

The Board of Directors held its second in person meeting of the year in Paris where they covered strategic and operational matters.

## ITF STRATEGIC UPDATE

### Billie Jean King Cup

The Board received an update on the immediate priorities that Billie Jean King Cup Limited is focussing on in 2024 including: strategic development; the business plan and budget creation; building the staff team; reviewing brand and narrative; media rights; host city options for 2025 onwards and delivery of the 2024 Finals. Alongside this the Board received the 2023 year-end financial report and the 2024 forecast.

### Davis Cup

The Board held a technical discussion around format for 2025 onwards. They went through a financial analysis of format and location options to inform a decision on potential change in format from to a home or away round from September from 2025 and hosting options for the Final 8 from 2025. The Board unanimously agreed to move to a Home or Away for September ties from 2025 onwards.

### Data & Digital

The Board received an update on actions taken since their previous meeting, proposals on how to create a digital ecosystem for recreational players with product and value propositions through a single World Tennis App. The 'go to market strategy' for the World Tennis App and the data and schematic flows were explained with brand insight and recommendations made. An overview of initial exploration and concepts of commercial opportunities available was given. The Board gave their mandate to continue to develop business models and an implementation plan with the Digital & Data Working Group for a new connected digital ecosystem.

### Tours & Player Pathway Strategy

The Board received updates on the 14 U strategy for 2024 and beyond, the 18 U Tour and Team Competition strategy and the WTT strategy.

The 14 U strategy aims to address player development and welfare and safeguarding challenges. The aim is to bring structure to the development space to protect it for the ITF, Regional and National Associations.

The 18 U Tour and Team Competition strategy aims to ensure the WTT Juniors is the preferred pathway for players and their support teams, overcoming threats and risks. This achieves a fairer pathway with greater access to entry level (J30) events while reducing travel through more local tournaments. Targeted growth plans will be drawn up in collaboration with Regional and National Associations and a more balanced calendar will enable talented players to progress while protecting player welfare and reducing travel costs.

The third pillar of the overall strategy focuses on high performance player progression and to identify and support the most elite junior players with suitable services and programmes to support their development progression into professional tennis.

The Board reviewed the WTT strategy, focusing on the pathway, tournament standards and innovation, underpinned by a focus on player progress, player finances and integrity on the WTT. The aim is to deliver equally for women's tennis as for men's tennis at all levels of the pathway and to ease the financial burden for players through provision of more hospitality and better scheduling.

The Board was presented a resolution to confirm and ratify the previous approval of the proposed 2025 financial distribution model of World Tennis Tour data/streaming revenues which they duly did.

## **Wheelchair Tennis**

The pillars of the Wheelchair Tennis strategy were outlined for the Board along with a situational analysis, NA programme assessment and revenue analysis. The aim of the strategy is to increase financial investment opportunities through an improved product, which will in turn increase player numbers. Achievement of this is through creating a greater profile of players and tournaments. This will provide input to strategically invest in growth and enhance governance areas and provide efficiencies and effectiveness on the Tour with sustainability and standards across programme growth. The Board approved the direction of travel set out in the Wheelchair Tennis strategic update.

## **Rules of Tennis**

The Board reviewed a proposed amendment for 2025 to permit off-court coaching in all events played under the Rules of Tennis. The background of the proposed change including the conduct and analysis of trials by all international governing bodies of tennis was explained. The Board resolved to support the recommendation of the Rules of Tennis Committee, to amend the Rules of Tennis to permit off-court coaching during matches played under the Rules of Tennis, with effect from 1 January 2025. The Board approved the submission of the change to the 2024 AGM for voting.

## **Finance**

The Board was given an update from the Finance Committee Meeting held earlier in the week. The Board reviewed the Risk Management report, with the risks identified and the mitigating actions being taken. The Board was asked to note that these areas are subject to ongoing focus by the Executive team which they duly did.

The Board was appraised of forward planning and spending on strategic projects through 2024 and into 2025. An important factor in the scenarios going forward is changes to the Prize Money and Participation Payment structure. Comparisons across 2023 and 2024 and savings recognised by a change from Group Stages to the Home or Away ties in Davis Cup were illustrated. There is scope for further savings and these areas are being actively explored by the Finance Committee.

The Board received a report on the investment portfolio and decided that it would be prudent not to draw down but to retain fund in cash for liquidity purposes if needed. The Investment Advisory Panel is reviewing the long-term strategy of the portfolio.

The Board approved the 2023 Financial Statements.

## **Development Strategy**

The Board received an update on the status of the development programme and its alignment with the priorities established with ITF2024+4. The importance of investment into the Academy and World Tennis Number platforms was highlighted.

The Board we appraised on potential projects aimed to engage and keep new players in Tennis highlighting the standardisation of the Tennis Play and Stay programme introduced a few years previously. To strengthen the core values of TPS, health will be reinforced as a mainstay for the programme. Other initiatives that will encourage participation will be world tennis week, world clubmark, and the use of national development officers to help developing nations to use the off-the-shelves ITF development programmes.

Four other project pillars were discussed being the launch of an ITF Centre of Excellence concept and model - home for tennis development, coaching, training and competition as well as technological research; The concept of "Centre of Excellence" applied through the NTC Recognition pathway. Data showed that potentially 133 nations could be engaged with facilities that would qualify for recognition. Advocacy support for facilities; A Regional Training and performance programmes for talented players from Tier 1-2-3 nations to continue bridging the gap with the resources and represented nations.

### **Alternative Tennis Formats and Tennis Variations**

The Board received a report on the known variations of tennis. ITF has been tracking the growth of different variations since 2016. Discussions have been held around the ways to move forward with many member nations already involved in Padel in their countries. It was affirmed that many ITF member nations are encompassing variations within their tennis federations and looking for guidance. The Board expressed caution around potential governance risks as well as the potential distraction and focus of the ITF from Tennis through taking on another variation. The Board asked for a Taskforce to be created to go through the issues and return with recommendations on any further pursuit of tennis variations.

Additionally, the Board approved a Taskforce to be set up to create a positional paper regarding the ITF's process of determining the level of engagement with Disability Tennis Variations in the future.

### **Paris 2024 OTE Update.**

The Board received an update on the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Tennis Events. The qualification and entry processes including AIN (Neutral Athletes) were explained.

**Dave Haggerty**  
President