

# GRSA INTERNATIONAL ATW MAGAZINE

MARCH 2026

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# Sinner Completes Hard-Court Crown With Indian Wells Triumph

Jannik Sinner added another landmark to his rapidly expanding résumé on Sunday, lifting the Indian Wells title and completing one of the most exclusive collections in modern tennis.

The world number two defeated Daniil Medvedev 7-6 (8-6), 7-6 (7-4) in a fiercely contested final played under the scorching Californian sun, sealing victory in just under two hours. With the win, the Italian becomes the youngest player ever to capture every major hard-court prize in the men's game.

For Sinner, the moment carried special weight.



**“I knew this was a tournament I hadn’t won yet,” he said after the final. “I wanted to prepare in the best possible way, as professionally as possible. Having this achievement now means a lot to me.”**

## Completing the Hard-Court Set

Sinner’s latest trophy fills the final gap in an already glittering collection, the 24-year-old has now won:

- Australian Open – 2024 and 2025
- US Open – 2024
- ATP Finals
- All six hard-court Masters 1000 events: Miami, Toronto, Cincinnati, Shanghai, Paris and now Indian Wells

Only Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer have previously completed that sweep.

## Did You Know?

Andre Agassi came close in his era, winning five Masters events on hard courts alongside both hard-court majors and the ATP Finals. However, the Masters calendar differed slightly during his career.

## A Match of Margins

The Indian Wells final was as tight as the scoreline suggests.

Neither player surrendered a break of serve, forcing both sets into tie-breaks. In the key moments, however, Sinner's serve proved virtually untouchable.

His numbers told the story:

- 43 of 47 first-serve points won
- 10 aces
- 60% of second-serve points won
- No break points faced



Medvedev, known for his defensive resilience, saved the only two break points of the match and even surged 4-0 ahead in the second-set tie-break. But Sinner responded with a stunning run of seven consecutive points to slam the door on the comeback.

The victory also extends the Italian's dominance in their recent rivalry. Sinner has now won nine of their last ten meetings.

### Momentum Building

Remarkably, Sinner did not drop a set during the entire tournament, securing his first title of the season and the 25th of his career.

The triumph arrives just weeks after a dramatic Australian Open campaign ended in a five-set semi-final loss to Novak Djokovic, a match many felt showcased the next chapter of their rivalry.

### Medvedev's Strong Return

Despite falling short in the final, Daniil Medvedev leaves California with renewed momentum.



The former US Open champion is set to return to the ATP Top 10 when the rankings update, following an impressive run that included a semi-final victory over world number one Carlos Alcaraz.

His path to the tournament was far from straightforward. Medvedev nearly missed Indian Wells altogether after travel delays in Dubai linked to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

One notable absence will be Novak Djokovic, who has withdrawn with a right shoulder injury. The 24-time Grand Slam champion is a six-time Miami winner and was runner-up to Jakub Mensik last season.

# Sabalenka Hits Back at Dubai Criticism and Casts Doubt Over Return

World number one Aryna Sabalenka has branded the criticism surrounding her late withdrawal from last month's Dubai Championships as "ridiculous", and admitted she may think twice before returning to the event.

The Belarusian, alongside then world number two Iga Swiatek, pulled out of the WTA 1000 tournament on 13 February, just two days before the main draw got under way. Their withdrawals drew a sharp response from tournament director Salah Tahlak, who suggested both players should lose ranking points.

**Sabalenka, now a four-time Grand Slam champion, did not hide her frustration.**

"I don't think he showed himself in the best way possible," she said.

"It's actually so sad to see that the tournament directors and the tournaments are not protecting us as players. They only care about their sales, about their tournament, and that's it.

"I'm not sure if I ever want to go there after his comment. For me, it was too much."

Her remarks came just days after she claimed the Indian Wells title on Sunday, securing her first trophy since finishing runner-up at the Australian Open in January.

Sabalenka explained that the decision to skip Dubai had been taken with a longer-term view in mind, as she and her team look to manage the physical demands of an increasingly packed season.

"Going into this season, we decided to prioritise my health and make sure we have these little gaps in the schedule where I can reset, recharge, work and be better prepared for bigger tournaments," she said.



The debate once again shines a light on one of the sport's most persistent talking points. For the game's top players, the season stretches across 11 months, leaving little room for recovery and increasing the risk of injury, fatigue and burnout.



The 26-year-old is now preparing to defend her Miami Open crown, but she also used the moment to highlight a wider issue that many leading players have raised repeatedly, the relentless nature of the tennis calendar.

“I feel like the scheduling is going crazy,” Sabalenka said. “That’s why you see so many players injured, always taped, and not delivering the best quality matches because it’s almost impossible.”

Sabalenka’s concerns were backed by American star Coco Gauff, who said the criticism aimed at Sabalenka and Swiatek was unfair.

“Iga and Aryna have played that tournament so many times and it wasn’t anything personal towards it,” said Gauff.

“It’s tough. We’re trying our best to play the calendar. I completely understand why she would feel like that because the comments were unnecessary.”



# NITTO ATP FINALS SETS BENCHMARK WITH MAJOR SUSTAINABILITY MILESTONE

Turin showpiece secures ISO 20121:2024 certification as organisers deepen ESG drive

**The Nitto ATP Finals is making headlines for more than just the action on court.**

The Italian Tennis and Padel Federation (FITP) has confirmed that the 2025 edition of the prestigious year-end event has been awarded ISO 20121:2024 certification by Bureau Veritas, a globally recognised standard for sustainable event management.

It is a significant achievement for the tournament in Turin, underlining a growing commitment to balancing elite sport with responsible planning and long-term impact.

To secure the certification, FITP worked in partnership with Enovation Consulting, a specialist in sustainability strategies for sport and an official partner of the event since 2024. Together, they developed a robust ESG framework covering environmental, social and governance priorities, with clear targets, performance tracking and a structure designed to drive continual improvement.

One of the most important elements of the programme has been the monitoring of the tournament's carbon footprint, including detailed measurement of CO2 emissions linked to the event. Organisers have also produced a dedicated ESG report in line with international standards and the wider sustainability goals of the ATP Tour.

The Finals' environmental ambitions are not limited to the venue itself. Through the Torino Green Project, launched in collaboration with the ATP and title sponsor Nitto Denko Corporation, the event has supported greener urban spaces and biodiversity-focused initiatives across the city, helping create a more lasting benefit for the local community.

Within the tournament footprint, a number of practical steps have been introduced to reduce impact. Expanded recycling points, compostable materials in selected hospitality areas and initiatives promoting more responsible consumption all form part of the strategy.

Energy and mobility have also been key areas of focus. The event is powered by certified renewable energy, while spectators are being encouraged to make more sustainable travel choices through incentives linked to rail and public transport services.

The tournament's ESG vision also places strong emphasis on people and community. School programmes, accessibility initiatives and charitable partnerships tied to the event are all aimed at ensuring the Nitto ATP Finals leaves a positive mark on Turin beyond the final match.

With ISO 20121:2024 certification now secured, the Nitto ATP Finals is strengthening its reputation as a leader not only in world-class tennis, but also in the way major sporting events can be staged with greater responsibility and purpose.

## ALCARAZ VOWS TO RESPOND AFTER KORDA UPSET: "I'LL TRY TO PUSH THEM EVEN FURTHER"

World No. 1 already looking to reset ahead of the clay season after Miami stumble

If recent history tells us anything, writing off Carlos Alcaraz after an early defeat is usually a dangerous game.

The World No. 1's Miami Open campaign came to an abrupt halt in the third round on Sunday, with Sebastian Korda producing a superb performance to claim a 6-3, 5-7, 6-4 victory. Yet rather than dwell on the disappointment, Alcaraz was already looking ahead – and, more specifically, towards the clay-court stretch where he has so often looked untouchable.

A year ago, the Spaniard suffered a surprise opening loss in Miami before exploding into life on clay, reeling off a remarkable 22-1 run across the surface. That sequence laid the foundation for one of the most dominant spells of his young career, and there is every chance this latest setback could sharpen his focus once again.

For now, though, Alcaraz's immediate plan is simple: step away, reset, and recharge.

He said he was eager to get back home, spend a little time with family and friends, and give himself the mental break needed before turning full attention to the clay swing. With Monte-Carlo looming, he knows the schedule will not allow for too much downtime, but his priority is clear, recover properly and return ready to compete at full intensity.

That measured response reflects a player who, despite still being only 22, increasingly understands the rhythm of a long season. Alcaraz began 2026 in blistering fashion, winning his first 16 matches, but defeats to Daniil Medvedev in Indian Wells and now Korda in Miami have offered a reminder that nothing stays effortless at the top for long.

Against Korda, he found himself facing an opponent playing with rare freedom and accuracy. The American was exceptional for much of the contest, striking cleanly and taking the initiative whenever openings appeared. Although Alcaraz managed to punish a wobble when Korda served for the match in the second set, he admitted afterwards that he never truly found the tools to make his rival uncomfortable often enough.

That, perhaps, was the most revealing part of his post-match assessment. Alcaraz spoke candidly about the challenge of facing opponents who elevate their level against him, accepting that this is now part of life as the man everyone wants to beat. Rather than complain about it, he framed it as a test he must learn to master.





He pointed to the fine margins that shaped the match, the repeated deuces, the tight 30/30 games, the break-point opportunities that slipped away. From his perspective, the answer is not dramatic change, but better execution in the biggest moments. His message was clear: next time, he wants to make those pressure points even more uncomfortable for the man across the net.

**In other words, Alcaraz expects the heat, and plans to raise it further.**

There is also a wider storyline developing. His defeat could have a significant impact on the race for No. 1, especially with Jannik Sinner waiting to capitalise. With Alcaraz defending a heavy haul of points through the clay season and Sinner carrying less immediate pressure in that regard, the margin at the top may tighten quickly over the next few weeks.

That shifting landscape only adds to the sense that every match against Alcaraz comes with added incentive for his rivals. He acknowledged as much, suggesting that opponents often play with a nothing-to-lose mindset against him. When a player is piling up wins and trophies, the pressure dynamic changes; the challenger swings freely, while the favourite becomes the target.

Even so, Alcaraz insisted he does not feel burdened by expectation. His focus remains on producing his best tennis, not on the weight of ranking or reputation. If anything, he seems energised by the fact that opponents are bringing something extra when they face him.

He departs Miami with a 17-2 record for the season and with clay now firmly in sight. His next scheduled stop is Monte-Carlo, where he returns as defending champion. It was there last year that he lit the spark for a commanding run on the dirt, a stretch that also delivered titles in Rome and at Roland Garros.

So while the loss to Korda will sting, it may yet serve as a useful warning shot.

For Alcaraz, the message is not panic, it is preparation. And if the past is any guide, that should be a worrying thought for the rest of the field.

# Agassi returns to Indian Wells to hand Sinner the trophy in No. 1 club moment

There was no shortage of star power at Indian Wells on Sunday, but one detail stood out above the rest, the unmistakable presence of the ATP's World No. 1 fraternity.

The BNP Paribas Open final brought together two former top-ranked players in Jannik Sinner and Daniil Medvedev, before another former No. 1, Andre Agassi, stepped forward to present the trophy to the Italian champion.

For Agassi, the occasion carried a sense of history. The American famously lifted the Indian Wells title in 2001 during the same season in which he completed the coveted Sunshine Double. Twenty-five years on, he was back on centre stage in the Californian desert, this time applauding a new champion from courtside before taking part in the trophy presentation.

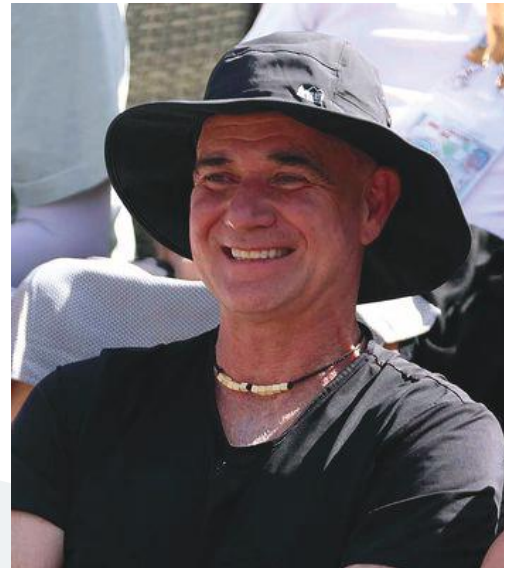
It was not just Agassi representing that elite club. Jim Courier, another former World No. 1 and one of Agassi's great rivals, was on commentary duty for Tennis Channel during the final. Courier's own Indian Wells story is a significant one: he won the title in 1991, becoming the first man to complete the Sunshine Double, and added a second trophy there in 1993.

For Sinner, the moment was another landmark in what has already become a remarkable rise. The Italian first climbed to World No. 1 in June 2024, making history as the first player from Italy to reach the top of the men's game. His first spell at No. 1 lasted 65 weeks, and he added another week at the summit after his triumph at the Rolex Paris Masters last November.

By securing the 25th tour-level title of his career, Sinner has also tightened the race at the top of the PIF ATP Rankings. He now sits 2,150 points behind his great rival Carlos Alcaraz, keeping the battle for supremacy very much alive.

## Did You Know?

Agassi's 2001 Indian Wells title formed part of his Sunshine Double-winning campaign, while Courier was the first man ever to achieve that feat back in 1991.



# More Than Tennis: From the “Golden Glizzy” to the Honey Deuce

Tennis tournaments today are about far more than what happens on court, and few moments capture that better than Aryna Sabalenka’s recent post-match surprise at the Miami Open.

After her win, Sabalenka was presented with what was dubbed a “Golden Glizzy”, a Wagyu hotdog topped with caviar. A deliberately extravagant twist on classic street food, it blends high-end ingredients with a playful concept, perfectly reflecting the identity of the Miami Open.

Reported to be priced at around \$100, it’s not designed to be an everyday snack. Instead, it sits firmly in the category of experience-driven hospitality, something you try once, photograph, and talk about. Whether it’s “worth it” is almost beside the point. The value lies less in the food itself, and more in the moment it creates.

This isn’t just novelty for the sake of it. It’s a clear example of how tournaments are evolving, placing increasing focus on hospitality, atmosphere and shareable moments. The combination itself, luxury meets casual, mirrors Miami as a city: vibrant, bold and unapologetically modern.



This is where Miami sets itself apart. It leans into spectacle, creating experiences designed to capture attention instantly.

Compare that to the US Open’s Honey Deuce, perhaps the most iconic tournament drink in tennis. Made with vodka, lemonade, raspberry liqueur and garnished with frozen honeydew melon balls, it has become a defining feature of the event. In 2023 alone, over 450,000 were sold. Unlike Miami’s headline-grabbing, one-off creations, the Honey Deuce is consistent, recognisable and deeply embedded in the US Open’s identity.

Wimbledon, by contrast, remains rooted in tradition. Strawberries and cream, with close to 200,000 portions served each year, and Pimm’s define the experience. There is no reinvention here, and that is exactly the point. The appeal lies in its heritage.

Meanwhile, the Australian Open takes a different approach again, embracing Melbourne's reputation as a global food capital. Its offering is diverse and contemporary, with international cuisine, local wines and a festival-like atmosphere that extends well beyond the tennis itself.

Roland Garros completes the picture with a distinctly Parisian identity, champagne, fine dining and classic French patisserie, reinforcing a sense of elegance and culture.

What becomes clear is that each tournament is no longer just selling tennis, it is selling an experience.

Miami offers spectacle and immediacy.

New York delivers scale and iconic branding.

London protects tradition.

Melbourne embraces modern lifestyle.

Paris leans into refinement.

For players, these moments add personality to the tour. For fans, they create lasting memories. And for the sport, they represent an evolution.

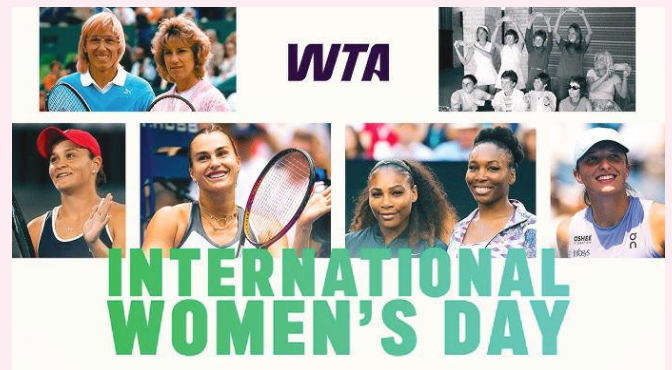
Tennis is no longer just something you watch.

It's something you experience.



# International Women's Day: Progress, Perspective and the Future of Women in Sport

On the 8th of March we celebrated International Women's Day. In today's day and age, I believe it is more important than ever to recognise and celebrate this day. Not because women need "special treatment", but because progress deserves acknowledgement, and because, despite how far we have come, there is still work to do.



Women have come a very long way both in sport and in business. There was a time when women were not allowed to participate in many competitive sports, were excluded from leadership roles, and were denied access to the same professional opportunities as men. In fact, women were only officially included in the Olympic Games in 1900 – and even then, only 22 women competed, compared to nearly 1,000 men. Fast forward to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games (held in 2021), and nearly 49% of competitors were women – the most gender-balanced Games in history. That progress, over just over a century, is extraordinary.

In tennis specifically, the transformation has been powerful and highly visible. From Billie Jean King's fight for equal prize money and her historic "Battle of the Sexes" victory in 1973, to Martina Hingis redefining what a teenage champion could look like, to Serena Williams reshaping the standards of dominance, longevity and athleticism – these women did not simply win titles. They changed perception. They changed opportunity. They changed the commercial value of women's sport.

Today, players such as Aryna Sabalenka, Iga Świątek, Coco Gauff and Emma Raducanu continue to push the sport forward – not only through performance, but through global marketability and influence. Women's tennis is one of the few sports where prize money at the biggest events is equal. The US Open became the first Grand Slam to offer equal prize money in 1973, largely due to Billie Jean King's advocacy. The Australian Open followed in 2001, and both Roland Garros and Wimbledon reached parity in 2007.

However, outside of Grand Slams, prize money is not always equal. At many ATP and WTA events, differences still exist. The debate often centres around revenue generation. According to publicly available figures, the ATP has historically generated higher overall annual revenue than the WTA – largely due to media rights structures, event formats, and commercial history. For example, combined media reports in recent years have suggested ATP annual revenues exceeding \$200 million, with WTA revenues traditionally lower, though both tours have been restructuring their commercial models to close this gap.

When looking at viewership, the picture is more nuanced than many assume. Women's Grand Slam finals frequently attract comparable global audiences to men's finals. The 2018 US Open final between Serena Williams and Naomi Osaka drew over 3 million viewers in the United States alone, and globally women's tennis consistently performs strongly in television markets. Sponsorship data also shows that female tennis players are among the highest-earning female athletes in the world. In fact, tennis regularly dominates Forbes' lists of highest-paid female athletes.

So when people question whether equal prize money is "necessary", perhaps the better question is: what are we valuing? Revenue alone? Historical structures? Or elite performance and global impact? Regardless of where one stands in the economic debate, I think we can all agree that these women are extraordinary athletes. Their physical, technical and mental demands are no less significant. Their preparation, discipline and sacrifice are identical. Excellence should be recognised as excellence.

Beyond the professional tour, there is also progress happening in the industries that support the sport, including stringing and sports-based businesses.

When it comes to stringing, historically I have not seen many women in this field. It has long been a male-dominated space, particularly at tournament level. But in recent years, that has begun to change. Since the creation of GRSA, I have had the privilege of meeting incredible women who are either learning to string or are already experienced stringers and business owners. At our last two conferences, it has been an absolute pleasure and honour to spend time with them – to see their involvement, interest, technical ability and entrepreneurial mindset.

The global sports industry is still male-dominated in many technical and leadership roles. According to international labour data, women hold roughly 20–30% of leadership positions across the broader sports sector, depending on the region. In technical roles – including equipment servicing, operations and logistics, the percentage is often lower. That is precisely why representation matters. When one woman enters a room that has historically been filled with men, she does not just take a seat, she expands the perception of who belongs there.

In stringing, detail matters. Precision matters. Patience matters. Communication matters. These are not gendered qualities, they are professional qualities. And the more diversity we see in our field, the stronger and more innovative it becomes.

International Women's Day is not about division. It is about recognition. It is about acknowledging the women who fought for the opportunities that many now benefit from. It is about celebrating the women who continue to push boundaries – on court, in boardrooms, in workshops, and at stringing machines around the world.

Most importantly, it is about ensuring that the next generation does not see barriers where previous generations did.

**Progress should never be taken for granted. But it should absolutely be celebrated.**

**Natasha Parnell**

# Sabalenka's Moment: From a Hint to Reality

Aryna Sabalenka's 2026 season is already one to remember, and not just because of what she's doing on court.

In early March, the World No. 1 announced her engagement to Brazilian entrepreneur Georgios Frangulis, sharing the moment with fans on Instagram with a simple caption: "You & me, forever."

The proposal itself was as memorable as the announcement. Frangulis, founder of the global Oakberry açai brand, created a romantic setting filled with candles and flowers before getting down on one knee.

But what has made this story stand out even more is the sense that, in some way, Sabalenka saw it coming.

At the start of the year, during her victory speech at the Brisbane International, a tournament she went on to win, Sabalenka jokingly thanked her team and her boyfriend, adding that she hoped she would soon be calling him "something else".

At the time, it felt like a light, playful comment. Looking back now, it feels like a glimpse into what was about to happen.

Fast forward just a few weeks, and everything seemed to come together at once.

Sabalenka arrived at Indian Wells not only as the top seed, but in the middle of what she herself described as an unforgettable week, getting engaged, welcoming a new puppy into her life, and going on to win the title.

After lifting the trophy, she summed it up perfectly: "What a week, getting a puppy, getting engaged and winning a title. I will definitely remember it for the rest of my life."

On court, her form has remained as dominant as ever. Already a multiple Grand Slam champion and one of the most powerful players in the game, Sabalenka continues to set the standard on the WTA Tour. Off court, this latest chapter shows a different side, one of balance, stability and personal happiness.

Her fiancé, Georgios Frangulis, has been a constant presence in recent seasons. A successful entrepreneur and motorsport enthusiast, he has supported Sabalenka throughout both her professional highs and more difficult personal moments, and their relationship has become increasingly visible within the tennis world.

What stands out in all of this is how naturally it has unfolded. A comment made in a winning moment. A season that starts with momentum. And then, almost unexpectedly, everything aligning at once.

In a sport built on precision, timing and belief, perhaps it's not such a coincidence after all.

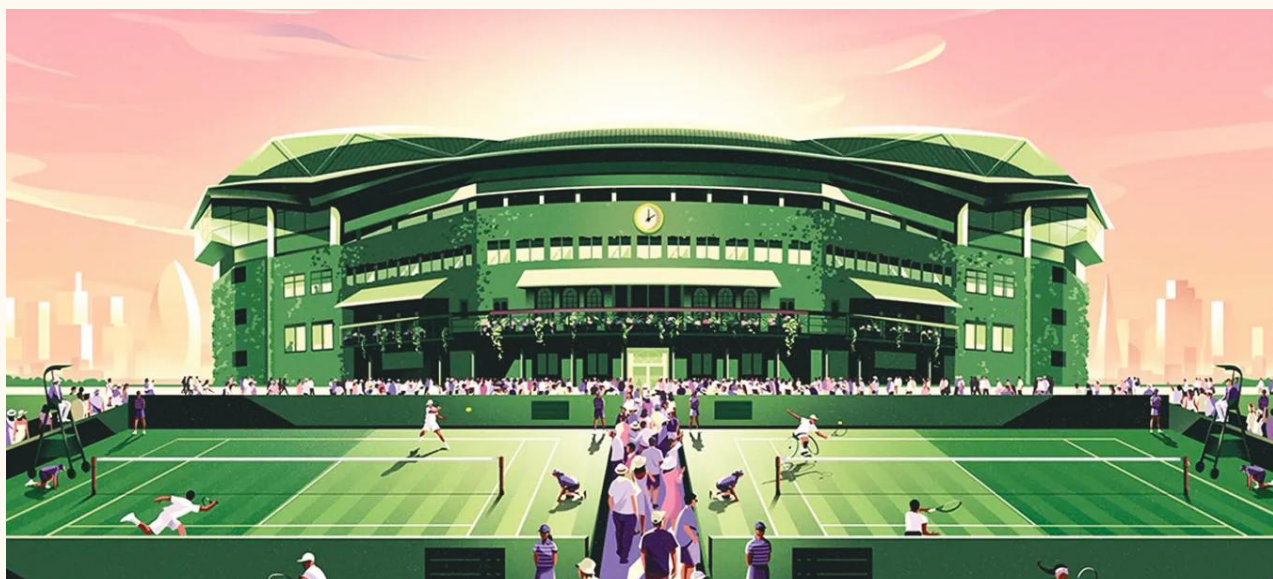
For Sabalenka, 2026 is already proving that sometimes the biggest wins don't just happen on court.



## MSV BUSSARD TENNIS STRING FOR ULTIMATE CONTROL.

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# More Tech at Wimbledon



Wimbledon is taking another step into tennis's technological future, confirming that Video Review will be introduced at The Championships in 2026. The move follows the tournament's first use of Electronic Line Calling last year and marks another significant shift for the sport's most tradition-steeped Grand Slam.

For the first time in Wimbledon history, players will be able to challenge certain chair umpire judgement calls using Video Review. The system will cover decisions such as “not-up”, “foul shot” and “touch”, giving competitors an opportunity to seek a second look at some of the game's most debated moments. Reviews will be available on Centre Court, No.1 Court, No.2 Court, No.3 Court, Court 12 and Court 18. Players may request them on point-ending calls, when play is stopped immediately, or straight after a point in cases involving hindrance. Wimbledon says the review can either uphold or overturn the original decision, and there will be no limit on the number of reviews a player can ask for.

The All England Club has also confirmed further refinements to its Electronic Line Calling set-up for the 2026 Championships, which run from 29 June to 12 July. This year, scoreboards across every court, including those used in qualifying, will show live visual indicators for line-calling decisions, displaying “out” and “fault” calls in real time.

There is continuity off the court as well. Wimbledon's revised finals weekend timetable, first used in 2025, will remain in place. On Saturday 11 July, the men's doubles final will begin at 1 p.m. BST, followed by the women's singles final at 4 p.m. On Sunday 12 July, the women's doubles final starts at 1 p.m., before the men's singles final takes centre stage at 4 p.m.

For a tournament built on heritage, Wimbledon is showing an increasing willingness to modernise where it matters. First came Electronic Line Calling; now comes Video Review. The grass may still look the same, but the officiating landscape is changing fast.

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In 2022 GRSA was launched



In 2024



In 2025



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# DID YOU KNOW?

Be aware of your surroundings, not just your workspace, not just your part of the job, be aware of everything going on around you. It will help you adapt to unforeseen circumstances, it will allow you to make decisions based on what you know, not just what you think you know.

**TEAM GRSA**

## LANDMARK TECH ADVANCEMENTS THAT CHANGED THE GAME

1

### **Miami Open – The Birthplace of Hawk-Eye (2006)**

The Miami Open became the first tournament to introduce Hawk-Eye technology into live competition, giving players the ability to challenge line calls. This moment fundamentally shifted tennis from purely human officiating to data-assisted accuracy, adding both transparency and a new layer of drama for fans.

2

### **US Open – Technology Goes Mainstream (2006)**

Later that same year, the US Open became the first Grand Slam to adopt Hawk-Eye, cementing its legitimacy on the sport's biggest stage. What began as an experiment quickly became the standard, driving global acceptance and permanently changing how officiating is trusted in elite tennis.

3

### **Next Gen ATP Finals (Milan) – The Game Reimagined (2017)**

Designed as a testing ground for innovation, the Next Gen ATP Finals introduced full electronic line calling, eliminating line judges entirely. Combined with shot clocks and format changes, the event reshaped the tempo and presentation of tennis, influencing how the modern game is played and consumed.

4

### **Australian Open – The Fully Automated Era (2021)**

The Australian Open made history by implementing Hawk-Eye Live across all courts, removing line judges and relying entirely on automated calls. This marked a decisive shift from technology as support to technology as authority, redefining officiating and signalling the future direction of the sport.

# Stringer Solutions

with Richard Parnell



An easy tip on how to keep the cross strings straighter during their installation.

One of the most important aspects of stringing, and one that will separate the experts from the rest, is the straightness of the crosses. This is also an integral part of being able to string on the Tour, many a player has complained about crooked cross strings and rightly so.

Straightening the crosses can be done in different ways, there is obviously the setting off awl which can be used at any time during the stringing of the crosses, however, here I would like to jump in at the basic technique of stringing those crosses.

When a cross string is tensioned, it can be in one of three positions:

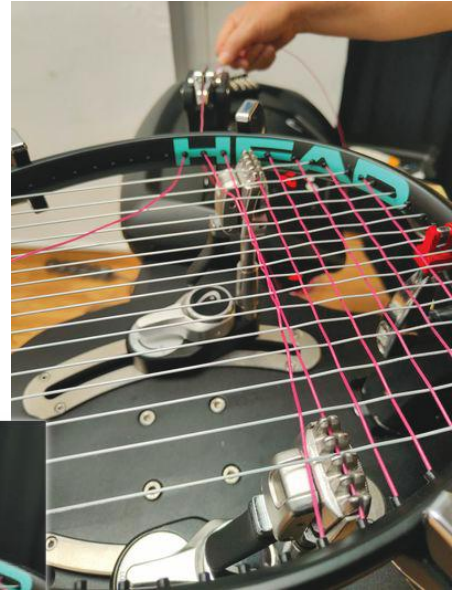
- a. Curved
- b. Recurved
- c. Straight

**Let's look at each of these individually and compare their effect on the string bed and straightness of the cross.**

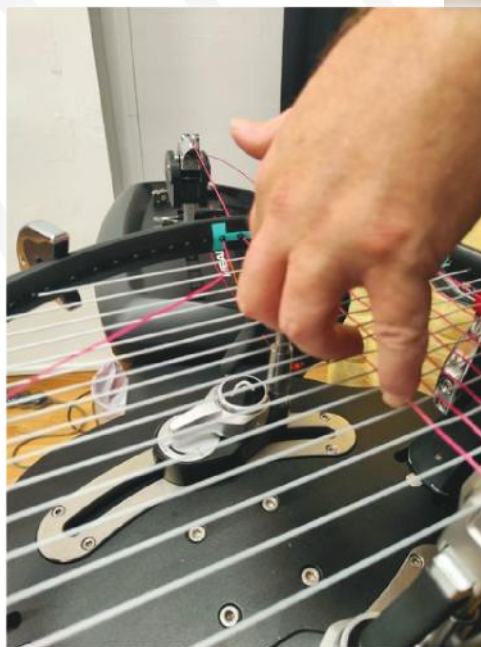
a. **Curved** - By leaving the string curved while tensioning, as we see in image A, the string, by not being straight is longer which means that the string will not be as "tight" as a straight string (the shortest route from A to B is a straight line). Once the tension head has stopped moving, we move the string to its straight position, the tension head often has difficulty picking up that small difference in length. Normally a lower DT will be attained. If the crosses are straightened at the end of the stringing process, then the strings will be prone to moving more and be less responsive.



b. **Recurved** – By leaving the string curved inversely against the previous cross while tensioning, as we see in image B, the string, by not being straight is longer which means that the string will not be as “tight” as a straight string. This also means that when the string is tensioned it will automatically move away from the previous cross string and will never stop at the perfect “straight” position, rather move past it and again be curved but in the opposite direction. This string will then need to be pushed straight.... Which means that pushing the string up against the previous cross was a waste of movement and creates more cross string movement. If the crosses are moved straight at the end of the stringing process, then the strings will be prone to moving more and be less responsive.



c. **Straight** - By ensuring that the string is straight while tensioning, as we see in image C, the string, by being straight is shorter which means that the string will be as “tight” as possible, because, as we have mentioned before, the shortest route from A to B is a straight line. This cross string, by being held in place by fingers that are guiding it and making sure it doesn't become curved will stay in its place longer and play better. When we have weaved the string we need to pull it as tight as possible by hand so that the tension head is working with the shortest string length possible.



If the main strings are natural gut and the crosses a monofilament, which is a harder string, then the indentations left in the natural gut need to be in the right place straight away, otherwise the cross strings will always slip back into these indentations and the cross strings will never remain straight.

**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**

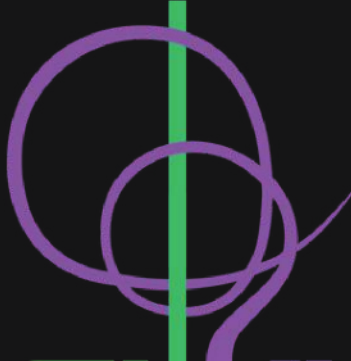


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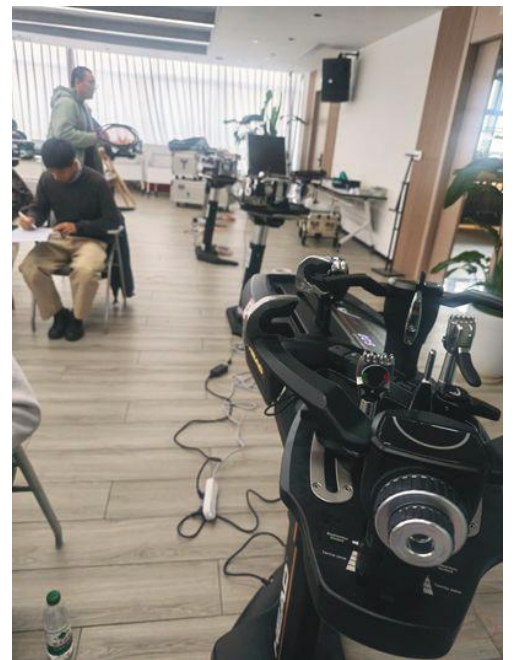
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# Kenneth Leong - GRSA Pro Stringer Workshop

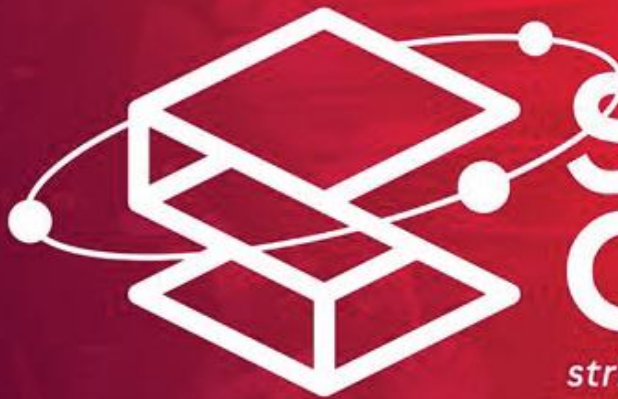
We concluded our second workshop of the year in the Qingpu district of Shanghai. In this workshop, we had 16 participants for the pro stringer workshop. On top of these 16 new stringers, we have 2 members who attempted the pro master exams and 3 more who attempted the competition and competition master exams.

April is going to be a very busy month for us as we are going to hold our first intermediate level workshop in Beijing for stringers with experience. After which 6 members from Asia will be heading to the Madrid masters to carry out stringing duties.



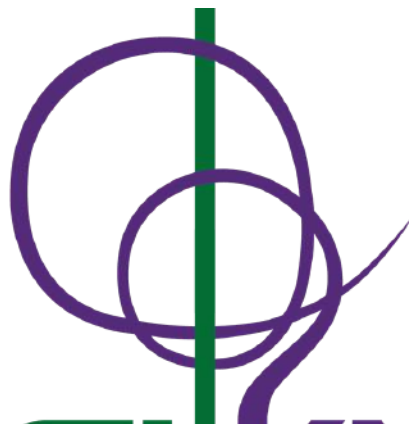


**Another major development in GRSA Asia is happening as well. Stay tuned for the next magazine for the unveiling.**



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# NICK DOWN

## TALKS TF ARCHPOWER



First visited in about late 2023, this month's pattern from the list of non-standard rackets is the Tecnifibre Archpower. The Tecnifibre Archpower was used on several rackets and the following year was discontinued in favour of drilling holes in its "arch" and then adding an X to AP to make an APX. The APX is not on the non-standard list of rackets.

The AP is Tecnifibre's version of a ring at the throat, which like many other brands, struck when Prince forgot to renew a patent. Tecnifibre called it Archpower and it had straight lines and technically is an Arch not a ring. All the main strings are wrapped around the top straight part of the arch.

There are 16 mains and 16 crosses. No shared holes. No double-barrelled grommets and enough tie-off locations to use two pieces of string.

Stringing this type of pattern is better with two pieces of string as it avoids long runs of string around the outside of the frame which looks unsightly and can unbalance the stringbed.

Tecnifibre have three different models sharing this pattern; the Tecnifibre Dynergy AP125, the AP130 and the AP135.

The AP125 has the signature of pro player Miguel Angel Rodriguez, the Colombian cannonball.

For the purpose of this article, I have used the 125 version with 2 pieces of string.

It is important that there is a hard-weave at the bottom cross.



## Nick's Nugget

In Squash, it's become common to see pro players using "Closed Throat" rackets, with no bridge or hole. This type of racket has longer main strings, designed for more power.

# Instructions

## Mains

(Start at Head and all Mains must be pulled at the Head only).

LH1 to below Arch

RH1 to above Arch

(Remember that the first main that comes down the racket from Head to Throat on the Left side always goes low/under/below the ring or arch or hinge etc. The right side will do the opposite).

Below Arch to RH2, Above Arch to LH2

LH2 to LH3, LH3 to below Arch, Above Arch to LH4

RH2 to RH3, RH3 to above Arch, Below Arch to RH4

RH4 to RH5, RH5 to above Arch, Below Arch to RH7

LH4 to LH5, LH5 to below Arch

Above Arch to LH7, LH7 to LH9

LH9 to below Arch, Above Arch to LH12

RH7 to RH9q, RH9 to above Arch

Below Arch to RH12

Tie-off both sides at H9

## Crosses

Start at H6 (either side)

If starting at LH6 weave goes over LM5

If starting at RH6

weave goes under RM5

Tie-off is at H4 either side.

Last cross is T1

Tie-off is T2 either side.

**Next month:-** the Karakal F series with a wrap-around throat.



## Racket String

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# Master Athletics

A company has entered the Squash market, that is introducing three things (amongst others) that are unique, as far as I know:



- **A Training Racket**
- **A range of replacement grips that either decrease or increase the Grip size.**
- **Squash Rackets that are sold with a customising kit so that they can be customised easily.**

Master Athletics is a brand based in the USA. They have been involved in Platform Tennis and Pickleball for a while, as well as a few other sports and continue to do so.

They have now entered the squash market with a range of equipment that can be found on their website.

**However, the three points that I listed, earlier are noteworthy:**

Items 2 and 3 are more convenient than other brands; 2 is all about a range of replacement grips that change the size of the grip by one size. They are available from -1 to +2. I can see those being popular in a shop environment, but will also grab the attention of players of many sports,

3 relates to some rackets being sold with a tuning kit. Whilst it's possible to change the weight etc of a racket and there are a few ways of doing this with readily available gear such as Lead and other materials. There has been no possibility of buying a kit that includes a racket before.

To me, the most exciting item listed, is no. 1 on my list, the training racket. To my knowledge, something like this is not available elsewhere. It has been seen before in other sports, occasionally, but not in Squash.



**The website says this:**

“Master Athletics launches the first dedicated squash training racquet ever offered, designed to help players sharpen technique and elevate hand-eye coordination. Inspired by the proven training concept that Master offers in many other racquet sports, the Squash Training Racket (SQTR) delivers a familiar squash racquet feel with a reduced head size that forces players to focus on the sweet spot—promoting cleaner contact, better timing, and improved precision.

The SQTR is an ideal training aid for players of all levels and is best used for 5–10 minutes before practice or matches to activate proper mechanics and reinforce consistent ball striking. Purpose-built and performance-driven, the SQTR helps players train smarter and translate better habits directly into match play.

Simple, effective, and innovative, the SQTR redefines how squash players train.”

**It lists the Specifications as,**

Weight: 4.4 oz / 125 g  
Balance: 350 mm  
Head Size: 30 sq in  
String Tension: 20–30 lb  
String Pattern: 10 × 14  
RA Tension: 58  
Grip Size: 4” (0)



Ben Porter, Co-Owner and General Manager of Master Athletics said, "Master Athletics has always been dedicated to helping athletes 'Master Their Game' through superior equipment”.

Ben has previously worked for Prince, he was head of Squash for Wilson and then Padel. He has had a lifetime of experience in Racket Sports.

There you have it, really, players will be able to get this training racket and closely match its feeling to their existing racket in many aspects except the headsize, which is the whole point really.

In conclusion, a good prospect that can be used by many players. It's one of those things that you weren't aware that you needed until it became available, now it is!

For anyone that wants to know, the tuning kits contain a racket, a pack of weight strips, a pack of weighted butt caps and a clear bumper.

**Please, either email me or look at the Master Athletics Website for more information.**

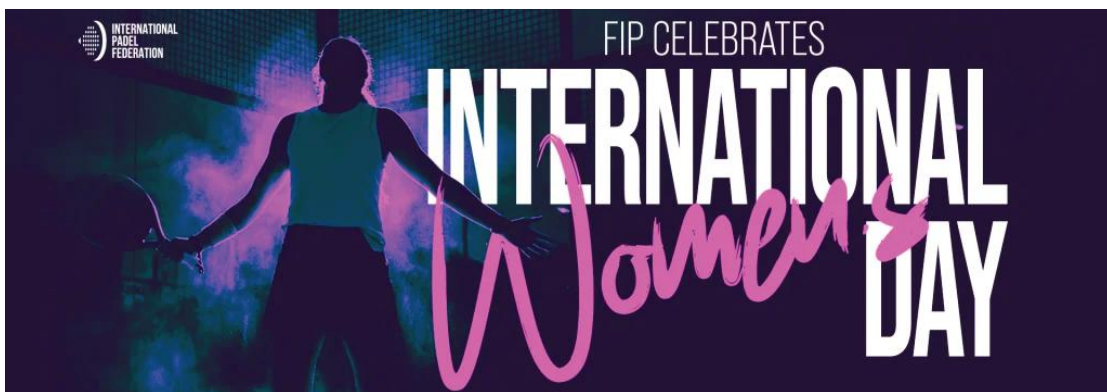


## FIP Marks International Women's Day by Reaffirming Commitment to Equality

On International Women's Day, the International Padel Federation (FIP) has underlined its commitment to gender equality by championing a sporting model built on equal opportunity, equal visibility and equal financial recognition for male and female athletes.

Padel stands out as one of the most gender-balanced sports in the world. Of the estimated 35 million people who play the game globally, almost half are women, a clear sign of the vital role women have played in padel's rise. That balance is not only visible on court, but also reflected in the Federation's policies, with principles of fairness and inclusion woven into its activities and the staging of international competitions.

### The pillars of equality



FIP has developed a defined strategy that aligns with International Olympic Committee standards and wider principles of international sports governance. At the heart of that approach is equal prize money, guaranteed across the leading events on the international calendar, including the World Team and Pairs Championships, Premier Padel Tour Majors and Finals, the CUPRA FIP Tour, FIP Beyond and the Hexagon Cup.

Another cornerstone is the integrated event format. Men's and women's competitions are staged side by side at all events, with shared finals days bringing both draws to the same stage. One ticket gives spectators access to both finals, ensuring equal visibility and creating the same commercial value for sponsors and partners.

That commitment also extends to media and broadcasting. Television coverage and digital content are distributed evenly across official platforms and live broadcasts, strengthening a model in which equality is not treated as an aspiration, but as a fundamental value at the heart of the sport.

If you want, I can also turn this into a slightly more dynamic magazine feature version with a stronger opening and a closing quote-style flourish.

# Padel Confirmed as Medal Sport at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games

**LAUSANNE**, Switzerland, Padel is confirmed as a medal sport at the 20th Asian Games Aichi-Nagoya 2026, which will be held from 19 September to 4 October 2026, marking a major milestone in the sport's continued international growth.

"This is a significant moment for our sport," said FIP President Luigi Carraro. "The Asian Games represent one of the most important multi-sport events in the world, and the confirmation of Padel as a medal sport reflects both the rapid development of the sport across Asia and its growing global impact. We are proud to work alongside the Olympic Council of Asia and the Aichi-Nagoya Organising Committee to deliver a successful competition at the Games."

The confirmation follows the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games Organising Committee (AINAGOC), the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) and the International Padel Federation (FIP), establishing the framework for the organisation and delivery of the Padel competition.

Under the agreement, the International Padel Federation will take primary responsibility for the planning and sporting delivery of the Padel competition, working in close cooperation with the Aichi-Nagoya Organising Committee and under the governance of the Olympic Council of Asia.

The announcement builds on the decision confirmed in November to include Padel in the sports programme of the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games following the recognition of the International Padel Federation by the Olympic Council of Asia.

The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding now formally confirms Padel as a medal event at the Games. Padel has experienced remarkable growth across Asia in recent years, with expanding participation, new infrastructure and the creation of national federations throughout the continent. The sport is now played by millions of people worldwide and is widely recognised as one of the fastest-growing sports globally.

The Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games will bring together thousands of athletes from across the continent and will provide an important stage for the continued expansion of Padel in Asia, reinforcing the sport's growing presence within the global sporting landscape.

Further details regarding the Padel competition at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games will be announced in due course.

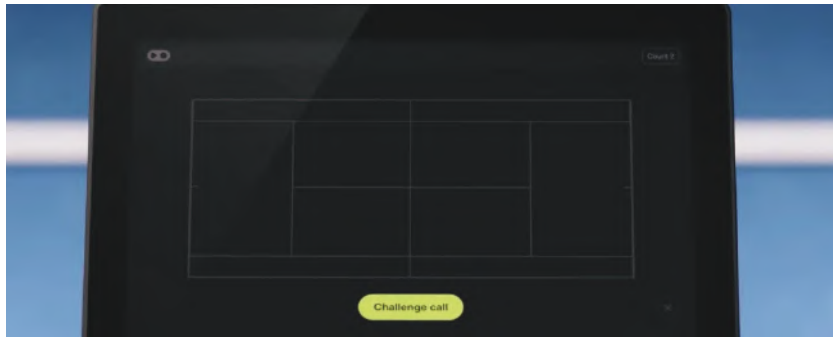
Find out more about the Games on the official event website



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

**WPC Belgium - Belgian Pickleball Open 2026****EID:** 2308 EUR 35**Organizer:** Pickleball Belgium**EVENT - TOURNAMENT****Starting:** July 31, 2026 to August 02, 2026**City:** Woluwe-Saint-Lambert, Belgium**Tournament Venue:** Centre Sportif Mounier**Registration Deadline:** July 01, 2026 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 3**NRW-Landesmeisterschaften 2026****EID:** 2272 EUR 20**Organizer:** Karsten Wischermann**EVENT - TOURNAMENT****Starting:** June 27, 2026 to June 28, 2026**City:** Kerpen, Deutschland**Tournament Venue:** Racket Arena Rhein-erft**Registration Deadline:** June 21, 2026 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 2**WPC SERIES - BALI CHAMPIONSHIP****EID:** 2326 USD 60**Organizer:** Pickleball Global**EVENT - TOURNAMENT****Starting:** September 21, 2026 to September 26, 2026**City:** Sanur, Denpasar City, Bali, Indonésie**Tournament Venue:** Liga Tennis**Registration Deadline:** August 31, 2026 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 5**MORE  
INFO**

# UPA Set to Introduce Line-Calling Technology Across Pro Events



Professional pickleball is preparing to take a decisive step forward, as the United Pickleball Association (UPA) moves to implement automated line-calling technology across its top competitions.

The rollout will begin at the PPA Finals in San Clemente on 4 May, before extending to all Major League Pickleball (MLP) events starting 22 May in Dallas. Ahead of its official debut, the system is currently being tested at the Greater Zion Cup at Black Desert Resort, offering an early glimpse of what could soon become standard across the professional game.

Developed by PlayReplay, the technology introduces a new level of precision to line calling. The system uses two cameras positioned at either end of the net, tracking the ball's movement throughout each rally. Data is processed courtside and transmitted to a small monitor, where officials can view the action in real time.

The screen provides a clear visualisation of each point, showing the ball's trajectory and exact contact with the court surface. When a ball lands out, the system highlights the call with a red indicator, removing any ambiguity. Each rally is also recorded, allowing officials to review previous shots if needed.

The system goes further than simple tracking. It factors in shot speed and even calculates ball compression on impact, helping determine whether a ball has clipped the line or missed it—margins often too fine for the human eye.

For now, the UPA will use the technology in a supporting role. Referees will monitor the system and rely on it primarily for player challenges rather than replacing line calls entirely.

Early testing has already demonstrated its impact. During use at Black Desert, a challenged call in a match between Federico Staksrud and Mota Alhouni was quickly reviewed and overturned after the referee consulted the replay screen. While there was initial hesitation, the clarity of the visual evidence left little room for dispute.

The introduction of automated line calling represents a move towards greater consistency and transparency. As the professional game continues to grow, the margins are becoming too fine to leave to chance.

# Black Desert Resort to Host Greater Zion Cup

The PPA Tour heads to southern Utah for the Greater Zion Cup, staged at the impressive Black Desert Resort. Making its debut as a host venue, the resort provides a stunning backdrop for what promises to be a high-quality week of pickleball. Conditions look ideal, too—warm temperatures, still air, and a stage perfectly set for elite-level competition.

## Will Anna Leigh Waters Complete Another Triple Crown?

Few stories in modern pickleball are as dominant as that of Anna Leigh Waters. Already the sport's benchmark in the women's game, she continues to raise her own bar. Entered across singles, women's doubles alongside Anna Bright, and mixed doubles with Ben Johns, Waters arrives as the overwhelming favourite in all three disciplines.



Her singles form borders on untouchable. In 2026, opponents are averaging just over three points per game against her—a staggering statistic that underlines her control. In doubles, her partnership with Bright has matured into a formidable pairing, brushing aside rivals who once posed credible threats.

Mixed doubles, perhaps, offers the only glimmer of vulnerability. While Waters and Johns have tasted defeat this season, they remain the team to beat. Challenges may emerge from the Johnson siblings—Jorja Johnson and JW Johnson—or the duo of Bright and Hayden Patriquin. Yet with the draw working in their favour, Waters and Johns are unlikely to face more than one of these threats en route to the final.

## Early-Round Fireworks in Mixed Doubles

While Championship Sunday often grabs the headlines, the earlier rounds frequently deliver the most compelling contests—and Utah's mixed doubles draw is rich with them.

A standout Round of 64 clash sees Lacy Schneemann and Jonathan Truong take on Rachel Rettger and Nicolas Acevedo. Acevedo, a savvy pick by Johnny Goldberg for the Miami Pickleball Club, could well be a rising name to watch.

Generational contrast defines another intriguing tie: Jessie Irvine and Dekel Bar face youngsters Elsie Hendershot and Cam Chaffin—a pairing whose combined age barely matches that of their seasoned opponents.

Elsewhere, Maggie Brascia and Tama Shimabukuro meet Lingwei Kong and Martin Emmrich, with Shimabukuro continuing his pursuit of a breakthrough moment on the doubles stage.

## **Women's Doubles: Depth and Opportunity**

The women's doubles draw offers its own share of compelling early match-ups. Mari Humbert and Brooke Buckner face the youthful pairing of Hendershot and Kong in a clash of experience versus emerging talent.

Another fixture to note pits Zoey Weil and Liz Truluck against Ella Yeh and Kiora Kunimoto—a contest likely to be defined by aggressive baseline play and quick-fire exchanges.

Meanwhile, Allyce Jones and Jamie Wei take on the promising duo of Cailyn Campbell and Emma Nelson. Campbell's recent progress mirrors her potential, while Jones continues to set the benchmark for intensity and effort on court.

## **Is Men's Singles Becoming More Predictable?**

Men's singles has long been regarded as the most volatile discipline, but recent form suggests a shift towards greater consistency at the top.

High-profile early encounters include JW Johnson against Tyson McGuffin, Rafa Hewett versus Armaan Bhatia, and Cason Campbell meeting Chaffin. Looking ahead, a potential Round of 32 clash between Shimabukuro and Connor Garnett promises relentless athleticism.

At the summit, Hunter Johnson, Federico Staksrud, and Chris Haworth have established themselves as the leading trio. While their consistency adds a layer of predictability, the depth beneath them ensures no path to the podium will be straightforward.

## **Longshots Worth Watching**

In doubles, the numbers suggest that top seeds usually dominate the latter stages—but every tournament produces its disruptors.

One pairing to keep an eye on is Pablo Tellez and Jack Sock. Sock's evolution in the sport has been notable, and alongside the ever-capable Tellez, they possess the firepower to trouble any team.

In women's doubles, Callie Smith and Lea Jansen bring experience and composure. If they maintain consistency—particularly in positional discipline, they are more than capable of pushing deep into the draw.

As for men's singles, Sock again emerges as a genuine outside contender. With a favourable path and proven pedigree, he remains a threat to anyone standing between him and a medal.

Whether courtside in Utah or tuning in via Pickleballtv, the Greater Zion Cup promises a week rich in storylines, emerging talent, and elite competition.

# Spanish Para Badminton Excellence

Pramod Bhagat capped a fine week at the Spanish Para Badminton International – II in Vitoria by claiming two gold medals and a silver on the final day of competition.



The Indian star, competing in the Standing Lower (SL3) category, first teamed up with Standing Upper (SU5) ace Manisha Ramadass to win mixed doubles gold in dramatic fashion. Up against Brazil's Rogerio Junior Xavier De Oliveira and Edwarda De Oliveira Dias, the Indian pair looked to be in serious trouble in the deciding game, trailing 17-20, before producing a stunning late surge of four straight points to snatch the title.

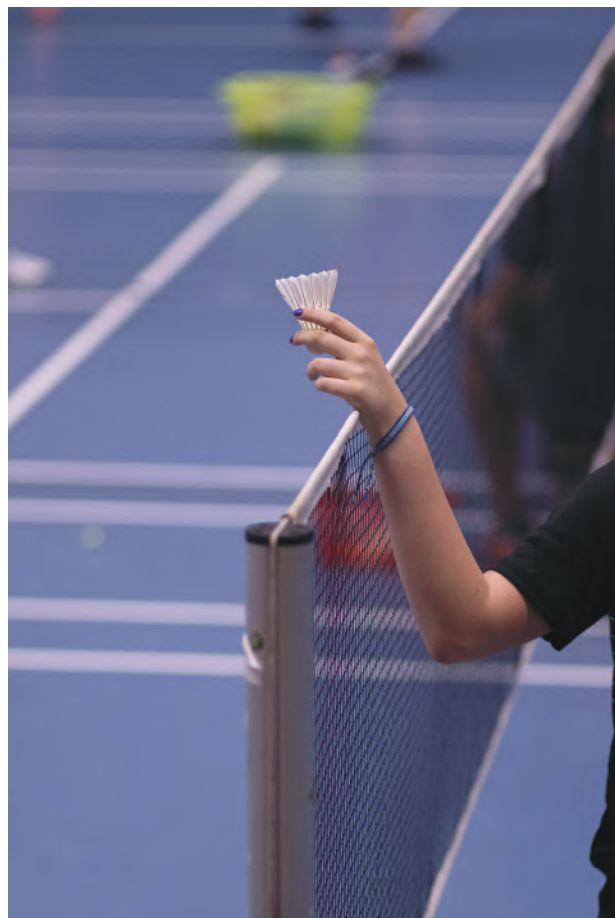
Bhagat then returned to court for an all-Indian men's singles final, where Kumar Nitesh pushed him all the way. After taking the opening game 21-17, Bhagat saw Nitesh respond strongly to claim the second 21-10, but the SL3 standout held his nerve in the decider to seal the crown 21-18.

A third title, however, proved just out of reach. In the men's doubles final, Bhagat and Sukant Kadam were denied by fellow Indians Kumar Nitesh and Ruthick Ragupathi, who prevailed in straight games, 21-19 21-14.



Bhagat was far from the only multi-title winner in Vitoria. Six players left the tournament with two gold medals, among them Ramadass, who added the SU5 women's singles title to her mixed doubles triumph. She overcame compatriot Thulasimathi Murugesan in a hard-fought final, recovering from a game down to win 17-21 21-16 21-15.

The SH6 events also produced double champions, with USA's Miles Krajewski and Peru's Giuliana Poveda each completing title doubles. Chinese Taipei's Fang Jen-Yu also enjoyed a golden run, taking both singles and doubles honours in SU5.



In the wheelchair categories, Korea's Choi Jungman secured the WH1 singles title and combined for gold in the WH1-2 men's doubles. His compatriot Jung Gyeoul also delivered an impressive campaign, winning both the WH2 women's singles and mixed doubles crowns.



# Hasta Siempre Carolina

Carolina Marín, the player who transformed Spanish badminton, has announced her retirement following the serious knee injury she suffered at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

“My journey ends here,” she said. “Thank you all... it has been a wonderful journey.”

The 32-year-old leaves behind an extraordinary legacy: three World Championship titles (2014, 2015, 2018), Olympic gold in Rio 2016, seven European crowns, and a stint as world No. 1. Widely known for her fierce competitiveness and trademark on-court intensity, Marín broke new ground for European players in a sport traditionally dominated by Asia, inspiring a new generation of athletes across the continent.

More than the titles, however, she took pride in elevating badminton’s profile in Spain and earning respect across the sporting world. Her success helped bring unprecedented visibility to the sport in her home country.

Her career-ending injury came during the Olympic semi-final against China’s He Bingjiao, who later paid tribute by wearing a Spanish Olympic Committee badge on the podium, a gesture that reflected the deep respect Marín commanded among her peers.

Marín had hoped to return for the European Championships in her hometown of Huelva this April, but ultimately chose not to risk further damage, accepting that her body could no longer meet the demands of elite competition.

Her career may be over, but her impact on the sport, particularly in Spain, will endure for generations, both through her achievements and the path she paved for others.





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