

GRSA INTERNATIONAL ATW MAGAZINE

AUGUST - 2025

Victoria Mboko

Victoria Mboko becomes the First Canadian Player to defeat THREE Grand Slam Champions in a single WTA event in the Open era



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Raducanu in Umpire Exchange During Cincinnati Open Epic

Emma Raducanu was involved in an unusual on-court exchange with the umpire during her narrow defeat to world number one Aryna Sabalenka at the Cincinnati Open.

The 22-year-old Brit pushed the defending champion to the limit in a pulsating contest that lasted over three hours, eventually falling 7-6 (7-3), 4-6, 7-6 (7-5). The performance marked another sign of progress in her comeback season, with Raducanu climbing back into the world's top 40 after overcoming her previous injury struggles.

Sabalenka, 27, was full of praise for her opponent, saying: "As I said at Wimbledon, I am really happy to see her healthy – mentally and physically. Every time she is improving and I can see she is getting back to her best. I'm enjoying fighting against her – she is such an incredible player."

The match, however, also featured a tense moment late in the deciding set. Preparing to serve at a crucial point, Raducanu paused to point out a crying child in the stands, telling the umpire: "It's been like ten minutes."

The official replied: "It's a child. Do you want me to kick the child out of the stadium?" prompting Raducanu to shrug, with some spectators shouting "yes" from the crowd. The umpire then remarked: "I can call in, but we need to continue for the moment," and play resumed.

Social media users quickly weighed in, with some criticising the umpire's comment as "unprofessional" and suggesting the noise should have been addressed without singling out the player.

Raducanu, speaking after the match, chose not to address the incident directly, instead reflecting on her performance: "She's world No 1 for a reason. I pushed her more than I did at Wimbledon, so that's an improvement."



Toronto Masters Boss Issues Warning to Sinner and Alcaraz Over Absences

Toronto Masters tournament director Karl Halle has made it clear he doesn't want to see another year without Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz in the Canadian Masters line-up.

The pair, ranked first and second in the world, met in the Wimbledon final before both withdrawing from Toronto shortly afterwards. Their absence, combined with withdrawals from Novak Djokovic and Jack Draper, left organisers without several of the sport's biggest names.

Speaking on the Nothing Major Show, hosted by John Isner, Jack Sock, Steve Johnson and Sam Querrey, Halle admitted the situation was far from ideal. "As far as the top player withdrawals, it's definitely not what we want," he said.

Although the Canadian Masters alternates annually between Toronto and Montreal, Halle took the opportunity to speak directly to Sinner and Alcaraz about next year's event, which will be staged in Montreal.

"When they withdrew, we were in talks for several days," he explained. "I said, 'Okay, we're here... 2026 you're gonna be in Montreal. Just make sure that happens.' I'm very, very confident they'll be in Montreal next year because of what we're doing with the tours, the bonus pools, and also the three weeks between our tournaments next year."

Sinner and Alcaraz have since launched their North American hard-court campaigns at the Cincinnati Masters, which will serve as their only tournament preparation ahead of the US Open.



Serena Williams Shows Off Slim New Look in Mirror Selfie

Tennis icon Serena Williams has stunned fans with her latest mirror selfie, revealing a dramatically slimmer figure compared to her playing days.

The 23-time Grand Slam champion, who dominated the sport for nearly three decades from 1995 to 2022, was renowned for her powerful physique and unmatched athleticism on court. One of the most recognisable faces in tennis history, Williams now presents a very different image – leaner, yet still radiating confidence and presence.

In recent months, she has been seen embracing a range of bold looks – from a leopard-print bikini during a holiday with her daughter, Adira, to a lively dance at the Super Bowl during Kendrick Lamar’s performance of Not Like Us. Williams even addressed the moment publicly, clarifying that it was not aimed at former partner Drake.

Her transformation has been on full display through social media, including a playful post from the gym where she quipped: “Working out and working on my angles.” More recently, she shared photos from a trip to Niagara Falls with her daughter, again showcasing her svelte frame.

The latest post features a striking mirror selfie accompanied by the caption: “...But wait, let me take a Celfie.” It’s a snapshot that has reignited conversation among fans about her post-career style, health, and unmistakable charisma – proving that Serena Williams remains as captivating off the court as she ever was on it.



Tiafoe Set for Sixth Laver Cup Appearance as Team World Heads to San Francisco

Frances Tiafoe has been named in Team World's line-up for this year's Laver Cup, returning for a sixth appearance in the competition. The event will take place at the Chase Center in San Francisco from 19–21 September.

The American will join compatriots Taylor Fritz, Ben Shelton and Tommy Paul, along with rising Brazilian star Joao Fonseca, in Andre Agassi's squad. One spot remains to be filled as Team World aim to reclaim the trophy on home soil against a formidable Team Europe, already boasting Carlos Alcaraz, Alexander Zverev, Holger Rune and Casper Ruud.

Since debuting at the inaugural Laver Cup in 2017, Tiafoe has been central to Team World's success, compiling a 6–5 record. He famously clinched the team's first-ever title in London in 2022, defeating Stefanos Tsitsipas in a decisive singles match, having earlier partnered Jack Sock to beat Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer in Federer's farewell appearance.



This season, Tiafoe has reached the Roland-Garros quarter-finals and finished runner-up at the ATP 250 in Houston. A two-time US Open semi-finalist, he fell to teammate Fritz in last year's final four.

“Frances is a perfect fit for the Laver Cup,” said captain Agassi. “He’s a big-match player who thrives in the team environment and brings incredible energy both on court and on the bench.”

Tiafoe said: “There’s nothing like Laver Cup. Playing at home in front of U.S. fans means a lot, and I’ll do everything I can to help us win.”

Now in its eighth edition, the Laver Cup pits six of the world's best from Europe against six from the rest of the world in a high-intensity three-day battle. The 2025 event marks the first time the competition has been staged on the U.S. West Coast.

Monica Seles Opens Up on Myasthenia Gravis Battle

From teenage prodigy to tennis icon, and now to health advocate – the nine-time Grand Slam champion speaks about her latest challenge.

Monica Seles first sensed something was wrong in the most familiar of settings – swinging a tennis racket. It was an action she had repeated countless times during a career that brought nine Grand Slam singles titles and a place in the International Tennis Hall of Fame.

“I would be playing with some kids or family members, and I would miss a ball. I was like, ‘Yeah, I see two balls.’ These are obviously symptoms you can’t ignore,” recalls Seles. “For me, that’s when this journey started. It took me quite some time to really absorb it, speak openly about it, because it’s a difficult one. It affects my day-to-day life quite a lot.”



The 51-year-old, who lifted her first major trophy at just 16 at the 1990 French Open and played her last professional match in 2003, was diagnosed three years ago with myasthenia gravis (MG) – a rare, chronic neuromuscular disease. This is the first time she has spoken about her condition publicly, doing so to raise awareness ahead of the US Open.

The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke describes MG as a disorder that “causes weakness in the voluntary muscles” and most commonly affects young adult women under 40 and men over 60, though it can appear at any age.

Seles admits she had never heard of the condition before. “When I got diagnosed, I was like, ‘What?!’” she says. Symptoms such as double vision and weakness in her arms and legs became impossible to ignore. “Just blowing my hair out became very difficult,” she explains.

She is now working with immunology company argenx to promote their Go for Greater campaign, encouraging others to seek help early and not feel alone. “I wish I had somebody like me speak up about it,” she adds.



Resilience on and off the Court

Seles' career is one of the most storied in tennis history – and one of the most dramatic. Her fearless, hard-hitting style made her a dominant force in the early 1990s, winning eight Grand Slam titles by the age of 19. Then came the shocking incident in Hamburg in 1993, when she was stabbed by a spectator.

It was more than two years before she returned to competition, choosing the 1995 US Open as her comeback stage. She reached the final, losing to Steffi Graf, but the moment was about far more than the scoreline. “The way they welcomed me after my stabbing, I will never forget,” she says of the New York crowd. “Those are the moments that stay with you.”

Her life since has been shaped by a series of what she calls “hard resets.” Leaving Yugoslavia at 13 to train in the United States without speaking the language. Learning to navigate fame, money, and attention as a teenage champion. Recovering from a traumatic attack. And now, adapting to life with a chronic illness.

“In tennis terms, I guess I’ve had to reset – hard reset – a few times,” she reflects. “But one thing I always tell kids I mentor is: you’ve got to adjust. That ball is bouncing, and you’ve just got to adjust. That’s what I’m doing now.”



Stubbs Urges Patience with Canada's Rising Star Mboko

Victoria Mboko has set Canadian tennis alight, stunning the Montreal crowd with a breakout run to the Canadian Open title – and Rennae Stubbs believes fans must give the teenager “some grace” as her career takes off.

At just 18, Mboko claimed her first WTA crown on home soil, defeating four Grand Slam champions along the way and becoming the second-youngest player since Serena Williams to achieve such a feat. Her combination of explosive shot-making, fearless aggression, and mental steel carried her through three deciding-set battles en route to the trophy.



Next stop: the US Open, where the newly seeded world No 24 will look to carry her momentum into New York. But Stubbs, the former doubles world No 1 and respected commentator, is keen to temper the hype.

“Give her some grace – she’s 18,” Stubbs said on her podcast. “She is not going to light the world on fire every week, so make sure we support them through that. She is only going to get better.”

Rest and Recovery the Right Call

Mboko opted to withdraw from the Cincinnati Open, which began before the Canadian Open had concluded. Her coach, Nathalie Tauziat, confirmed the decision was made to ensure she reached the US Open fully fit, particularly after a fall against Elena Rybakina in Montreal left her with a sore wrist.

Stubbs believes it was the smart move. “I am so glad she didn’t play this week in Cincinnati because she had an issue with her hand or wrist when she fell against Rybakina,” she said. “Do the press, which she did – she was on Good Morning America and everything – then get your head back for the US Open. She is going to be really tough to beat there, with her serving and her big shots.”

With the tennis world’s eyes now firmly fixed on Mboko, Stubbs’ message is clear: let her grow, let her learn – and enjoy watching the journey unfold.

When the Heat Won: Rinderknech's Struggle in Cincinnati

It was the kind of afternoon that seemed to cling to the skin – the air heavy, the sun unrelenting. Arthur Rinderknech had been out there for almost two hours, locked in a third-round battle with Felix Auger-Aliassime at the Cincinnati Open. The first set had gone to the Canadian in a tiebreak, the second was balanced at 2-2, and the Frenchman was holding his own.

Then, just as Auger-Aliassime readied himself to serve, Rinderknech crumpled near the baseline. For a moment, the match stopped breathing. Auger-Aliassime and the chair umpire rushed across, followed swiftly by medical staff.



He was helped into a shaded seat, ice packs pressed to his neck and legs, the heat clearly having taken its toll. Against the odds, he insisted he could continue. For two more games, he tried. Then reality caught up – the legs no longer answering the call, the body's reserves spent. He retired, leaving Auger-Aliassime to move on, and the Cincinnati crowd to applaud a player who had pushed himself to the limit.

It had been that sort of week. The mercury hovered above 30°C every day, humidity magnifying the strain. Cameron Norrie had looked pale and drained in his earlier match against Roberto Bautista Agut, sweat pouring between points. Wimbledon had seen its hottest opening day on record earlier in the summer. The Australian Open, too, had edged into dangerous territory, temperatures brushing 34°C.

In Melbourne, they now have the Heat Stress Scale to monitor conditions, adjusting schedules or suspending play when necessary. In Cincinnati, the players relied on ice towels, shaded benches and sheer willpower.

For Rinderknech, it was a reminder that in tennis, you can prepare for the opponent across the net – but sometimes, it's the weather that dictates the outcome.

“Bottle-Gate” in Cincinnati: Alcaraz vs. the Umpire – and What It Reveals About Official Influence

During his commanding fourth-round win over Luca Nardi at the Cincinnati Open, Carlos Alcaraz found himself embroiled in an unexpected controversy—now dubbed “bottle-gate”. The chair umpire, Greg Allensworth, requested Alcaraz to cover or remove the Evian logo on his water bottle, citing the tournament’s sponsorship exclusivity for G&J Pepsi's Aquafina.

Alcaraz, visibly irked, responded sharply: “It wasn't my fault ... why should I have to cover it when it isn't my fault? ... Because it's your fault ... I'm not going to cover it!”

The exchange, caught on camera, has sparked debate. One report notes the umpire admitted the oversight—“It was my fault because I didn’t catch it sooner”— but still insisted Alcaraz comply, prompting the player to defiantly refuse. Despite the disruption, Alcaraz marched on to a straight-sets victory (6-1, 6-4) and comfortably advanced to the quarter-finals.

Small Friction, Big Implications

At first glance, this might seem a minor distraction—but it underscores how umpires can significantly influence the flow and feel of a match, whether intentionally or not:

- * **Psychological Disruption:** Such an unexpected request can derail a player’s focus, especially during an intense match moment.
- * **Perceived Authority vs. Fairness:** When players are caught between strict tournament protocols and fairness to them personally, tension can arise.
- * **Potential for Escalation:** As this case demonstrates, minor enforcement can escalate into a visible clash, even affecting a player’s emotional state.

Should Umpire Interventions Be Curbed—or Better Managed?

This incident raises important questions:

- * **Timing and Prior Notification:** Sponsorship rule enforcement should ideally occur before match time—in the locker room or warm-up—not mid-match.
- * **Clarity and Consistency:** Umpires need clear, tournament-wide protocols, and tournament officials should communicate such requirements ahead of time.
- * **Respecting Players' Focus:** In-match time should minimise off-court distractions. Addressing sponsorship issues mid-match places unnecessary pressure on players and the officials.

In Retrospect

While Alcaraz delivered a commanding performance, the “bottle-gate” episode highlights how seemingly trivial matters—such as a water bottle logo—can ripple beyond a match's technical play. Umpires are custodians of the rules, but they also hold the power to shape match dynamics, so careful timing and communication could ensure rules are enforced without overshadowing the sport itself.

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Terence Atmane: The Independent Underdog of Cincinnati

Emerging from the qualifiers ranked No.136, Frenchman Terence Atmane sensationally stormed into the semi-finals of the Cincinnati Masters 1000, defeating elite opponents Taylor Fritz and Holger Rune along the way—and becoming a bona fide revelation of the tournament. This extraordinary run vaulted him into the Top 70, achieving a career high ranking of world No. 69 on 18 August 2025, and brought in over US\$332,000, surpassing his earnings for the rest of the year combined.

But amid this breakthrough week, Atmane revealed a stark truth: he has no clothing or footwear sponsors, relying only on Tecnifibre for his racquets. He disclosed to L'Equipe, Heavy and others, “I buy my clothes and shoes like everyone else... I don't have an agent; I handle everything on my own in my corner”. His lack of sponsorship stems from a contract termination following a breach—he was dropped by Asics in 2024 after appearing with a pair of Nike trainers during the Shanghai Masters.

The Sponsorship Struggle: Harder Than You Think

Atmane's situation highlights a critical yet under-discussed reality: securing sponsorships in professional tennis is far from automatic, even for players with talent and potential.

- Lack of agent support: Without representation, players must navigate negotiations, wearables selection, media relations, and brand outreach all by themselves.
- Brand perception and discipline: A single misstep—such as breaching contractual terms—can result in an abrupt end to a sponsorship deal, as Atmane experienced.
- Financial pressures: Before his Cincinnati surge, Atmane largely competed in Challenger events, which often result in losses due to expenses like travel, coaching, and accommodation.
- Visibility limitations: Athletes outside the Top 100 often struggle to gain exposure, making it harder to attract sponsors even when performance justifies it.



What Does It Take—and Is It Taught?

So what does it take for aspiring players to land endorsements?

1. Consistent performance and visibility: Breakthrough results in higher-tier tournaments raise both ranking and attention—something Atmane now benefits from.
2. Professional representation: Agents, media coaches, or managers play a pivotal role in negotiating deals, securing brand partnerships, and protecting athletes from legal missteps.
3. Brand alignment and conduct: Maintaining professionalism, social media strategy, and avoiding contractual breaches are crucial.
4. Proactivity and networking: Reaching out to smaller brands willing to support emerging talents, or lining up equipment deals even before major results.

Is it taught anywhere?

Hardly. Most tennis academies and federations focus on technique, fitness, and sports psychology—not sponsorship savvy. The business side—marketing, negotiation, self-branding—often remains a personal learning curve.

Should it be taught? Absolutely. If upcoming players had guidance in:

- basic contract law and sponsor obligations,
- media and brand relations,
- and self-promotion tools,

they would be better prepared to build sustainable careers, avoid pitfalls (like Atmane's incident), and fully capitalise on their on court talents.

Terence Atmane's Cinderella week in Cincinnati is more than a performance story—it's a glimpse into the hidden financial battles young pros endure. Climbing the rankings now gives him greater access to tournaments and financial breathing room, but long term stability will require sponsorships and savvy off court strategy.

His journey prompts a wider question: should the tennis ecosystem equip rising stars with commercial skills to match their on court ones? As this independent outsider has shown, the ability to buy your own kit can be as crucial as your backhand—at least until that breakthrough moment arrives.



Carlos Alcaraz Linked up with Nike: A \$200 Million Coup That Redefines Tennis Earnings

In a seismic shift for tennis endorsements, young phenom Carlos Alcaraz has reportedly secured a multi year contract with Nike worth up to US\$200 million, including his very own custom logo joining the exclusive company of Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal in that regard.

According to reliable reports, the deal spans approximately a decade, with annual payouts estimated between US\$15 million and US\$20 million. Nike's confidence in Alcaraz reflects not only his Grand Slam pedigree—including French Open, Wimbledon and U.S. Open triumphs—but his increasingly magnetic appeal to a new generation of sports fans.

Tournament Winnings vs. Endorsements: A Stark Contrast

Alcaraz's on court achievements are formidable—his career prize money totals just under US\$48.5 million. Yet, as with many modern top athletes, endorsements now far eclipse prize earnings. A 2024 Forbes breakdown found he earned US\$42.3 million during that period, but crucially, only about US\$10.3 million came from tournament victories. The remaining US\$32 million sprang from sponsorships including Nike, Babolat, Rolex, Louis Vuitton, BMW, and others.

To put that in perspective: endorsements now make up roughly three quarters of his total income, a dynamic increasingly common among elite athletes across sports.

How Does That Compare with Other Stars—and Sports?

This shift isn't unique to Alcaraz. Roger Federer, for instance, secured a \$300 million deal over 10 years with Uniqlo about \$30 million annually far exceeding his earlier Nike earnings (reported at around \$10 million per year).

Meanwhile, Jannik Sinner, another young tennis stalwart, inked a 10 year, \$150 million contract with Nike, illustrating how leading players can command vast sums purely through sponsorships. Across other sports, the structure is similar: footballers, basketball stars, and even Formula 1 drivers often earn more off the field via endorsements and media rights than from their salaries or prize purses.

Performance vs. Premium: Is This Justified—or Excessive?

It's tempting to wonder whether such enormous compensation is justified or over the top. On one hand, Alcaraz's record is exceptional: multiple Grand Slam titles, a meteoric rise to world No1, and a youth driven global following suggest a rare brand value. Nike's investment seems to reflect not only his current status, but projected trajectory.

On the other hand, a \$20 million annual payout—tenfold or more greater than his prize earnings underscores a huge gulf between on court success and off court spectacle. These figures emphasise how modern sport blurs performance and personality: image, marketability, and digital reach can rival—or even outweigh—pure athletic results.

DID YOU KNOW?

“That ball is bouncing, and you’ve just got to adjust. That’s what I’m doing now.”

Monica Seles

Famous tennis players that retired from the sport due to ill health or medical issues

1

Li Na (CHN)

Career start: Turned pro in 1999. Reached career-high No. 2 (Feb 17, 2014); two Grand Slams — 2011 Roland Garros & 2014 Australian Open. Titles: 9 WTA singles.

Final retirement: 2014, citing chronic knee injuries.

2

Robin Söderling (SWE)

Career start: Turned pro in 2001. Career-high No. 4 (Nov 15, 2010); 2010 Paris Masters champion; Roland Garros finalist (2009, 2010). Titles: 10 ATP singles.

Final retirement: 2015, due to long-term effects of mononucleosis.

3

Mario Ančić (CRO)

Career start: Turned pro in 2001. Career-high No. 7 (July 10, 2006); Wimbledon semifinalist (2004); Davis Cup champion with Croatia (2005). Titles: 3 ATP singles (5 doubles).

Final retirement: 2011, after recurring mononucleosis and back problems.

4

Mardy Fish (USA)

Career start: Turned pro in 2000. Career-high No. 7 (Aug 15, 2011); Olympic silver (2004); four Masters 1000 finals. Titles: 6 ATP singles.

Final retirement: 2015, after severe anxiety/panic disorder following a 2012 cardiac arrhythmia diagnosis and procedure.

5

Ana Ivanovic (SRB)

Career start: Turned pro in 2003. Reached No. 1 (June 9, 2008); Roland Garros champion (2008). Titles: 15 WTA singles.

Final retirement: 2016, citing persistent injuries/health concerns.

The Grip That Defines the Game: Rob Shaw's Unique Approach to Wheelchair Tennis

In top flight wheelchair tennis, where milliseconds matter and mobility is twice the challenge, one subtle detail often goes unnoticed—how players hold their racket. Take Rob Shaw, Canada's leading quad division tennis pro. In an Instagram reel, he demonstrates how he tapes his hand to his tennis racket before a match—a practice born not of preference, but of necessity.

Shaw, who suffered partial paralysis from the neck down at age 21, must secure his hand to the racket due to diminished grip strength. "I tape my hand in with ..." he explains in another feature, highlighting the importance of this adaptation for effective play.

Why That Taped Grip Matters

In the Quad division, athletes often have very limited hand control. According to a wheelchair tennis adaptive device design report, taping the racket to the hand creates a fixed grip, crucial for maintaining control throughout a match—even as sweat or movement could otherwise cause slippage.

However, this solution brings its own set of challenges. A technical brief from Tennis Canada, *Get a Grip*, outlines how using tape forces a player into one static grip for the entire match. The choice of grip—Continental, Eastern, Semi Western—can greatly affect shot variety, power and court mobility:

- Continental grip offers balanced forehand and backhand strength, efficient underspin, and good overhead pronation—but limits topspin and dynamic angles.
- Eastern or Semi Western grips unlock heavier topspin, powerful angled shots, and even stronger chair pushes—but make backhands and serve pronation harder to control.

For a Quad player, the choice becomes a strategic balancing act, shaping not just their shots but their entire match strategy.



Grips and Stringers: Adapting the Equipment to the Athlete

Consider how integral this is to the work of stringers and equipment specialists. In able bodied tennis, players might tweak string tension and grip size for comfort or feel. In wheelchair tennis, those adjustments are mission critical:

- A stringer might add extra grip cushioning or custom tape to fit the athlete's hand posture.
- They might recommend grip size changes or layers that reduce slippage without compromising mobility.
- When working with a player like Rob Shaw, every tweak must respect the taped in setup while offering maximum shot versatility.

This interplay—between athlete, coach, and stringer—is often invisible to spectators but central to performance.



Lessons for Viewers of Able Bodied Tennis

When we watch able bodied players flick through grips between points, or adjust strings pre match, we often assume it's just comfort or a mental ritual. But in wheelchair tennis—especially at the Quad level—those choices can determine whether a player stays competitive throughout long rallies, whether they can push their chair effectively, or whether they can adapt mid match.

Rob Shaw's taped grip is not a curiosity—it's a lifeline. It represents the ingenuity and resilience of athletes who work around physical limitations to compete at the highest level. It also sheds light on the collaborative artistry behind the scenes: coaches and stringers tailoring equipment so that athletes can focus on the game, not just staying connected to their racket.

Rob Shaw's taped to racket grip is a quiet marvel of adaptive sport. It reminds us how much thought, precision and support goes into elite wheelchair tennis—far beyond what meets the eye.

Next time you watch a match, spare a thought for those nuanced decisions: the grip choice, the tape, the string work. They may seem small, but for wheelchair athletes, they are the core of their competitive edge.

US Open 2025 Sets Historic Benchmark: \$5 Million for Singles Champions

This year, the US Open has shattered previous financial records by offering an unprecedented US\$5million to both the men’s and women’s singles champions—the largest prize ever awarded to a tournament winner in tennis history.

The tournament boasts a staggering total prize pool of US\$90million, marking a 20per cent increase from the 2024 purse and establishing the highest total compensation in tennis to date.

A Brief Evolution of Grand Slam Prize Money

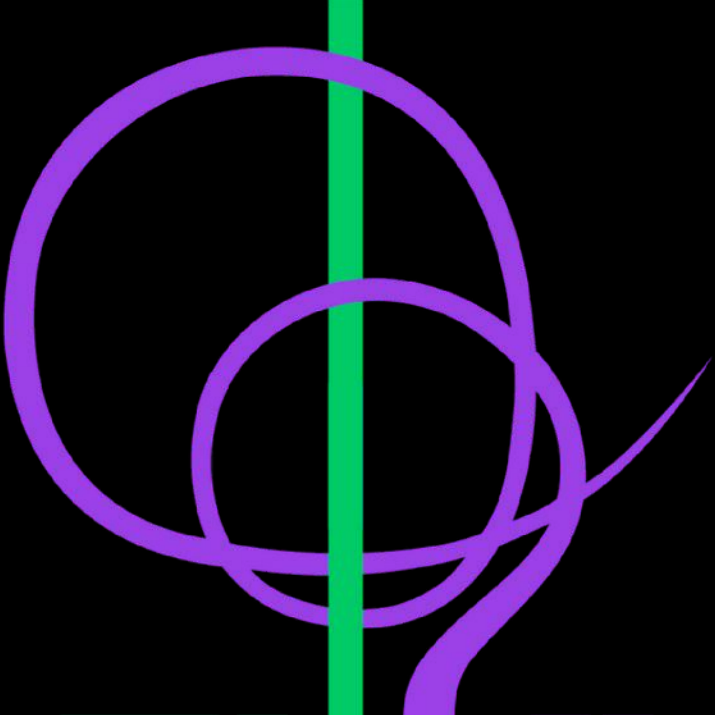
Year / Era	Event / Figure	Prize Money (Champion)
1968 (Open Era begins)	French Open offers first prize money	Around US\$3,000 for men's singles champion
1968 US Open	Total prize fund: US\$100,000; champion: US\$14,000 (but amateur status prevented Arthur Ashe from accepting prize money)	
1973	US Open introduces equal prize money for men and women, pioneering gender equity in tennis	
2007	Wimbledon and French Open finally reach gender pay parity	
2025 (current)	US Open doubles champion's prize to US\$5 million amid a record total purse of US\$90 million	

Why This Matters

These figures highlight decades of progress—from modest payouts to a staggering transformation. The mid-20th century saw prize pools measured in mere thousands. Now, champions walk away with multimillion-dollar prizes. This growth reflects tennis’s booming commercial appeal, global reach, and the increasing demands from players for a fairer share of tournament revenues.

Players have voiced these concerns directly—for example, past champions like Aryna Sabalenka and Jannik Sinner, along with Coco Gauff, signed letters urging Grand Slam organisers to increase prize money to better reflect their role in generating revenue.

The 2025 US Open stands as a milestone in tennis history: singles winners earning US\$5 million each, supported by an unmatched total purse of US\$90 million. It underscores tennis’s evolution from modest beginnings to a lucrative professional sport—and prompts reflection on whether these financial leaps fairly reward elite performance or have strayed into the extraordinary.



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7TH GRSA PRO STRINGER CERTIFICATION WORKSHOP IN SHANGHAI, CHINA.



From August 23rd to 24th, 2025, GRSA held the 7th Stringer Training Session in Shanghai, China. This training session has concluded successfully, not only achieving the professional teaching objectives with high quality, but also continuing the association's good reputation in supporting the career development of its trainees.

A total of 14 trainees were recruited for this training session, coming from different cities such as Shanghai, Hangzhou and Beijing. The wide geographical coverage fully reflects the active demand in the industry for learning professional racket stringing skills. During the training, all trainees showed a positive and enthusiastic learning attitude. Under the guidance of the Asia Chief instructor, Ken and Chinese Instructors Ren Jiachen—who provided detailed and systematic teaching based on their industry experience and professional teaching standards—the trainees efficiently mastered the theoretical knowledge and practical skills of tennis racket stringing, laying a solid core foundation for their future career development. We also pride ourselves with having an optimal machine to student ratio.



It is worth noting that after returning to their respective locations, many trainees from the association's previous training sessions have successfully started their own racket stores or stringing studios. Relying on the solid stringing foundation laid during the training, the quality of their services have been highly recognized by the market: they have not only gained the trust of ordinary consumers, but also gained the trust of professional players. Currently, most of the stores and studios are operating steadily with good business. This positive transformation from "professional learning to career implementation" not only confirms the practical value and industry influence of the GRSA training system, but also provides a strong reference for the career planning of the new trainees in this session.

GRSA workshops are proudly supported by our global partners HEAD and Wilson. Six brand new Wilson Baiardo stringing machines, Wilson and Head tennis rackets and strings were used for all workshops conducted in China.









2025年8月23日-24日，GRSA国际穿线师协会在上海顺利举办第七期穿线师培训，本次培训已圆满结束，不仅高质量完成专业教学目标，更延续了协会助力学员职业发展的良好成果。

本次培训共招收学员14人，学员分别来自上海、杭州、北京等不同城市，地域覆盖广泛，充分体现了行业对专业穿线技能学习的积极需求。培训过程中，全体学员学习态度端正、热情高涨，在导师肯老师与任家琛老师的指导下一一两位讲师依托深厚的行业经验与专业教学水平，提供了细致系统的教学——高效掌握了网球拍穿线的理论知识与实操技能，为后续职业发展夯实了核心基础。

值得关注的是，协会过往培训的学员返回各地后，已有不少人成功开启了个人穿线门店或工作室。凭借培训期间打下的扎实穿线功底，他们的服务质量得到了市场高度认可：不仅收获了普通消费者的信任，更赢得了专业球员的青睐，目前多数门店及工作室生意稳步向好。这一“从专业学习到职业落地”的良性转化，既印证了GRSA培训体系的实践价值与行业影响力，也为本期新学员的职业规划提供了有力参考。



RN Parnell International S.L

Here's a breakdown of the network

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



In 2022 GRSA was launched



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In 2024



In 2025





P.R.S.

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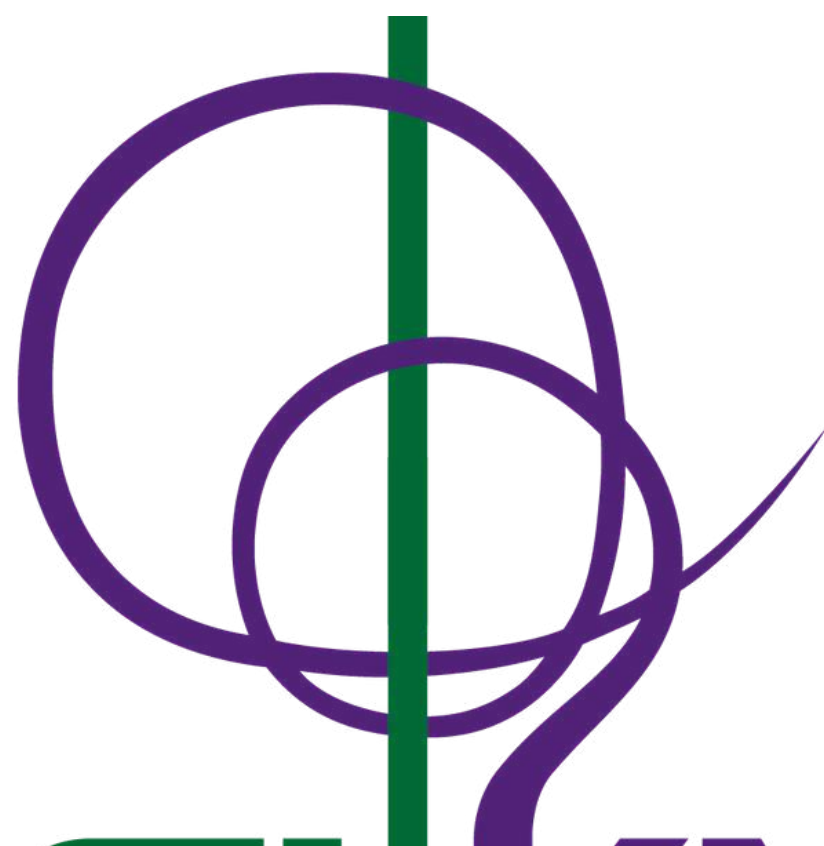
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CONGRATULATIONS KHALID

Khalid is the 3rd person in Indonesia to achieve the GRSA Online Certified Pro Stringer certification level and is already looking at taking the next step, not just that, but eager to get to the highest possible certification is on his list of goals.

It's wonderful to see how people from all over the world are placing their trust in GRSA's Online certification programs, a true testament to the work ethic of the whole GRSA family.

CONGRATULATIONS PHILLIP

Phillip is eager to learn more, his first step was to learn the basics, and attend a beginners workshop with Martin Mann.



CONGRATULATIONS YUSUF

Well done for being the first person in Turkey to achieve this certification, we're looking forward to you taking the next step and becoming an Online Certified Pro Master Stringer!



CONGRATULATIONS FELIX

Felix took on his first workshop to get underway and learn the basics. He thoroughly enjoyed the experience.



CONGRATULATIONS ANJA

Anja recently attended a workshop, starting off her stringing journey, and hopefully getting the bug to take on more certifications.



GRSA IN IRELAND WITH ROGER HENRY



It was a busy summer season for the GRSA Stringing Team in Ireland. As well as providing the stringing services at a number of key events we were adding more budding stringers to our team with a few workshops. We have been working very closely with HEAD Ireland and thank them for their continued support and thanks also to Tennis Ireland for the opportunity to run the stringing services at the various tournaments including Regional, National & International events. Big thanks to fellow GRSA stringer Michael Flanigan for his help at various tournaments and it was great to work alongside him at the AIG Irish Open.



In summary ...lots of rackets strung...long hours worked...met lots of people (old & new)...had lots of fun along the way....

Thank you to all the GRSA Team for the continued support and more workshops in the planning stage.



June 2025 - Carrickmines Junior Open (Dublin)

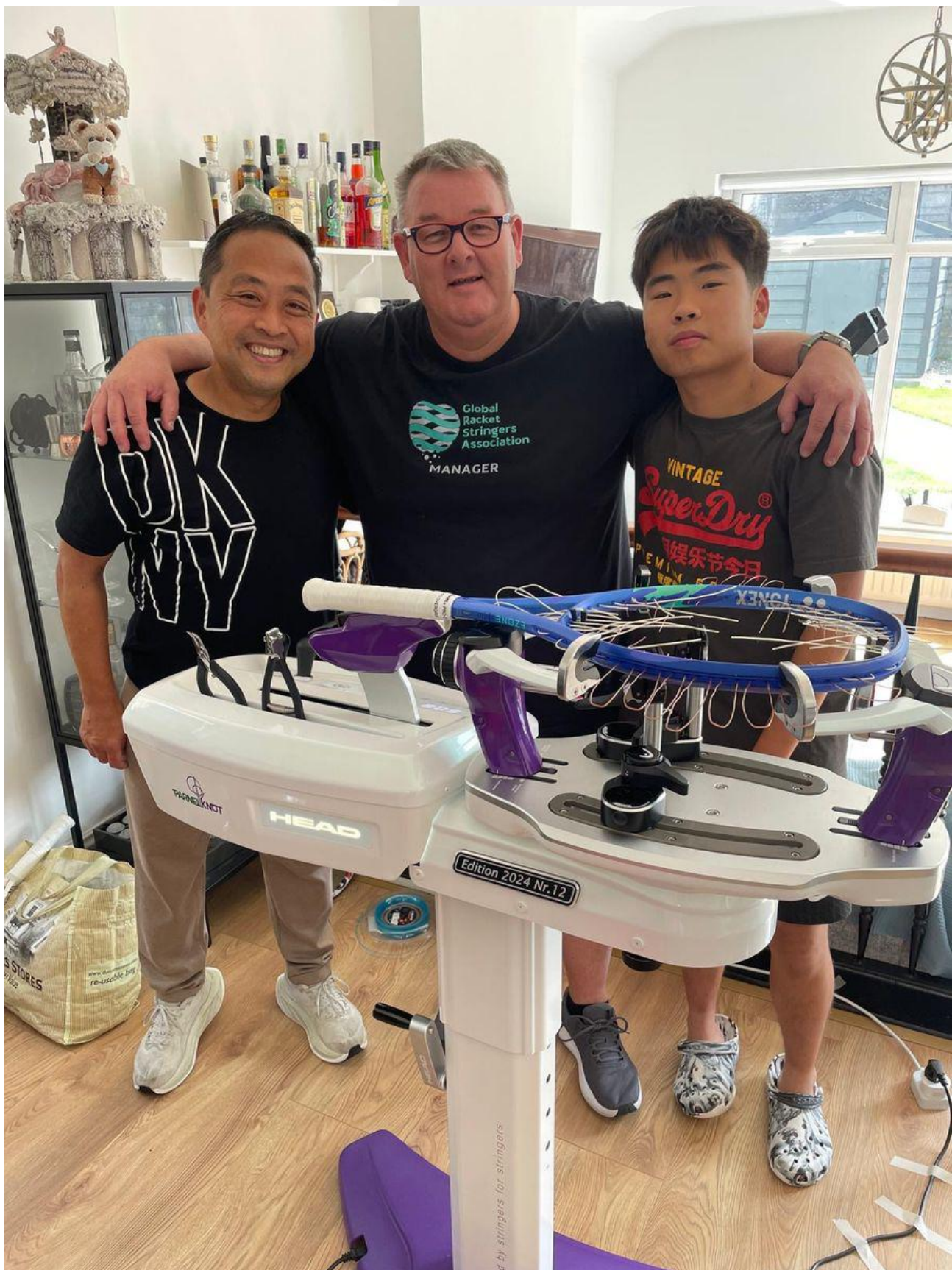


Roger joined at the U18 ITF in Naas by good friend and GRSA Ireland supporter - Federico Raffo from HEAD Ireland



Arriving early morning at Carrickmines Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club for another busy day at the AIG Irish Open.

A full Men's & Ladies draw kept the GRSA Stringing Team (Roger & Michael) busy with players, spectators & members rackets. A fantastic week working with the whole tournament team led fantastically by tournament director (Lisa Murphy - Tennis Ireland).



GRSA Member Romeu ...the proud owner of a brand new limited edition Parnell Knot HEAD Stringing Machine...the only one in Ireland (so far). I was delighted to make the long journey to spend a great few days working with Romeu and his son Henrique.



2025

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

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GRSA International's Second Annual Stringer's Conference: Come to Málaga!

It's going to be EPIC!

Following the remarkable success of our inaugural international conference, GRSA International is delighted to announce the Second Annual Stringer's Conference, taking place from Thursday 13th to Sunday 16th November 2025 at the stunning Wyndham Grand Costa del Sol.

This is far more than a conference — it's a vibrant celebration of our global stringing community. Professionals, enthusiasts, and innovators from around the world will come together to learn, share, and connect.



What Your Ticket Includes

Your conference pass unlocks:

- Full access to all presentations, workshops, and demonstrations
- A goodie bag packed with gear worth the price of your ticket
- 3 evening dinners (including beverages), featuring a cocktail night and an unmissable gala night
- Morning coffee breaks and networking opportunities
- Full tournament day on Thursday with tennis and padel matches
- Live entertainment, industry surprises, and a buzzing international atmosphere

Tickets are limited. Reserve yours now:

- 275€ for members
- 350€ for non-members
- 125€ for plus-ones (includes access to the welcome mixer, cocktail and gala dinner)



➡ Book your place directly on our website.

Places are limited: Although we're not full just yet, places are limited, with 2 dedicated rooms for workshops and presentations, we only have room for a specific amount of people so be sure to book soon to avoid disappointment

Returning Delegates — We've Got Something Special for You

If you joined us last year, you’ve already received your personal invitation — and for good reason. As a gesture of our gratitude, all returning participants will receive a special gift, created exclusively for GRSA International by our friends at Wilson Sports.

Accommodation Details

Delegates can book their stay directly with our host venue, the beautiful Wyndham Grand Costa del Sol.

To enjoy our discounted rate, use the GRSA booking code: **9900190743**.
Click the booking image here or our website and please ensure you select Wyndham Grand.

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 Guests 2 guests, 1 room	 Check-in Wed, 12 Nov 2025	 Check-out Sun, 16 Nov 2025
Special Codes or Rates ▼		

Activities for Partners and Families

We’re making this year’s event even more inclusive. Partners and family members are welcome to enjoy a range of optional add-on activities — including spa experiences, local excursions, and day trips throughout Málaga and the Andalusian coastline. Full details will be available shortly.

Be Part of the Industry’s Most Anticipated Gathering

Whether you’re a seasoned tour stringer or just starting out, this is your opportunity to grow, connect, and be inspired. With an exciting line-up of speakers — including Ron Rocchi (Wilson) and Denis Fabian (HEAD) — hands-on workshops, and unforgettable evening events, this year’s conference promises to be truly unmissable.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Costa del Sol!

For further details or enquiries, please contact us at: **info@grsa-international.com**



GRSA WORKSHOP @ PRS HQ

On the weekend of 16 & 17 of August, another GRSA International workshop took place at the P.R.S. HQ in Steinbach Germany, and what a workshop!

The set up seemed to be a a bit challenging as we had 3 stringers coming in for a 1 day workshop aiming to achieve the level of "Approved Stringer", and two young ladies having partly in charge of stringing for Premium Racket Service shop, said service being under the guidance and supervision of GRSA International D-A-CH responsible Martin Mann, all aiming for the level of CPS having a additional day to pass tests and exams.

It turned out to be a really nice and easy workshop as all participants had been studying the A-Z of stringing prior to the workshop so that all topics touched in theory and practice could be handled smoothly, in a decent timely manner.

A lot of stringing - a lot questions raised and answered - truly an enjoyable and productive time.

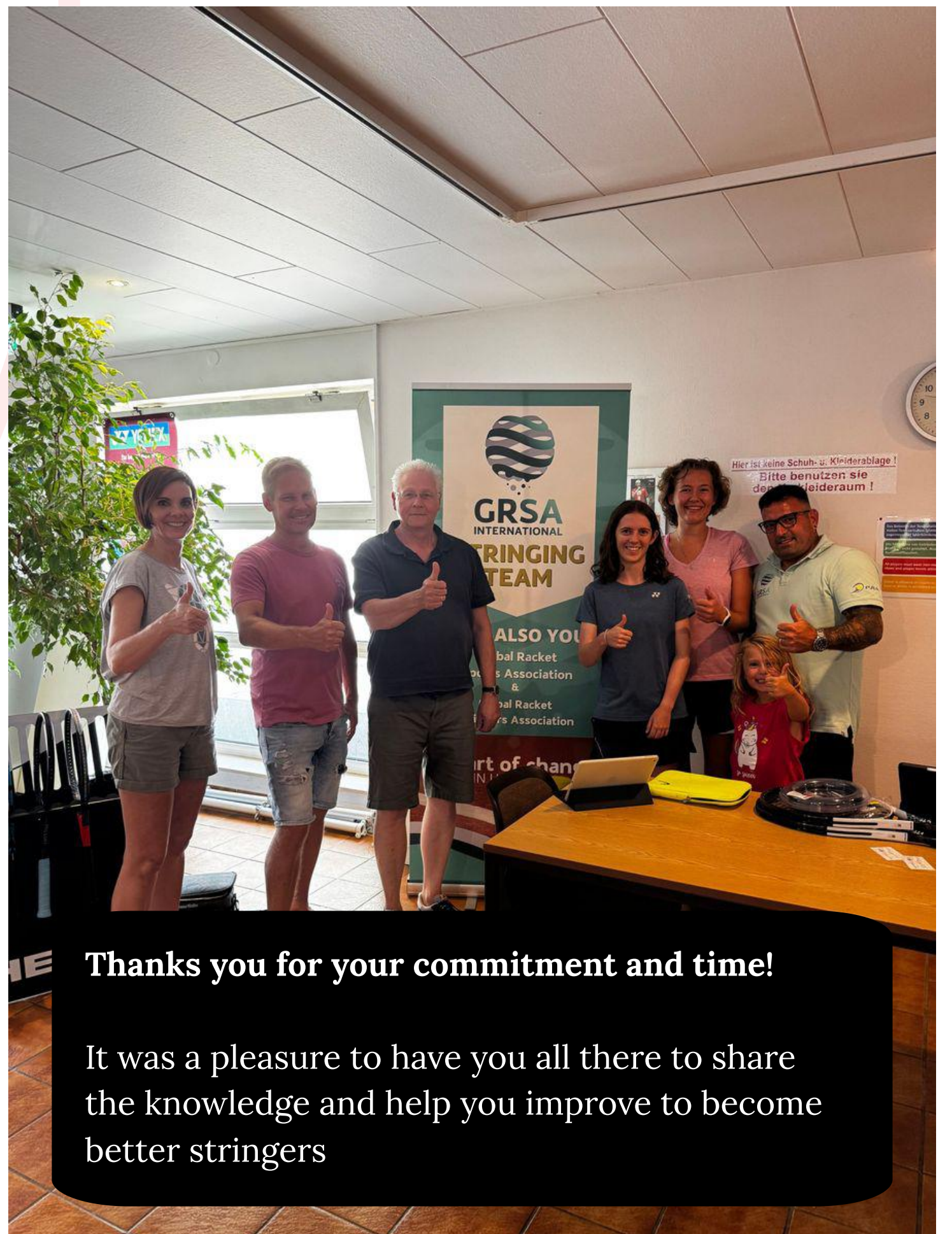
Congratulations to the following people for achieving the Approved Stringer status:

Anja Kerkamann
Felix Hoepfner
Philipp Müller





Well done to Mara Teresa Beyerle & Katharina Dreibholz for achieving the level of Certified Pro Stringer and Dominik Baumann for achieving the level of "Certified Master Professional Stringer"



Thanks you for your commitment and time!

It was a pleasure to have you all there to share the knowledge and help you improve to become better stringers

Compression Mat & Suitable footwear

A compression mat is a part of the stringers hardware that shouldn't be overlooked and often is.

Why is it so important? Because it has a direct effect on stringer fatigue. Unless the stringer is a seasoned veteran from many Grand Slam events and has reached the point where even with extreme fatigue, the rackets still come out perfectly strung, fatigue can affect the outcome 99% of the time.

We often see DT's slowly going down the more tired the team gets. By checking the DT's on all rackets we can control this and bring it to the attention of the stringers. The compression mat just makes the long hours standing behind the machine more bearable and reduces the stress placed on the feet.

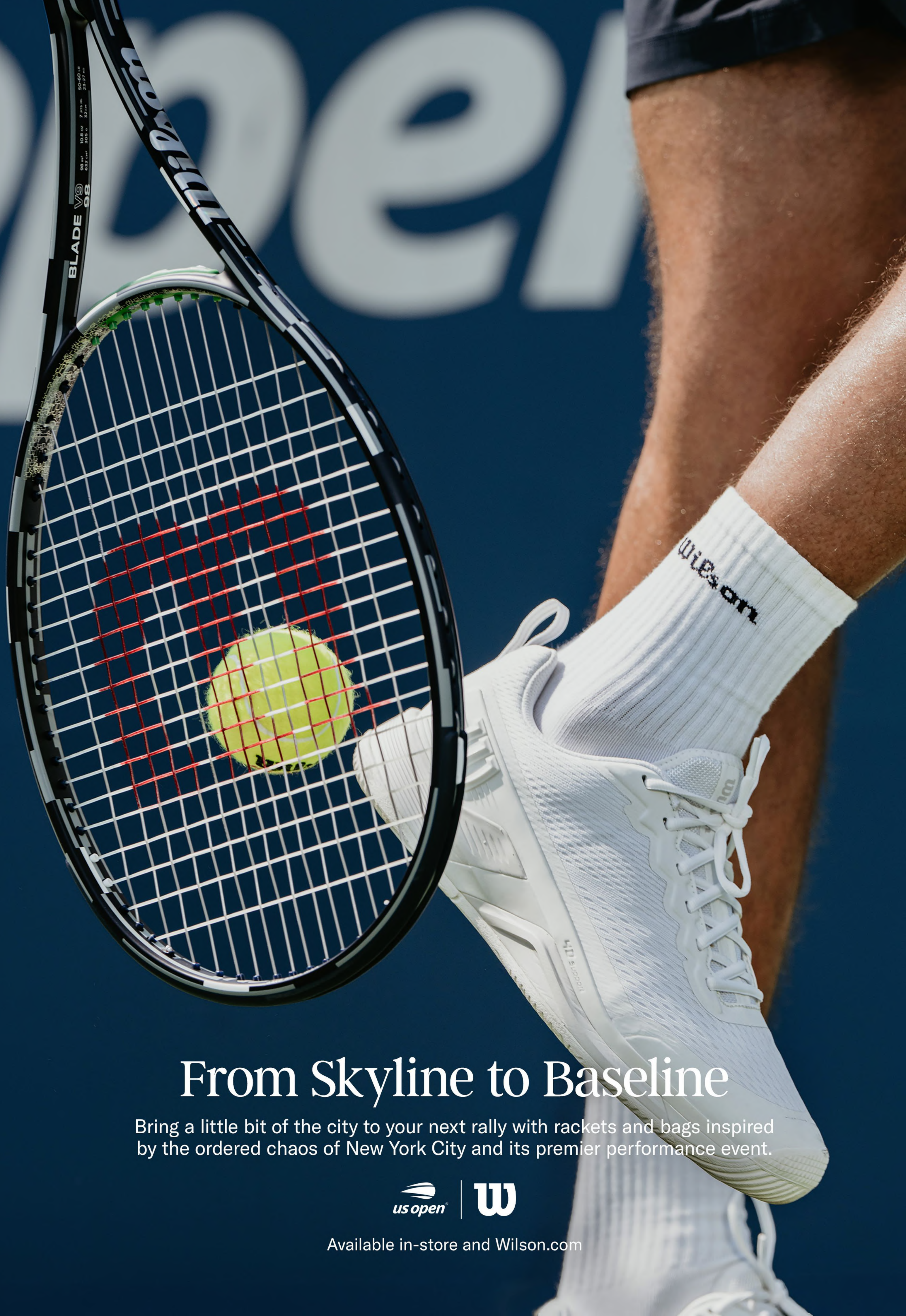
If you don't have a compression mat, they are not expensive and well worth investing in.

Another important part in reducing stringer fatigue is the type of shoes used while stringing. Normally a soft cushioned running shoe is probably the most comfortable, with most tennis shoes being the least comfortable and hard. Covered sandal-type shoes (Crocs or Ufos) are also an option as they can keep the feet cool, protected and are quite soft and cushioned.

GRSA does not recommend stringing barefoot, we have mentioned this before but it's always good to be reminded that an awl or snippers have sharp points and can fall out of a tool tray. Even though the harm might be minor, a trip to A & E will leave a stringing team with one less active member and mean everyone else has to take up the slack. You will not only be letting yourself down but the team as a whole.

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



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NICK DOWN take on the

prince
Squash

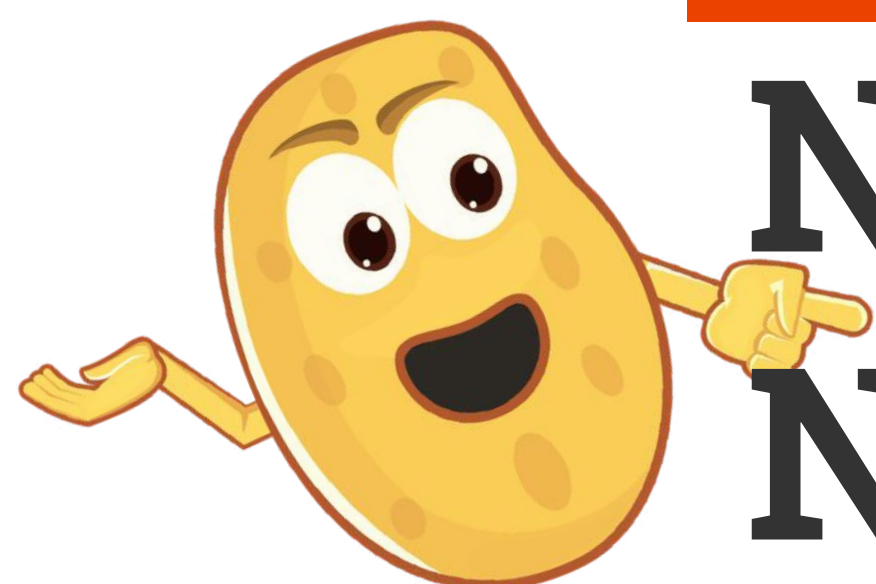
Prince Powerfan Pattern (non-powering)

This month I'll look at the Prince Powerfan Pattern, which is one of only two Prince Patterns without a powering at the throat. It is probably the most widely used pattern by Prince, in fact, there are a high number of rackets that have used this pattern for years and it is still currently used.

Whilst we have already seen double-barrelled grommets at the head, now they are at the throat (x8) instead of a throat ring (powering), they are also at the head and all of the double-barrelled grommets are involved when installing the main strings.

This pattern is very similar to the Triple Threat pattern. There are 16 mains and 17 crosses. I always string them with two pieces of string, to avoid long runs of string outside the frame. That applies whether leading to a knot or to a cross string.

Although, there is less height difference at the throat, there still must be a hard-weave at all double-barrelled grommets, at the bottom cross string at the throat and there must be no twists, at all, in any of the main strings.



Nick's Nugget

If a racket has a hole, of any size, at the throat, that you could poke your finger through. It's got an "open throat".

Mains:-

(Start at the head).

LH1 to LT1 (lower hole)

RH1 to RT1 (upper hole)

LT1 (lower hole) to LT2 (lower hole)

LT2 (lower hole) to LH3

LH3 to LH2

LH2 to LT1 (upper hole)

LT1 (upper hole) to LT2 (upper hole)

LT2 (upper hole) to LH4.

RT1 (upper hole) to RT2 (upper hole)

RT2 (upper hole) to RH3

RH3 to RH2

RH2 to RT1(lower hole)

RT1 (lower hole) to RT2 (lower hole)

RT2 (lower hole) to RH4

RH4 to RH5

RH5 to RT3 (upper hole)

RT3 (upper hole) to RT4 (upper hole)

RT4 (upper hole) to RH8

RH8 to RH11 (lower hole)

RH11(lower hole) to RT4 (lower hole)

RT4(lower hole) to RT3(lower hole)

RT3(lower hole) to RH6(lower hole)

RH6(lower hole) to RH8 and tie off.

LH4 to LH5(upper hole)

LH5 (upper hole) to LT3(lower hole)

LT3 (lower hole) to LT4 (lower hole)

LT4 (lower hole) to LH8

LH8 to LH11 (upper hole)

LH11 (upper hole) to LT4 (upper hole) to LT3 (upper hole)

LT3 (upper hole) to LH6 (upper hole)

LH6 (upper hole) to LH8 and tie off.



**Listen to my
playlist on Spotify**

**Crosses:-**

1st cross at either LH5 or RH5 (use unused hole) and ensure hard-weave. Tie off at RH4 or LH4. (You'll find that, because there are 17 cross strings, that the weave at the Head will be the same as the weave at the throat).

Last cross at throat will be at RT5 or LT5 tie off will be RT6 or LT6.

17 crosses, 1 string per hole, hard-weaves at all double-barrelled grommets. If it doesn't work out, you failed to follow these instructions and might need to start again.

Next month:- All brands Generic Fan Pattern.

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

PSA Squash Tour Hits New Heights with Record \$12.5M in Prize Money

Revamped tour calendar fuels unprecedented growth as Gohar and Asal top earnings in landmark season for equality.

The Professional Squash Association (PSA) has revealed record-breaking figures for the 2024–25 campaign, with total player compensation reaching an unprecedented \$12,534,421 – an 18.4% rise on the previous season.

The milestone follows the debut of the PSA's revamped Squash Tour structure, designed to create a more stable, long-term calendar of elite tournaments in the lead-up to the sport's Olympic debut at LA28. The new system also drove a record 1,019 sanctioned events across the year.

Women's events accounted for \$5,916,910 in prize money – up 22.3% – while men's tournaments offered \$6,617,511, a 15.1% increase. World No.1 Nouran Gohar topped the women's earnings chart with \$400,045, reclaiming the position for the first time since 2022–23. On the men's side, Mostafa Asal led the way with \$400,686 – his first time at the summit. Remarkably, the two No.1s finished the season with almost identical totals, a landmark moment for gender parity in the sport.

Average earnings for the men's and women's top 10 players climbed to \$183,734, representing a 13% uplift year-on-year. The campaign featured 606 men's events and 413 women's events, staged across 70 nations, with Sri Lanka hosting a PSA tournament for the first time.

In the breakdown of tournament categories, 81 World Events were held – a 37.3% jump on the previous year – alongside 215 Challenger Events and 720 Satellite and Federation tournaments.

“The 2024–25 campaign was one of the most competitive and exciting in living memory, delivering record figures in both prize money and sanctioned events,” said PSA Chief Executive Alex Gough. “Our strategy is centred on increasing financial rewards and playing opportunities for athletes, and we are firmly on course to meet the targets in our long-term vision. The future is incredibly bright for professional squash, with the coming season set to deliver even more landmark moments.”

Egyptian Double for Elhammamy and Khalil at ESF Tournament #1

Nadine Elhammamy and Salman Khalil ensured home fans left happy in Giza as they clinched an all-Egyptian double at the ESF Tournament #1 2025.

With only two non-Egyptian players across both draws – and none among the seeds – the odds were heavily stacked in favour of local success. But the week still delivered a showcase of high-quality squash from start to finish.



The women's event boasted a strong line-up of top-100 players, including Habiba Hani, Hana Ismail and Barb Sameh, alongside two stars from Egypt's recent World Junior Championship-winning team: Elhammamy and Jana Swaify. Seeded sixth and fifth respectively, both battled their way to the final, seeing off Ismail and Farida Walid in the semis.

Elhammamy – silver medallist in the World Juniors and beaten only once since May – struck first in the final, taking the opener 11-9 after surviving four missed game balls. Swaify hit back in style, storming to an 11-2 win in the second. But momentum swung again as Elhammamy rattled off nine straight rallies to claim the third 11-2.

The No.6 seed looked to be cruising at 4-0 in game four, only for Swaify to claw back to 6-6 and save four match balls. A tense tiebreak followed, but a decisive no let at 10-10 ended her fight, with Elhammamy sealing it 12-10 for her fourth PSA Tour title.

An hour earlier, 20-year-old Khalil had matched that total with victory in the men's final. The reigning US college individual champion arrived in red-hot form, having won three titles since April, but was pushed to five games in both the quarters and semis by Hazem Hossam and Seif Tamer.

In the final, Khalil faced University of Pennsylvania teammate Omar Said for the third time this summer. After taking the first two games 11-7, 11-6, Khalil was in full control when Said retired at 6-1 down in the third. The win preserved Khalil's perfect record in PSA finals – four finals, four titles.

SHOHDY AND KHAFAGY SEAL EGYPTIAN DOUBLE IN JAIPUR



While Egypt were celebrating success in Giza, there was more glory for the nation nearly 3,000 miles away in Jaipur, where Yassin Shohdy and Nour Khafagy claimed the men's and women's titles at the HCL Squash Indian Tour 1, 2025.

Top seed Shohdy had to work hard from the outset, recovering from a game down to beat Ayaan Vaziralli in round two. In contrast, Khafagy made a blistering start, dismantling Malak Talati 3-0 in just 12 minutes.

From that point, Shohdy hit his stride, sweeping past Naoki Hayashi and Seif Refaay without dropping a game to set up a final clash with Mohamed Gohar – younger brother of women's World No.1 Nouran Gohar. Gohar had lifted his maiden PSA title only days earlier at the SA Sekwoja Open, but found no way past an in-form Shohdy, who sealed the championship 11-6, 11-9, 11-7 in just 33 minutes.

Khafagy's triumph came earlier in the day against home favourite Tanvi Khanna. The Indian No.5 seed had lit up the women's draw by toppling both the No.2 and No.4 seeds to reach the final, chasing her fourth PSA Tour crown.

The opening exchanges suggested a tight contest, with Khafagy taking the first game 11-3 before Khanna levelled 11-5. The Egyptian regained the lead with another 11-5 and appeared on the brink of a decider when Khanna earned two game balls at 10-8 in the fourth.

Khafagy held her nerve, saving both before forcing a tiebreak, and closed out the match 12-10 to secure her third PSA Tour title – capping another Egyptian double on the international stage.

ROMERO COMPLETES AUSTRALIAN QUADRUPLE AS LAI BREAKS NEW GROUND IN DEVONPORT

Spain's Noa Romero capped a sensational spell in Australia by lifting her fourth PSA title of the trip at the City of Devonport Tasmanian Open 2025, while Hong Kong's Matthew Lai celebrated his first crown on foreign soil in the men's event.

Romero arrived in Devonport with titles already in Bendigo, Geelong and Melbourne – a remarkable run for a player who had never won a PSA event before landing Down Under. She eased past Mehwish Ali in round one but was pushed the distance in five-game battles against Breanne Flynn and Gigi Yeung in the following rounds.



The meeting with Yeung was their sixth of the tour, with the winner of each previous encounter going on to claim that tournament's title. Romero maintained that unusual streak, overcoming her familiar rival before defeating New Zealand's Ella Lash in the final to climb to a career-high world ranking of No.103.

In the men's draw, top seed Lai was seeking to add to two titles won at home in Hong Kong, China – and finally broke his overseas duck with a commanding 3-0 victory over Australia's Dylan Molinaro.

Molinaro, the No.3 seed, was appearing in his fourth PSA final but still chasing a maiden title after a semi-final win over Leo Chung. Lai's route to the final had been far less straightforward, requiring five games to edge Nicholas Calvert and Chi Him Wong, either side of a 3-1 win against Joeri Hapers.

Finals day proved far simpler, with Lai closing out the week in just 29 minutes, winning 11-9, 11-5, 11-1 to seal a landmark triumph.

Premier Padel 2025: First-Half Report Cards – Men's Tour

The August break has brought the Premier Padel season to a brief standstill – and with it, a chance to reflect. From the Riyadh P1 curtain-raiser to the heat of Tarragona, the men's circuit has served up drama, surprises, and no shortage of partner swaps. Now, with the decisive autumn run looming, it's time to grade the contenders.

Nobody Perfect

Not a single player escapes this mid-term review with a perfect score. Even the game's top names have stumbled at times. Yes, Coello and Tapia lead the Race once more, but an unconvincing start rules them out of "top honours".

Excellent Form

Eight titles, world No.1 status intact – Arturo Coello and Agustín Tapia may not have bulldozed the field as in 2024, but their trophy haul makes them the benchmark.

Juan Lebrón has finally shaken off his injury woes, looking lethal again on the right. Juan Tello's 2025 revival mirrors that of "El Lobo", bringing back the fire that once made him a feared opponent.

Then there's the year's breakout story – Javi Leal and Fran Guerrero. Dangerous individually, dynamic together, they've punched above their ranking with two semi-final runs and a quarter-final, all while outside the top eight.





Very Good – But Room to Grow

Ale Galán and Fede Chingotto have been consistent finalists but remain second best to the world's top pair. Franco Stupaczuk has impressed without making that decisive leap.

Coki Nieto and Mike Yanguas have alternated brilliance with quiet weeks, while Pablo Cardona and Leo Augsburger's electric start faded in mid-season. Paquito Navarro and Lucas Bergamini's rise from seventh to fifth shows what steady results can deliver, and Tino Libaak's bright start was cruelly halted by injury.

Good – But Below Potential

Martín Di Nenno's semi-final record isn't bad, but for a player of his calibre, it feels underwhelming. Momo González and Jon Sanz have had their moments but haven't truly caught fire. Edu Alonso and Álex Arroyo, so promising in 2024, have yet to find their old rhythm.

Failing to Fire

Álex Ruiz and Javi Garrido's seasons have been misfires. Ruiz remains mired in last-16 exits, Garrido is still searching for the right partner – and the self-belief that once defined his game. Both have the weapons to turn it around after the break, but they'll need a strong finish to rescue their year.



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

PRO KENNEX HUAHIN PICKLEBALL OPEN 2025 (WPC Tier 2)**EID:** 2084 THB 1000**Organizer:** Nuan-anong Silarat**EVENT - TOURNAMENT****Starting:** November 07, 2025 to November 09, 2025**City:** T Rex Sport Club / Badminton Courts, 3218 Hin Lek Fai, Hua Hin District, Prachuap Khiri Khan, Thailand**Tournament Venue:** T-rex Sport Club**Registration Deadline:** October 25, 2025 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 2**6th German "Oktoberfest" Open****EID:** 2113 EUR 35**Organizer:** Andreas Kopkau**EVENT - TOURNAMENT****Starting:** October 24, 2025 to October 26, 2025**City:** Adenauerallee 110, 45891 Gelsenkirchen, Deutschland**Tournament Venue:** Deutscher Pickleball Bund E.v.**Registration Deadline:** October 19, 2025 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 3**DUPR ROME OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP 5TH ED.****EID:** 1856 EUR 30**Organizer:** Marco Maurizi**EVENT - TOURNAMENT****Starting:** October 18, 2025 to October 19, 2025**City:** Via Castore Durante, Roma RM, Italia**Tournament Venue:** Standout Pickleball Arena**Registration Deadline:** October 11, 2025 (OPEN)**Tier Level:** 3**MORE
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Championship Sunday Sparkles at the Veolia Bristol Open

Mixed Doubles – Waters & Johns Extend Dominance

Top seeds Anna Leigh Waters and Ben Johns battled past siblings Jorja and JW Johnson in a pulsating five-game final, 11-4, 4-11, 11-4, 7-11, 11-3. Waters and Johns are now an extraordinary 51-2 in finals together (53 for Waters in total, 66 for Johns). The Johnsons' record against them drops to 1-10, their sole win coming in North Carolina earlier this year. All four players notched at least 10 clean winners, but the champions' efficiency told—just 7 errors across dinks, serves, returns and third shots compared with the Johnsons' 18. The crowd were treated to a marathon 43-shot rally along the way.

Men's Doubles – Milestone for Ben Johns

Ben Johns and Gabe Tardio crushed sixth seeds Jaume Martinez Vich and Matt Wright 11-1, 11-6, 11-2. It was Johns' 50th career doubles title, while Wright, aged 48, became the oldest PPA finalist in history. Johns and Tardio dominated clean winners 24-3 and committed zero errors on dinks, serves or returns. The match featured a best rally of 29 shots.

Women's Doubles – The Perfect Partnership

Anna Bright and Anna Leigh Waters swept past Jorja Johnson and Rachel Rohrabacher 11-6, 11-3, 11-1 to claim their third straight title. Bright now owns 19 doubles crowns, Waters 51, and together they boast a perfect 10-0 record. They kept volleys into the net to a minimum—just 5 compared to their opponents' 14—with a standout rally stretching to 35 shots.

Men's Singles – Goins' Breakthrough

Ranked 19th, Johns Lucian Goins captured his first PPA title by defeating No.15 seed Gabriel Joseph 13-11, 9-11, 11-2. Goins, who had previously taken bronze at the Cape Coral Open, kept errors on serves and returns to just 7 compared with Joseph's 16. Joseph, the 2023 Takeya Showcase champion, pushed hard but couldn't match Goins' clean finish in a contest highlighted by a 14-shot rally.

Women's Singles – Todd Holds Off Christian

No.2 seed Parris Todd edged out top seed Kaitlyn Christian in two tense games, 12-10, 12-10—mirroring her win over Christian at the Tucson Open. Christian was left to rue missed chances, failing to convert all four game points she held. The longest rally lasted 11 shots in a match defined by razor-thin margins.



PPA Tour Serves Up New Era with Exclusive LT Pro 48 Pickleball

The Carvana PPA Tour has teamed up with Life Time, the United States' premier healthy lifestyle brand and a major provider of pickleball courts, to make the LT Pro 48 Pickleball the official ball of all PPA tournaments and events. Designed by Life Time founder, chairman and CEO Bahram Akradi and his engineering team, the ball made its official debut at the PPA stop in Bristol, Tennessee, earlier this month.

The collaboration strengthens Life Time's role in the sport, with more PPA tournaments now set to take place at its athletic country clubs across North America.

Engineered for Consistency and Durability

The LT Pro 48 was created to tackle two of the most common complaints about existing pickleballs – inconsistent bounce and premature cracking. Featuring symmetrically spaced holes and chamfered edges, the ball is built for truer flight, greater durability and the rigours of professional play.

“Pickleball is more than a sport – it's a global movement,” said Akradi. “With the LT Pro 48, we've engineered a ball that bounces truer and lasts longer, meeting the demands of top-level competition.”

Positive Player Reception

The LT Pro 48 has already been trialled at two PPA events, earning high praise from both pros and amateurs. “The LT Pro 48 has really elevated the quality of what a pro-level ball can be,” said Connor Pardoe, PPA Tour founder and CEO. “We're thrilled our partnership with Life Time allows us to use it at the sport's highest level.”

Life Time's Pickleball Boom

Life Time's impact on the sport is striking. In the first half of 2025 alone, 3.1 million people played pickleball across its 800-plus courts, with members now averaging 6.8 games a month – up from 3.8 in 2023. More than 26,000 lessons have been delivered in that time.

The brand also launched the LT Open tournament series this month to boost competitive singles play, adding to its long list of PPA-hosted events at standout venues like Peachtree Corners, Georgia, and Rancho San Clemente, California. The recent appointment of tennis legend Andre Agassi as chair of the Life Time Pickleball and Tennis Board underscores its commitment to growing the game.

The LT Pro 48 pickleball is available for pre-order now at PickleballCentral.com, with shipping and in-store availability from 15 September.

Beyond the Shuttle: Winning the Mental Game

As a professional badminton player, I've experienced almost everything this sport can offer – Olympic gold in Paris 2024, silver in Tokyo 2020, and three world titles in mixed doubles. But behind those results lie years of challenges, doubts, and growth. Winning is never just about physical strength or tactics – it's about how you manage your mind.

From the outside, people see my ranking and imagine confidence comes naturally. The truth is, pressure never disappears, especially at the World Championships. To win a tournament like that, you need more than form. You must keep ambition burning while staying grounded. I never step on court thinking, we're favourites. That mindset can hold you back. I treat every match as if we're just another pair fighting through the draw. Humility keeps me sharp.

I still remember my first World Championships in 2018. We were already world No.1, yet I felt overwhelmed. My coach noticed the tension and told me to stop training. For two days, I did nothing badminton-related – just watched a comedy and switched off. It seemed odd, but it worked. I returned calmer, clearer, and ready. That was when I realised how vital mental balance is at this level.

Since then, I've changed my preparation. I study opponents obsessively – their habits, strengths, and the tactics they might use. If something in a match surprises me, I see it as a sign I wasn't ready enough. True preparation is understanding not only how you want to play, but also how others will try to stop you.

Of all my titles, 2022 meant the most. After losing the Tokyo final, I endured a difficult year and began to doubt myself. The World Championships brought me back – reminding me of who I was and why I loved competing.

Away from competition, I even tried my hand at television, joining the Chinese reality show *Daddy at Home*, where celebrity dads cared for babies. It was chaotic, funny, and a very different kind of pressure.

Now, post-retirement, my focus is on the next generation. In June, I opened my badminton academy, ZSwing, which already has over 200 young players. My goal is to create a space for serious training and growth, with an international camp at the end of the year where I'll serve as head coach. We'll set the bar high – I'm not great at teaching absolute beginners yet.

This month's World Championships will be in Paris – a city that will always be special to me, as the place where I finally claimed Olympic gold.

In mixed doubles, the field is stacked. Feng Yan Zhe and Huang Dong Ping are always dangerous, as are Jiang Zhen Bang and Wei Ya Xin. Thailand's Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Supissara Paewsampran are a model of consistency, with Dechapol's footwork the finest in the game. I also see potential in France's Thom Gicquel and Delphine Delrue. Home support can be a weapon if you channel it as energy rather than pressure – something I learned firsthand facing them in Paris 2024. Their first Super 1000 title earlier this year will only lift their confidence.

ZHENG SI WEI



If I could give every player one piece of advice, it's this: relax. Go to the cinema. Watch a comedy. It helped me when I needed it most. Because when your mind is clear, your body will follow.



Lee Zii Jia's Long Road Back to the Court

Five months after his last competitive outing, Lee Zii Jia is finally back – and fittingly at a venue that already carries special memories. The Adidas Arena in Paris, stage of his Olympic bronze medal, is where he resumes his journey at the TotalEnergies BWF World Championships.

Five months is a lifetime in elite sport. For Lee, that period has been consumed by a painstaking recovery from a right ankle injury – a challenge unlike anything he has faced before. The Malaysian star admits that while he's been pain-free for several weeks, the real test only comes when the lights are on and the shuttle is flying.

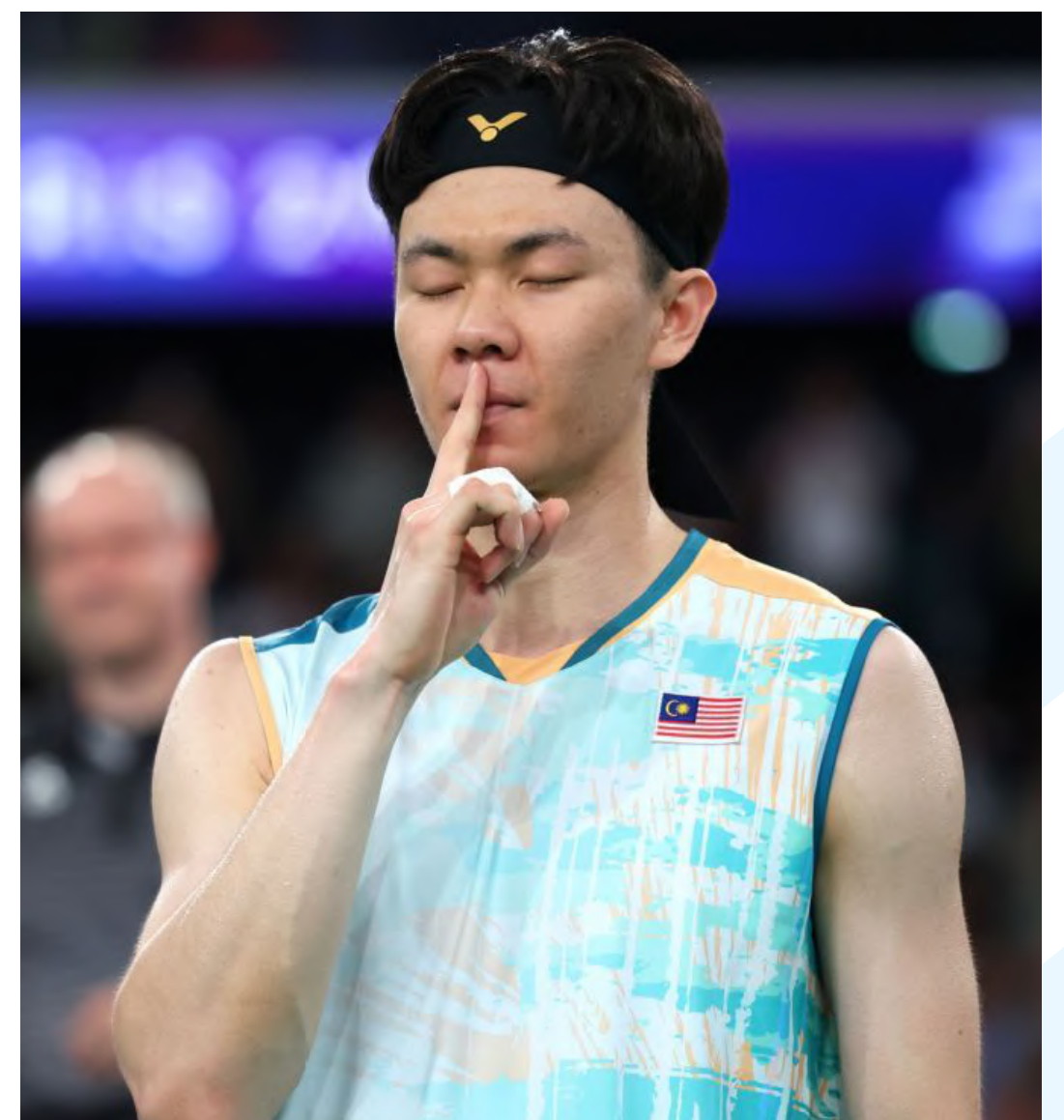
"I can say definitely it's not in pain. I can play in training. Of course, while in a tournament it's a different situation. So that's why I'm here, it's like a test for me," he explained.

Training offered confidence, but also frustration. "I haven't played a proper match. I did some match play, like five points, 21 points as well. But in sparring... I don't think they have that level to compete with me. But for myself, I think I'm ready. I'm quite confident in training, but like I said, in tournament it's a different world, it's a different situation."

The enforced lay-off left Lee battling doubts that ran deeper than physical fitness. "It's not normal (to be out for five months)... I wanted to stop playing because of all these injuries. I've had ups and downs, but never had to deal with injuries. It was my first time dealing with this big injury... I didn't know what I should do and how I should deal with this problem."

Away from the circuit, he turned to travel and art as an outlet, admitting: "During those five months... I was dealing with stress, and of course, I did have a little bit of depression. I travelled as well, to keep my mind fresh. I was sort of obsessed with art."

Now, with the World Championships at hand, Lee's outlook is refreshingly simple. "The most important now is that I want myself to enjoy the game. And of course, to be injury-free, that's the most important thing for me."



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A - When a stringer shows a GRSA certification, this is a clear sign that they have received the best training currently available and will provide a professionally balanced service.

Q - What makes GRSA stand out from the rest?

A - GRSA is a globally recognised association that includes some of the best and most knowledgeable Professionals, Master Stringers and Grand Master Stringers in the industry, this means the knowledge base is incomparable.

Q - What does GRSA teach its certified stringers?

A - GRSA teaches the importance of looking after the player, from the basics to the most intricate of details. How to provide accurate information, how to help improve and guide each individual.

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