

# Making the Top 100: ITF Top 10 junior transition to Top 100 ATP tour (1996 – 2005)

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated transition from a Top 10 ITF Junior rank to Top 100 ATP Tour rank over a ten-year period between 1996 and 2005. It provides an insight into the development variables of ITF junior win: loss ratios, number of junior and ITF Pro-Circuit events played between 14-18 years of age and ranking in the years prior to entering the Top 100. The results of this study can help to establish a range of statistical benchmarks coaches and Federations can use for players aspiring at a professional career on the ATP Tour.

**Key words:** Junior to senior transition, statistical analysis, Top 100 ATP.

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## INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Achieving a Top 100 ATP rank is a significant achievement in men's professional tennis. Much discussion surrounds the path a player and time a player should take in achieving this goal.



There have been a number of studies that have profiled average age of top-ranked male and female tennis players (Tennis Canada, Treleven & Miley). This study investigated transition from a Top 10 ITF Junior rank to Top 100 ATP Tour rank over a ten-year period between 1996 and 2005. It provides an insight into the development variables of ITF junior win: loss ratios, number of junior and ITF Pro-Circuit events played between 14-18 years of age and ranking in the years prior to entering the Top 100. The intended use of this study was to establish a range of statistical benchmarks coaches and

Federations can use for players aspiring at a professional career on the ATP Tour.

## METHODOLOGY

- The study's data was obtained from the ITF and ATP Tour websites:

[www.itftennis.com/juniors/](http://www.itftennis.com/juniors/) [www.itftennis.com/mens/](http://www.itftennis.com/mens/) [www.atpworldtour.com](http://www.atpworldtour.com)

- Data was collated on players meeting the criteria of:

Top 10 ITF Junior year-end rank between 1996 – 2005. (85 players\*)

Top 100 ATP Tour Players as at February 2 2009. (100 players)

- Basic statistical measures of mean, median, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, were used to profile players.

\* - Duplicate names were removed as players finished in Top 10 for more than one year in a row. Also some players achieved a Top 100 Rank during the calendar year but failed to stay inside the Top 100 at year-end. These players were included in the study and categorised as having achieved a Top 100 ATP Tour rank.

TOP 100 JUNIOR (1996 – 2005) TO TOP 100 ATP						
	Average	Std. Dev	Min	Max	Median	
SENIOR PROFILE						
Highest ATP Rank	36	28	1	92	33	
Age at Highest ATP Rank	23.0	1.7	18.8	26.5	22.6	
Age at First Year End Rank	17.6	1.6	15.0	22.0	18.0	
Age at Top 100 Rank	20.8	1.9	17.0	25.0	21.0	
Years in Top 100	3.7	2.7	1.0	10.0	3.0	
Transition Time Top 100 (yrs)	4.3	2.1	1.0	9.0	4.0	
W:L Ratio – Career (MD)	1.6	0.5	0.1	3.9	1.5	
- ATP Tour (MD)	1.2	0.7	0.3	4.1	1.0	
- ITF Pro Circuit (MD)	1.9	0.5	1.1	3.7	1.8	
JUNIOR PROFILE						
ITF Junior W:L Ratio	3.3	1.0	1.7	6.3	3.1	
ITF Junior Matches Played	110	34	36	188	108	
ITF Junior Tournaments Played	36	12	12	61	38	
ITF Pro Circuit Matches Played	84	25	32	152	80	
ITF Pro Circuit Tournaments Played	41	22	0	95	39	
YEARS PRIOR TO TOP 100 RANK	5	4	3	2	1	(0)
Average Year End Rank	783	440	208	127	102	99
APPROX. YEAR END RANK	800	450	200	125	100	Top 100

Table 1. Profile of forty-nine\* boys who finished with a Top 10 Junior ITF Year End Rank between 1996 – 2005 who have achieved a Top 100 ATP Senior Rank. (MD) = Main Draw. \* - Duplicate names removed.

## DISCUSSION

### Top 10 ITF Junior Circuit Player who achieved Top 100 ATP Tour Rank

Table 1 outlines the profile (mean) of a Top 10 ITF Junior Circuit player (1996 – 2005) who achieved a Top 100 ATP Tour rank. Forty-nine (49) players comprised this group after duplicate names were removed as some players finished with Top 10 rank for more than one year in a row.

#### ITF Junior Circuit Profile

• An average W:L Ratio of 3.3:1 (min 1.7/ max 6.3) was required in the ITF Junior Circuit to achieve a Top 10 year end rank. Players competed in 36 (min 12 / max 61) ITF Junior Circuit events and participated 110 (min 36/ max 188) matches during their junior career.

• Players competed in 41 (min 0 / max 95) ITF Pro Circuit events and participated in 84 (min 32 / max 152) matches between 15 – 18 years.

ITF JUNIOR PROFILE- AGE & NUMBER OF EVENTS PER YEAR						
Years	13	14	15	16	17	18
Mean	0	4	7	11	12	8
Std Dev	0	5	5	5	5	6
Min	0	1	2	0	1	1
Max	0	19	28	18	22	18
Median	0	1	5	13	13	8
%	0%	78%	95%	88%	84%	46%

Table 2. The number of ITF Junior events players competed in by age.

Table 2 above illustrates the number of ITF Junior events players competed in by age.

- 78% had begun playing by age 14.
- This peaked to 95% at 15 years and dropped to 88% by year 16.
- It continued to fall, with only 84% at 17 years and 46% by 18 years competing on the ITF Junior Circuit.

ATP TOUR + ITF PRO CIRCUIT PROFILE- AGE & NUMBER OF EVENTS PER YEAR						
Years	13	14	15	16	17	18
Mean	0	0	4	7	13	22
Std Dev	0	0	3	6	8	8
Min	0	0	0	1	1	5
Max	0	0	13	23	30	38
Median	0	0	3	5	12	22
%	0%	0%	57%	82%	96%	96%

Table 3. The number of ATP Tour and ITF Pro Circuit events players competed in by age.

Table 3 above illustrates the number of ATP Tour and ITF Pro Circuit events players competed in by age. 57% had begun playing by age 15. This rose to 82% at 16 years and peaked at 96% by year 17 and 18.

Table 4 below illustrates the combined number of ITF Junior, ATP Tour and ITF Pro Circuit events players competed in by age:

- At age 15, a total of 11 events were played with a 65/35% proportion to junior circuit.
- By age 16 this had increased to 18 events with a 60/40% split to Junior circuit.
- At age 17, players competed in 25 events with a 50/50% swing towards Senior circuit events.
- By the 18th year, the Top 10 ITF juniors that achieved a Top 100 ATP rank competed in 30 events with a further swing toward Senior circuit events of 25/75%

TOURNAMENT PROFILE (ITF JUNIOR & ATP / ITF PRO CIRCUIT) AGE & NUMBER OF EVENTS PER YEAR				
Age Profile	15	16	17	18
Total Events	11	18	25	30
Junior	7	11	12	8
Senior	4	7	13	22
Junior %	64%	61%	48%	27%
Senior %	36%	39%	52%	73%
Est. %	65	60	50	25
	35	40	50	75
5% shift to Seniors from Juniors at year 16. 10% shift to Seniors from Juniors at year 17. 25% shift to Seniors from Juniors at year 18.				

Table 4. The combined number of ITF Junior; ATP Tour and ITF Pro Circuit events players competed in by age.

#### ITF Pro Circuit & ATP Tour Profile

- The first ITF Pro Circuit rank was obtained at 17.6 years (min 15.0 / max 22.0) and a Top 100 ATP Tour rank at 20.8 years (min 17.0 / max 25.0). Players remained in the Top 100 for 3.7 years (min 1.0 / max 10.0).
- The highest ATP rank was obtained at age 23.0 (min 18.8 / max 26.5), with a transition time of 4.3 years (min 1.0 / max 9.0). To achieve this the player initially required a W:L Ratio of 1.9:1 (min 1.1 / max 3.7) on the ITF Pro Circuit, then 1.2:1 (min 0.3 / max 4.1) on ATP Tour. A career W:L Ratio of 1.6:1 (min 0.1 / max 3.9) was required.
- The average year-end rank was calculated for up to 5 years from a Top 100 rank. Results are below with an approximate ranking proposed also.

YEARS PRIOR TO TOP 100 RANK	5	4	3	2	1	(0)
Average Year End Rank	783	440	208	127	102	92
Approx. Year End Rank	800	450	200	125	100	Top 100

Table 5. Years prior to top 100 rank

#### FINDINGS

Analysis of Top 10 ITF Junior Circuit players from 1996 – 2005 who achieved a Top 100 ATP Tour rank in their career, indicated:

- 58% of players who achieved a Top 10 ITF Junior rank between 1996-2005 achieved a career high Top 100 ATP Tour Rank.
- First ITF Pro Circuit rank achieved at 17.6 years.
- Transition time from first year-end rank to Top 100 ATP Tour of 4.3 years at an age of 20.8 years.

(4) Highest ATP Tour rank achieved approximately two years after entering ATP Tour Top 100 at 23.0 years with an average of 3.7 years inside Top 100 rank.

(5) Players competed in 36 ITF Junior Circuit events and participated in 110 matches between age 14-18 years.

(6) Players competed in 41 ITF Pro Circuit / ATP Tour events and participated in 84 matches between age 15 – 18 years.

(7) Career W:L Ratio of 1.6:1 on ATP Tour, 1.9:1 on the ITF Pro Circuit and 3.3:1 on the ITF Junior Circuit.

(8) The ranking benchmarks from Table 5 could be used as an indicator prior to a Top 100 ATP Tour ranking.

#### SUMMARY

The best Juniors players over a 10 year period achieved an ATP rank before their 18th birthday and entered the Top 100 ATP Tour, four to five years later before the age of 22 yrs. They competed in over 40 ITF Pro Circuit events between 15-18 yrs while continuing to compete on the ITF Junior Circuit playing 36 events in the same period. They achieved a win:loss ratio of over 3:1 in juniors and almost 2:1 in the Pro Circuit. They halved their ATP ranking each year for 4 years before entering the Top 100.

#### DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

It is recommended Federations and Coaches create 'Development Schedules' for players which are underpinned by the findings of this study. The cornerstone of a players schedule should be periods of technical, tactical, physical and mental 'development'. Competition plans should be appropriate to the players' stage of development. Performance benchmarks of win:loss ratios and ranking timelines should be used as a guide to a player's overall development.

#### GLOSSARY

- Age at Highest ATP Rank – The chronological of player at time of highest ATP rank.
- Age at First Year End Rank – The chronological age of player at time of ranking.
- Age at Top 100 Rank – The chronological age of player when first Top 100 rank achieved.
- Years in Top 100 – The number of years a player was ranked inside the Top 100 on ATP Tour.
- Transition Time – The number of years taken to achieve Top 100 ATP Tour rank from first year-end rank.
- Win:Loss (W:L) Ratio (MD) – Calculation of Career (ITF Pro Circuit & ATP Tour) win / loss ratio in main draw matches. Breakdown of ATP Tour, ITF Pro Circuit and ITF Junior Circuit.

- ITF Junior Circuit – The world governing body tournament circuit for age 18/U tennis players.
- ITF Pro Circuit (PC) - The world governing body tournament circuit for over 18 yrs. tennis players.
- ATP Tour – The Men's Tennis Association professional tournament circuit.

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## RECOMMENDED ITF TENNIS ACADEMY CONTENT (CLICK BELOW)



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