



# CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

**ETHNICALLY DIVERSE  
COMMUNITIES PLAN**





# FOREWORD

**The vision which drives everything we do – Tennis Opened Up – is rooted in inclusion for all, and we have set out in our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Plan that we are committed to making all aspects of tennis and padel in Britain genuinely reflective of the communities around us. Connecting Communities sets out the work we are doing with people from a ethnically diverse background to make tennis and padel inclusive and relevant in all communities across the country.**

We know that if you are from an ethnically diverse background you are more likely to be under-represented, in sport more broadly and parts of tennis, in relation to the size of your community in Britain. We also know the importance of seeing “people like me” to feel inspired to play, to volunteer, to coach, and to be a leader in sport. We want to ensure that people from all communities, no matter what their lived experience, cultural and religious background, or historical influences shaped by both ethnicity and race, feel like they belong. We want everyone to see tennis and padel as “my sport” and are committed to listening to, and working with, organisations and individuals from all communities to make this a reality.

We have made progress in recent years: more people from an ethnically diverse background are picking up a racquet and playing, both yearly and monthly, than they were 5 years ago when we

launched our Inclusion Strategy. Through the ambitious work set out in this plan, we will build on the progress made to address areas where we know there is still under-representation, such as the tennis workforce, and to continue to build an inclusive culture ensuring that everyone who comes to our sport, in whatever capacity, feels like they belong, irrespective of their race or ethnic background.

What we have achieved so far has come from working more closely with communities, and leaders in them, listening to them to understand how to do things differently to create that feeling of belonging. From the launch of the Tennis Black List, a platform celebrating black and mixed black heritage excellence in the game, and establishing the Black Tennis Collective; to deepening our engagement with faith-based communities, including through working with Muslim community groups to mark Ramadan with events at the National Tennis Centre and Lexus Nottingham Tennis Centre. We want to continue to use this progress as a platform to do more and improve the sense of belonging in our sport.

This plan outlines our next steps in driving meaningful change. It sets out how we will strengthen partnerships directly with ethnically diverse communities, and with trusted organisations working in those communities, to ensure that tennis and padel in Britain continue to be sports open to all.

**Scott Lloyd**, Chief Executive

A black and white photograph of Arthur Ashe in action on a tennis court. He is wearing a white short-sleeved shirt over a dark collared shirt, a pearl necklace, and a wristband. He is holding a tennis racket with both hands, ready to hit a ball. The background is a blurred crowd of spectators. The image has a green diagonal bar at the top left and blue diagonal lines at the bottom left.

# OUR AMBITION:

Creating a sport where people from ethnically diverse communities feel like they belong, are represented and empowered - from grass roots to the professional game.

“

My potential is more than can be expressed within the bounds of my race or ethnic identity.

Arthur Ashe

# WHAT WE'VE ACHIEVED SO FAR

## TWO THIRDS OF PARTICIPANTS

in LTA SERVES,  
our underserved communities  
programme, are from  
ethnically diverse communities

## DEEPENED ENGAGEMENT

with faith-based communities  
e.g. hosting Ramadan Iftar  
events in partnership with  
the Muslim community

## INVESTED IN 2X RESEARCH STUDIES

to understand better how  
tennis impacts ethnically  
diverse communities

## OVER £2M IN LTA TENNIS FOUNDATION FUNDING

has been invested in projects  
specifically supporting  
ethnically diverse communities

## INVESTED £45M IN UPGRADING COURTS

in 1,000 parks across the country,  
where we know we have a more  
ethnically diverse player base

## LAUNCHED THE BLACK AND ASIAN COACHES NETWORK

to improve representation and  
belonging at all levels in coaching

## HELPED ESTABLISH

the Tennis Black List Awards and  
Black Tennis Collective, celebrating

## BLACK AND MIXED BLACK EXCELLENCE

and increasing the visibility of  
Black communities in tennis

## 27% OF YEARLY ADULT TENNIS PLAYERS

in the UK come from ethnically diverse  
backgrounds – 9 percentage points  
higher than the population

# UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITIES: PERCEPTIONS OF TENNIS IN ETHNICALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

**Despite people from ethnically diverse communities making up 27% of annual adult players, representation gaps remain across tennis.**

We commissioned Leeds Beckett University to talk directly to more people from ethnically diverse communities, around the country and in different types of venue, to understand how people from those communities perceive tennis, to explore the barriers they face and identify opportunities to do better at making tennis and padel truly a place where people from those communities feel like they belong.



## WHAT PEOPLE TOLD US:

1

Entry point in schools often disconnected from other venues like clubs and parks

2

Clubs perceived as not welcoming and lack of proactive outreach to communities

3

Greater understanding of the needs of more ethnically diverse communities needed

4

Tennis and padel viewed as “not for us” by some ethnically diverse communities

5

Underrepresentation of ethnically diverse coaches means lack of relatable and trusted role models

6

Lack of affordable facilities and equipment can be major barrier for some

# UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITIES:

## BLACK GIRLS AND SPORT - A BREAKUP STORY



Where different under-represented characteristics overlap is often where we see some of the greatest inequities in participation and engagement in sport. Despite having some of the most positive initial attitudes toward sport, Black girls remain the least active group in the UK.

We supported research led by Women in Sport, investing alongside other national governing bodies, to understand better the relationship:

**68%** of Black girls say sport is very important to keep their body fit and healthy, more than 49% of White British, 48% of Mixed and 50% of Asian girls

**60%** dream of becoming a top athlete or sports person, more than 47% of Mixed, 43% of Asian and 33% of White British girls

**BUT...**

**37%** of Black girls meet the Chief Medical Officer's guidelines for physical activity, less than 40% of Asian, 45% of Mixed and 46% of White British girls



## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE RESEARCH INCLUDE:

- 1** Acknowledge the inequality and inspire your people to understand and respect Black girls' unique needs.
- 2** Embed and enforce anti-racism and anti-misogyny policies and educate your workforce to be aware of gender and racial stereotyping and typecasting.
- 3** Value the Black women already in your sport, through proactive support and developing trust, and improve representation.
- 4** Review your provision and talent pathways with Black girls in mind - offer exciting recreational opportunities and more flexible talent pathways.



“

I've been involved in tennis my whole life - playing, coaching, and everything in between. Tennis has been a powerful force in my life, but I also know what it feels like to feel isolated within it. This research highlights the barriers Black girls face and gives us a chance to do better.

**Yasmin Clarke,**  
Former Elite Tennis Player,  
LTA Board Member and  
Councillor, and Level 5  
Master Tennis Coach

# STILL FURTHER TO GO

Our research, data, and conversations with ethnically diverse communities show that while progress has been made, more work is needed to change both perceptions and realities in tennis and padel.

We recognise that some challenges are unique to specific ethnic groups, but many barriers are shared and intersect with other under-represented communities - particularly women and girls, and under-served communities, linking with our [She Rallies](#) and [Breaking Down Barriers](#) plans.

To improve experiences and representation for ethnically diverse communities, we must address three key issues:

**1 CULTURE**  
“It should look and feel like a sport for me.”

**2 COMMUNITIES**  
“You need to listen to and understand my community and provide real opportunities to play and develop.”

**3 WORKFORCE**  
“There needs to be more, and more visible, role models from our communities in tennis and padel.”

This very much fits with the three key themes identified in our over-arching [EDI Plan](#):



# WHERE THE PLAN FITS

VISION	TENNIS OPENED UP				
MISSION	TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES THROUGH TENNIS				
INCLUSION AMBITION	Everyone in our sport understands that inclusion is central to our Vision and they confidently choose to be inclusive every day		People playing, working and volunteering in, and watching our sport will reflect the diversity of our communities <b>and feel a sense of belonging</b>		
CROSS CUTTING THEMES	Enabling a <b>culture</b> of everyday inclusion and belonging		Understanding and connecting <b>communities</b> to tennis and padel	Driving a more diverse and inclusive <b>workforce</b>	
COMMUNITY PLANS					
VALUES	 EXCELLENCE	 PASSION	 INCLUSION	 INTEGRITY	 TEAMWORK



# CULTURE

# CULTURE

## IMPROVING THE VISIBILITY OF ETHNICALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE SPORT

- Work with key external partners, elite players, and community influencers to bring tennis and padel into communities authentically, championing role models and celebrating moments of cultural and community significance that inspire engagement.
- Grow the visibility and impact of the LTA Tennis Foundation's investment in ethnically diverse communities across tennis and padel, showcasing positive outcomes and creating opportunities to attract further investment.

## CREATING SAFE, WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE SPACES IN TENNIS AND PADEL

- Continue to create safe, welcoming, and inclusive spaces across tennis and padel by embedding inclusion as a core standard, supported through training, resources, and a network of lead inclusion venues that actively champion engagement with ethnically diverse communities.
- Ensure major tennis and padel events deliver fan experiences which foster a sense of belonging and celebrate the diversity of the communities in which they take place.

## EMPOWERING LEADERS TO BE MORE INCLUSIVE

- Equip leaders across tennis and padel with the skills, tools, and cultural competence to build authentic, anti-racist, and community-rooted relationships with ethnically diverse groups to strengthen representation, understanding, and inclusive decision-making.
- Continue to embed a culture of zero tolerance for racism or religion based abuse, for example Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, ensuring appropriate mechanisms and policies for handling of complaints are in place across the sport.

“

It should look and feel like a sport for me.

# ENABLING A CULTURE OF EVERYDAY INCLUSION AND BELONGING

## SPOTLIGHT: BELIEF AND BELONGING IN TENNIS - MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

As part of our ongoing commitment to enabling a culture of inclusion and belonging across tennis and padel, we have been deepening our engagement with diverse communities of faith.

In 2025, we worked with local Muslim communities to host two Ramadan Iftar events, one at the National Tennis Centre and another at the Lexus Nottingham Tennis Centre.

These events were designed not only to celebrate the spiritual and cultural significance of Ramadan, but also to create space for meaningful connection between the sport and Muslim players, coaches, families, and community leaders. The Iftars brought together a diverse group of attendees, including local community representatives, tennis volunteers, and senior leaders from across the organisation. Together, we shared food, stories, and reflections on how tennis and padel can better support Muslim participation and visibility, both during Ramadan and throughout the year.





The events also served as a platform to listen and learn. We heard powerful insights about the barriers Muslim players may face, from scheduling conflicts with prayer and fasting to the need for culturally sensitive environments in training and competition. These conversations are now informing our wider approach, including the development of faith-aware guidance for coaches and the exploration of more inclusive calendar planning.

Following these events, our LTA SERVES programme has launched the 'Active Breaks' project – expanding on the work we already do to bring the SERVES programme into faith centres, such as mosques, with a series of quick and fun games which can be used to provide an 'active break' during religious learning.

“

The LTA's commitment to inclusion through genuine partnership is exactly what our communities need to see. By listening, learning and creating faith aware spaces, tennis can become a sport that truly reflects the diversity and values of modern Britain. The Muslim Sports Foundation is proud to support this journey, one that places belonging and understanding at the heart of participation.

**Sajid Hassian**, CEO of Muslim Sports Foundation





# COMMUNITIES

# COMMUNITIES

“”

You need to listen to and understand my community and provide real opportunities to play and develop.

## UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITIES

- Deepen understanding of and engagement with ethnically diverse communities by creating and maintaining safe spaces for sharing lived experiences and working with community and research partners to ensure actions are insight-led and drive meaningful change.
- Enhance data collection on ethnicity, faith, and other intersecting characteristics to gain deeper insights into our reach, impact, and areas of under-representation.

## CONNECTING COMMUNITIES TO OPPORTUNITIES TO PLAY

- Use community-focused research — such as “Black Girls and Sport” and “Perceptions of Tennis in Ethnically Diverse Communities” — to ensure core programmes like LTA Youth Schools and the LTA Youth Starter Offer are designed with the views and needs of ethnically diverse communities.
- Continue to expand the reach of the LTA SERVES programme in areas of high ethnic diversity and build long-term partnerships with community and faith-based organisations to create inclusive, welcoming places to play for all.

## ENABLING BELONGING AT EVERY STAGE

- Continue to build on our significant investment in park facilities, where there is a more ethnically diverse player base, and strengthen their connection with less frequent play settings — such as our SERVES venues — to ensure consistent, accessible, and sustainable opportunities to play.
- Ensure the player development culture across tennis and padel is inclusive and culturally competent, to enable players from ethnically diverse backgrounds to reach their full potential, and ensure our work to open up the Performance Pathway to those from lower socio-economic backgrounds specifically targets the intersection with more ethnically diverse communities.



# UNDERSTANDING AND CONNECTING COMMUNITIES IN TENNIS

## SPOTLIGHT: BACK IT

Building genuine relationships with our stakeholders and the communities they serve is at the heart of our approach to inclusion. Jabilayh “Bee” Asante, co-founder of Black Tennis Mentors, launched ‘Back It’ – a mobile tennis pop-up designed to connect with Black communities in London by bringing the game directly into local spaces and creating opportunities for dialogue, play, and shared lived experience.

The initiative was born from a desire to understand better the lived realities of Black communities and to co-create tennis experiences that feel relevant, welcoming, and rooted in community identity. By setting up in familiar, accessible locations, Back It has helped the group to listen more deeply to what matters to Black tennis communities, and how tennis can play a role in strengthening community cohesion.

Each pop-up has been more than just a one-off event. It's been a space for friendship, cultural celebration, and honest conversations about representation, access, and trust in tennis. They have heard directly from new and returning players about the barriers they face and the opportunities they see — insights that are now shaping how the LTA designs programmes, partnerships, and pathways for ethnically diverse communities.

Back It is a reminder that connection starts with presence — showing up, listening, and being open to learning from their local audience. As we continue to grow this work, we are committed to embedding community voices at every stage, and a good example is the formation of the Black Tennis Collective, which the team from Black Tennis Mentors sit on.



“

Our pop-up tennis events are about creating spaces where the Black community can truly belong. Places that feel welcoming, inclusive, and celebrate our culture. We want tennis to reflect who we are and make everyone feel at home on the court.

Jabilayh Asante, Co-founder of Black Tennis Mentors



**WORKFORCE**

# WORKFORCE

“

There needs to be more, and more visible, role models from our communities in tennis and padel.

## CLOSING THE WORKFORCE REPRESENTATION GAP

- Use our targeted grant-giving schemes, through our workforce development centres, to grow the number of, and provide more support for, new coaches and officials from ethnically diverse communities, as well as exploring opportunities for community-based course delivery.
- Enable more inclusive attraction and recruitment practices across the sport by reviewing and addressing potential barriers for ethnically diverse candidates. This will involve working with community groups and using improved data to target recruitment efforts at specific under-represented communities across all workforce roles.

## ENABLING OUR WORKFORCE TO BE MORE INCLUSIVE

- Strengthen our EDI training framework for coaches, officials and volunteers by integrating co-developed anti-racism and interfaith modules, in partnership with leading organisations, to ensure the delivery of impactful, high-quality learning experiences and resources.
- Continually create opportunities for LTA colleagues, the Board, and Council to understand the lived experience of those from ethnically diverse communities, in their own words, to increase empathy, challenge bias, and build trust. Additionally, work with relevant partners to make anti-racism and cultural competence central to the customer service ethos at all our Major Events, raising standards to enhance the experience for all ethnically diverse fans.

## SUPPORTING OUR WORKFORCE TO DEVELOP

- Provide opportunities for aspiring coaches from under-represented backgrounds to gain exposure to performance environments and systems, in order to build confidence, understanding and experience of, and hence improve access to work in, the Performance Pathway.
- Increase ethnic diversity in coaching, officiating, and leadership across tennis and padel by expanding the reach of the Black and Asian Coaches Network, developing diverse tutors and mentors through targeted recruitment, and providing tailored support for ethnically diverse individuals at all levels of the sport.

# DEVELOPING A DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE

## SPOTLIGHT: BLACK AND ASIAN COACHES NETWORK

Representation in coaching matters — not just for equity and opportunity, but for inspiration. When players see coaches who reflect their own backgrounds and lived experiences, it sends a powerful message: “I can belong here”. In 2025, we took a meaningful step toward building a more inclusive and diverse coaching workforce by launching the Black and Asian Coaches Network.

This network is a space to enable a community of support, visibility, and shared purpose. It was created to ensure that coaches from Black and Asian backgrounds, who are currently under-represented, feel empowered to bring their full selves into the sport, and to thrive in environments that are safe, welcoming, and inclusive.



While increasing representation is a key goal, the network is also about impact. It is about inspiring future generations to engage with tennis and padel — whether as players, coaches, or leaders — because they see people who look like them succeeding and shaping the game.

Through future regular engagement, mentoring opportunities, and tailored development support, the network will be aiming to help coaches build confidence, share experiences, and access the tools they need to progress. It's also providing valuable insight into the systemic challenges that exist — and informing how we evolve our coaching structures, recruitment practices, and leadership pipelines.

The Black and Asian Coaches Network is a vital part of our broader EDI Plan, and it reflects our belief that diversity in coaching enriches the sport for everyone.

“

It is fantastic to see the LTA's Connecting Communities plan and ambition to build on existing work and address the issues of workforce, culture and community. They are meaningful steps that will help to create an environment where ethnically diverse communities can feel they can participate, progress, and lead.

**Nik Trivedi**, Interim CEO of Sporting Equals

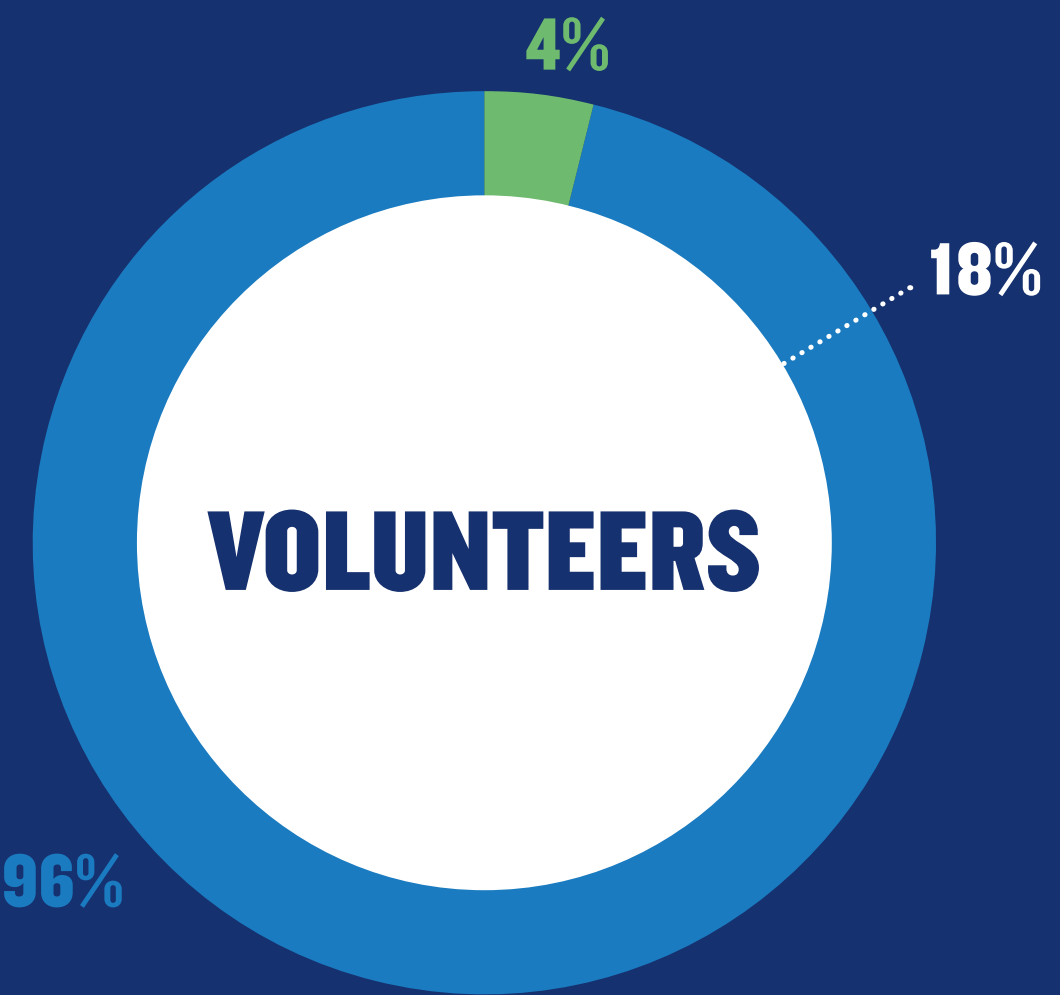
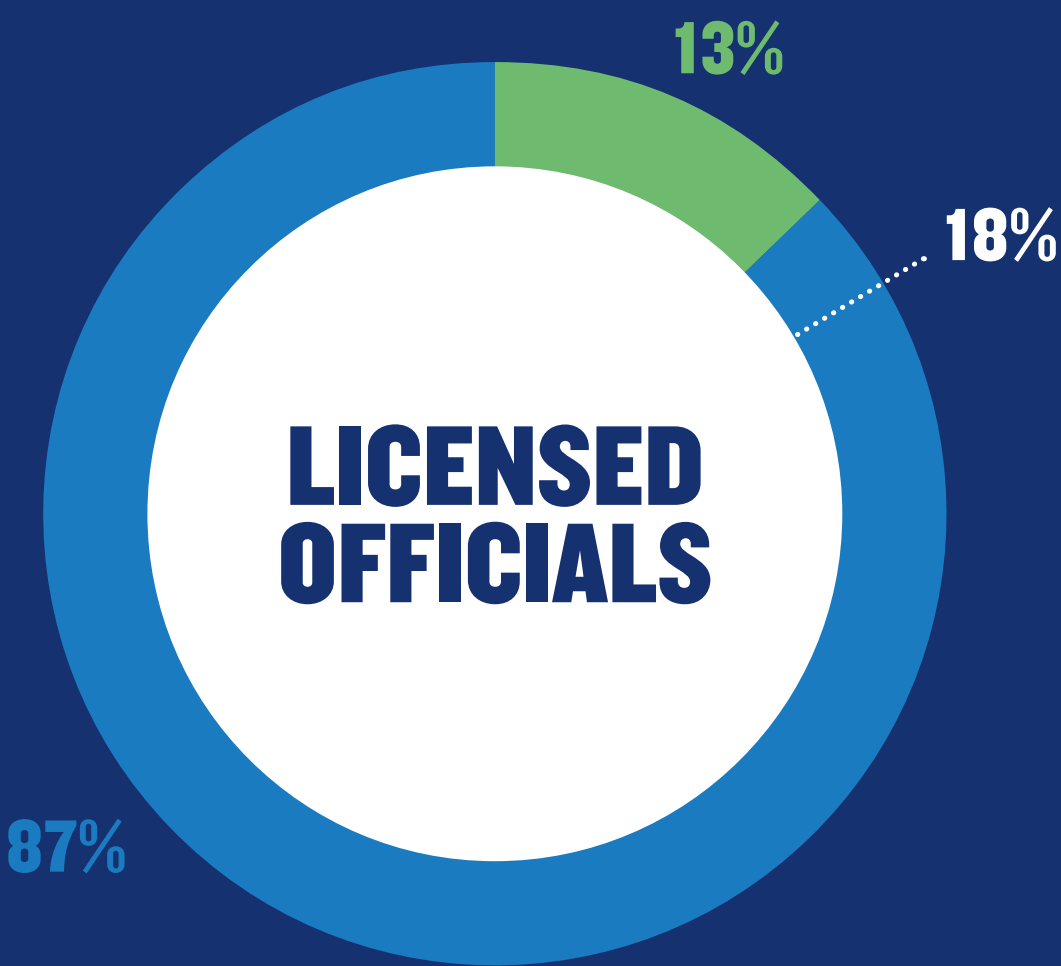
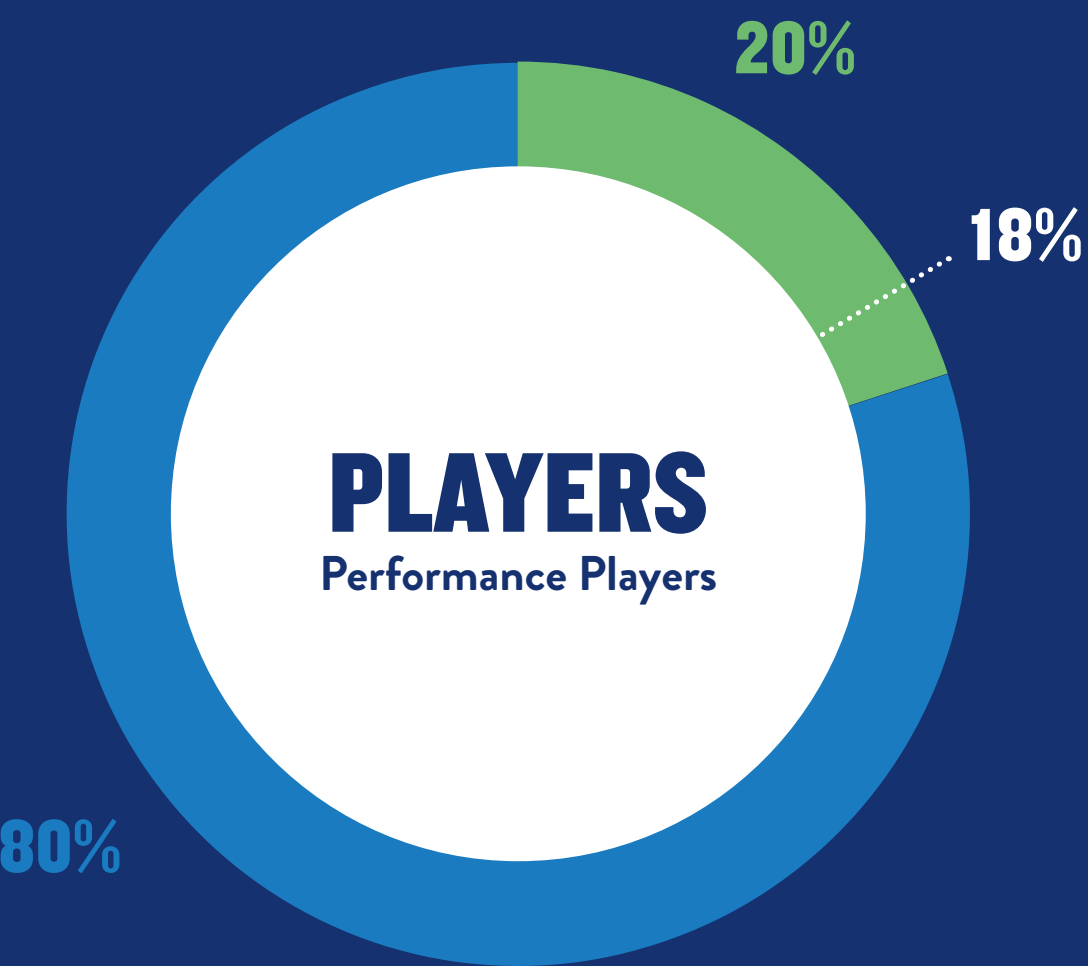
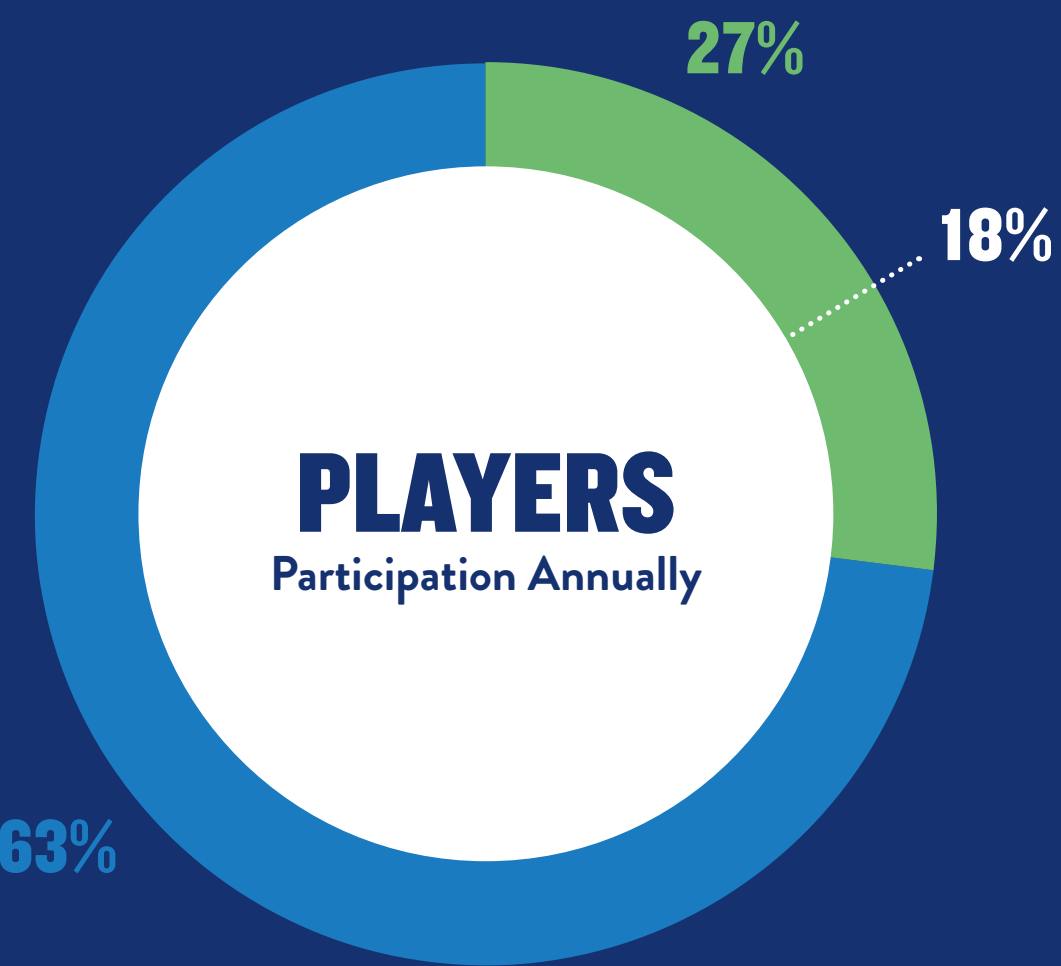
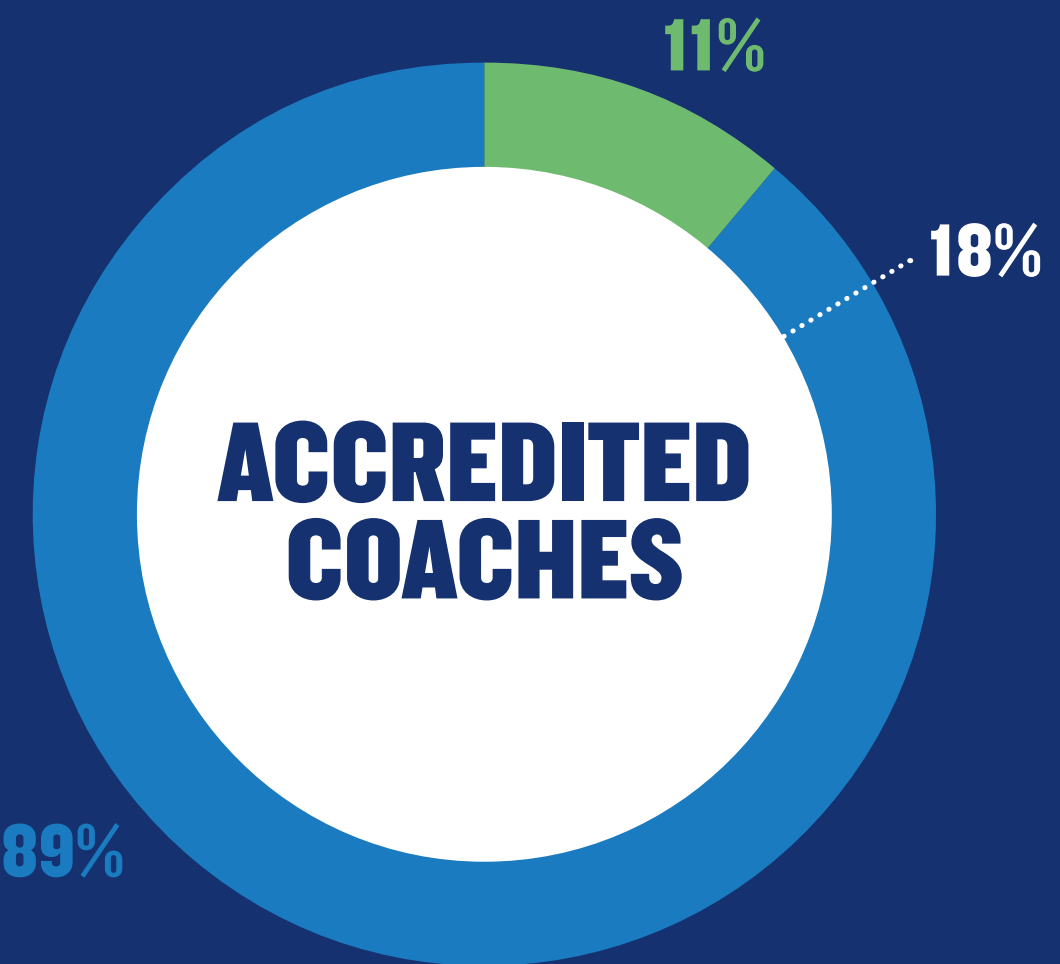
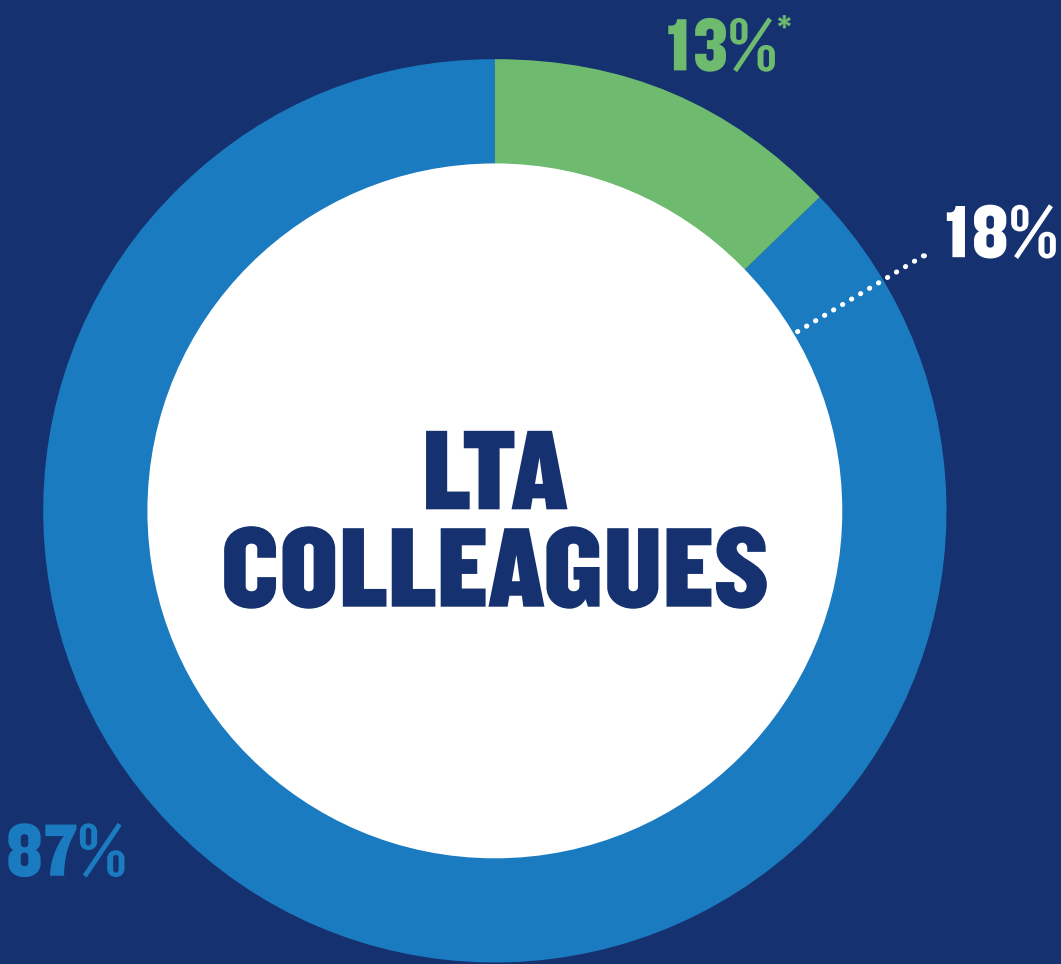


# MEASURES OF SUCCESS

By 2029, we will measure and improve the sense of inclusion and belonging among ethnically diverse communities, using a baseline metric established in 2026 to measure progress.

We will also improve representation in workforce areas where ethnically diverse communities remain particularly under-represented. And while we are achieving success with players—both in recreational and performance tennis—at levels above the national population proportion, our commitment is to continue improving and maintaining these levels year on year.

Voluntary data capture around diversity characteristics can mean that some people do not share their race or ethnicity with us. We continue to work to improve the quality of all of our data in this area.



Population Level ..... Ethnically diverse  White  \*Based on current management information

