



Editorial

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Welcome to issue 93 of the ITF Coaching and Sport Science Review. This is the second issue of 2024. It is available in the ITF Academy and on the new page of the journal which can be accessed [here](#).

This issue is dedicated to tennis development at the international level. Articles in this issue cover topics related to their management, governance, and leadership, the context in which player development is implemented, the relevance of creating a tennis culture in nations, the evolving pathways and holistic approaches to nurturing tennis talent, the design of sustainable structures of tennis competitions, the implementation of international programmes for empowering female coaches such as the WISH initiative, or the need for female coaches network strategies, and practical examples of the implementation of participation programmes based on data insights.

The development of tennis on the international stage is crucial for the growth of the sport globally. Tennis is a widely recognized and followed sport, that not only contributes to physical fitness but also plays a significant role in fostering international relationships and cultural exchange (Murray & Pigman, 2014; Zhao & Knijnik, 2021). Enhancing tennis infrastructure and talent development programs across different countries ensures the sport remains competitive and inclusive, providing opportunities for athletes from diverse backgrounds to compete at the highest levels (ITF, 2024).

International tennis development initiatives often focus on having both more and better players by building and improving facilities, providing coaching education, and creating competitive opportunities for players in emerging tennis nations. These efforts help bridge the gap between well-established tennis powerhouses and developing nations, allowing for a more diverse and competitive global tennis scene (Smart, 2019). Moreover, the ITF and other governing bodies have been instrumental in implementing programs aimed at increasing participation and nurturing young talent, particularly in regions where access to tennis has traditionally been limited (ITF, 2024).

Furthermore, the success of international tennis development programs can be measured by the increasing number of players from diverse backgrounds being introduced to tennis and those achieving success in the junior and professional circuits (ITF, 2019). This not only enriches the competitive landscape but also inspires future generations of players from various parts of the world. However, there remains a need for continued investment and strategic initiatives to ensure that tennis development is sustained and that the sport continues to grow globally (Varmus et al., 2022).



In this context, the ITF and Olympic Solidarity have forged a crucial partnership to advance tennis development worldwide. This collaboration plays a pivotal role in nurturing talent, enhancing coaching expertise, and strengthening national tennis associations (Nash et al., 2024). Through targeted programs like the Development of National Sports Systems (DNSS), the ITF and Olympic Solidarity provide comprehensive support to member associations, focusing on sustainable growth and structural improvements (Schaerer, 2023).

The partnership's impact extends beyond individual athlete development, encompassing coach education, administrative capacity building, and the promotion of Olympic values (International Olympic Committee, 2021). By leveraging Olympic Solidarity funding, national tennis federations can implement long-term development strategies, addressing specific needs within their unique contexts (Robinson & Minikin, 2011).

This collaborative approach has yielded significant results, with numerous countries benefiting from tailored programs that enhance their tennis ecosystems (Martinez-Gallego, et al., 2023). The synergy between the ITF and Olympic Solidarity not only contributes to the universality of the Olympic Games but also ensures the global growth of tennis as a sport (Robinson & Minikin, 2012).

As tennis continues to evolve, the ongoing partnership between the ITF and Olympic Solidarity remains crucial in fostering inclusivity, excellence, and sustainable development within the sport on a global scale.

One of the key participation tools developed by the ITF is the ITF World Tennis Number (WTN). The number of countries that have adopted this innovative platform is constantly growing, and this marks a transformative development in the nations' tennis landscapes, significantly enhancing the accessibility and organization of the sport. This innovative platform introduces real-time ratings for singles and doubles, allowing players to accurately measure their progress and skill levels. Through its personalized Game Zone, the WTN offers a tailored experience that enables players to find suitable opponents based on their abilities. This not only supports player development at all levels but also fosters a more engaged and competitive tennis community across the nations. The national associations recognize the WTN as a critical tool for connecting players both locally and globally, thus reinforcing Spain's commitment to advancing the sport.

The WTN's impact extends beyond individual player benefits; it plays a pivotal role in uniting the global tennis community by establishing a universal standard for skill assessment, regardless of age, gender, or ability. By simplifying the process of finding fair and competitive matches, the WTN encourages greater participation in tennis, whether for competitive play or social interaction. Furthermore, the platform's emphasis on performance tracking, global connectivity, and fostering camaraderie aligns with broader goals of promoting physical health and mental well-being. Through these advantages, the WTN not only redefines tennis experiences in nations but also contributes to the global growth and inclusivity of the sport.

Under its Advantage All Programme the ITF has launched the inaugural Twinning Initiative, marking a significant step forward in advancing gender equality in tennis through global collaboration. This innovative initiative pairs nations to create meaningful alliances, leveraging each other's experiences and insights to promote gender balance in the sport. In its pilot year, Tennis Canada, the recipient of the 2023 Advantage All Gold Award, has partnered with the Seychelles Tennis Association, a Highly Commended achiever. Tennis Canada, as the lead twin, has committed to investing its entire \$5,000 prize money into supporting and guiding the Seychelles Tennis Association. This partnership not only aims to improve gender equality in tennis but also seeks to foster a deeper cultural understanding between the two nations.

The Twinning Initiative is a key addition to the ITF's Reward and Recognition Programme, which celebrates and supports significant strides toward parity in tennis. By encouraging nation-to-nation collaboration, knowledge sharing, and cultural respect, the initiative embodies the core values of the Advantage All Programme: Empower, Balance, Culture, Value, and Voice. The concept of twinning first proposed during an ITF Advantage All women's leadership webinar, was recognized as an effective way to unite nations with shared goals and challenges. The ITF's Reward and Recognition Programme has been instrumental in highlighting global efforts towards inclusivity, with top honors in 2023 awarded to Tennis Canada, Tennis Australia, and Tennis New Zealand, among others. As the 2024 Advantage All Awards approach, with winners to be announced at the ITF Annual General Meeting in October, nations are encouraged to apply by August 30th for the opportunity to earn significant monetary prizes and participate in initiatives like the Twinning Initiative.

In 2024, the ITF with the support of OS, the Regional Associations, and the member nations, is organizing a series of Regional Coaches Conferences across various regions, aimed at enhancing coaching standards and promoting tennis development

worldwide. These conferences will take place in eight distinct countries with a carefully curated agenda tailored to the specific needs and contexts of the region. This initiative continues the ITF's commitment to advancing tennis education, following the success of previous Regional Coaches Conferences, which have proven instrumental in boosting the knowledge and skills of coaches globally.

The ITF/OS Southern African Regional Coaches Conference returns to South Africa and will be hosted in Cape Town at the Kelvin Grove Lifestyle and Sporting Club, from 20 to 22 September 2024. Confirmed International speakers include Riaan Kruger (ITF), Nick Vets (BEL), Alex Jurgens (EST), and Irina Chichmarova (BLR). The ITF/OS Caribbean Regional Coaches Conference returns to Trinidad and will be hosted in Tacarigua at the National Tennis Centre, from 27 to 29 September 2024. Confirmed International speakers include Jan Bunt (NED), Isla Smith (GBR), Isabella Baston (CAN) and John Goede (ITF). The ITF/OS Southeast Asian Regional Coaches Conference will be hosted in Da Nang at the Tien Son Sport Center from 27 to 29 September 2024. Confirmed speakers include Dario Novak (CRO), Simone Bertino (ITA), David Taylor (AUS), Annabel Taylor (AUS), Jonathan Stubbs (ITF) and Riaan Kruger (ITF).

Moving into October, the ITF/OS South American Regional Coaches Conference will be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 3-5 October 2024. Confirmed international experts include David Sanz (ESP), Rui Machado (POR), Paulina Sepúlveda (CHI), Cesar Kist (ITF), and Miguel Crespo (ITF). In the following month, Central America will host its conference in Puebla, Mexico from November 1-3. Confirmed international speakers include Cecilia Ancalmo (ITF), Rafael Martínez (ESP), Eva Borrás (ESP), Fernando Vilches (ARG), and José Caballero (USA). The ITF/OS West & Central Asian Regional Coaches Conference will be hosted in Manama, Bahrain at the Bahrain Tennis Club, Juffair from 1 to 3 November 2024. Confirmed international speakers include Gary Cahill (IRL), Matt Smith (LTA), Petra Russegger (AUT), Riaan Kruger (ITF), and Amir Borghei (ITF). The ITF/CAT Northern African Coaches Conference will take place in Sousse, Tunisia from November 4-6. Confirmed speakers to date include Virginie Jégo (SUI), Walter Gouy (FRA), Illou Lonfo (CIV), Mostafa Naïm (EGY), Selma Mouelhi (TUN), Wahid Alioua (TUN), Hichem Riani (CAT), Thierry Ntwally (ITF) and Amine Ben Makhlof (ITF). Finally, the Tennis Europe Coaches Symposium will take place in Cyprus from 1-2 November featuring M. Bagdathis (CYP), E. Gulbis (LAT), V. Cabral (ITF), T. Jones (ITF), and M. Crespo (ITF) as some of the international speakers.

These conferences will cover a wide range of topics pertinent to tennis coaching, coach education, gender equality, and development, emphasizing knowledge sharing and collaboration between nations. Typically, the conferences include sessions on physical conditioning, biomechanics, video analysis, psychology, tactics, pathways to high-performance tennis, and the development of decision-making, all delivered in depth. These topics were also central to previous ITF Coaches Conferences, which have featured first-class keynote speakers and attracted thousands of attendees across in-person and virtual events, underscoring the importance of these gatherings in the ITF's Coach Education Programme.

For those unable to attend these conferences in person, the ITF

Academy offers recordings of all sessions. This allows a broader audience, including coaches, tennis professionals, and sports enthusiasts, to access valuable insights and expertise. To access these materials, individuals can sign up at www.itf-academy.com, and register for the appropriate conference. This ensures that the knowledge shared during these conferences continues to benefit the global tennis community long after the events have concluded. Further details to complete registration and book the conference packages can be found in the ITF Academy.

We hope that you have found this editorial article useful. 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 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 you enjoy reading the 93rd edition of the ITF Coaching and Sport Science Review.

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