

The ITF Board of Directors met virtually on Microsoft Teams for the 21-22 September meeting, a continuation of the virtual fortnightly meetings that have been conducted since March 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions.

ITF President David Haggerty opened the meeting acknowledging the successful staging of the US Open and the Italian Open in Rome and is looking forward to Roland Garros as well as the WTA/ATP Tour events commencing in Hamburg and Strasbourg. Additionally, on the World Tennis Tour, the 50th Junior tournament since returning to tennis on 31 August was starting. In September, Wheelchair Tennis is hosting three events and Beach Tennis will host one event.

ITF 2024 Strategic Update

The Board received an update on how the ITF is adapting to the continued Covid-19 situation and the revised objectives and plans integral to the ITF 2024 strategy. Several programmes have been reduced or suspended until the crisis has passed, however highly important programmes within the four pillars of the ITF have continued. Within Governance, the Constitutional Review is ongoing; within events, Olympics and Paralympics, the Billie Jean King Cup by BNP Paribas, the Davis Cup by Rakuten and the World Tennis Tour are priorities for the ITF; Digital Transformation has a clear focus which is the World Tennis Number and within Stakeholder Engagement both National Association and Regional Association engagement continues. Looking forward to 2021, the ITF is working on contingency planning exercises and will continue to focus on revenue generation activities while remaining agile and flexible in the current fast-changing environment to ensure that we can support Nations and tennis can continue safely.

Finance

The Board was given an update from the Finance and Audit Committee Meeting held the previous Friday. They reviewed the previously presented Mid-Year Review and the 2021 Pre-Budget exercise carried out in July. Since then, the budget process for 2021 has commenced.

The Finance and Audit Committee are currently reviewing additional savings and evaluating their impact on key projects of work prior to making a recommendation to the ITF Board. Reviews will be ongoing for the remainder of the year and during the budget exercise. The Executive in conjunction with the Finance and Audit Committee will propose the budget for 2021 at the November Board meeting.

Davis Cup by Rakuten

The Board, having taken the decision in June to postpone the 2020 Davis Cup Finals have continued, through a Davis Cup Special Taskforce, to work with Kosmos Tennis to explore the successful hosting of the event in 2021 and logistical implementation of carrying over the 2020 competition.

Billie Jean King Cup by BNP Paribas

The Board reviewed the successful launch of the rebrand of the Fed Cup by BNP Paribas to the Billie Jean King Cup by BNP Paribas. The media conference via Microsoft Teams LIVE was well attended and thousands tuned into the public live feed and viewed videos on You Tube, via the ITF website and on ITF social channels. There has been an overwhelming, positive response with extensive mainstream media coverage and support from players, tennis commentators and social influencers. The rebrand has promoted the positivity of the iconic name of Billie Jean King and at the same time highlighted the ITF values of equality and inclusion.

From a commercial point of view 2021 will bring additional sponsorship to the Billie Jean King Cup by BNP Paribas and the Finals to be held in Budapest, Hungary. Work is progressing with the host nation planning for the April 2021 Finals.

Return to Tennis - World Tennis Tour

The Board received an update on the work carried out by the Executive and the respective Committees across all the ITF Circuits to facilitate a Return to Tennis. It was noted that, to date, no incidents of Covid-19 have been reported from any tournaments which have taken place. It is expected that on the World Tennis Tour by the end of 2020 314 tournaments will be staged. The Calendar for the final quarter of the year is predominantly European focused, but there is intention to stage tournaments from late October onwards in the USA and other tournaments in Africa, Asia and Central America are also scheduled.

Following the establishment of the WTT Men's and Women's Player Panel, a survey and feedback on the return to tennis has been conducted and results have been very positive, with players reporting back to the ITF on the good work undertaken by organisers with respect to Covid-19 protocols.

In Wheelchair Tennis, Beach Tennis and Seniors Tennis, tournaments are returning to the calendar in varying numbers. The WTT Juniors expects a healthy number of tournaments across all regions in the final quarter of 2020 with the exception of Oceania Region, where Covid-19 restrictions continue to keep borders closed or where travel is severely restricted. The Committee has approved measures to ensure competition can be maintained and 'closed' events at J5 level will be considered. The Junior Year-End Ranking Criteria will not be applied for 2020 and the WTT Committee will receive a recommendation to allow an extension of the 'carry over' ranking for Junior Reserved Place at WTT tournaments (for the entirety of 2021 versus the current stipulation of when a player turns 19 years).

Contingency Planning

The Board has ascertained that the Covid-19 pandemic could continue to cause disruption of ITF events into 2021 and there is a need for ITF to consider revised operational and commercial approaches and thus a need for clear contingency plans for its key assets. The Board reviewed the contingency planning exercise and agreed with the objectives set out: to protect ITF income; to ensure playing *job opportunities* where possible at all levels of ITF Circuits and to ensure consumers have on court content available via ITF channels and partners.

Data Rights

The Board received their first report from the Data Rights Taskforce that has been set up to assist the Executive on the delivery of the data rights dividends to Nations in 2020 where the reduced number of events caused by Covid-19 restrictions have impacted on the World Tennis Tour.

2020 AGM

In Executive Session, the Board reviewed matters to submit to the 2020 AGM: Nominees for Awards for Services to the Game, applications to transfer from Class C to Class B membership and applications for an increase in shares. The Board's recommendations will be put to the Council in the AGM Agenda issued one month before the 2020 AGM.

Dave Haggerty
President