

ITF World Tennis Masters Tour: Seed Exempt Guidance

June 2025

This document is provided to assist Tournament Committees, Tournament Directors and Referees on how to use the Seed Exempt regulation within the ITF World Tennis Masters Tour (“WTMT”).

What are Seed Exempts?

The primary measure for acceptances and seeding within the WTMT is the ITF WTMT Ranking, which reflects a player’s activity and results on the WTMT within the previous 52 weeks. The ITF Masters Committee recognises that the majority of players on the Tour compete in a low frequency of tournaments throughout the year, and that some very strong players may compete at tournaments with little or no ranking points earned in the previous 52 weeks. This can result in unbalanced draws, and situations where very highly ranked players are drawn to play other exceptional players in the opening round(s) of a tournament.

As a result, the [ITF Masters Regulations](#) (Section 37, p. 37) allows for the use of Seed Exempts to help ensure that exceptional players or doubles teams with few or no ranking points may be considered for seeding.

The Regulation states:

Unless approved otherwise by the ITF, the following number of seed exempts can be nominated at all Tour tournaments:

*For a draw-size of 64 - 128 - **up to 4***

*For a draw-size of 48 - **up to 3***

*For a draw-size of 8 - 32 - **up to 2***

Seed exempts can be ranked or unranked players / teams. If requested, the tournament committee must provide an explanation for the nomination of seed exempt(s) and their order within the seeding list.

Who decides on Seed Exempts?

The Tournament Committee can decide and apply Seed Exempts at their tournament. The Tournament Committee usually consists of the Tournament Director, Tournament Referee, and other key personnel involved in the event planning and delivery, such as the Masters Tour Coordinator from the National Association.

Seed exempts should be promptly reviewed by the Tournament Committee in the period between the Entry Deadline, and before making the tournament draws, which usually allows between 24-72 hours.

Seed Exempts may be applied at any tournament grade.

What measures should be used to decide on Seed Exempts?

The Tournament Committee should use relevant information available to them to consider Seed Exempts.

1. ITF World Tennis Number (“WTN”)

It is recommended that Tournament Committee’s consider WTN as part of the Seed Exempt process. For example, a player with few or no ITF ranking points that has a very strong WTN relative to other players in the event may be considered a seed exempt by the Tournament Committee.

Tournament Committees should compare WTN’s of entered players. This information can be accessed via

Tournament Acceptances visible on the tournament page of the ITF website, or by using the Referee's Tournament Planner software file.

The following guidance charts may also be helpful to understand the relative strength of WTN's for each age group, gender and tournament grade:

[Women's WTN Guidance](#)

[Men's WTN Guidance](#)

2. Previous or Current ATP/WT A Ranking

As a guideline, players' previous ATP/WT A rankings should be considered for age groups 30+, 35+, 40+, 45+, 50+ and 55+ age groups. In exceptional circumstances, ATP/WT A rankings could be considered for older age groups. The ITF Office will supply this information with an Excel document.

As a guideline, players with a Career High ATP/WT A Ranking of 500 or better should be considered for seeding in these age groups, but organisers are not obliged to seed players of this level – which shall be determined based on an assessment of those players alongside other entered and seeded players.

3. Career-high ITF Masters Ranking

Players who have held a previous career-high ITF Masters ranking of note should be considered for seeding.

As a guideline, players with a Career High Top 10 ITF Masters Tour ranking within the most recent 10 years should be considered for seeding in these age groups, but organisers are not obliged to seed players of this level – which shall be determined based on an assessment of those players alongside other entered players.

4. Head-to-Head Results

Head-to-head results should be considered when an unseeded player has beaten a player that would be seeded, based on the original acceptance list. This should only be applied where a player has a clear Head-to-Head winning record over one or more players in the event.

5. Recent Activity of a Player

This could include recent results at the World Championships or recent activity from previous MT1000 tournaments.

Example Case:

MT700 tournament: Men's Singles 40+ with 4 seeds

Based on rankings, the seeded players are projected to be:

1. ITF Ranking = 10. WTN = 6.5.
2. ITF Ranking = 25. WTN = 8.2.
3. ITF Ranking = 47. WTN = 8.7.
4. ITF Ranking = 65. WTN = 12.2.

There is a non-seeded player with a WTN of 7.0, who has ranked #5 in the WTMT in the past 5 years and has previously held an ATP Ranking of 800. The player has a 2-1 Head-to-Head record against the #2 seed.

In this example, it would be appropriate to apply a seed exempt, placing the player as #4 seed. The previous #4 seed would become unseeded.

Who can I contact with questions?

Please contact the ITF Masters department masters@itftennis.com for further assistance.

MT1000 ONLY

The Masters Department will provide the Tournament Director and Referee with additional information to assist – this will include the following for all players entered. This will be provided 1 month before the tournament, updated weekly until the entry deadline:

- Highest ranking achieved and date
- Current World Tennis Number (WTN)
- Highest ATP / WTA ranking and date achieved.
- Link to most recent World Championships
- Link to previous edition of the Tournament

1. The person(s) responsible for seeding should review the entries and consider players that should be seeded using the seed exempt rule.
2. The Referee must send the unpublished draws to the ITF office – Masters@itftennis.com including information about any seed exempts used.
3. The draws must be sent to the ITF office with heading **MT1000 SEED EXEMPTS**
4. The subject heading must be MT1000 DRAWS and sent to the ITF at least 1 working day (24 hours) before draws are to be published.
5. The ITF Masters department will check the draws and respond within 24 hours (sooner if during ITF office hours of 9am to 5pm, London, UK)

MT700 ONLY

1. The ITF Masters Department will provide the Tournament Director and Referee with additional information to assist – this will include the following for all players entered:
 - Highest ranking achieved and date
 - Current World Tennis Number (WTN)
 - Highest ATP / WTA ranking and date achieved.
 - Link to most recent World Championships
 - Link to previous edition of the Tournament
2. Any queries should be sent to Masters@itftennis.com