



Press Release

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LTA ANNOUNCES NATIONAL ACADEMIES AND REGIONAL PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CENTRES AS PART OF NEW 10-YEAR VISION FOR PERFORMANCE TENNIS IN BRITAIN

STRATEGY AIMS TO SET NEW STANDARDS FOR PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

- *LTA confirms new National Academy venues at Loughborough and Stirling*
- *Eleven new Regional Player Development Centres across the country also confirmed*
- *First major milestone in the LTA's ten-year Performance Strategy for British Tennis, which focuses on making GB one of the most respected nations in the world for player development*
- *Strategy's implementation will be supported by new Performance Advisory Group with backgrounds in playing and coaching at the highest level: Jamie Delgado, Tim Henman and Sam Smith*

Tennis Scotland operating at the University of Stirling and Loughborough University have today been named as the first two National Academies for tennis, a major milestone in the development of the Lawn Tennis Association's ten-year Performance Strategy for tennis in Britain.

The National Academies will play a crucial role in the implementation of a new seamless player pathway, which sits at the heart of the new Performance Strategy, led by Performance Director Simon Timson, and aims to make Britain one of the most respected nations in the world for tennis player development.

The new player pathway provides a clear route from beginner's mini-red to major tournament success to support high potential junior players from the age of seven, playing the sport locally, into the world's Top 100. It's specifically designed to enable the best British players to regularly train and compete with one another at every stage of their development.

The pathway starts with affordable, high-quality local training for the youngest children and ends with a Pro-Scholarship Programme for those players with greatest potential selected between the ages of 16 to 24 who are capable of reaching the world's Top 100 and beyond. In between, players will have the opportunity to pass through first a Regional Player Development Centre and then a National Academy.

The National Academies – due to open in September 2019 – will set new, world-class standards for the holistic development of high-potential British players in transformative, full-time, residential, training environments. These programmes will nurture 14 to 18-year-olds (and sometimes younger) as people, players and performers. Players who demonstrate the greatest future potential in the sport will be selected and supported with world-class coaching, science, medicine, and welfare expertise, whilst also being provided an excellent mainstream education up to at least GCSE-level.

In addition, the LTA has today named the selection of 11 Regional Player Development Centres (RPDCs). The RPDCs will provide quality support to high potential junior players aged between 10 and 14, and the right coaching and athletic development for those aiming to progress to a National Academy. The 11 centres will be based at the following locations:

- Culford School (Bury St. Edmunds)
- Team Bath Tennis (University of Bath)
- Living Tennis (Bisham Abbey)
- Batchwood Sports Centre (St. Albans)
- Reeds School (Surrey)
- Dukes Meadows (Chiswick)
- Bromley Tennis Centre
- Swansea Tennis Centre
- My Tennis (Nottingham)
- Bolton Arena
- Tennis Scotland (with network sites at Stirling, Edinburgh and Glasgow)

More details about these academies and centres will be announced in the coming months.

To support the new Performance Strategy for British Tennis, the LTA has formed its first-ever Performance Advisory Group comprising of Jamie Delgado - coach to Andy Murray and former professional player; Sam Smith broadcaster and former British No.1 and Tim Henman, a former four-time Wimbledon semifinalist and world No.4, who will support the LTA in continually reviewing and evolving the performance strategy. This panel of experts will play a critical role in helping the LTA understand the perspective of aspiring players and better enable the Performance team to plan and deliver programmes that will allow talented players to fulfil their potential.

The entire player pathway will be underpinned by investment in a specialist coaching workforce for every age and stage of the pathway and a clear player development philosophy, as well as a focus on players' physical and emotional wellbeing.

LTA's Chief Executive Scott Lloyd said: "With an emphasis on creating a seamless player pathway for talent development, this new Performance Strategy marks a step-change in the LTA's approach to developing a pipeline of future tennis champions. It's fantastic to see the new player pathway start to become a reality with the confirmation of the National Academies, supported by our new Regional Player Development Centres.

"The success of British players in recent years has given tennis in Britain a huge boost. Our priority now is building on this success, and we recognise that in the past we haven't always been consistent enough in our approach to player development. The new performance strategy has been designed to help create future British tennis champions, who we hope will continue to inspire others to play, watch and enjoy the sport for generations to come.

"I am also delighted that we will be able to tap into the extensive and diverse experience from Jamie, Sam and Tim and thank them for being generous enough to give back to the sport they have devoted so much of their lives to. They will play a critical role in strategically supporting the LTA's Performance Team."

LTA's Performance Director Simon Timson said: "The single biggest challenge in developing a pipeline of future tennis champions in the UK is the lack of transformative, full-time, residential, pro-style training environments for our brightest talent in their teenage years.

"That's why I am delighted to announce Stirling and Loughborough as the homes of Britain's first National Academies. They will be at the heart of our new player pathway for aspiring future champions. National Academies will offer our highest potential 18 and under players the opportunity to train together in a vibrant environment, with world-class facilities and the best

coaches, science, medicine and welfare expertise, nurturing a new wave of talent and future British champions.

“It’s our ambition to provide world-class support to players, coaches and parents and ensure they all have a seamless experience through the new performance pathway. Together with our new Regional Player Development Centres, our new National Academies will help us meet our objective of making GB one of the most respected tennis nations in the world for player development.”

Loughborough University’s Executive Director of Sport, John Steele, commented:

“We are absolutely delighted to have been chosen by the LTA to host a National Academy at Loughborough University. This is an extremely exciting opportunity to create a world-class player development pathway for the best players in the UK, who have aspirations to go on to represent Great Britain and achieve success at the highest level in tennis. Our world-class facilities, internationally recognised sports science offer and unique sporting ecosystem, combined with a partnership with Loughborough Endowed Schools Foundation, provides the structure and foundation to make the LTA’s vision a reality. We look forward to working closely with the LTA’s performance team and welcoming the first cohort of athletes in September 2019.”

Tennis Scotland Chief Executive, Blane Dodds, commented:

“This is tremendous news, for the Bid team and for both Scottish and British Tennis. Scotland has enjoyed unprecedented levels of success in tennis with Andy and Jamie Murray, Gordon Reid and Colin Fleming. Players win Championships but systems enable players to win consistently. We look forward to working with Britain’s highest potential young tennis players, we want to work with the best and we believe we have the right experience, to recruit a world-class coaching and support team as shown with our formidable track record. Winning the National Academy selection helps us to enhance the world class sporting system in Scotland, and play a pivotal role in creating a pathway for champions that nurtures Britain’s highest potential players toward emulating Andy and Jamie’s successes.”

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Media contacts:

LTA: John Dolan & Anna Young: Media@LTA.org.uk or 07932 276053

Tennis Scotland: Sarah Cruickshank Sarah.Cruickshank@tennisscotland.org 07958202952 or
Dave MacDermid Dave.MacDermid@tennisscotland.org 07710580148

Loughborough University: Pete Mathews P.W.Matthews@lboro.ac.uk or 01509 228686

Notes to editors

FURTHER COMMENTS FROM THE SUCCESSFUL NATIONAL ACADEMIES:

Loughborough's Director of Tennis, Helen Reesby, said:

"It's hard to appreciate the significance of this partnership for tennis at Loughborough University and we are immensely proud to be partnering with the LTA to deliver one of only two National Academies in Britain. As part of the National Academy we will be recruiting world-class coaches and practitioners into the centre to lead, deliver and bring the vision to life, and we look forward to welcoming them, and of course the players, to Loughborough."

Colin Fleming, National Coach, Tennis Scotland added:

"We are delighted that we will be hosting a National Academy in Scotland and welcoming top juniors from across the nation to Stirling. This will provide a complete player pathway from mini-red to major tournament success for the first time. The National Academy will be the focal point of all the work Tennis Scotland is doing across all age groups from local to regional training. We look forward to putting our huge passion and energy alongside our track record for developing players into the National Academy and to working in partnership with the LTA to play our part in delivering the long-term strategy to make GB one of the most respected nations in the world for player development.

ABOUT THE LTA:

The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) is the National Governing Body for tennis in Great Britain, responsible for developing and promoting the sport, with a mission to get more people playing tennis more often. It does this under the consumer brand of British Tennis, by working with a broad range of partners and over 25,000 volunteers, to grow the game in communities, clubs and schools. The LTA represents the interests of over 590,000 British Tennis Members, men and women, girls and boys across the country, 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 corner-stones of which are the premier grass court events leading up to Wimbledon: the Nature Valley Open at Nottingham, the Nature Valley Classic at Birmingham, the Fever-Tree Championships at Queens Club and the Nature Valley International at Eastbourne. The LTA works with many delivery partners to grow the sport across the country. One of these is its charitable entity, the Tennis Foundation, to provide a tennis provision for more than 20,000 schools, disadvantaged youth as well as promoting tennis as an inclusive sport for anyone with a disability. For further information about the LTA and British Tennis, and to review the British Tennis strategy for 2015 – 2019 visit www.lta.org.uk or follow us on Twitter @BritishTennis.