

The ITF Board of Directors met virtually for the 1-2 June meeting in a continuation of the regular fortnightly meetings that have been conducted since March 2020 due to global pandemic restrictions.

### **Finance & Audit Committee**

The Board was given an update from the Finance and Audit Committee Meeting held the previous week. The group management accounts for first quarter of 2021 and the Forecast for the full year, were reviewed. Due to the continuing disruption caused by Covid-19 including restrictions on travel, events have been cancelled resulting in subsequent reductions in sanction fees, fines, and IPIN. In order to increase playing opportunities and incentivise tournament hosting and to seek solutions for hosting \$25k and above WTT events the Board agreed further financial support for the Balanced Calendar project.

The Board received the updated risk register following a full risk management review having been conducted, and an update on the investment portfolio performance. Some investment gains have been reported in the first quarter with a further increase in April, showing performance slightly below the portfolio benchmark. With two thirds of the year remaining, and uncertainty in investment markets, the result can change, but at present the performance is above budget.

### **ITF Circuits**

ITF Circuits provided the Board with a mid-year review and progress report for the return to competition which continue to see disruptions due to regulations that restrict international travel, movement, and accessibility.

### **Beach Tennis**

The Beach Tennis Tour calendar has been the hardest hit due to the COVID-19 pandemic and is operating at 17% capacity compared with a 'normal' annual season with extremely limited tournament activity at entry level and in key markets, notably, a) South America, where historically there has been a high level of activity taking place but due to COVID restrictions there is little planned until September, and b) in Italy.

As such, the Beach Tennis Committee is supportive in principle of extending the current COVID ranking points freeze period to the end of 2021. This will be discussed at Committee level and brought to the Board before the end of July.

There is more optimism for the Beach Tennis Sand Series with 5 events planned between August and December 2021.

### **Juniors**

The Juniors circuit is operating at more normal levels with a calendar at 80% capacity so far in 2021. The ITF continues its work with the nations to schedule further events in the latter part of the year.

The ITF Board was informed that the Juniors Committee is considering the introduction of a Protected Ranking for those impacted by international travel restrictions with limited to no access to tournaments as a result of COVID-19.

The World Tennis Number (WTN) will be introduced at 14U and 16U Finals in 2021. WTN will also be used for acceptance into Grade 5 tournaments for the start of the 2022 season at the latest. In terms of the major Juniors events in 2021, the Junior Masters remains in question due to Covid conditions in China. The ITF Circuits team is working with Chengdu and will provide an update in the coming month.

## **Seniors**

The Seniors circuit has provided 50% of its calendar capacity in Q1 & Q2 2021 with a higher percentage of tournaments to be held in the second half of 2021. The Board was told that 300 tournaments are projected in 2021. The new 30s circuit is proving to be very popular. The Seniors Committee is also considering an extension to the current ranking protection provision.

## **Wheelchair**

The ITF expects improvement in the number of tournaments in the second semester 2021. The Classification system review process is reaching its conclusion with a final report to be submitted to the ITF Board in July 2021. Player consultation is underway to review classification methods and the terms of the classification process.

## **ITF MAJOR EVENTS**

### **Davis Cup by Rakuten Finals 2021**

A successful launch of the 2021 Davis Cup Finals was organised by Kosmos Tennis in Madrid on 27 May to herald the launch of ticket sales for the 2021 Davis Cup Finals. The Madrid Arena, will host the Madrid rounds and final stages in 2021.

The 2021 campaign "I'm All In" was launched the same day as the PR event, overseen by Kosmos Marketing Director, Marc Carrion, and implemented in the 3 host city markets of Madrid, Innsbruck, and Turin.

Madrid hospitality packages and tickets have already begun to attract a significant amount of interest. Turin and Innsbruck forecast 75% tickets sold by the time the Finals begin.

### **Billie Jean King Cup Finals 2021**

The ITF Board was advised that ITF Executive team is reviewing alternative host proposals for the 2021 Finals and progress will be reported at the next Board meeting. Several discussions with potential bidders indicate expressions of interest for this year's event as well as 2022 and 2023. .

### **Tokyo 2020**

National Olympic/Paralympic Committees will announce their national squads and the tennis players who will represent their country at the Games on June 22. The list of eligible players will be established following Roland-Garros rankings as at Monday June 14.

### **ITF World Tennis Tour (WTT)**

Nations have been offered financial support from the ITF during the pandemic to encourage existing hosts to return to competition and to attract new hosts. This said, the Board was informed that there are still fewer tournaments in 2021 compared with previous calendar years and the WTT is currently operating at 70%.

One of the issues for the players is the increased number of higher ranked players who are "playing down," resulting in higher-than-normal average cut off rankings. For example, for women playing WTT60s the average rank is 300. This increase in "playing down" is causing concern amongst the cohort of rising players struggling to earn points.

The Board was informed that \$320,000 of the balanced calendar funding has been used of the \$1m allocated to assist \$25k and above tournaments for the remainder of 2021.

The ITF World Tennis Tour player panels are working very well, with players engaged and providing constructive input into developing the professional pathway.

## **Integrity**

The Board was provided with an overview which highlights the importance of an integrity infrastructure in place for ITF-sanctioned events. They were advised of the risks associated with unsanctioned and privately funded events that sell data rights to the betting markets and have limited or no integrity measures in place, raising the risk of corruption. The data indicates that this is directly resulting in an increase in betting anomaly alerts. The ITF entered discussions with the ITIA Supervisory Board on this matter. The ITF Board agreed that unsanctioned events are outside the ITF's remit, but it is even more crucial that the ITF ensures a successful player pathway is in place and acknowledged as the official channel of progression which only the ITF can deliver. A balanced calendar of tournaments equally providing a player pathway for men and women players is required.

## **Advantage All – Gender Equality in Tennis Update**

The Board was provided an update on actions taken to date to drive awareness and engage nations and regions on the need for balance in the representation of men and women on national and regional boards and to review their strategy for gender equality. The Advantage All update indicated progress and that the current programme is on track to reach targets initially set in 2018 and that reflect the IOC gender equality charter. COVID-19 has impacted the timeline for delivery in certain areas and the ITF will discuss any revision to the targets and timeline, as well as any refinements to the strategy, with the Gender Equality in Tennis Committee.

## **Constitutional Review**

The ITF Board reiterated its commitment to clarify, rationalise and simplify the current written Constitution in both its content and its form. The aim is to assess revisions which might be needed to ensure the Constitution is contemporary, easier to understand and future-proof, and ensures good Governance. The ITF Board emphasised the need to consult with nations and regions, and agreed that in the second half of 2021, the ITF would consult regarding the principles of any potential changes, with a second phase also planned for early 2022.

**Dave Haggerty**  
**President**