



## Editorial

Luca Santilli & Miguel Crespo 

Tennis Development, Development Department, International Tennis Federation, London, UK.

Welcome to issue 92 of ITF Coaching & Sport Science Review, which is the first one of 2024 and marks the 33rd year of publication. In this issue, you will find a variety of articles including an introduction to the use of artificial intelligence in tennis, the study of some important body muscles for high-performance tennis, the role of self-talk routines, visualization and motivation in juniors, the severity of medical conditions of players, the factors that enable breakthroughs in tennis, an overview of listesis damage in tennis, a study on influential tennis literature, and some practical considerations on notational analysis research of the game, among others.

The ITF is happy to announce a significant decision taken by the ITF Coaches Commission (the Commission) in the context of tennis coaching certification standards. The Commission, entrusted with advising the ITF on teaching methodologies and training systems, has undertaken a commendable initiative. In its commitment to fostering excellence in tennis coaching, the Commission has embarked on updating the recommendations regarding the alignment of coaching certifications with the skill levels and ratings of tennis players.

With the dynamic evolution of the sport and advancements in coaching methodologies, periodic revisions are essential to maintain relevance and efficacy. By aligning certification levels with player competencies, coaches will gain clearer benchmarks for player development and career progression. This alignment not only benefits individual players but also enhances the overall quality of coaching across the tennis landscape.

The process of updating certification recommendations involves meticulous analysis, consultation, and collaboration with stakeholders from various spheres of the tennis community. Drawing upon insights from experienced coaches, sports scientists, and industry experts, the Commission has agreed on this decision as it is comprehensive, inclusive, and reflective of contemporary coaching paradigms.

The previous equivalence was based on the ITF's International Tennis Number (ITN) system that had been in place for a considerable period. However, with the launch of the ITF World Tennis Number (WTN), there arises a need for adaptation to reflect the contemporary landscape accurately. The transition from ITN to WTN represents a paradigm shift in how player performances are evaluated and categorized, necessitating a corresponding adjustment in coaching recommendations.



The ITF WTN system brings with it a host of benefits, including enhanced accuracy, flexibility, and inclusivity. By leveraging cutting-edge data analytics and machine learning algorithms, ITF WTN offers a more nuanced understanding of player abilities, encompassing factors beyond mere win-loss records. This holistic approach not only captures the intricacies of individual playing styles but also accounts for the dynamic nature of player development over time (ITF WTN, 2024).

Considering these advancements, it is crucial to adapt coaching certifications to ensure parity and relevance with the WTN framework. The updated proposal aims to establish clear correspondences between coaching certifications and players' playing levels, thereby enabling coaches to tailor their guidance and support according to the specific needs of each player. This alignment fosters an efficient relationship between coaches and players, facilitating more effective communication and collaboration toward shared goals.

Moreover, the equivalency with the ITF WTN system presents an opportune moment for coaches to embrace innovation and embrace new methodologies in their coaching practices. By staying abreast of the latest developments in sports science and technology, coaches can leverage data-driven insights to optimize player performance and enhance the overall coaching experience. The updated certification equivalences serve as a roadmap for coaches to navigate this transformative period with confidence and clarity (Crespo & Jabaloyes, 2020).

The approved equivalency is summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Equivalency between ITF Coach Certification Levels and ITF WTN player ratings (as approved by the ITF Coaches Commission).

ITF Certification Course	ITF World Tennis Number Player Rating
Play Tennis	Work with beginner players and 10 & under children. (WTN 40 - 35 approx.)
Coaching Beginner and Intermediate Players	Work with beginner and intermediate players. (WTN 34 - 25 approx.)
Coaching Advanced Players	Work with advanced players. (WTN 24 - 16 approx.)
Coaching High-Performance Players	Work with high-performance players. (WTN 15 - 1 approx.)
The ITF WTN ratings provided for each coach certification courses are approximate as the players' rating may vary since the system is a dynamic tool that constantly evolves over time.	

Furthermore, the approved recommendations will be a valuable resource for tennis organizations, academies, and educational institutions worldwide. By harmonizing coaching standards, the ITF aims to facilitate seamless transitions for coaches operating in different regions and under diverse systems. This global approach fosters a sense of unity and coherence within the tennis coaching fraternity, transcending geographical boundaries and cultural differences.

In conclusion, the update of coaching certification recommendations by the ITF Coaches Commission signifies a pivotal moment in the evolution of tennis coaching standards. The ITF will update all its resources following this recommendation. We urge coaches to embrace this initiative wholeheartedly and actively engage in the process. Together, let us strive towards a future where every coach is empowered to unlock the full potential of every player, enriching the sport of tennis and inspiring generations to come.

As part of its Development strategy, the ITF has launched the ITF National Association (NA) Survey which asks all ITF member nations to provide their latest insight on their national tennis landscape and delivery of activities. Their contribution is an important process for the ITF to understand the latest state of tennis around the world and provides a snapshot of the health of our sport. The information shared forms the basis for the insight that has already been published beforehand within the ITF Global Tennis Reports (ITF, 2019; 2021).

This updated edition of the NA Survey sits as a service within the ITF Academy, the ITF’s online education platform. It has been developed to provide a more efficient and simpler completion of the Survey for nations than with the previous editions. This platform will make the NAs’ contribution of information more manageable, reflective, and easier to share.

The ITF appreciates the contribution of all National Associations in completing the NA Survey. The outputs will provide beneficial tools to assist all NAs in continually growing the sport of tennis from the grassroots right through to the highest levels in their countries. Importantly, the ITF

will support the National Association’s development of tennis by analysing the data provided.

The insight that is provided fundamentally allows the ITF to understand the global landscape of tennis more accurately and directly from all the member National Associations. Once analysed, the data on total players, coaches, clubs, and courts will be published in the next edition of the ITF Global Tennis Report. This data, as it has in 2019 and 2021 when published in the Global Tennis Reports, has supported the implementation of the ITF strategy ITF2024 and will continue to act as an up-to-date insight tool for future strategic development and to support the growth of tennis worldwide. Throughout the Survey, several different sections request information. This information will be shared internally with the respective ITF department to support their activities with all member nations.

National Associations should provide the most recent and latest data available across the different questions included within the Survey. In most cases, this will be data from 2023. In the instance where data from 2024 is available, this is accepted. If the most recent accurate and reliable data is available before 2023, then this will also be accepted. Data sources should be provided where applicable within the Survey.

For some National Associations, accessing accurate, valid, and reliable data first-hand (primary data) from their databases remains challenging. Consequently, when completing the NA Survey, we request you to specify what data sources have been sourced to complete specific questions – most importantly under the sections “1. Players”, “2. Tennis Venues & Access” and “3. Delivery of Tennis”.

Data sources may include secondary sources such as commercial data agencies and data from governments or sports ministries. Where a NA is unable to use primary or secondary data sources, an estimate can be provided. A data source and date must be provided for these questions. Where possible, NAs are also asked to provide a hyperlink to the specific source or an uploaded file of the source, multiple documents or links can be uploaded for each question.

Accurate information and insight from nations not only inform the global picture of tennis to support future ITF strategies moreover, it also provide specific national information that can support targeted action plans and context for possible resourcing to countries and programmes across different projects and activities.

The results of this ITF NA Survey will be used in a variety of ways. The data may lead to a better understanding of our knowledge about the international tennis ecosystem. It will assist in the delivery of ITF development assistance to member nations, it will help nations to know more about tennis in other nations, and it will be shared with all the participants. We very much look forward to the NAs’ feedback and contribution to the updated NA Survey.

We hope that you have found this editorial article useful. It is intended to present some of the activities that the ITF is implementing to develop tennis worldwide.

We would also like to encourage new submissions to the ITF CSSR through the new platform. Finally, we would like to thank all the authors for their contributions, as well as all of those who sent in proposals. Full guidelines for acceptance and publication of articles can be found on the most recent issue page of the ITF Academy. We hope that you enjoy reading this last edition of the ITF Coaching and Sport Science Review.

## REFERENCES

- Crespo, M., & Jabaloyes, J. (2020). Something new? Innovation post COVID-19. A must for tennis. *ITF Coaching & Sport Science Review*, 28(81), 8–11. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.52383/itfcoaching.v28i81.31>
- ITF (2019). ITF Global Tennis Report. ITF Ltd. London, available at: <https://www.itftennis.com/en/aboutus/organisation/publications-and-resources/publications>
- ITF (2021). ITF Global Tennis Report. London: ITF Ltd. Available at: <http://itf.uberflip.com/i/1401406-itf-global-tennis-report-2021/0?>
- ITF WTN (2024). ITF World Tennis Number. ITF Ltd. Available at: <https://worldtennisnumber.com>

Copyright © 2024 Luca Santilli & Miguel Crespo



This text is under a [Attribution 4.0 International \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

You are free to Share - copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format - and Adapt the content - remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially under the following terms:

Attribution: You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

[CC BY 4.0 license terms summary](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). [CC BY 4.0 license terms](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

[RECOMMENDED ITF TENNIS ACADEMY CONTENT \(CLICK BELOW\)](#)

