

The ITF Board of Directors gathered in Paris for its second meeting of the year. The meeting was very productive and covered many strategic as well as operational matters.

ITF 2024 STRATEGIC PILLARS – UPDATE

ITF COO Kelly Fairweather presented an ITF 2024 progress and comprehensive update to Board on all the projects approved in Paris in 2017. The Board were pleased with the progress and noted the fact that the foundation phase would be largely concluded by end 2019.

PROFESSIONAL TENNIS

Davis Cup Format Below World Group

Following the Davis Cup Committee meeting on Saturday 1 June, the Board received their recommendations for 2020 format as follows;

1. Global Group I and II for 2020 with no play-off rounds but with a view to evaluating quality of ties in 2020 (Olympic year) in Group II and the possibility of adding in a play-off in 2021 onwards
2. More National Association consultation on Groups III and IV, as no clear mandate has emerged from the feedback received to date to change to remove Group IV.
3. Re-brand Groups I and II as “World Group I and II” and aim to create one regional champion from each of the Group III’s

Taking into account the push from several nations to play twice a year, the Board requested that in addition to the Group III/IV research, further National Association consultation is conducted on the possibility of adding in play-offs in Group I and II for 2020 onwards, but with hosting grants only and no prize money for nations. The executive has been asked to revert to the Board in due course.

Fed Cup Host City and Format Reforms Update

The Board were presented with the Finals format change proposals for 2020, recommended by the Fed Cup Committee. The Board approved these changes, including extending the format to include a new week-long Finals event in 2020 subject to final approval of the host city. Following a robust bidding process, bid presentations to host the Finals from 2020 were made by the short-listed cities. A final decision and announcement on the winning bid will be made towards the end of June.

ITF World Tennis Tour

The Board received an update on the terms of the agreement with the two Tours. ATP and WTA ranking points will be awarded through the round of 16 at \$15,000 and higher tournaments; ITF ranking points will be in \$15,000 and \$25,000 qualifying events, as well as in new ITF development tournaments between \$15,000 level and ITF junior tournaments. The ATP will not award points to M\$25,000 outside the Challenger calendar weeks (five-week period).

Three main draw spots will continue to be available in \$15,000 tournaments for top-100 junior ranked players. \$15,000 and \$25,000 qualifying draws can increase to 48 over eight days.

The TIU recognised the benefit of additional playing opportunities in contributing to an improved integrity environment for players. Players’ rankings will be updated with new points allocations on 5 August 2019, such points to be applied retroactively to all tournaments played since August 2018.

A new more affordable tournament level (circa \$5,000 in prize money) will be added in 2020 following discussion with National Associations to expand the reach of the WTT to more players. The executive will be reviewing allocation of ITF points in round of 32 (\$15,000 and \$25,000).

Wheelchair Tennis Classification Rules

The Board received an update on the revised classification rules and the proposed approach, agreed with the International Paralympic Committee, to classify Tokyo 2020 athletes in the open class in line with the existing ITF regulations. The Board also received and approved the proposed approach to powerchair athletes inclusion in the quad class for Tokyo 2020.

DEVELOPMENT

World Tennis Number

The World Tennis Number project (WTN) is progressing well in accordance with the three milestones agreed by the Board for 2019. A pilot project is in place with 14 nations and two regional associations which have safely shared their data with the ITF to test the singles algorithm. The system digital platform and general repository database are being built by the selected solution provider company for this project. The doubles algorithm is also being built in collaboration with Imperial College, London. The ITF WTN Steering Committee will be on hand during the 2019 ITF Worldwide Participation Conference on Sunday 7 and Monday 8 July at Chelsea FC for a detailed update. A dedicated workshop on the WTN and its benefit to National Associations will take place at the ITF AGM in Lisbon.

FINANCE

Finance Committee Report

Following the Finance Committee meeting held on 2 June, the Board received an update on the Q1 Financials. The Operating Result from Ongoing Activities is a slight improvement to budget of \$0.2m. Expenditure on Strategic Initiatives has increased by \$0.3m due to additional design costs for the ITF Website. The total anticipated spend on Strategic Initiatives is in line with the \$10.5m approved by the Board. Despite the significant expenditure on Strategic Initiatives, reserves remain at the same level as at the beginning of 2017, when the expenditure was approved. The non-Operating result is \$2.2m above budget as investment markets enjoyed significant gains in Q1 following the losses incurred in Q4 2019 and the five-year net returns are in line with the target of 5% annual growth.

GOVERNANCE

IRP / Supervisory Board

Jennie Price, the Chair of the Supervisory Board of the Tennis Integrity Unit, addressed the meeting and answered questions. An update on the proposed implementation of Recommendation 1 of the IRP's Final Report was provided to the Board. This proposal comprised the discontinuance of live-scoring data from ITF \$15,000 events for the purposes of betting from the end of 2020, and the introduction of enhanced integrity protection measures at those events, subject to all of the package of measures in Recommendation 1 being implemented. The Board approved a more detailed evaluation of the resource requirements of this proposal.

ITF Ethics Commission Chair Report

The Ethics Commission chair reported in summary to the Board on the Ethics Commission's work to date, primarily around managing election queries from candidates, nations and regions, and the confirmation of the nominations for President and Board of Directors elections. The Election Panel's focus now turns to reviewing and determining the voting processes that will be followed at the AGM.

Rules of Tennis amendments and Temporary variation

A proposal from the Rules of Tennis Committee for a permanent amendment to rule 29 (Continuous Play) to increase the maximum time between points from 20 seconds to 25 seconds from 2019 was supported by the Board and will be submitted to the 2019 AGM accordingly. An application for a temporary amendment to the Rules of Tennis by USTA, to permit in-play coaching in all competitions at the 2019 US Open, was received. The Board deferred a decision until the USTA confirmed that it intended to implement the application (subject to ITF Board approval).

Gender Equality Strategy

The Board received an update on the Gender Equality strategy that now sits across the whole organisation and all business. They noted that a strategy brochure and guidelines have been produced and a campaign is under development with a view to inspiring National Associations to move forward with action items within their own remit.

Dave Haggerty
President