

## Advancement of 2<sup>nd</sup> Placed Teams from the Round Robin Stage in 17-23 Draw Format

### Background

New in 2023, runner-up teams from the round-robin stage of draw formats of 17-23 teams were drawn by lot to fill vacant positions in the Quarter Finals. This method was largely successful, with 68% of 172 teams captains supporting the process put in place.

An example of this can be seen to the right, with lucky loser teams highlighted in yellow.

Feedback from captains was that some weaker teams were advancing ahead of much stronger teams, which has been considered by the ITF Masters Tour Player Panel, and ITF Masters Committee. The following outlines a revised process that is in place for 2024.

### 2024 Regulation

For draw sizes of between 17-23 teams, each group winner shall qualify for the Quarter Finals. Any vacant positions in the Quarter Finals will be filled in line with the following process:

- All teams that finish in 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the final group standings will be ranked in order of their three (3) highest ranked players based on the latest ITF Singles Rankings within the same age category.
- The four (4) highest ranked teams that finish in 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the Round Robin stage will be drawn by lot to fill any vacant positions in the Quarter Finals. For example, the 18 team draw format shall advance six (6) group winners, with two (2) vacant places filled by “lucky losers”.
- Vacant positions in the Quarter Finals shall firstly be allocated to the opponent of Line 1 (expected #1 seed), followed by Line 2 (expected #2 seed), and so on.
- Except for draw formats where only one (1) “lucky loser” is drawn, a “lucky loser” shall not be drawn to play the winner of their own round-robin group. Using the example image above, Sweden could not be drawn to play Spain if they competed in the same round-robin group and are drawn to play Switzerland.
- Teams that are not drawn shall be included in the playoff stages for position 9<sup>th</sup> onwards.

### Notes:

- The principle of the approach aligns with ITF individual tournaments, whereby losers in the final round of qualifying events could gain entry into vacancies in the Main Draw by way of a “lucky loser”.
- The principle of drawing lucky losers from amongst the highest ranked players/teams only is in place at other tennis competitions; for example, Grand Slams who draw Lucky Losers from amongst the four (4) highest ranked players who lose in the final round of qualifying. This ensures that low ranked players do not advance ahead of more highly ranked players, whilst maintaining a draw element to the process.
- ITF Rankings of the 3 highest ranked players shall be considered. ITF Masters regulations permit teams to compete with teams of 3 players. The three (3) highest ranked players may not necessarily be the Number 1, Number 2 and Number 3 player in the Order of Merit.
- The playoff stage draw will take place on Tuesday afternoon towards the competition of all round-robin groups. At the time of the playoff stage draw, the most recent ITF Rankings will be used. For example, the ITF Masters Rankings as of 11 March 2024 will be used for the draw on Tuesday 12 March 2024.
- Draw Formats of 16 or less teams will advance group winners only to Semi-Finals.
- Draw Formats of 24 or more teams will advance group winners only to Quarter Finals.

### W50 - Maria Esther Bueno Cup - 1st to 8th Play-off

