



Press Release

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LTA INTRODUCES NEW RATING SYSTEM WITH TENNIS PLAYERS IN BRITAIN AMONG FIRST IN THE WORLD TO GET AN ITF WORLD TENNIS NUMBER

The LTA has announced the introduction of the ITF World Tennis Number for players of all standards – making Britain one of the first countries in the world to introduce the brand new, inclusive, innovative and modern rating system that has been designed to provide a significant boost to grassroots participation and recreational competition.

Likened to the handicap system in golf, the World Tennis Number will operate with one simple scale for all players aged 10 and over and regardless of gender, catering for players of all abilities from beginners to top players. Updating every week, players will be given a 'Number' from '40' to '1', with recreational players starting close to 40 and top level players being close to 1 (players with an ATP/WTA world ranking will all be rated simply as 'Pro').

The introduction of the new rating system will mean that it will be easier than ever to find an evenly-matched opponent – each player will have a personalised World Tennis Number 'Game zONe' to help identify opponents of a similar level. In addition, for the first time ever in Britain, the ratings system will also include doubles – with players having a separate Number for playing either singles or doubles matches, which will help engage many more players.

Initially including results from organised matches in local, county, regional, national and international competitions, and at local tennis venues, it is also the LTA's ambition in the future to enable players to 'self-submit' results from games against their friends to help support local, recreational play.

The LTA has played a leading role, alongside the ITF and other major tennis nations, in the development of the new system. While Britain is amongst the first countries to introduce the World Tennis Number, 134 national associations have already signed up to adopt it, representing over 80% of the world's tennis playing population and helping to create a common language for tennis across the world.

The World Tennis Number will replace the LTA's current ratings system, which was identified as a priority area to improve by coaches, referees, players and parents during the LTA's Competition Review. It will be available for free to all LTA Advantage members who play tennis at any level, and will be displayed when they log in to Advantage via the LTA website.

Its adoption forms part of a series of improvements being implemented by the LTA to make competitions more relevant, accessible, welcoming and enjoyable for all players – something seen as central to retaining players of all ages and abilities in tennis, as well as supporting players on the Performance Pathway to develop their game and progress.

Olly Scadgell, LTA Participation Director, who has been part of the international steering committee for the ITF World Tennis Number, said: "Introducing the World Tennis Number is key part of what the LTA is doing to grow the sport and open tennis up to more people. We know that one of the barriers to more people playing tennis is finding someone of a similar ability to play and compete against, and so the World Tennis Number will make it easier for players to find others of a similar level to play with and therefore have an even and enjoyable game.

"There has been a lot of work put in behind the scenes over the past 18 months, but we're now really excited to see the impact that the World Tennis Number and our wider improvements to tennis competitions will have in the coming years, and would encourage all players in Britain to ensure they have signed up to Advantage to get their own Number."

To find out more about the World Tennis Number visit www.lta.org.uk/WTN, and to sign up to receive one for free simply register as an LTA Advantage 'Compete,' Play + or free 'Play' member at www.lta.org.uk/advantage.

-ENDS-

NOTES TO EDITORS

How the World Tennis Number Works

The World Tennis Number will be available for free to all LTA Advantage members who play tennis at any level, and will be displayed when they log in to Advantage via the LTA website. The new rating system will cover all age groups for adults and juniors from 10 years of age upwards, while having a Number will support acceptance into certain competitions.

Each player's Number will be calculated using match results from 2016 onwards by a sophisticated algorithm specifically designed for tennis using the world leading expertise of Imperial College London and Data Scientists. Those who have played enough recent matches will see a 'verified' tick next to their Number which indicates their number is accurate. Each player's Number will be displayed to one decimal place.

World Tennis Number video: <https://youtu.be/CaVSU6vdacs>

Any venues, coaches or officials organising competitions are being encouraged to ensure they have uploaded match results to the LTA's website to ensure matches count towards a player's Number. They can do this through the LTA's Competition Management System.

For adult beginners, or players who don't have any match results within the past four years, they will simply be able to complete a short questionnaire to get an initial Number and help them find opponents of a similar standard. Players aged 18 and under who are new to the sport will initially be assigned a Number of '40'. Once the player has recorded some match results their number will then be updated to quickly reflect their level. As an inclusive rating system, the World Tennis Number is also being developed to provide ratings for disability tennis players.

LTA Competition Improvements

Alongside the introduction of the World Tennis Number, other developments to the competition structure implemented by the LTA, as part of its competition strategy, have included;

- the introduction of a simpler 'calendar year' based system for Competition Age Group categorization

- launch of a new Competition Management System enabling players to more easily find and enter competitions whilst supporting organisers to plan and deliver enjoyable competitions
- introduction of more team competition opportunities through a new LTA National League team competition for tennis venues in the Winter season
- a new competition reward system for players aged 10 years and under called LTA Youth Competition Rewards, replacing mini tennis ratings
- changes to local competition – including the introduction of a new competition product to help get players to start competing called LTA Youth Matchplay to further support LTA Youth Team Challenge and LTA Youth Local Tour

For LTA media enquiries please contact:

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ABOUT THE LTA

The LTA is the National Governing Body of tennis in Great Britain. We are here to govern and grow tennis, from grassroots participation through to the professional game. Our vision is “Tennis Opened Up” and we’re on a mission to grow tennis by making it relevant, accessible, welcoming and enjoyable. We work with schools, with volunteers, with coaches and with venues across the whole country. We also represent the interests of over 685,000 Members, men and women, girls and boys, playing on more than 23,000 courts. The LTA runs and supports a network of 11,500 approved tournaments for players of all ages, the four corner-stones of which are the premier grass-court events leading up to The Championships, Wimbledon: the Nottingham Open, the Birmingham Classic, the cinch Championships at The Queen’s Club, London and the Eastbourne International. For further information about the LTA and tennis in Britain, visit www.lta.org.uk or follow us on Twitter @the_LTA