



Press Release

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DELGADO, SMITH AND HENMAN NAMED AS NEW LTA PERFORMANCE ADVISORY GROUP

MARKS THE FIRST MAJOR STEP TOWARDS A NEW 10-YEAR VISION FOR PERFORMANCE TENNIS IN GREAT BRITAIN

- *Ten-year Performance Strategy for British Tennis focuses on creating a seamless 'pathway for champions' through the sport and aims to set new standards for player development in the UK*
- *Strategy's implementation will be supported by the new Performance Advisory Group with backgrounds in playing and coaching at the highest level: Jamie Delgado, Sam Smith and Tim Henman*

The Lawn Tennis Association today announced that Jamie Delgado, Sam Smith and Tim Henman are to form a new Performance Advisory Group for British Tennis, working alongside the LTA's current High Performance team.

The group - consisting of coach to Andy Murray and former tennis professional Jamie Delgado, broadcaster and former tennis professional Sam Smith and former British number one tennis player Tim Henman - will play a vital role in guiding the development of a new 'pathway for champions', which sits at the heart of the new strategy. The strategy is being led by LTA Performance Director, Simon Timson, and aims to make Britain one of the most respected nations in the world for player development.

The Performance Advisory Group will be essential in helping the LTA understand the perspective of aspiring players and better enabling the Performance team to plan and deliver programmes that will allow talented players to fulfil their potential.

The new pathway is designed to act as a clear roadmap to support talented players from the age of seven, playing the sport locally, into the top one hundred in the world and major tournament success. It's specifically designed to allow the best British players to regularly train and compete with one another at every stage of their development. New Regional and National Academies will form a core part of the pathway and the LTA will announce further details about these over the coming weeks and months.

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 a focus on creating a seamless pathway for talent development, the new Performance Strategy marks a step-change in the LTA's approach to developing a pipeline of future tennis champions. I am 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. I believe it's vital as an organisation that we have the right tennis 'IQ' where it's most needed and I'm confident that,

with the appointing of this Performance Advisory Group, we've been able to bring in genuine expertise to help advise and guide our team - which is a key principle for our Performance Strategy as a whole."

LTA's Performance Director Simon Timson said: "The success of British players in recent years has given British Tennis a huge boost. Our priority now is maintaining and building on this success, and that's why I am thrilled that Jamie, Sam and Tim have agreed to support us in implementing our Performance Strategy. They will play a critical role in helping our Performance Team understand the perspective of both aspiring and professional tennis players when planning and delivering programmes at every age and stage of the pathway. Having their wealth of experience on board will play a key role in helping us meet our ultimate objective of making Great Britain one of the most respected tennis nations in the world for player development."

Jamie Delgado, Coach to Andy Murray, said: "A key strand of the LTA performance strategy will be in how we recruit, retain and develop more world-class coaches at every age and stage of the pathway. I look forward to sharing my experience in that process."

Sam Smith, broadcaster and former tennis professional, commented: "An important element of the LTA's performance mission is how we maximise the potential of girls and young women aspiring to perform at the highest level and we aim to do that by ensuring the strategy delivers programmes that provide the right blend of coaching, science, medicine and broader support."

Tim Henman, former British number one tennis player, said: "This advisory group will support the LTA's performance team to always understand the perspective of developing players when planning and delivering programmes with the aim of fully reaching their potential on the world stage."

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Jamie Delgado had a standout junior career, becoming the first Briton to win the prestigious under 14 Orange Bowl title in 1991. He turned pro in 1995 and holds the all-time male record for playing in 23 consecutive Wimbledon Championships (singles or doubles). He reached a career-best ranking of No. 121 (in singles) and 57 in doubles. Since retiring in 2014, he has gone onto a successful pro coaching career working with Gilles Mueller and most recently Andy Murray during the most successful year of his career winning Wimbledon, the Olympics and ATP World Tour finals.

Tim Henman won 11 ATP singles titles during his 15-year pro career and reached a career-best singles ranking of No.4. He had an accomplished and consistent record in the sport's major tournaments: reaching four semi-finals in five years at Wimbledon, and one semi-final each at the French Open, US Open and ATP World Tour finals. Playing for GB, he won a doubles silver medal in 1996 and represented his country 21 times in Davis Cup. Since retiring he has set up the Tim Henman Foundation, and is a lead commentator for the BBC's annual tennis coverage.

Sam Smith had a nine-year pro career on the WTA Tour, peaking at No. 55 in the world in 1999. She played the Championships at Wimbledon eight times, reaching the last 16 in 1998, upsetting No.7 seed and former champion Conchita Martinez en route. She represented her country at the 1992 Olympics and in 13 Fed Cup ties. Since retiring from the game in 2000, she has moved into broadcasting, fronting BBC, BT Sport, ITV, Channel 7 (in Australia) and Sky Sports coverage during the major tournaments.

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 Queen's Club-London) 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.