the logo on the stringbed is an easy one.

Some players have specific requests for the stringers concerning the placement of the logo, the direction of the logo, and how the logo is painted including which colour is used. Often stringers think these requests are just superstitions, but is there more to these requests than meets the eye?

Some players ask for the stencil to be painted with a light coat of paint, this request can affect the playability of the frame because, if the strings are stuck together with a thick coating of stencil ink, the snap-back of the strings can be affected and less spin generated.

If the player asks for the logo to be lined up on a certain string, this can also have an aesthetic influence on the restring as all rackets will then be identical and when the player is on court everything will look identical. I'm sure many stringers place logos higher or lower than other stringers, by requesting a specific placement (including relative to the buttcap) they are removing a variable. Will it affect the playability? No.

The painting of the logo in a retail environment is a matter of choice and some shops do and some do not, as it doesn't affect the quality of the restring, it is a personal choice. It is often considered a finishing touch that adds a professional touch for an amateur client.

The investment in stencils for the major brands is minimal, the cost of ink is low so offering the service can be seen as going the extra mile to keep a client happy. It is advisable to ask the client before applying the logo as some players are against creating marketing for the brand.

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The day you stop trying is the day you miss another opportunity to learn something new. You'll also miss out on knowing if that attempt would have been the one that actually worked.

D.J Efford

1 **The Queen's Club** boasts ten Indoor Courts (two winter domes, one housing two clay indoor courts and the other housing two Plexi indoor courts), 12 Grass Courts, six Shale Courts, six Plexi Courts, four Artificial Grass Courts and an Indoor Practice Wall.

2 **The Queens club also has other courts**

Real Tennis: Two courts

Rackets: Two courts

Squash: Three glass backed courts.

3 **The Queen's Club additionally has:**

Gymnasium: Over 1200 sq ft containing both a range of Cybex and Life Fitness equipment as well as a free weights area.

Fitness Studio: Dedicated studio for a range of fitness classes including Yoga, Pilates, Zumba, HIIT, Spin & Tone, Bootcamp and Tai Chi.

Treatment Rooms: Four Treatment Rooms – Members can enjoy the benefits of Massage (Deep Tissue, Remedial, Therapeutic), Osteopathy, Physiotherapy and Pilates in Studio (reformer).

Junior Club: Two dedicated indoor courts for the Junior Club provide Junior members (aged 6 – 16 years) group lessons, a dining and lounge area, homework room, games room and changing rooms.

4 **The Queen's Club** was the world's first multipurpose sports complex. The club hosts the prestigious annual Queen's Club Championships grass court men's lawn tennis tournament, and will be hosting the women's tournament again as of 2025. It is also the national headquarters of real tennis, hosting the **British Open** every year.

Stringer Solutions

with Richard Parnell

TOP
TIP

Which Stringing Machine Should I buy?

I often get asked which stringing machine I would recommend. The answer is simple, the best one you can afford now and for the immediate & short term future.

A stringing machine is an investment in your craft and/or business and as such should reflect either your current stringing needs or the increased volume due to a new more professional machine.

Quite a few years ago I was using a crank machine (80's), having already upgraded from a drop weight, and I was stringing about 7 rackets a week or about 30 a month. I realized that the business was being held back because my machine didn't shout "professional at work here" so I looked into the choices available to me at the time, there were a lot less then, and basically it was a choice between Babolat or TF professional machines.

I looked at what I thought was an achievable increase in volume, worked out the rackets needed to pay for the machine over 2 years and set a ballpark figure for the investment it would need. I chose the Babolat Starring "E" and never looked back, my volume increased massively, I used the stringing charge to cover the bill every month and kept the string profit as income over that period. This meant that after 2 years I had a professional machine that lasted me from 1989 until 1997 when I upgraded again to the best machine on the market at the time, the Babolat 5502. The Starring "E" was then sold second-hand for a decent amount and lasted its new owner another 15 years.

The change of machine was a choice of what the business could be as opposed to what it was at that time.

I use this example of how the choice of machine can impact not just the ease of use, the more precise outcome and quicker stringing, but as an investment in yourself and your stringing business.

There is a lot more choice these days and as I write this..... another new machine is about to be launched that is definitely worth a look at.

Whichever machine you can afford, Go for It!! You won't regret it.

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

HEAD[®]

OFFICIAL STRINGING TEAM

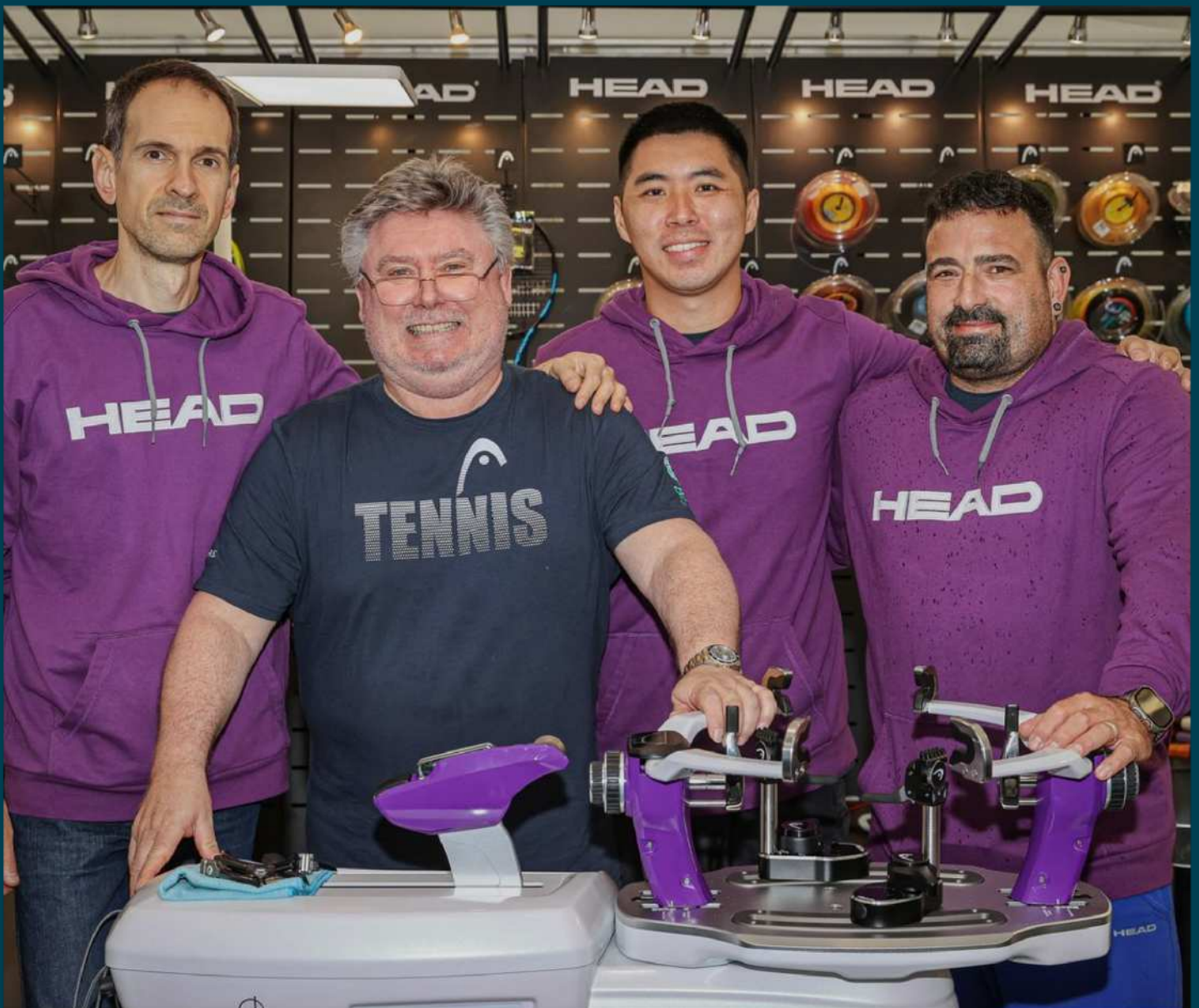
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P.R.S.



**Global
Racket
Stringers
Association**





ECO TRANS *Ladies* OPEN



Kenneth

Martin



Cristian



Ecotrans Ladies Open Berlin WTA 500

Singles draw: 32, **Doubles draw:** 16



407 rackets in total were strung under some very adverse conditions, from rain storms to extremely high winds which at one point, meant that the installations had to be emptied for safety reasons. Overall it was a successful tournament and everybody was happy with the professional service provided.

Lowest tension was: 15,3/15,3 kg and the highest tension was: 28/ 26 kg

Singles winner: Jessica Pegula

Doubles: Wang / Zheng

Stringing Team:

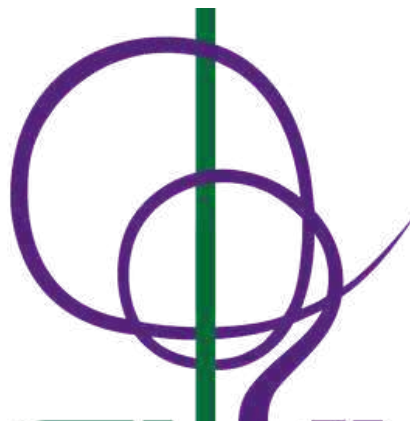
Head Stringer: Richard Parnell, **Team Manager:** Martin Mann, **Team:** Kenneth Leong (South East Asia - manager), Cristian Ungureanu, Jörg Maierstein and Benjamin Müller who are GRSA Members, also joined the team for their first WTA500.





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STRINGS, RACKETS & TENNIS GEAR



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13th to the 17th
NOVEMBER 2024
Mijas, Málaga (Spain)

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**FOR MORE
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LIMITED SPACES
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Knowledge is power
excellence through education

Bringing stringers together from different parts of the world will never be an easy task & making the conference a “not to miss” event even harder. Part of the reason GRSA have taken this long to organise the first GRSA Global Conference is because we wanted to make sure the foundations of GRSA were set and we were ready to offer a professional and engaging new concept to this type of event.

Education is key to success and for this reason GRSA is bringing together some of the most respected experts in the industry to provide insights and advice on how to maximize potential.

Whether it is learning to string from scratch or taking your stringing to the next level, there will be something for everyone.

Fancy learning the intricacies of badminton stringing from an expert? We've got you covered. Mark Goodman is one of the most experienced badminton stringers out there. Want to learn the particularities of stringing squash rackets including the standard and non-standard patterns that create confusion? No better person to show you than GRSA's Global Squash manager Nick Down.

Customising is an important part of a racket technicians expertise. Let us show you the latest developments and tips and tricks on how to work with professional players and their equipment.

Fancy seeing what is involved in tour stringing with the GRSA International Stringing Team? We will have a course to cover the different protocols in place at the different events we run. Show us what you can do and increase your chances of making the team.

One of the Costa del Sol's leading holiday destinations will be the home of the first **GRSA Annual Global Stringers Conference**.

Wyndham Grand - Costa del Sol
Mijas Costa, Málaga, Spain

Beginner's Stringing Course

For absolute beginners, taking in the basics and showing you where and how to start, best practice and how this could even become a secondary income stream.

IN THE PERFECT SETTING!

Badminton & Squash Workshops

These specialist workshops help you understand the intricacies, styles & techniques required for both stringing needs.

Imparted by world class stringers

Customisation Workshop

Offering your clients professional customisation helps keep them coming back to you.

This workshop, given by a leading customisation expert does exactly this. Don't miss out!

EMAIL US FOR MORE INFORMATION



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

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

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

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

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

GRSA No Strings Attached.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



HEAD balls received as part of the NSA incentive.



DONATE NOW



NICK DOWN Looks at the **PRINCE EXO3 TOUR**

Prince Exo3 Tour was produced by Prince about 10-15 years ago. It was short-lived and at the same time, quite revolutionary, departing from what had become an established piece of technology, that at the time was unique to Prince.

However, the Exo3 Tour broke so often, that it was recalled by the brand and never released again.

For that reason, there are very few available. It would be fair to say, that the only ones that can be bought are the very few that slipped through the net. I can only remember two being used, 1 new one currently for sale and 1 that I picked up (used) in the last six months (sold under a different name, recognised by me).

- It still has a powering at its throat.
- It still has a string suspension insert system at the head and on both sides.
- It still has speedports at the head and on both sides.

That said, it differs from previous and particularly other Exo3 models with those features because:

- It is drilled through the powering and the string runs through grommets instead of going around the powering.
- Like all Exo3 models it still has plastic pieces that fit into the SpeedPorts at the head and on both sides, additionally, there are grommets built in to the plastic inserts at the head and on both sides.

Unlike other Prince Exo3 rackets, it doesn't have a fan string pattern, instead the strings are straight.



Nick's Nugget

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

Although, it still has an open throat, it is more traditionally shaped with the main strings not as long as other models.

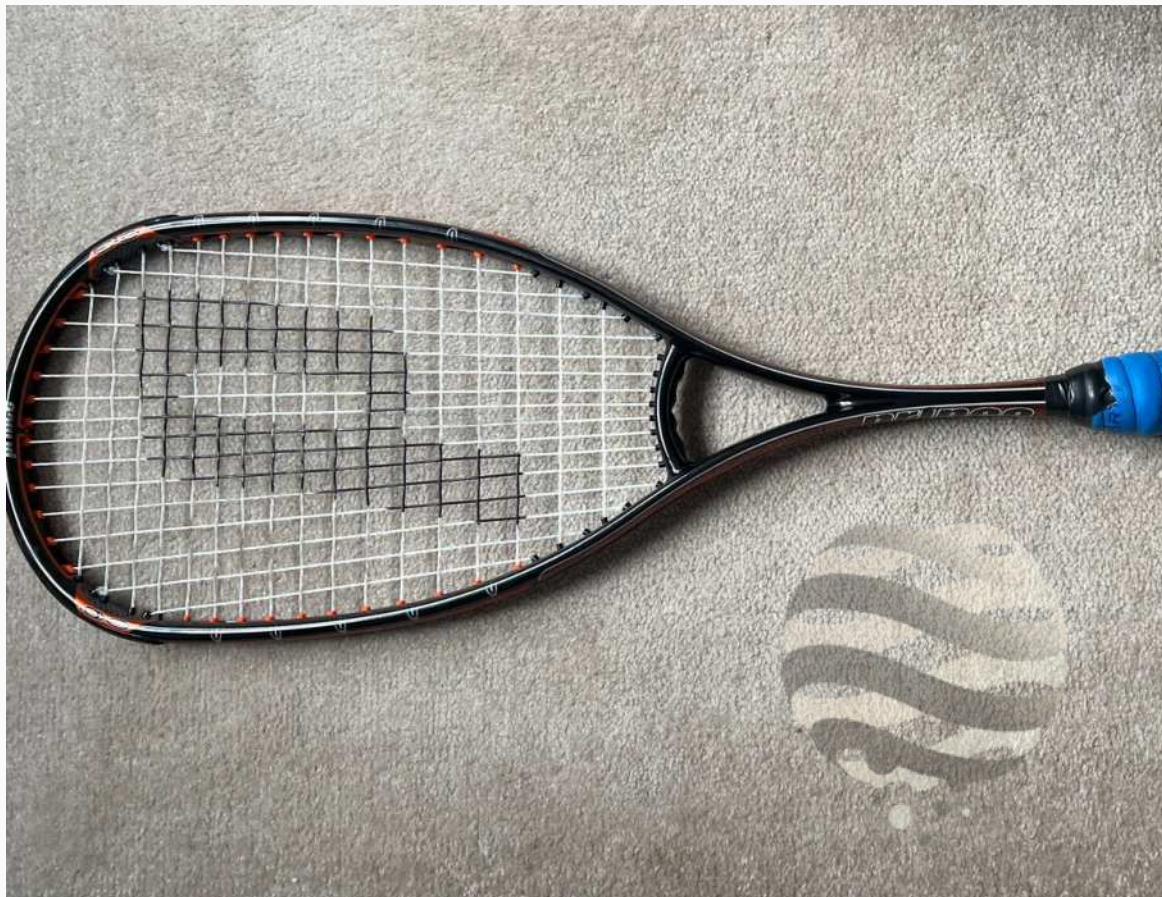
The tie-off points are marked on the frame, like all powering models. 2-piece stringing is preferred, it is possible to use 1-piece of string, but care needs to be taken that the cross strings correspond with the tie-off markings and the speedports on the sides, which are offset.

In other words, be careful!

In conclusion, I wanted a close look at this racket so that I could decide if there was enough challenging aspects, to a stringer, to warrant its addition to the list of Non-Standard Rackets, however there wasn't and the answer was No.

Whilst there were some challenging aspects to this string-pattern, there was nothing that was not an aspect of another pattern already on the list.

For example, it has a straight string pattern, drilled powering to form a bridge. Holes that contain grommets at the head, the bridge and both sides. There are no double-barrelled grommets, there are no hardweaves. All these aspects mean that this is a standard open-throat racket.



PSA Club Campestre De Cali 2024: Miguel Rodriguez Clinches Title

Miguel Rodriguez delivered a dominant performance on home turf at the PSA Club Campestre De Cali, securing his 31st PSA Tour title with a victory over Leonel Cardenas. This win marks his first PSA title in Colombia since 2014.

Rodriguez, the tournament's No.1 seed, had not competed in a PSA event in Colombia since 2016. However, he entered this tournament as the top seed and advanced to the final without losing a single game.

In the final, Rodriguez faced a formidable opponent in Leonel Cardenas, who is enjoying a career-best ranking of No. 22 in the world. Cardenas had a stellar season, highlighted by a notable win over Joel Makin in El Gouna. Like Rodriguez, Cardenas reached the final without dropping a game, setting the stage for an intense match.

The contest began with two marathon rallies, each exceeding 30 shots, signaling a fierce battle ahead. The first game, lasting 25 minutes, ended in Rodriguez's favor when Cardenas hit a forehand boast into the tin. Rodriguez quickly extended his lead, winning seven consecutive points to shift from a 2-2 tie to a commanding 9-2, and ultimately took the game.

Refusing to bow out easily, the young Mexican fought back in the third game, securing it on his third game ball with a deft backhand volley winner after Rodriguez had saved the first two.

However, Rodriguez regained control in the fourth game, converting a narrow 5-4 lead into a decisive 10-5 advantage, earning six championship balls. Despite Cardenas saving one with an impressive 'tweener' and Rodriguez hitting the tin, the Colombian quickly wrapped up the match. He smashed a backhand return of serve into the nick, collapsing to the floor and unleashing a triumphant cry as the enthusiastic home crowd erupted in celebration.

Result:

- [1] Miguel Rodriguez (COL) def. [2] Leonel Cardenas (MEX) 3-1: 11-7, 11-4, 9-11, 11-6 (92m)



Historic Victory for Hayley Ward at the Investimax Brussels Open

Hayley Ward made history at the Investimax Brussels Open, becoming the first South African woman to win a PSA event since 2018. Ward triumphed over England's Kiera Marshall to secure the prestigious title.

Ward, the tournament's No. 2 seed, dominated her path to the final, winning all her matches 3-0. However, she faced a formidable opponent in the No. 1 seed, Kiera Marshall, who had previously defeated Ward in their only PSA Tour encounter. This final marked Marshall's sixth appearance in a PSA Tour final, yet she was still in pursuit of her first title. In contrast, Ward, playing in her first-ever final, perhaps benefited from a sense of freedom and lack of pressure.

Ward took the first two games 11-7, demonstrating poise and control. Despite being on the big stage for the first time, she showed no signs of nerves in the third game, clinching it 11-6 to claim the title.

This victory not only signifies Ward's first PSA title but also marks a significant achievement for South African squash. She becomes the first South African to win a PSA Challenger Tour title outside her home country since Alexandra Fuller's win at the Open International des Volcans in 2018.

Result:

- [2] Hayley Ward (RSA) def. [1] Kiera Marshall (ENG): 11-7, 11-7, 11-6



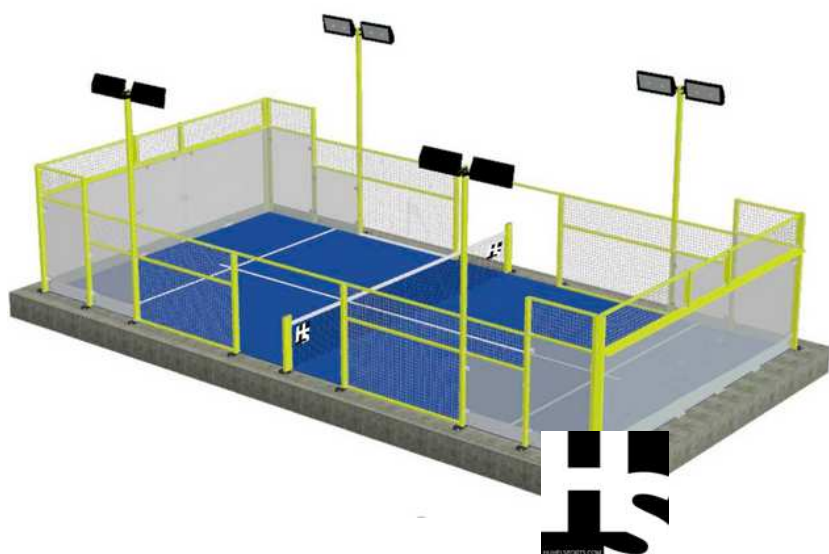
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Huhel Sports supply the only courts with an aluminum structure that includes a 15-year anti-corrosion guarantee.

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

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

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

Jurgen Klopp: From the Pitch to the Padel Court

Jurgen Klopp, the charismatic football manager known for his animated touchline presence and tactical brilliance, has recently found a new love: padel. This lesser-known racket sport (in some countries) has captured his heart, leading him to collaborate with Wilson Sporting Goods to create a signature padel racket—the Klopp Elite Padel Racket. But how did this transition from the football pitch to the padel court happen?

Padel, often described as a mix between tennis and squash, has been gaining popularity worldwide for some time. Its smaller court size, glass walls, and strategic gameplay make it accessible to players of all ages and skill levels. Klopp, like many others from the sports world, was drawn to the sport's fast-paced action and social nature.

Jurgens fascination with padel grew rapidly. So much so that he had a padel court installed at Liverpool's training centre. His passion extended beyond playing; he wanted to promote the sport and create awareness. Thus, the Wilson x Jurgen Klopp padel collection was born.



The Klopp Elite Padel Racket

The Klopp Elite Padel Racket, priced around the £250 mark, embodies Klopp's relentless spirit. With a diamond head shape, Arrow-Grip texture for enhanced spin, and Soft EVA Foam for comfort and power, it's a testament to his commitment to padel. The racket features Klopp's signature and is part of a sleek collection that includes a matching bag.

Klopp's decision to step down as Liverpool's manager surprised many. However, his desire to spend more time with his family and pursue his newfound passion played a significant role. Coaching at the highest level demands immense dedication, and Klopp chose family and now padel over the relentless football calendar.

Changing Priorities

As Klopp transitions from the football pitch to the padel court, he leaves behind a legacy at Liverpool. His impact on the club, fans, and players will forever be remembered. Now, with racket in hand, he embarks on a new chapter—one filled with volleys, smashes, and the unmistakable sound of a ball hitting the sweet spot.

WHO'S ON THE RISE & WHO'S ON TOP IN THE FEMALE CATEGORY?

Who are the biggest talents in the world of padel? Padel Alto has ranked the top rising stars, highlighting players who have already entered the world elite or are quickly climbing the rankings. The criterion for inclusion is that the players are under the age of 22.

Noemi Aguilar, an 18-year-old from Madrid, is currently ranked 66th. She has participated in Premier Padel main rounds and won a FIP Rise tournament this season. Two years ago, she struggled to get through the qualifiers, but now she regularly reaches the main rounds on the biggest stage. Last year, her notable achievement was reaching the round of 16 in the Master tournament in Madrid. Additionally, she played a significant role in Spain's gold medal at the Youth World Cup, 2024 appears to be very promising for Noemi Aguilar.



Marina Martinez Lobo, aged 21 and hailing from Alicante, is ranked 36th. Last year, she established herself as a main round player in the World Padel Tour, with her best result being a quarter-final appearance. This year, she has started strong with several wins in Premier Padel tournaments, showcasing her continuous improvement. Marina has shown great potential, and her achievements suggest she can ascend to the top echelons of the sport.

Jimena Velasco, a 19-year-old from Cáceres, is ranked 37th and has rapidly climbed the rankings over the past two years. She reached the quarter-finals of Premier Padel this season and won an Ultimate Padel Tour event. Training at the M3 Padel Academy, Jimena's strong start to the year indicates she is poised for even greater success in 2024.

Noa Cánovas, also 20 and from Barcelona, plays backhand and is ranked 38th. Alongside her partner Jimena Velasco, Noa reached the quarter-finals in Venezuela and won the latest Ultimate Padel Tour tournament. The duo has shown great potential, and their performance this season will be exciting to watch as they continue to develop.



Carmen Goenaga, 20, from Salamanca, is ranked 20th. She reached two quarter-finals on the World Padel Tour and two on Premier Padel last year. This year, she has formed an exciting partnership with Aranza Osoro and aims to reach her first semi-final. Carmen's ability to compete with the best on the international stage marks her as a significant talent.



Andrea Ustero, aged 17, from Barcelona, is ranked 28th. Alongside Alejandra Alonso, Andrea made a name for herself with impressive performances last year, defeating world stars and reaching quarter-finals. Their teamwork and strength make them a formidable pair, and it will be fascinating to follow their journey in the coming years.

Alejandra Alonso, 18, from Valladolid, is ranked 21st. Together with Andrea Ustero, Alejandra has shown an incredibly high level, reaching two semi-finals at the start of this season. These young players are set to make significant strides in their padel careers, and their names are ones to remember.



Claudia Fernández, an 18-year-old from Madrid, is ranked 13th. She has made enormous progress over the past few years, reaching finals several times this season with her partner Gemma Triay. With two championships on the agenda this year, Claudia has a good chance of securing a place in the Spanish squad. Her presence at the top level of padel is set to continue, making her future in the sport very exciting.



Finally, **Claudia Jensen**, an 18-year-old Argentine born in Madrid, is ranked 11th. Long regarded as one of the greatest talents in padel, Claudia has lived up to this reputation by climbing the rankings and winning a Premier Padel tournament this year. Her selection for the Argentine World Cup squad later this year is almost certain. Claudia Jensen's potential to reach incredible heights in padel is evident, and at just 18 years old, she is already among the best in the world.



As we look to the future, these young talents represent the next generation of padel stars. Each player has shown remarkable skill and promise, indicating that the sport's future is in very capable hands. Their journeys will undoubtedly be followed with great interest by fans and enthusiasts around the world.

THE GRSA INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT EXPERIENCE



This could be your opportunity!

The tournament experience is an initiative **GRSA** really believes in, it's designed for stringers looking to gain more experience, more knowledge and be part of the wonderful world of tournament stringing.

We're already looking at dates for this year and will announce them soon, but this is your chance to let us know if you're interested.

**CONTACT US FOR
MORE INFORMATION**

DO YOU BELIEVE
YOU HAVE THE
ABILITY TO PASS
THE TOUR
CERTIFICATION?

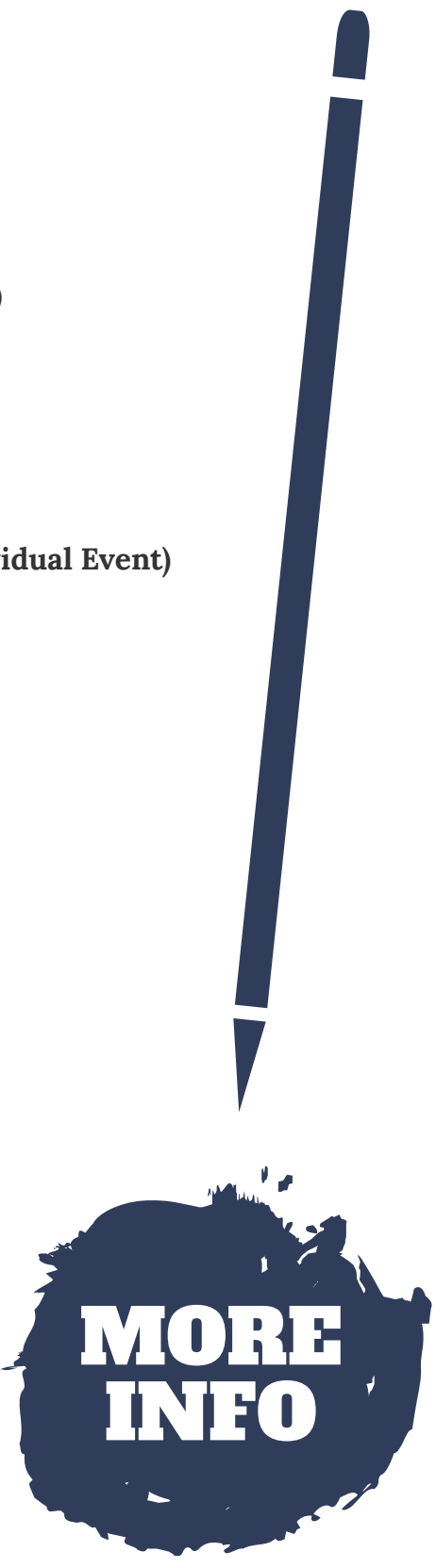


THIS IS FOR ANYONE WHO IS:

**GRSA CERTIFIED
COMPETITION MASTER**

**MORE EVENTS
WILL BE COMING
SOON!**

If you're looking for a Pickleball event to either go and see, or take part in, here are just a few of the upcoming events, use the link to see more and who knows, you might just get involved and win!

ROME OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP - 2ND ED.**EID:** 1516 **FREE****Organizer:** Marco Maurizi**EVENT - TOURNAMENT****Starting:** October 25, 2024 to October 27, 2024**City:** Via Armando Luciani, 57, Rome, RM, Italia**Tournament Venue:** Augustea Sport City**Registration Deadline:** October 24, 2024 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 3**Borneo Pickleball International Tournament (Individual Event)****EID:** 1608 **PRICE** MYR 100**Organizer:** Admin Malaysia**EVENT - TOURNAMENT****Starting:** October 08, 2024 to October 14, 2024**City:** Kuching**Tournament Venue:** Kuching Pickleball Association**Registration Deadline:** August 31, 2024 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 3**JOOLA POLISH OPEN 2024****EID:** 1595 **FREE****Organizer:** Jakub Skoczyński**EVENT - TOURNAMENT****Starting:** September 06, 2024 to September 08, 2024**City:** Pszczyna, Polska**Tournament Venue:** Sct Pszczyna**Registration Deadline:** August 31, 2024 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 3**MORE
INFO**

Global Pickleball Federation: Steering the Future of Pickleball Worldwide

The Global Pickleball Federation (GPF) serves as the primary international governing body for pickleball, focusing on the sport's global integrity and development. Operating as a not-for-profit organization, the GPF's mission spans from grassroots initiatives to recreational and high-performance levels, aiming to foster pickleball's growth worldwide.

The GPF plays a pivotal role in uniting pickleball's established continental federations and a dedicated volunteer network, ensuring a cohesive structure that supports the sport's expansion. Key federations integrated with the GPF include the Pickleball Federation of the Americas, Confederation of African Pickleball, Oceania Pickleball Federation, Asian Pickleball Association, and various European member countries. This alignment ensures that pickleball's development is coordinated and consistent across all regions.

Founded after an international task force formulated an ethical framework and By-Laws, the GPF is positioned to lead pickleball towards recognition by the International Olympic Committee. A critical component of this effort is the Global Pickleball Federation 2024 Rulebook, which sets the standard for pickleball rules across its 45 member countries and counting. The GPF's collaboration with continental and national federations facilitates the implementation of uniform regulations and standards, promoting best practices and maintaining the sport's integrity at all levels.

The GPF Board consists of international leaders who have played instrumental roles in introducing pickleball to countries such as Australia, Ghana, Ireland, Mexico, The Philippines, Poland, and beyond. Their vision and leadership are integral to the GPF's mission of advancing pickleball globally.

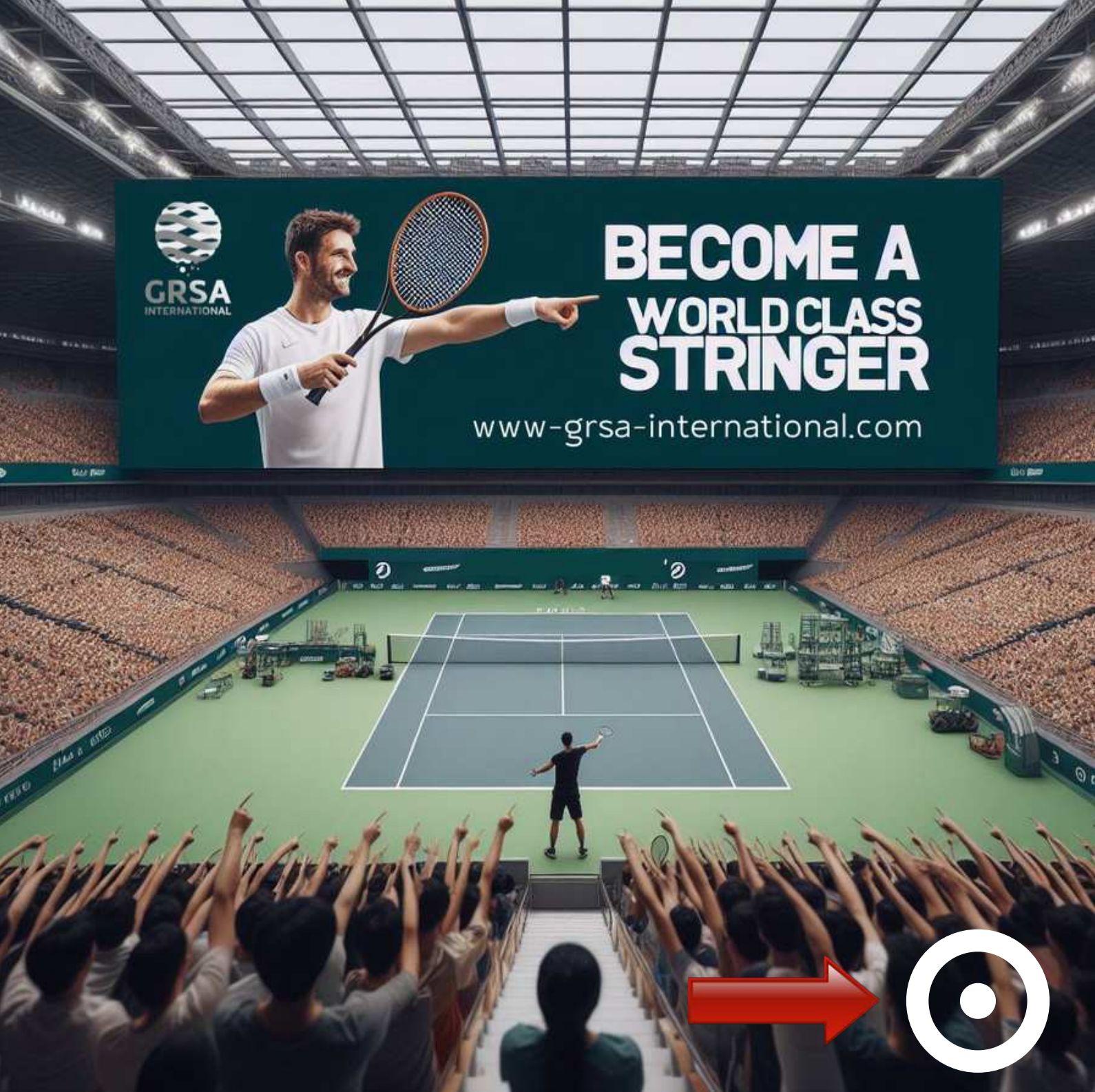
Global Pickleball Federation: Fostering the Sport for All, for Life

The Global Pickleball Federation (GPF) is committed to promoting, leading, and supporting the growth and development of pickleball as a lifelong sport accessible to people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. Despite the universal appeal of pickleball, equipment such as paddles, pickleballs, and nets remains scarce in many regions worldwide.

A shining example of the GPF's impact is seen in the Philippines, where the Philippine Pickleball Federation has driven the sport's remarkable growth. What started as makeshift courts on the streets has blossomed into a thriving community of over 80 clubs and more than 4,100 players. This journey began in April 2018 on Emerald Avenue, a bustling street in the heart of Pasig City's business district. Today, Street Pickleball is a popular hub where people gather to learn and play the sport.

Coni Ibañez, the president of Ortigas Street Pickleball, reflects on the initiative's success: "We have many new players every week, real first-timers who borrow paddles to try pickleball. We also have many visitors from around the world who hear about us on social media and come to the Philippines to see what we're up to." Since its grassroots inception in 2018, pickleball in the Philippines has expanded to 70 venues, boasting over 170 courts, showcasing the sport's rapid and inclusive growth.





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

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

Goal Getter: Chris Haworth's Journey from Tennis to Pickleball Dominance

In December 2023, Chris Haworth resolved to win a gold medal in pickleball for 2024, a goal he achieved just 21 days into January at the APP Punta Gorda Open. Since then, Haworth, a former junior tennis prodigy from Oklahoma, has clinched multiple titles, including golds in Delray Beach and New York, along with a bronze in Sacramento.

Originally a tennis academy director, Haworth transitioned to pickleball after a Thanksgiving week-off trial sparked his passion for the sport. By March 2023, he was competing in tournaments, rapidly excelling and soon leaving his tennis job to pursue pickleball full-time. His first significant success came with a bronze at the 2023 APP Sunmed St. Louis Open.

Haworth's swift rise in pickleball is marked by his dedication to the sport's nuances and his emphasis on fitness. Despite being goal-driven, his motivations have shifted from singles to mastering doubles play, aiming for a medal by year's end.

Haworth's story is not just about sports but also about family and community. Residing in Oklahoma City with his husband, Jackie, and their dogs, he values proximity to family, which influences his choice to remain in the area despite his career demands.

Haworth's journey from tennis to pickleball exemplifies the impact of commitment and passion on achieving one's goals, inspiring others to pursue their dreams with similar fervor.



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Cheam June Wei Reflects on a Strong Fortnight Despite Kaohsiung Masters Final Loss

Cheam June Wei has every reason to be proud of his recent performances, even though he fell short of clinching the Super 100 Kaohsiung Masters title. The world No. 61 made a commendable run to the final but was ultimately bested by Taiwan's Lee Chia Hao, who secured a 21-15, 21-12 victory at the K-Arena.

This defeat marks Chia Hao's fourth career win over June Wei. Despite this, June Wei's runner-up finish in Kaohsiung adds to his impressive track record, which includes previous second-place finishes at the 2018 Dutch Open and the 2022 Indonesia Masters.

Just a week prior, June Wei celebrated a significant victory at the Lin Dan Cup in China, earning RM131,000. Buoyed by this achievement, the 27-year-old Malaysian is now turning his attention to upcoming tournaments with the goal of securing his first World Tour title.

Ong Ewe Hock, June Wei's coach, praised his player's performance throughout the tournament in Taiwan. "June Wei played exceptionally well in the lead-up to the final," Ewe Hock told Timesport. "However, he faced a formidable opponent in Chia Hao, who controlled the match and caused June Wei to lose focus."

Ewe Hock highlighted the challenges June Wei faced, competing alone and without the support of a coach amidst a home crowd favoring Chia Hao. "I did not accompany him to Taiwan, and playing in front of a supportive local crowd must have been difficult for him to maintain concentration," Ewe Hock added.

After the final, June Wei communicated with his coach, revealing that he felt he was only able to play at 50 percent of his capacity. "Upon his return to Malaysia, we will work on refining his game. Moving forward, we will consider sending a coach to support June Wei at tournaments," Ewe Hock concluded.

As June Wei looks ahead, his recent experiences will serve as valuable lessons in his pursuit of his first World Tour crown, with his determination and skill set laying a solid foundation for future successes.



Lee Zii Jia Rekindles His Passion for Badminton

Lee Zii Jia, once struggling with form and motivation, has found his stride in badminton again. After a disheartening runner-up finish at the Denmark Open in October 2022 and a shocking early exit at the Indonesia Open in June 2023, Lee decided to take a break from the sport. This pause was aimed at reigniting his passion and regaining his focus. Training under new coach Wong Tat Meng, Lee's return to the sport was marked by a renewed intensity and a strategic overhaul that has paid off handsomely.

Over the past year, Lee's dedication and hard work have led to a remarkable comeback. He has won three HSBC BWF World Tour titles, including the SATHIO GROUP Australian Open 2024. This victory is particularly noteworthy as it is his second title in just five weeks. During this period, he also secured a second-place finish at the Malaysia Masters, narrowly losing to then world No.1 Viktor Axelsen, despite not being in peak physical condition.

Reflecting on his transformation, Lee said, "I've changed a lot mentally. I'm calmer now, and that's encouraging as I prepare for the Olympics." His latest triumph, a hard-fought 21-19, 11-21, 21-18 victory over Kodai Naraoka, showcased his newfound mental resilience. Even when Naraoka rallied to equalize at 18-18, Lee remained composed and focused, a testament to his improved mindset and strategic approach.

Over the past five weeks, Lee has been the only player to reach three finals, demonstrating his consistent performance and enhanced endurance. His sole setback came in the quarterfinals of the Indonesia Open against world champion Kunlavut Vitidsarn, but this did little to dampen his momentum.

Lee's resurgence is not just about winning titles; it's also about rediscovering his joy for the game. "It was an exciting battle, one of the toughest, yet best plays in my career. Kodai gave his all, and we both played a good match. I quite enjoyed myself out there," he shared, reflecting on his Australian Open victory.

With the Paris 2024 Olympics looming, Lee's recent successes position him as a key contender. As he continues to build on his recent form, Lee Zii Jia's story of overcoming adversity and finding renewed purpose serves as an inspiration. With everything aligning perfectly, he is set for a potentially spectacular performance in Paris.

Key Takeaways:

- Rediscovered passion after a challenging phase.
- Won three HSBC BWF World Tour titles in a year.
- Triumphed at the SATHIO GROUP Australian Open 2024.
- Improved mental resilience and strategic focus.
- Prime contender for the Paris 2024 Olympics.

Lee Zii Jia's journey highlights the power of resilience and determination, marking him as an athlete to watch in the upcoming Olympics.



Ginting's Singapore Streak Ends as Leong Jun Hao Secures Major Upset

Anthony Sinisuka Ginting's two-year dominance in Singapore came to an unexpected halt when Malaysia's Leong Jun Hao, ranked 33 places below him in the world, claimed a stunning victory at the KFF Singapore Badminton Open 2024. Ginting, the world No. 3, fell 21-14, 10-21, 21-8 to Leong, who has now become the first player to defeat the Indonesian in Singapore since Kento Momota in the 2019 final.

Leong, undeterred by his 0-2 record in previous meetings against Ginting, showcased a proactive and confident approach throughout the match. "Overall, I played proactively, so of course I'm happy," the 24-year-old Malaysian said, reflecting on his performance. "I used to feel he was too strong an opponent, and I'd get overpowered. Today, I was more positive and didn't allow him to attack easily. There was more initiative on my part."

Leong's determination paid off as he smoothly maintained his lead and capitalized on opportunities to close out points. "As I played more and more smoothly, I felt I needed to maintain it, so I tried my best to widen the lead and kept looking for a chance to kill the shuttle," he added. This victory marks a significant breakthrough for Leong, who will now face world No. 1 Viktor Axelsen in the quarterfinals.

Ginting, who has been the two-time defending champion in Singapore, acknowledged that Leong managed the conditions better on the day. "It was a tough match. I made a lot of unforced errors, and I couldn't overcome the challenges on court. Leong, on the other hand, did," Ginting said. "Of course the drift is difficult, but Leong also faced the same thing."

Since his runner-up finish at the All England Open in March, where he lost to compatriot Jonatan Christie, the Tokyo 2020 bronze medallist has struggled, losing all three of his recent encounters against top 10 players in individual and team events. Reflecting on his performance, Ginting added, "The hope is to improve my performance before the Olympics, at least to have some satisfactory results. What happened today is a lesson for the next event."

Leong's victory not only ends Ginting's impressive winning streak in Singapore but also sets a new milestone in his own career, as he continues to climb the ranks and make a name for himself on the international stage.



Miyazaki Impresses in Super 1000 Debut Against World No. 1 An Se Young

Tomoka Miyazaki made her Super 1000 debut in a remarkable fashion, facing off against the reigning queen of women's singles, An Se Young, in the first round of the KAPAL API Indonesia Open 2024. The 17-year-old Miyazaki, who has been hailed as the face of the next generation, took on the world No. 1 with notable determination and poise.



Despite being a wide-eyed schoolgirl off the court, Miyazaki showed no signs of intimidation against her formidable Korean opponent. In an exciting match, she managed to snatch the opening game 22-20, showcasing her potential and setting the stage for what could be the beginning of a riveting rivalry. An Se Young, however, displayed her superior experience and tactical prowess, rallying back to win the next two games convincingly, 21-7 and 21-11, to secure her place in the second round.

"Tomoka is very confident – at her age, I wasn't as confident. I used to be afraid when I was younger," remarked An Se Young, reflecting on her own early career. The Korean star, now 22, recognized the promise in her young adversary, noting that Miyazaki's attacking play and resilience could lead her to great heights.

Miyazaki's standout performance comes on the back of an impressive year. The 2022 world junior champion has already made significant strides on the international stage, having defeated top players such as Aya Ohori, Pusarla V Sindhu, and Nozomi Okuhara. She also claimed her first World Tour title at the Super 300 Orleans Masters, underscoring her rapid rise in the sport.

Reflecting on her match against An Se Young, Miyazaki remained clear-headed and pragmatic. "This is my first time playing An Se Young. I know she's the best now in the world. But when I played her today, I wanted to challenge myself and try to take the first game," Miyazaki said. "I knew it would be hard, but I gave it my best. After I got the first game, she just turned it around with some perfect play. But I learned so many things from her, so I'm happy to have played her."

Miyazaki also acknowledged the physical gap between her and the world No. 1. "The big difference is physical – she's stronger than me. She's been strong even when she was my age, so I cannot compare to her," she admitted, highlighting the development she aspires to achieve.

With her debut behind her and the experience of playing against the best, Miyazaki is poised to continue her upward trajectory. Her composure, talent, and drive suggest a bright future, where she may soon be challenging for the top positions in women's badminton.



QUESTIONS ANSWERED

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