

BRITISH – OPEN – WHEELCHAIR TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS



OFFICIAL PROGRAMME

12-17 JULY 2022



We're delighted to welcome you to the LTA's British Open Wheelchair Tennis Championships in Nottingham for what promises to be another memorable tournament.

After the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, it's brilliant to welcome full capacity crowds back to our LTA major events this summer, with excitement in our sport growing after a year of success for our elite players.

With that in mind it is the LTA's pleasure to offer free admission for everybody to the British Open and we hope to see many of you take advantage and come along to cheer on the cream of wheelchair tennis.

Our five-year mission to promote our 'tennis opened up' agenda has made progress on so many levels, with our drive to ensure tennis is relevant and accessible to all enhanced by the success enjoyed by our elite players in the last year.



Emma Raducanu's inspiring win at the US Open last September captured the imagination of the nation, with the continued success for Joe Salisbury, Britain's ATP world No.1 doubles player, and Alfie Hewett, Wimbledon finalist and recent ITF men's wheelchair world No.1, together with his doubles partner Gordon Reid, adding to the momentum.

This was also a year that saw British No.1 Cameron Norrie break into the world's top 10 for the first time and in addition, we had seven players in the top 200 of the ATP rankings only a few weeks ago, highlighting the growing strength in depth of our game.

Continued success for players at all levels has ensured the profile of the British game remains at an encouraging high. This period of the season allows us to highlight the positivity around tennis in Britain and, for this week, the focus will be firmly on some of the world's best wheelchair tennis stars.

We are all looking forward to witnessing some top-class action in Nottingham and we hope those fortunate enough to attend the tournament will leave with nothing but fond memories.

Scott Lloyd
CEO, LTA

For everyone at UNIQLO it is truly an honour to partner with the International Tennis Federation (ITF), an association that first began in 2014, which we are as proud as ever to continue. While 2021 was another challenging year for live sporting events, we are grateful for the opportunity to continue working with the ITF to support wheelchair tennis. And we are delighted to have recently renewed our partnership with the ITF, until the end of 2024.

In 2022, UNIQLO is once again the proud title sponsor of the UNIQLO Wheelchair Tennis Tour, a tournament that showcases the best of the sport in 40 countries over 160 tournaments, including all four world Grand Slam events. In addition, we sponsor the ITF Wheelchair Tennis Rankings.

Last year was a great year for UNIQLO on the court. Shingo Kunieda, our first Global Brand Ambassador, made history again, winning gold at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games in the men's singles and the men's wheelchair singles title at the US Open. His US Open win marked a historic 25th singles Grand Slam, for a



career total of 29 men's singles titles, including titles won in the pre-Grand Slam era. Gordon Reid, another of our Global Brand Ambassadors, also had an extraordinary year. He was a singles division finalist at Wimbledon and won bronze (men's singles) and silver (men's doubles) medals at the Tokyo Paralympic Games. Furthermore, together with his doubles partner, Alfie Hewett, won all four Grand Slam men's doubles titles – the first time this has been done in the history of wheelchair tennis. Shingo and Gordon personify the values important to UNIQLO, and I wish to congratulate them both on their tremendous achievements.

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to make everyone's life better, it is simple, high-quality, everyday apparel with a practical sense of beauty and ingenious in detail. LifeWear is always evolving, thought through with all life's needs in mind, to be clothing our customers will love and use for a long time. UNIQLO's aim is to make the world a better place by offering LifeWear to, and engaging with, local communities. Our close association with the ITF and wheelchair tennis brings that vision closer to reality.

On behalf of everyone at UNIQLO, I would like to express our heartfelt thanks to the players and the organizers for their exceptional efforts to keep the sport strong during these times. Recent challenges remind us of the universal value of sport in our daily lives. We wish you all the very best for the UNIQLO Wheelchair Tennis Tour in 2022.

Tadashi Yanai

Tadashi Yanai
Chairman, President & CEO
Fast Retailing, Co., Ltd.

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The official publication has been produced on behalf of the LTA by **Ignition Sports Media**
DESIGN: Alex Guildford and James Ginieres **PRINT:** S&G Print Group

BRITISH – OPEN – WHEELCHAIR TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS

LIVE SCORES & ORDER OF PLAY

Find out the day's order of play at the British Open Nottingham as well as all the latest scores and the singles and doubles draws for the WTA and ATP events on the LTA website: **Match Centre ([lta.org.uk](https://www.lta.org.uk))**

PLAYER ENTRY LIST

Find out which players are entered for the Rothesay Open Nottingham: Player entry list: **Wheelchair Tennis Championships ([lta.org.uk](https://www.lta.org.uk))**

EVENT INFO

Got a question? Check out our 'On the Day' section for key information on everything from courtside etiquette to first aid, and sustainability to the grounds re-entry process: **On the day ([lta.org.uk](https://www.lta.org.uk))**

GET SOCIAL

Keep across the latest news, results, highlights and behind-the-scenes features from your favourite summer grass court events by following the LTA on **Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube** and **TikTok**





SITE MAP

- A Entrance Tent
- B Tournament Office /
Players Lounge
- C Tennis Centre
- D Public Catering
- E Disabled Toilets
- F Toilets

Key

- Centre Court
- Match / Practice Courts
- School Festival
- Grass Courts
- Public Access Route to Courts
- Tree

BRITISH
- OPEN -
 WHEELCHAIR TENNIS
 CHAMPIONSHIPS

UNIQLO GLOBAL BRAND AMBASSADORS

Constantly challenging and striving to become the best in the world. Seeing opportunity in adversity. Always moving forward, equipped with integrity and a strong respect for others. UNIQLO partners with exceptional individuals who share our values and social commitments.

They are the ambassadors of UNIQLO's LifeWear philosophy, and their outstanding performance inspires us to create new clothing for active, healthy lifestyles. We support their efforts to foster the next generation of leaders.

To inspire and enrich the lives of all people, all around the world. This is our shared goal.



ROGER FEDERER

Tennis legend. 20 time Grand Slam winner with 8 Wimbledon titles. Ranked No. 1 in the world for the longest streak ever. One of the more beloved and influential players of all time.



KEI NISHIKORI

Historymaker and the pride of his homeland. First Japanese player to make the finals at the US Open, enter the top 4 in world rankings, and win an Olympic medal in '96 years.



SHINGO KUNIEDA

One of the world's leading wheelchair tennis players. Won the first wheelchair tennis Grand Slam. Three Paralympics Gold medals, 24 Singles, and 21 Doubles titles.



GORDON REID

World-ranked wheelchair tennis player. At 15, became the youngest wheelchair tennis champ in the UK. Two-time Singles and 16-time Doubles Grand Slam Champion. Paralympic Gold medalist.



AYUMU HIRANO

Snowboard star. At 15, became the youngest Japanese medalist ever at the Winter Olympics. Two-time Silver medalist. Dual talent adding skateboarder to his resume.



ADAM SCOTT

World-class golfer with 14 PGA Tour wins. First Australian to take the Masters Tournament, right after becoming a Uniqlo Global Brand Ambassador. Former No. 1 world-ranked player.

AN INTRO TO WHEELCHAIR TENNIS

If you've not seen wheelchair tennis before, we've put together a beginner's guide to the sport so you can impress your friends with expert knowledge...

When did the sport begin?

Wheelchair tennis originated in 1976 in the USA, where it was developed and promoted by American players Brad Parks and Jeff Minnenbraker.

Since then, it has grown to be played on every continent (other than Antarctica) with the ITF's UNIQLO Wheelchair Tennis Tour now featuring over 160 tournaments in more than 40 countries!

It is now an established Paralympic sport too, with Gordon Reid having won the men's singles gold medal for Great Britain at Rio 2016, and Peter Norfolk having claimed gold medals in the quad singles at both Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008.

This summer the wheelchair tennis grass court season was taken to new levels with a full series of international ranking tournaments staged as part of the LTA's major events at the cinch Championships at The Queen's Club (men), Rothesay International Eastbourne (women) and Rothesay Classic Birmingham (quads).

Are the rules the same?

Almost, but not quite! The one major difference is that a wheelchair tennis player is allowed up to two bounces of the ball before returning it. However, it is only the first bounce that is required to be in the court of play.

What equipment do players use?

Players use specially designed tennis wheelchairs, with two larger cambered wheels for stability and manoeuvrability, and two small castor wheels at the front and one 'anti-tip' castor wheel to the rear.

How many different competitions are there?

There are three different competitions in wheelchair tennis, with players competing in one of the men's, women's or quad events. The men's and women's division athletes have disabilities in their lower limbs only and are classified by gender. Quad division athletes have upper and lower limb disabilities and are classified based on disability, not gender.

An ITF Futures tournament will also be held as part of the British Open, featuring players hoping to kick start their international career by earning world ranking points, as well as a junior tournament.

I've heard it is a great sport to watch, is that right?

The skill level of the top players in the game is phenomenal, with their movement and positioning around the court coupled with brilliant racket skills often leading to some incredible rallies.

Great Britain is quite good at wheelchair tennis, isn't it?

Great Britain is one of the leading nations in the world for wheelchair tennis!

Seven Brits will contest the 2022 British Open Wheelchair Tennis Championships with Alfie Hewett, Gordon Reid and Dermot Bailey competing in the men's main draw; Lucy Shuker and Cornelia Oosthuizen in the women's main draw and Andy Lapthorne and Anthony Cotterill in the quad main draw.

How can I watch it?

If you are here at the British Open for only one or two days to watch the action in person, you can still see the rest of the tournament with live streaming online – so don't forget to smile when sat in the crowd in case you are on TV!

How can I give it a go?

The LTA's Open Court disability tennis programme supports grassroots wheelchair tennis sessions across the country, as well as a series of regional and national competitions. It doesn't matter if you don't have your own wheelchair tennis chair – many LTA registered tennis venues have their own stock of tennis wheelchairs that new players can use to give the sport a try.

Find out more about wheelchair tennis at www.lta.org.uk/play/inclusion-disability/wheelchair-tennis/



Top: Anthony Cotterill will be competing in the British Open quads.

Britain's Cornelia Oosthuizen in action at the 2021 British Open. Getty Images.

ROLL OF HONOUR

– WOMEN –

YEAR	WOMEN'S SINGLES	WOMEN'S DOUBLES
2021	DIEDE DE GROOT (NED)	DIEDE DE GROOT & ANIEK VAN KOOT (NED)
2020	CANCELLED DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC	
2019	DIEDE DE GROOT (NED)	DIEDE DE GROOT & ANIEK VAN KOOT (NED)
2018	DIEDE DE GROOT (NED)	DIEDE DE GROOT (NED) & YUI KAMIJI (JPN)
2017	YUI KAMIJI (JPN)	MARJOLEIN BUIS & DIEDE DE GROOT (NED)
2016	JORDANNE WHILEY (GBR)	JISKE GRIFFIOEN & ANIEK VAN KOOT (NED)
2015	JORDANNE WHILEY (GBR)	JISKE GRIFFIOEN & ANIEK VAN KOOT (NED)
2014	YUI KAMIJI (JPN)	YUI KAMIJI (JPN) & ANIEK VAN KOOT (NED)
2013	SABINE ELLERBROCK (GER)	JISKE GRIFFIOEN & ANIEK VAN KOOT (NED)
2012	ESTHER VERGEER (NED)	JISKE GRIFFIOEN & ANIEK VAN KOOT (NED)
2011	ESTHER VERGEER (NED)	JISKE GRIFFIOEN & ANIEK VAN KOOT (NED)
2010	ESTHER VERGEER (NED)	ANNICK SEVENANS (BEL) & ANIEK VAN KOOT (NED)
2009	ESTHER VERGEER (NED)	KORIE HOMAN & ESTHER VERGEER (NED)
2008	ESTHER VERGEER (NED)	JISKE GRIFFIOEN & ESTHER VERGEER (NED)
2007	ESTHER VERGEER (NED)	JISKE GRIFFIOEN & ESTHER VERGEER (NED)
2006	ESTHER VERGEER (NED)	JISKE GRIFFIOEN & ESTHER VERGEER (NED)
2005	ESTHER VERGEER (NED)	FLORENCE ALIX-GRAVELLIER (FRA) & MAAIKE SMIT (NED)
2004	ESTHER VERGEER (NED)	MAAIKE SMIT & ESTHER VERGEER (NED)
2003	ESTHER VERGEER (NED)	DANIELA DI TORO & SONJA PETERS (NED)
2002	ESTHER VERGEER (NED)	MAAIKE SMIT & ESTHER VERGEER (NED)
2001	ESTHER VERGEER (NED)	SONJA PETERS & ESTHER VERGEER (NED)
2000	SONJA PETERS (NED)	DANIELA DI TORO (AUS) & MAAIKE SMIT (NED)
1999	DANIELA DI TORO (AUS)	SONJA PETERS & ESTHER VERGEER (NED)
1998	DANIELA DI TORO (AUS)	SONJA PETERS & ESTHER VERGEER (NED)
1997	CHANTAL VANDIERENDONCK (NED)	MONIQUE KALKMAN & ESTHER VERGEER (NED)
1996	MONIQUE KALKMAN (NED)	DANIELA DI TORO (AUS) & CHANTAL VANDIERENDONCK (NED)
1995	MONIQUE KALKMAN (NED)	NANCY OLSON (USA) & MONIQUE KALKMAN (NED)
1994	DANIELA DI TORO (AUS)	DANIELA DI TORO (AUS) & MAAIKE SMIT (NED)
1993	MONIQUE VAN DEN BOSCH (NED)	
1992	MONIQUE VAN DEN BOSCH (NED)	
1991	MONIQUE VAN DEN BOSCH (NED)	
1990	JANET MCMORRAN (GBR)	

ROLL OF HONOUR

– MEN –

YEAR	MEN'S SINGLES	MEN'S DOUBLES
2021	ALFIE HEWETT (GBR)	ALFIE HEWETT & GORDON REID (GBR)
2020	CANCELLED DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC	
2019	SHINGO KUNIEDA (JPN)	GUSTAVO FERNANDEZ (ARG) & SHINGO KUNIEDA (JPN)
2018	SHINGO KUNIEDA (JPN)	JOACHIM GERARD (BEL) & STEFAN OLSSON (SWE)
2017	GUSTAVO FERNANDEZ (ARG)	STEPHANE HOUDET & NICOLAS PEIFER (FRA)
2016	STEPHANE HOUDET (FRA)	STEPHANE HOUDET & NICOLAS PEIFER (FRA)
2015	STEPHANE HOUDET (FRA)	ALFIE HEWETT & GORDON REID (GBR)
2014	SHINGO KUNIEDA (JPN)	JOACHIM GERARD (BEL) & MAIKEL SCHEFFERS (NED)
2013	JOACHIM GERARD (BEL)	STEPHANE HOUDET (FRA) & RONALD VINK (NED)
2012	SHINGO KUNIEDA (JPN)	STEPHANE HOUDET & MICHAEL JEREMIASZ (FRA)
2011	MAIKEL SCHEFFERS (NED)	MAIKEL SCHEFFERS & RONALD VINK (NED)
2010	MAIKEL SCHEFFERS (NED)	STEPHANE HOUDET (FRA) & SATOSHI SAIDA (JPN)
2009	SHINGO KUNIEDA (JPN)	STEPHANE HOUDET & MICHAEL JEREMIASZ (FRA)
2008	SHINGO KUNIEDA (JPN)	STEPHANE HOUDET & MICHAEL JEREMIASZ (FRA)
2007	SHINGO KUNIEDA (JPN)	SHINGO KUNIEDA & SATOSHI SAIDA (JPN)
2006	ROBIN AMMERLAAN (NED)	MICHAEL JEREMIASZ (FRA) & MARTIN LEGNER (AUT)
2005	DAVID HALL (AUS)	DAVID HALL (AUS) & MICHAEL JEREMIASZ (FRA)
2004	DAVID HALL (AUS)	MICHAEL JEREMIASZ (FRA) & MARTIN LEGNER (AUT)
2003	ROBIN AMMERLAAN (NED)	DAVID HALL (AUS) & MICHAEL JEREMIASZ (FRA)
2002	DAVID HALL (AUS)	ROBIN AMMERLAAN (NED) & JAYANT MISTRY (GBR)
2001	DAVID HALL (AUS)	ROBIN AMMERLAAN (NED) & JAYANT MISTRY (GBR)
2000	RICKY MOLIER (NED)	DAVID HALL & DAVID JOHNSON (AUS)
1999	DAVID HALL (AUS)	KAI SCHRAMEYER (GER) & MARTIN LEGNER (USA)
1998	DAVID HALL (AUS)	DAVID HALL & DAVID JOHNSON (AUS)
1997	RICKY MOLIER (NED)	SCOTT DOUGLAS & STEPHEN WELCH (USA)
1996	LAURENT GIAMMARTINI (FRA)	SCOTT DOUGLAS (USA) & MARTIN LEGNER (AUT)
1995	DAVID HALL (AUS)	MICK CONNELL & DAVID HALL (AUS)
1994	LAURENT GIAMMARTINI (FRA)	MICK CONNELL & DAVID HALL (AUS)
1993	KAI SCHRAMEYER (GER)	
1992	CHIP TURNER (USA)	
1991	CHIP TURNER (USA)	
1990	THIERRY CAILLIER (FRA)	

A vibrant, high-angle photograph of four children and a dog playing in a sprinkler. The children, two girls and two boys, are running and laughing as water sprays around them. A fluffy, light-brown dog is also running happily in the grass. The background is a lush green lawn with tall grass and a dense line of trees. The overall mood is joyful and carefree.

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ROLL OF HONOUR

- QUADS -

YEAR	QUAD'S SINGLES	QUAD'S DOUBLES
2021	SAM SCHRODER (NED)	SAM SCHRODER & NIELS VINK (NED)
2020	CANCELLED DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC	
2019	NIELS VINK (NED)	LUCAS SITHOLE (RSA) & NIELS VINK (NED)
2018	DAVID WAGNER (USA)	BRYAN BARTEN & DAVID WAGNER (USA)
2017	DAVID WAGNER (USA)	BRYAN BARTEN & DAVID WAGNER (USA)
2016	DYLAN ALCOTT (AUS)	BRYAN BARTEN & DAVID WAGNER (USA)
2015	LUCAS SITHOLE (RSA)	NICK TAYLOR & DAVID WAGNER (USA)
2014	DYLAN ALCOTT (AUS)	JAMIE BURDEKIN (GBR) & DAVID WAGNER (USA)
2013	LUCAS SITHOLE (RSA)	DAVID WAGNER (USA) & SARAH HUNTER (CAN)
2012	NOAM GERSHONY (ISR)	NOAM GERSHONY & SHRAGA WEINBERG (ISR)
2011	PETER NORFOLK (GBR)	NICK TAYLOR (USA) & DAVID WAGNER (USA)
2010	JOHAN ANDERSSON (SWE)	JOHAN ANDERSSON (SWE) & ANDY LAPTHORNE (GBR)
2009	DAVID WAGNER (USA)	NICK TAYLOR & DAVID WAGNER (USA)
2008	PETER NORFOLK (GBR)	NICK TAYLOR & DAVID WAGNER (USA)
2007	DAVID WAGNER (USA)	NICK TAYLOR & DAVID WAGNER (USA)
2006	PETER NORFOLK (GBR)	NICK TAYLOR & DAVID WAGNER (USA)
2005	PETER NORFOLK (GBR)	IDO FRIEDMAN & SHRAGA WEINBERG (ISR)
2004	BAS VAN ERP (NED)	NICK TAYLOR & DAVID WAGNER (USA)
2003	PETER NORFOLK (GBR)	NICK TAYLOR & DAVID WAGNER (USA)
2002	NOBUHIRO TACHIBANA (JPN)	RICK DRANEY & DAVID WAGNER (USA)
2001	SHRAGA WEINBERG (ISR)	RICK DRANEY & NICK TAYLOR (USA)
2000	RICK DRANEY (USA)	NICK TAYLOR & KEVIN WHALEN (USA)
1999	RICK DRANEY (USA)	RICK DRANEY & CHRIS STUDWELL (USA)
1998	RICK DRANEY (USA)	MARK ECCLESTON & ROY HUMPHREYS (GBR)
1997	RICK DRANEY (USA)	RICK DRANEY & BRENT POPPEN (USA)

BY MARSHALL THOMAS

ANDY LAPTHORNE LEADING THE WAY

Quads ready to make their mark in Nottingham



The advent of quad singles and doubles wheelchair tennis events at the Rothesay Classic Birmingham was the latest in a long-line of ‘firsts’ for the quad division in recent years – breakthroughs that Britain’s two-time US Open singles champion and two-time Wimbledon doubles champion Andy Lapthorne has long been involved in campaigning for when it comes to inclusion and equality.

A landmark summer for wheelchair tennis has included three world ranking events being held for the first time alongside three of the LTA’s summer grass court tournaments, with the cinch Championships at The Queen’s Club hosting a men’s wheelchair event for the fourth year, the Rothesay International Eastbourne hosting a women’s wheelchair event for the first time and the Rothesay Classic Birmingham hosting the first grass court ranking event for quad players outside of Wimbledon. Lapthorne was the inaugural quad singles champion in Birmingham and now arrives in Nottingham looking for a first British Open singles title.

“I’ve had a lot of wins on the court and they’re obviously really important, but some of the wins off the court have been more important in terms of playing at Wimbledon and now the change at Roland Garros, where we had an eight draw for the first time this year,” says Lapthorne, who started 2022 by claiming his 15th Grand Slam title.

“Unfortunately, they went to a 12 (draw) for men and women, but for the first time we have equal prize money at Roland Garros for the three winners of the three wheelchair events. That’s definitely a big step forward and I’ve played my part in that change.”

Players are eligible to compete in the quad division if they have a permanent physical disability that results in significant loss of function in three or more extremities,

while also fulfilling the wheelchair tennis minimum disability criteria.

“To just get the opportunity to play at Wimbledon during The Championships was a massive thing and it’s continued to lead to better things for the quad division and wheelchair tennis as a whole, really,” says Lapthorne as he reflects on the dream he had as a 10-year-old visiting Wimbledon for the first time and sharing a lift in the players’ area with Serena and Venus Williams because disability access was still under development.

Fast forward to 2019 and Venus watched courtside as Lapthorne beat her fellow American and second seed David Wagner in the semi-finals of the inaugural Wimbledon quad singles draw.

“When you are in a lift with these two, what looked to me like two giant athletes, and I had watched them so much on the TV and stuff, to see them in real life was just really inspiring,” said Lapthorne at the time.

Born with cerebral palsy, Lapthorne was a decade into his senior playing career before the opportunity to play a quad doubles exhibition at Wimbledon came around in 2018, leading to quad singles and doubles championship events being added to the competition schedule a year later.

Having played Wagner in his inaugural singles semi-final at Wimbledon in 2019, Lapthorne and Wagner combined to win the quad doubles title at the All England Club in 2021, earning the 31-year-old Londoner the latest in his collection of historic achievements. Scheduled to pair up at the Edgbaston Priory Club this summer, Lapthorne and

Wagner became the first quad doubles partnership to complete a career Grand Slam together. Their fourth Australian Open crown together in January earned them their third doubles title in four majors.

If not making history on the court, Lapthorne enjoys learning about the history of tennis off the court and he’s taken inspiration from one of the sport’s greats, a former two-time Birmingham champion and Eastbourne runner-up, when it comes to making his dreams and those of other fellow players a reality.

“For me, from watching lots of documentaries and reading books about people like Billie Jean King, the thought of how do you approach making change for the better, is an important thing,” he says. “Wimbledon’s the reason I got involved in tennis. If it hadn’t been for Wimbledon and going as a kid I wouldn’t have played tennis, I’d have gone and played basketball.

“So, using the example of the likes of Billie Jean, who is an inspiration in terms of how to make change and how she went about making change, is something that has stuck with me. I just want the quad division to have the same as the men’s and women’s divisions.

“Given the nature of our tour calendar, where players are coming in from and the timing that’s optimal for grass court preparation, it’s not as easy as you might think to schedule a tournament on grass, so we’re grateful for this opportunity to extend our grass court season,” adds, the three-time Paralympic medallist Lapthorne, referring to the new quad event at Devonshire Park. ●

FACTFILE ANDY LAPTHORNE

AGE: 31

LIVES: EASTCOTE, MIDDLESEX

CAREER TITLES: 21 (SINGLES); 41 (DOUBLES)

GRAND SLAM TITLES: 15 (2 SINGLES, 13 DOUBLES)

PARALYMPIC MEDALS: 3 (SILVER – QUAD SINGLES RIO 2016; BRONZE – QUAD DOUBLES RIO 2016; SILVER – QUAD DOUBLES LONDON 2012)



MOMENTS IN TIME

Right: Lucy Shuker and Stephane Houdet pose with the mixed doubles trophy at the 2017 British Open. Getty Images.

Below: Andy Lapthorne and Peter Norfolk shake hands at the 2015 British Open.

Bottom: A young Gordon Reid and Marc McCarroll at the 2011 British Open in Nottingham.





ONES TO WATCH...



Born: May 1980

Form guide: Shuker reached the semi-finals of the Australian Open singles this year, and was a runner-up in the doubles. On home soil, Shuker was crowned singles and doubles champion at the ITF 3 event in Bolton, before returning a week later to claim the ITF 2 singles title. The win saw her return to her career-high ranking of World No.5. Shuker also claimed the Georgia Open doubles title alongside Dana Mathewson before reaching the Cajun Classic final – their fourth successive doubles final together.

Any previous: Shuker made her debut at the British Open in 2003, and has been an eight-time quarter-finalist here in singles. She also finished runner-up in the women's doubles last year as well as in 2014 and 2010 and won the mixed doubles in 2017 and 2018.

Good to know: Born in Qatar, where her father worked, Shuker was a Hampshire county badminton player prior to her motorcycle accident – something which is evident in her renowned skills at the net and being regarded as a particularly outstanding doubles player. Her brother Matthew is also an accomplished badminton player and has played for England.

What they say: After competing on the grass at Wimbledon last week, Shuker said: "I'm heading back onto the hard court. I'll take the confidence from this week and try to put it into Nottingham. After that, I'm looking forward to the US Open. It'll be exciting to have another go at a Grand Slam. I'm qualifying directly for the Grand Slams and it's mad to think that the Paralympics is two years away so I'm definitely looking to qualify and hopefully be on the podium. I'll give it my all."

Career highlights so far: Shuker was part of the doubles pair alongside Jordanne Whiley that made history in winning Great Britain's first ever Paralympic medal in women's wheelchair tennis when they won bronze at London 2012 – a feat they matched at Rio 2016 before becoming the first British women to reach a Paralympic final when they won silver at Tokyo 2020. Shuker is also a five-time Wimbledon doubles finalist (2009, 2010, 2012, 2018 & 2021) and four-time Australian Open doubles finalist (2010, 2013, 2021 & 2022) and has helped lead Great Britain to a string of silver and bronze medals in the World Team Cup women's event, including a first ever silver medal for the GB women's team here in Nottingham in 2009.

LUCY SHUKER



Born: December 1990

Form guide: Mathewson rose to a career-high singles ranking earlier this year, and was runner-up in both the ITF2 and ITF3 Bolton Indoor tournaments here in Britain. She's also won three doubles titles this year, most notably on the grass at Wimbledon last week.

Any previous: Mathewson was a singles semi-finalist at the British Open last year. She is also a previous doubles semi-finalist here, having reached that stage in 2019.

Career highlights so far: Mathewson made history at Wimbledon this year in becoming the first USA woman to win a Grand Slam title when she won the doubles alongside Japan's Yui Kamiji. She competed at both Rio 2016 and also at Tokyo 2020 where she reached the singles quarter-finals.

What they say: Speaking on court after winning at Wimbledon last week, Mathewson said: "It doesn't really feel real. I'm actually really excited that I got to play with Yui. ... I'm just overjoyed. Our teams put in so many hours with us off the court that not everybody sees, and that's a huge part of why we're here today."

DANA MATHEWSON

ONES TO WATCH...



Born: August 1990

Form guide: van Koot was singles runner-up in Australia this year, and a semi-finalist at Roland Garros, but lost in her opening match at Wimbledon last week. She did, however, finish as runner-up in the Cajun Classic Super Series event in the USA back in March, and won the preceding ITF1 Georgia Open. As well as a Grand Slam doubles title in Melbourne and Paris, she has also claimed a further three doubles trophies on the tour so far this year.

Any previous: van Koot is a six-time British Open doubles champion, including the last two editions of the tournament in 2021 and 2019. She was also the British Open Women's Singles runner-up for five consecutive years from 2012-2016 and has reached the semi-finals on the last three editions of the event.

Good to know: Born with her right leg shorter than her left, van Koot eventually had her right leg amputated and started playing wheelchair tennis aged 10.

Career highlights so far: van Koot is one of the most decorated players in the sport, having won Grand Slam singles titles at the Australian Open and US Open in 2013 and Wimbledon in 2019, as well as 21 doubles titles across all four majors – including completing the calendar year Grand Slam in both 2013 and 2019. She became women's world No. 1 in January 2013 after winning her first Grand Slam at the Australian Open, ending the year as ITF World Champion.

ANIEK VAN KOOT

Born: March 1979

Form guide: The British No.2 was a winner at the Can Uner Open in April with partner Lucy Shuker.

Any previous: Having previously played in the Nottingham Futures as part of the event here, Oosthuizen was a singles and doubles quarter-finalist when she made her British Open debut last year.

Good to know: Oosthuizen is a former British Army Women's Tennis Captain who dreamt of playing at Wimbledon as a young girl. In 2014 she sustained an injury while playing tennis and took up wheelchair tennis in 2017, representing Team UK at the Invictus Games in Toronto, where she was a doubles bronze medallist.

What they say: "When I was nearly 10 years into my Army career I was injured in my right foot and lower leg. Six months later I was diagnosed with Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS), a chronic neurological pain condition for which there is no known cure yet. Luckily, the LTA ran taster sessions for players new to wheelchair tennis and I went along to a few of these. That's the start of this story."

Career highlights so far: Following on from her Invictus Games success, Oosthuizen represented Great Britain in wheelchair tennis for the first time at the 2019 World Team Cup, winning another bronze medal. Now she is targetting success in the 2024 Paralympics in Paris. She is also 2019 Nairobi Open champion, and 2021 Vilnius Open, Znojmo Cup and Opem Internacional Fundacion Once champion. In total she has won 4 ITF singles titles plus 8 ITF doubles titles.

CORNELIA OOSTHUIZEN

ONES TO WATCH...



Born: October 1991

Form guide: Reid has spent much of this season on the sidelines with a wrist injury, but despite that has still managed to win two Grand Slam doubles titles with Alfie Hewett. Last week saw Reid return to action at Wimbledon, pushing Hewett to three-sets in their quarter-final match and partnering him to finish as runners-up in the doubles, showing he has the form to challenge for the title here in Nottingham despite his lack of recent match practice.

Any previous? Reid is a two-time men's singles finalist here in Nottingham and was the British Open men's doubles champion in 2015 and again last year.

What they say: After his record-breaking sequence with Hewett came to an end at Wimbledon, Reid said: "We're really proud of the run we've had. Unfortunately, circumstances didn't help us to continue that. At the end of the day we gave it our best shot and just came second best to the better team. There's lots of hunger, we want to keep improving, keep adding to the titles."

Career highlight so far: Reid has 21 Grand Slam titles to his name – two in singles and 19 in doubles. He is also a Paralympic gold medallist having been crowned singles champion at the Rio 2016 Games. That was part of a stellar year for the Scot that saw him win the 2016 Australian Open and Wimbledon singles titles and be crowned 2016 ITF World Champion as the year-end world No.1.

GORDON REID



Born: October 1988

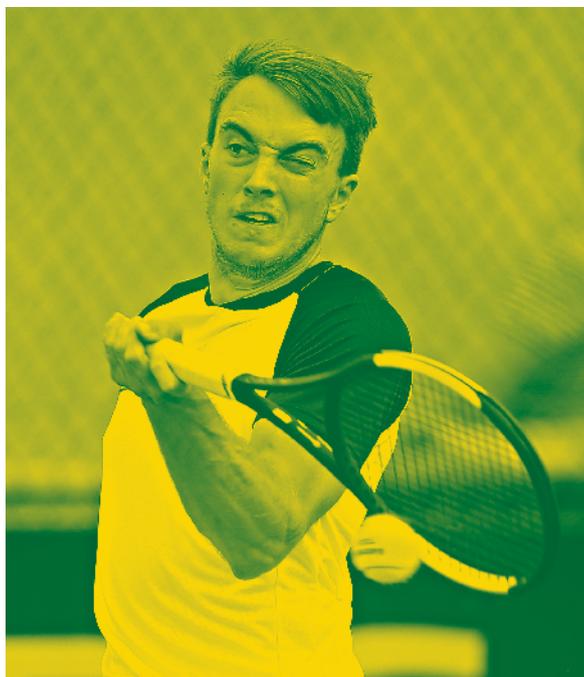
Form guide: He's enjoyed great success in Britain in the last two seasons – mostly on grass after winning his second Grand Slam title at Wimbledon in 2021 and then winning the cinch Championships at The Queen's Club last month. In addition to the cinch Championships, Gerard has won two other singles titles on the tour this year, as well as six doubles titles. Gerard was also part of an enthralling men's doubles semi-final played out on Wimbledon's No.1 Court last week that helped showcase the sport to fans in the stands and watching on TV.

Any previous: Gerard won his first Super Series title here at the British Open in 2013, and has also won the doubles title twice – in 2014 and 2018. Previous major titles on British soil also include the 2015 and 2016 Singles Masters title at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

Good to know: After contracting polio as a baby Gerard began playing wheelchair tennis at the age of 12 and went on to become one of the best junior players of his generation, winning the Junior Masters in 2006. He has since spent much of his time training at the Justine Henin Academy of Tennis in Belgium.

Career highlight so far: Gerard is Belgium's most successful wheelchair tennis player – he became Belgium's first Paralympic medallist in wheelchair tennis when claiming the men's singles bronze medal at the Rio Paralympics and in 2017 he helped Belgium win their first World Team Cup men's bronze medal. He was also the Australian Open and Wimbledon singles champion in 2021, has four Grand Slam doubles titles with two wins in Australia (2017, 2019), one at Roland Garros (2014) and one at Wimbledon (2019), and is a four-time year-end Singles Masters champion (2015, 2016, 2018 and 2019).

JOACHIM GERARD



DERMOT BAILEY

Born: February 1994

Form guide: Bailey reached the final of the Bolton Indoor ITF 3 Wheelchair Tennis Tournament in February in his first event of the season. Wins over Robin Groenewoud and Kouhei Suzuki saw him reach the final, finishing as runner-up to Ruben Spaargaren. He followed that up by helping the Great Britain men's team qualify for the World Team Cup finals, before last month reaching ITF futures semi-finals at events in Poland and the Czech Republic.

Any previous? This will be Bailey's eighth time competing in the main draw at the British Open Wheelchair Tennis Championships, and he will have his sights set on going beyond the second round for the first time.

What they say: Bailey dedicated his Paralympics call up for Tokyo 2020 last year to his former coach, Kevin Hoey, who tragically died in 2013 aged just 32 – "Kevin passed away when I was 18 and I'd been working with him for six or seven years at the time. The impact of Kevin was massive, we'd been working together since I was so young. We didn't get to finish the journey we were on together, but reaching the Paralympic Games is something we've been working towards, so it's brilliant that we made it."

Career highlights so far: Made his Paralympic debut for Great Britain at Tokyo 2020 to realise a long-held goal. Bailey has been a mainstay in Great Britain's men's World Team Cup squad in recent years, with the team winning bronze in Tokyo in 2016, silver in Sardinia in 2017 and Apeldoorn in 2018 and then gold in Israel in 2019.



NICHOLAS PEIFER

Born: October 1990

Form guide: Peifer has claimed one singles and six doubles titles on the ITF's UNIQLO Wheelchair Tennis World Tour this year. That included a win on British soil at the LTA's ITF 2 Bolton Indoor event in February, where he also finished runner-up in singles. After missing this year's Australian Open, tough draws meant that Peifer didn't win a match at either Roland Garros or last week at Wimbledon.

Any previous: Peifer first competed at the British Open here in Nottingham back in 2005. A four-time singles semi-finalist, he will be aiming to go one better to reach the final for the first time this year. The Frenchman is also a regular feature in the latter stages of the doubles draw, winning the trophy in both 2015 and 2016.

Good to know: Peifer took up wheelchair tennis aged 10 and played his first international tournament in his home city of Sarreguemines in 2003, returning to the tournament to win his first senior men's singles title there in 2005. A former World No.1 junior and Junior Masters Champion, Peifer's early ambitions were aided by support from the Little Dreams Foundation founded by musician Phil Collins. He made his senior world top 10 debut in 2008 and has been a fixture at the top of the men's game since.

Career highlights so far: Alongside compatriot Stephane Houdet, Peifer forms one half of one of the best doubles pairings on the circuit – the duo have claimed multiple titles together including Grand Slam titles and gold medals at both Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020. Peifer is also a four-time runner-up in singles at Grand Slams, having reached finals at the Australian Open, Roland Garros and the US Open.

ONES TO WATCH...



Born: October 1990

Form guide: Lapthorne and David Wagner won a deciding match tie-break to claim their fourth Australian Open doubles title together in January. He then joined forces with 19-year-old Brit Greg Slade to win the Bolton Indoor ITF 2 quad doubles title and then again with Wagner to be crowned champions at the Cajun Classic. Lapthorne took the first title at the maiden quad event at the Rothsay Classic Birmingham last month, before then finishing as runner-up in the doubles at Wimbledon in a showpiece final on No.1 Court.

Any previous: Lapthorne is a five-time singles finalist at the British Open, most recently in 2019, but is still to secure his first title. He won the doubles title here in 2010 and has been runner-up on seven occasions including last time out in 2021.

Good to know: It was at Wimbledon that Londoner Lapthorne's desire to become a tennis player was sparked as a 10-year-old – he ended up in a lift alongside Venus and Serena Williams, and after a brief chat and photos, he has said that ever since that day he always wanted to play there. Now 31, the intervening years have seen Lapthorne become one of the leading quad wheelchair players in the world.

Career highlights so far: Lapthorne won the US Open quad singles title in 2014 and 2019, and has won six Australian Open doubles titles, four at the US Open and one at Roland Garros – but it is perhaps his two doubles at his home Grand Slam of Wimbledon that are the most special. He is also a three-time Paralympic medallist, including in the quad singles at Rio 2016 and alongside Peter Norfolk in the doubles at London 2012.

ANDY LAPTHORNE



Born: March 1974

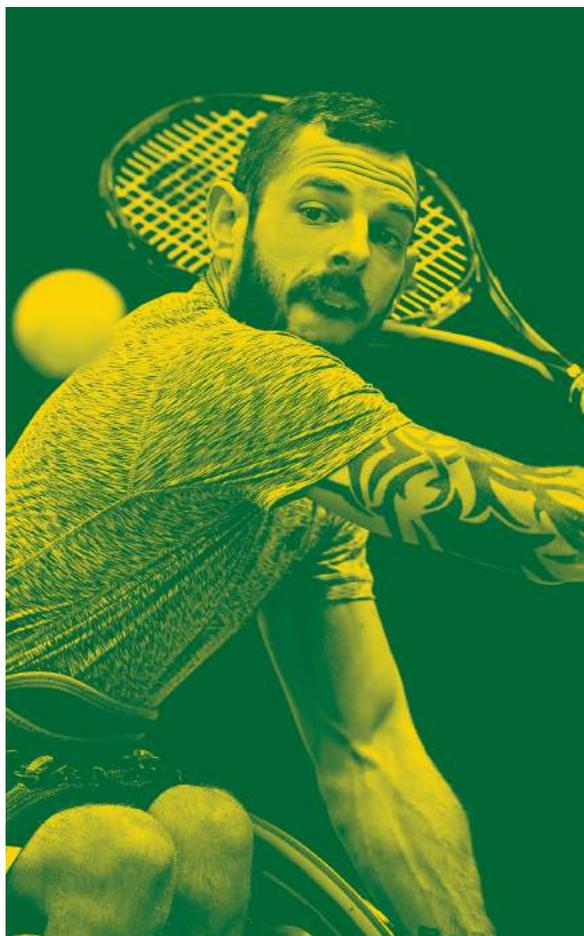
Form guide: Wagner has already won four singles titles this year – his most since 2018 – and four doubles titles, including both the Australian Open and the Cajun Classic Super Series alongside Britain's Andy Lapthorne. The pair also finished as runners-up in the doubles at Wimbledon last week, with the match played on Court No.1 to conclude The Championships.

Any previous: Wagner was the British Open quad singles champion in 2007, 2009, 2017 and 2018, and has won 13 British Open quad doubles titles – the first in 2002 and the most recent in 2018.

Good to know: Formerly a collegiate level tennis player, Wagner started playing wheelchair tennis at the age of 25 after breaking his neck in the surf of Redondo Beach, California. Like a number of players in the quad division, he plays by taping his racket to his hand.

Career highlights so far: Wagner has gone on to become one of the most successful quad division players of all-time. He has won six Grand Slam singles titles (three at the Australian Open and three at the US Open), and 21 doubles titles. He is also a three-time quad doubles Paralympic champion, winning gold at Athens 2004, Beijing 2008 and London 2012, and has won a further three silver and two bronze medals across both singles and doubles.

DAVID WAGNER



Born: May 1987

Form guide: Davidson is in good form, having reached at least the semi-finals in six singles tournaments so far this year, including most recently on his debut at Wimbledon last week.

Any previous: This is the Australian's fifth appearance at the British Open, having reached the singles semi-finals here in 2017 and 2018. He is also a two-time doubles semi-finalist in Nottingham.

Good to know: Davidson initially started playing wheelchair tennis at the age of 14, as well as table tennis. After leaving the sport for a while he returned from a decade's break in 2015.

Career highlights so far: Davidson and quad doubles partner Dylan Alcott combined to win the 2016 World Team Cup in Tokyo, Japan, before the pair won gold at the Rio 2016 Paralympics – following that up with a silver at Tokyo 2020. Those successes added to four consecutive doubles titles at the Australian Open between 2018 and 2021, while as a singles player Davidson has been a semi-finalist at all three Grand Slam events so far this year.

HEATH DAVIDSON



Born: June 1995

Form guide: Shaw's tournament appearances have been limited this year, but he reached the semi-final of the ITF2 Bolton Indoor event back in February and won two doubles rubbers and a singles at the World Team Cup. He also played at the inaugural pre-Wimbledon grass court event staged by the LTA at the Rothesay Classic Birmingham, defeating fellow Brit Anthony Cotterill before losing to Andy Lapthorne.

Any previous: Shaw will be hoping to progress beyond the second round for the first time at the British Open, but he did finish as runner-up to Heath Davidson in the consolation draw here back in 2016.

Good to know: Local hope Shaw is from Ruddington, just south of Nottingham. As a baby he was diagnosed with cerebral palsy and he is now an ambassador for CP Sport. Inspired by his dad's efforts as a marathon runner and keen gym goer, Shaw attended a wheelchair sports camp and after trying several sports he settled on wheelchair tennis, saying: "As I lived in Nottingham and Nottingham Tennis Centre wasn't far from us I started going to regular wheelchair tennis sessions with coach Martyn Jones and I loved it."

Career highlights so far: Shaw has won four singles titles and six doubles titles on the ITF's UNIQLO Wheelchair Tennis World Tour and has been a regular member of the Great Britain World Team Cup squad since making his debut for his country in 2015.

JAMES SHAW

SETTING NEW PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

In conversation with LTA Performance Director, Michael Bourne



Michael Bourne was appointed as the LTA's new Performance Director in July 2020 and here, he outlines his vision for supporting the best talent in British tennis.

CAN YOU OUTLINE THE VISION OF THE LTA'S PERFORMANCE STRATEGY?

We want to become one of the most respected nations in the world for player development. In order to do that, our focus is on ensuring we identify the best talent we have in the UK, partner them with world-class coaching, make sure they have brilliant training environments, give them the right exposure to competition and the performance support that allows them to grow and develop.

“WE ARE TRYING TO BUILD SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS AND THAT IS TOUGH IN A SPORT LIKE TENNIS, BUT WE ARE GETTING THERE. WE KNOW WHAT WE'RE GOING AFTER AND WE'RE STARTING TO SEE THOSE GREEN SHOOTS OF SUCCESS”

MICHAEL BOURNE



WITH THAT IN MIND, HOW IMPORTANT IS THE INTRODUCTION OF MORE TOURNAMENTS IN BRITAIN THIS YEAR WITH THE LTA'S ENHANCED PERFORMANCE COMPETITIONS CALENDAR?

That initiative is a big win for us because it allows our players to get great development opportunities and progress their rankings domestically. It allows

some of our more senior pros to earn as well as gain ranking points domestically and it runs from 10 & under right through to the elite. So overall, we're really happy in regard to how that's helping to facilitate the idea of getting competition exposure.

IN A YEAR THAT HAS SEEN BRITAIN PRODUCE A GRAND SLAM SINGLES CHAMPION, THE WORLD NO.1 IN DOUBLES AND THE WORLD NO.1 IN WHEELCHAIR TENNIS, WOULD YOU SAY WE ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK WITH THE LTA'S PERFORMANCE PROGRAMME?

We have had a good year, but I don't think we should get ahead of ourselves. We've had successes and we've had players progress, for sure. We still have a long way to go to hit our goals and this is only year four of a 10-year strategy. Whilst we're currently on track with our



work over the coming year, we should always strive for more. This is not just about hitting our targets. We are trying to build sustainable success and that is tough in a sport like tennis, but we are getting there. We know what we're going after and we're starting to see those green shoots of success.

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO HAVE INSPIRATIONAL FIGURES LIKE EMMA RADUCANU AND ANDY MURRAY INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION TO PLAY TENNIS?

A big part of our player pathway is you've got to see it to believe it. On the singles Top 100 we've got Emma Raducanu and Cam Norrie, Dan Evans and Andy Murray. We are also so strong in Mens Doubles with Joe Salisbury at No.1 in the rankings and Neal Skupski leading the ATP Race for 2022. Then we have Alfie Hewett reaching No.1 in the wheelchair rankings and it is great for young players to look up to them and try and emulate them. We want players coming through at each age and stage, from any background, to be able to see somebody they can relate to on that journey. Also, all our senior players are really good in terms of supporting the juniors and giving them advice on how to get to that elite level.

HOW WOULD YOU REFLECT ON YOUR FIRST YEAR WITH THE LTA?

I joined the organisation because I was really inspired by what the LTA was trying to do, both on the performance side and the Tennis Opened Up vision, led by chief executive, Scott Lloyd. We as a performance team can play a big part of that, by the inspiration our elite players can provide. If we can do our bit and players have got places to train and there are good routes for the youngsters to come into our system, then we will have a thriving ecosystem for players to come through for years to come. ●



THE LTA'S PLAYER PATHWAY



The LTA's Player Pathway is dedicated to nurturing the most promising players toward the elite levels of the game. Learn more about the support available from the LTA for professional players to take the next steps in their tennis careers.

PLAYER PATHWAY

REGIONAL PERFORMANCE:

Support performance-minded players to become nationally competitive by age 10 and prepared to effectively transition to the National Performance stage of the Player Pathway

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE:

Support players aged 10+ who are capable of becoming competitive in Europe and transitioning effectively to the International Junior stage of the Player Pathway by 14

INTERNATIONAL JUNIOR:

Supporting our highest potential juniors to become internationally competitive by 18 and well prepared to graduate onto the Pro Transition stage of the Player Pathway

PRO TRANSITION:

Support our highest potential young players to become elite level professionals and Davis Cup and Billie Jean King Cup squad players

PRO:

Support our top British professional players to perform at the elite level and as part of Billie Jean King and Davis Cup squads with excellence

WHEELCHAIR PERFORMANCE PATHWAY (WCPP)

POTENTIAL:

Inspire, attract and support performance-minded players to become nationally competitive and prepared to effectively transition to the Progression stage of the Pathway'

PROGRESSION:

Support our highest potential juniors and adults to become internationally competitive and well prepared to graduate onto the Pro Transition stage of the Pathway

PRO TRANSITION:

Support our highest potential players to have success on the ITF Wheelchair Tennis Tour, become elite level professionals and World Team Cup squad members

PRO:

Support our top British professional players to achieve success at the Grand Slams and Paralympics, and to perform with excellence

A young boy with glasses, wearing a green and black jacket and white shorts, is sitting in a wheelchair on a tennis court. He is holding a tennis racket and looking intently at a yellow and red tennis ball in the air. The background shows a blurred tennis court and a fence.

WHEELCHAIR TENNIS INITIATIVE

The LTA's groundbreaking Wheelchair Tennis Initiative kicks into action next month.

A series of Talent Spot days aimed at attracting new wheelchair tennis athletes will take place at gets underway in Norwich next month before embarking on a nationwide tour.

This year has already been a momentous one for British wheelchair tennis after the sport made its debut as an ITF ranking event at the Rothesay International Eastbourne before also featuring at the cinch Championships at The Queen's Club, Rothesay Classic Birmingham and Wimbledon.

These premier tournaments further enhance Great Britain's reputation as a world leader in wheelchair tennis and the LTA are determined to capitalise through its Wheelchair Tennis Initiative, which is supported by the National Lottery, and Performance

Pathway Talent Identification Programme expertly delivered by Wheelchair Performance staff.

The upcoming Talent Spot days are designed to attract, engage and inspire people with physical impairments to try out wheelchair tennis and get involved in the sport. They provide a first opportunity to enter the LTA's Wheelchair Performance Pathway through bespoke sessions created to acknowledge the fundamental characteristics required for wheelchair tennis such as chair skills, racket skills and competitiveness.

One player to have greatly benefitted from the LTA's Wheelchair Performance Pathway is Ben Bartram. The 16-year-old started playing wheelchair tennis aged 11 after attending a Tennis Foundation wheelchair tennis session

in his native Norfolk and rapid progress saw the teenager become the world no.1 Junior Wheelchair Tennis player last year.

Nottingham's very own Abbie Breakwell is another who took up wheelchair tennis at a clinic at the British Open in 2015 when she was also a member of the ball crew. The 19-year-old is now ranked no.3 in Great Britain, has won four ITF titles and belongs to the LTA's Wheelchair Performance Pathway. Just last month Breakwell performed the coin toss at the Rothesay Open Nottingham before Harriet Dart's win over Donna Vekic, while also helping out at a wheelchair tennis clinic.

All 10 of the LTA's Wheelchair Tennis Initiative one-day sessions are primarily aimed at people aged 8-30 with a physical disability, although participants do not necessarily need to be a



Abbie Breakwell and Harriet Dart at the 2022 Nottingham Open

wheelchair user. At the end of each event the LTA will provide participants with details of similar opportunities in their area to help them develop their skills and meet other wheelchair tennis players.

The LTA are confident the initiative will play a vital role in identifying the next generation and early development of aspiring wheelchair performance players who could one day represent Great Britain at Grand Slams, Paralympic Games and other major events.

It is no coincidence that two-time British Open champion Jordanne Whiley's pathway to meteoric success started with wheelchair tennis camps at the Nottingham Tennis Centre where, fittingly, she would go on to win the first of eight senior World Team Cup medals representing Great Britain in 2009.

As a child Whiley, who was born with Brittle Bone Disease, and her parents often attended the British Open not knowing she would grow up and win the prestigious tournament on two occasions on her way to becoming world no.1 in women's doubles and Britain's most decorated female wheelchair tennis player.

Meanwhile, a spinal cord injury following a motorcycle accident changed Peter Norfolk's life and would ultimately lead to wheelchair tennis glory in later years. Norfolk OBE made history as winner of the inaugural Paralympic wheelchair tennis quad singles gold medal at Athens 2004. Also known as 'The Quadfather,' Norfolk received Tennis Foundation backing throughout his career that saw him become Britain's most successful Paralympic wheelchair tennis player of all time, leaving a lasting legacy for generations to come.

Inter-linked with Whiley and Norfolk are numerous stories of British wheelchair tennis success such as Alfie Hewett, who became the first British men's player to win the British Open title at Nottingham in 2021, and his doubles partner Gordon Reid who won singles gold at Rio 2016. Both Hewett and Reid, like British women's No.1 Lucy Shuker, benefit from LTA support as part of the Wheelchair Tennis Performance Pathway. ●

Over the coming months the LTA will be holding 10 one-day participation events across the country, starting in Norwich next month and ending at the National Tennis Centre, Roehampton, in October:

- **Saturday 6 August:**
EASTON TENNIS CENTRE
- **Saturday 13 August:**
WREXHAM TENNIS CENTRE
- **Sunday 14 August:**
SILKSWORTH TENNIS CENTRE, SUNDERLAND
- **Sunday 27 August:**
EXETER TENNIS CENTRE
- **Saturday 10 September:**
JOHN CHARLES CENTRE, LEEDS
- **Sunday 25 September:**
EDGBASTON PRIORY CLUB BIRMINGHAM
- **Sunday 2 October:**
SCOTSTOUN TENNIS CENTRE, GLASGOW
- **Sunday 9 October:**
HILLS ROAD TENNIS CENTRE, CAMBRIDGE
- **Saturday 15 October:**
LTA NATIONAL TENNIS CENTRE, ROEHAMPTON

To sign up to a Wheelchair Tennis Initiative participation day visit [Wheelchair Tennis Initiative \(lta.org.uk\)](https://www.lta.org.uk)

NOTTINGHAM TENNIS CENTRE

Just a month ago the LTA took over the long term lease and management of Nottingham Tennis Centre. The LTA has had a long association with the venue, and has hosted international events here since 1970. When in 2019 the City Council announced that they needed to find significant financial savings in their budget and were looking for a new leaseholder and operator for the site, the LTA stepped in to ensure the centre's future. A 150 year lease has now been agreed, meaning the centre will be able to continue to operate for many years to come.

The site is one of the most significant and strategically important tennis venues in Britain. With 11 covered courts, 13 grass courts and 16 outdoor hard courts it can host a wide variety of tournaments and training camps throughout the year.

As well as the British Open Wheelchair Tennis Championships, which take place from 12-17 July, the centre also hosted the Rothsay Open Nottingham last month.

Tickets to the British Open are free for adults and children and can be booked via this link: <https://www.lta.org.uk/fan-zone/international/british-open-wheelchair-tennis-championships/tickets/>

The Centre also act as one of the LTA's Regional Performance Development Centres (RPDC) – providing a world class training environment for some of the best 14 and under players in the country. It is also home to one of the 10 and under Performance Programmes, supporting younger players as they set out on their journey to play at the top level. However it isn't just a home for



performance and professional tennis. The centre remains one of the largest community indoor tennis centres in the country, providing opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to get involved in tennis throughout the year. At present over 1,200 players every week take part in a variety of activities – from junior coaching to social adult sessions.

The centre also boasts a fantastic disability tennis programme, with opportunities for visually impaired, learning difficulties and wheelchair tennis players to develop their skills and compete.

There are strong links with the University of Nottingham, and ensuring the centre was open to as many different groups as possible was important to the LTA when it took over the centre's management.



The LTA is now making a significant investment in the centre and as part of the immediate transformation that users will notice, there will be

- Re-surfacing to the outdoor hard courts
- Upgrading of outdoor floodlights
- New fencing installed around outdoor courts
- Upgrade of the existing air bubble covering three courts

Then over the next 12 months, there will be further development on site including the installation of four further indoor courts under a new bubble. The tennis courts will be amongst the best in the country, but still available for the local community to use.

There is a bright future ahead for Nottingham Tennis Centre, and the LTA is confident that with the help of this new investment, the centre will be able to support the thriving community tennis programme as well as provide infrastructure for events throughout the year. ●



LUCY SHUKER

Twenty years after Lucy Shuker took up wheelchair tennis it appears there is no stopping the British No.1



Twenty years after Lucy Shuker took up wheelchair tennis it appears there is no stopping the British No.1. This season she's returned to her career-best singles world ranking of No.5, almost 10 years since first attaining the landmark, while she began 2022 by reaching her ninth career Grand Slam doubles final at the Australian Open.

"It's quite unbelievable to think it has been 20 years. It has been an absolute journey, with some of my highest highs and lowest lows. I'm sure every athlete can resonate," says Shuker, the winner of over 116 international titles across singles and doubles. "It has only been recently that those who've worked with me for a long time, and my friends and family, have encouraged me to take a step back and acknowledge what I've been able to achieve in my career. And yes, I feel very proud of all of it."

The Qatar-born four-time Paralympian has featured in a landmark summer for wheelchair tennis that saw world ranking events being held for the first time alongside three of the LTA's summer grass court tournaments, with the cinch Championships at The Queen's Club hosting a men's wheelchair event for the fourth year, the Rothesay International Eastbourne hosting a women's wheelchair event for the first time and the Rothesay Classic Birmingham hosting the first grass court ranking event for quad players outside of Wimbledon. Just two days after Wimbledon ends, the world's best players return to hard courts as Nottingham Tennis Centre hosts the British Open Wheelchair Tennis Championships.

"It is no secret that I have always been competing with less function than all of the other girls at the top of the game," continues Shuker, who was injured in a motorcycle accident shortly after her 21st birthday that would result in her becoming a T4 paraplegic.

"It has always felt like a challenge to me, but one that I've always enjoyed taking on. When you do get those victories they are so much sweeter. I've been proud to have done it my way, to have been the one proving people wrong and showing that it is possible. If my career can inspire just one person to play wheelchair tennis, especially someone with a spinal cord injury, and for the sport to change their life the way it has changed mine then that would be very humbling."

Shuker turned 42 at the end of May and not only does the level of her spinal break mean she has less function than her fellow top players, she is also the oldest player in the women's top 10. At the recent French Open she was the only player in the women's draw that also played in the first Roland Garros wheelchair event in 2007.

"To be able to be a role model for disability sport, and for wheelchair tennis is of course a huge honour. I absolutely love encouraging



FACTFILE: LUCY SHUKER

AGE: 42
LIVES:
 THREE LEGGED CROSS, DORSET
CAREER TITLES:
 30 (SINGLES);
 76 (DOUBLES)

PARALYMPIC MEDALS:
 3 (SILVER – WOMEN'S DOUBLES, TOKYO 2020; BRONZE – WOMEN'S DOUBLES RIO 2016; BRONZE – WOMEN'S DOUBLES LONDON 2012)
DOUBLES MASTERS TITLES: 1 (2016)

people to play a sport that I love so dearly and that has given me so many incredible opportunities and memories," says Shuker, who made history at London 2012 when she and Jordanne Whiley became the first female wheelchair tennis players for Great Britain to win a Paralympic medal. In Tokyo last year they upgraded two successive doubles bronze medals to a historic silver medal.

"Each of the Paralympic Medals comes with their own story and each one I am incredibly proud of for very different reasons. It hasn't been easy, there have been lots of hurdles along the way. You have to find a way to be kind to yourself and to be relentless in the pursuit of your dreams."

With Whiley having retired after Tokyo, Shuker continues to shine bright for British wheelchair tennis at the top of the women's game.

While she continues to relentlessly pursue her dreams, Shuker's wheelchair tennis success is partially founded in her earlier sporting pursuits and her success with a racket. Before her accident she played county badminton for Hampshire and her ability to drop shot her opponents and her touch at the net is more than a passing nod to her former sport.

"I have also been incredibly fortunate along the way to have met some great people who have taught me so much and helped me to become both a better player and a better person," she says. "I would say to anyone who is beginning on this journey, to be proud of what you do and how you conduct yourself, be open to being challenged and to ensure

that you create a team around you that shares your dreams and values and are loyal in helping you to strive towards your dreams.

"Never ever stop dreaming and believing. A (Paralympic) gold medal and a Gram Slam title is what I continue to train for and work towards, every moment that I step on court. Irrespective of whether I achieve those things I know I have given it my everything."

In January Shuker arguably came closer than ever before to earning a Grand Slam title, with only a deciding match tie-break in the women's doubles final at the Australian Open coming between Shuker, Japanese partner, Yui Kamiji, and that elusive achievement.

"Specifically in wheelchair tennis, inclusion in Grand Slams and more recently increases in draw sizes are a great step forward for future generations of players," says Shuker. "The depth in our sport is increasing all the time and it is becoming more and more professional every year with more investment from players and National Governing Bodies. Interest from the media and sponsors and, of course, social media continues to elevate opportunities for tournaments, players and fans.

"I hope to be able to continue to support important advancements and changes and see the impact for the next generation. I feel very proud to be in a position where I can help to break down barriers and stereotypes for disability sport and that is something I hope to continue with long after my playing career finishes." ●

INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

LTA Youth Ambassador Paul Jubb on his biggest dream



Every champion instantly becomes a sporting role model and British tennis has been serving them up at a rapid rate over the last year.

Roll the clock back to the summer of 2021 and Emma Raducanu was dreaming of a breakthrough at the highest level of the game and Cameron Norrie was still striving to land his first ATP Masters title, while doubles star Joe Salisbury and wheelchair hero Alfie Hewett were still striving to claim the world No.1 spot.

Yet all four of those British heroes achieved their goals and more in a triumphant year, with Raducanu's US Open win, Norrie's climb into the top 10 of the ATP rankings and Salisbury and

Hewett's ascent to the pinnacle of their respective rankings inspiring others to believe anything is possible.

That is certainly the mentality Paul Jubb is displaying as he eyes some ground-breaking wins over the course of this grass court season.

At the age of 22, York-born Jubb secured his first ATP Challenger win as he highlighted his prowess on clay in Bolivia in March and he admits the inspiration provided by his British compatriots has given him an extra motivation to join the success story.

"There are so many good things happening in British tennis at the moment and when one of the British players does well, you want to try and add to the success story," begins Jubb.

"THERE ARE SO MANY GOOD THINGS HAPPENING IN BRITISH TENNIS AT THE MOMENT AND WHEN ONE OF THE BRITISH PLAYERS DOES WELL, YOU WANT TO TRY AND ADD TO THE SUCCESS STORY"

PAUL JUBB

Below: Paul Jubb trains at the LTA's National Tennis Centre

"All the young guys coming through at the moment are a great bunch and we are all so close with each other. We message and push each other on to succeed and there is a great feeling among the guys that has to be positive for what we are all trying to achieve.

"This is an individual sport, but it feels like all the British players are in this together. We all train together at the LTA's National Tennis Centre and we are all here to make each other better.

"The culture of success we have at the moment in British tennis is really nice and we are all so excited about this time of the year and the grass court season.

"I'm sure all the Brits would agree with me when I say this is our favourite time of the year and we all have a great chance to succeed and try to enjoy it as well."

Raducanu's success at Wimbledon and the US Open last year highlighted how quickly a tennis career can lift off, and Jubb admits his ambitions to be a role



ABOUT LTA YOUTH

Find out more at
www.lta.org.uk/youth

model for players aiming to follow in his footsteps is one of the reasons why he became an LTA Youth Ambassador alongside Emma Raducanu and Lucy Shuker.

“I’d love to be in a position where I could inspire kids to play tennis,” continues Jubb. “I need to win more matches to do that, but I’ve always felt it was important to think about the way you handle yourself so that people look up to you and maybe follow in your footsteps. You want to present yourself and tennis in a good light and I’ve always tried to do that.”

“It would be nice to think that young kids would see me or one of the other British players on TV this summer and decide to give tennis a try and that’s what happened to me when I started.”

“Tennis was just a fun sport for me when I was learning the game and it was only when I was about 14 that I decided I could try and make a career out of the sport. Thankfully it has gone well for me so far, but I want to achieve so much more.”

“It is an exciting time for the sport in this country and it also feels like tennis is reaching out beyond the traditional fans and players we have had in Britain down the years. We are seeing so many more people from different communities getting involved in our sport and that has to be a good thing.”

Inspiration is one of the great legacies all champions leave when their achievements are quantified and Jubb is hoping to join the growing collection of British heroes who have been fulfilling that role in recent months. ●

The LTA Youth Programme is designed to introduce children as young as four to tennis. Fun, dynamic sessions will help kids get to grips with the basics of the game, improve their co-ordination and make some new pals along the way.



BLUE STAGE TENNIS LESSONS FOR AGES 4-6

This is an introduction to tennis. Here, we’ll help kids improve their balance, agility and co-ordination while teaching them about the sport we love. At this stage it’s not about winning or losing, it’s just getting to grips with the basics.

RED STAGE TENNIS LESSONS FOR AGES 6-8

This will look a bit more like the tennis you know. You’ll see overarm serves, rallies and volleys. Coaches will help children to further develop their co-ordination, balance and speed. We’ll introduce relaxed competition here too.

ORANGE STAGE TENNIS LESSONS FOR AGES 8-9

Time to throw in some tactics, problem-solving, and guides to sportsmanship and leadership. At this stage children will know all of the rules and will be serving and returning in matches.

GREEN STAGE TENNIS LESSONS FOR AGES 9-10

This is the big one. It’s time for kids to play on full size courts. Now it’s all about growing their game by fine tuning and refining the techniques they’ve learned so far.

YELLOW STAGE TENNIS LESSONS FOR AGES 10+

Time to find your game. Playing on a full size court with the same size balls the pros use, kids will continue to explore different styles on the court, and start to choose their own.



LTA YOUTH SCHOOLS

Designed specially for schools and to support the curriculum, our programme brings together inclusive PE lesson plans, personal development resources, teacher training and much more. It’s all been designed by teachers, for teachers, and it’s all free.

To find out more visit: lta-tennis.force.com/schools/s/

COLOUR HOLDERS ETCHED INTO TENNIS HISTORY

Representing your country in any sport is a special achievement, and tennis is no different.



As well as being a highlight of a player's career, Great Britain teams also connect with, enthuse and excite tennis fans in Britain like nothing else in our sport. That is why in 2021, to mark 125 years since the first player stepped on court, we revived what was once a tennis tradition – the LTA Colour Holders programme.

Historically, in the same way a player might receive a 'cap' in football or rugby, when a player represented Great Britain in tennis, they received a Colour.

If players compete in the Davis Cup, Wheelchair World Team Cup, Billie Jean King Cup, Olympics or Paralympic Games, they become Colour Holders.

Colour Holder status was also achieved previously for players who competed for Great Britain in the Wightman Cup and Kings Cup, two competitions that have since ceased.

From the early days of the programme, Colours have been awarded to both females and males who have represented Britain. In addition, following the creation of wheelchair tennis and its subsequent growth to become a professional sport, World Team Cup representatives and Paralympians have been included as Colour Holders for the first time alongside Davis Cup, Billie Jean King Cup and Olympic players – all together on one list.

A sequential list has been created depicting when a player gained their Colour Holder status in relation to their peers, meaning each player to represent Great Britain will have their own unique number.

Since 1896, 319 tennis players have become Colour Holders. The list was started by John Boland, who became the first at the inaugural modern Olympic Games in Athens in 1896. World No.1 doubles player Joe Salisbury, wheelchair tennis players Greg Slade, Abbie Breakwell and Ben Bartram and US Open Champion Emma Raducanu are among the most recent players to achieve this status having been selected to play in the Billie Jean King Cup and World Team Cup competitions respectively this year.

Wheelchair tennis player Ruby Bishop is our most recent Colour Holder at number 319 and there will be plenty more joining this exclusive club in the years to come.

The ultimate achievement of representing your country should be recognised and the LTA's Colour Holder programme ensures each and every name on the list is reserved their own special place in British tennis folklore. ●



▶ **WATCH...**

Reintroducing GB Colour Holders





From top: left to right: The joy of victory for Johanna Konta; Danny Sapsford was Colour Holder 200; 1935 - The presentation of the Davis Cup to the winning British team at Wimbledon with Fred Perry and Bunny Austin in attendance; Jordanne Whiley celebrates winning the bronze medal after her victory over Aniek van Koot at the 2020 Paralympic Games; Captain Anne Keothavong with the GB Fed Cup team for a match against Croatia in Tallinn n 2017; First female Colour holder Charlotte Sterry; Tim Henman and Neil Broad won silver medals at the 1996 Olympic Games; Andy Murray led Britain to Davis Cup glory in 2015

BRITISH OPEN

TOASTING THE HEROES OF BRITISH TENNIS



LTA Tennis Awards crown worthy winners

The 2022 LTA Tennis Awards were staged in May, with US Open champion Emma Raducanu claiming the Player of the Year prize alongside so many other heroes of the British game who were given recognition for their contributions.

The winners of this year's awards were announced by a host of special guest presenters, including Judy Murray OBE, Sally Bolton OBE, HRH the Duchess of Gloucester and TV personality Bear Grylls.

2022 LTA AWARDS WINNERS

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD	JENNY FROW (HEREFORDSHIRE & WORCESTERSHIRE)	①
Jenny Frow has helped transform her local club, Bewdley. Jenny has taken on many roles including Chair and President, and was instrumental to a big clay court development which proved the catalyst for turning around the fortunes of the club. She's inspired many women and girls to pick up a racket and was the brains behind Term Time Tennis, aimed at mums.		
CATHIE SABIN AWARD FOR VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR	SUSIE GRIFFITHS (WALES)	②
Susie Griffiths has transformed tennis in two venues in Anglesey. She has increased members from 60 to 200 at Bangor, transforming the website and social media profile. Then, despite personal adversity, she raised over £25,000 through crowdfunding and grants to establish a new club in Rhosneigr, which now boasts a successful coaching programme.		
YOUNG PERSON OF THE YEAR	RUBY BISHOP (NORFOLK)	③
Ruby Bishop is a true ambassador for tennis who not only represents Great Britain as a wheelchair player, but has shown relentless drive as a volunteer to raise disability awareness for other young people.		
PLAYER OF THE YEAR	EMMA RADUCANU (KENT)	④
Emma Raducanu became the first British woman to win a Grand Slam singles title for 44 years and the first qualifier to win a Grand Slam title in the Open Era in winning the women's US Open singles title. At 18-years-old, Emma became the youngest British woman to reach the fourth round of Wimbledon in the Open Era and jumped 324 places in the rankings to reach the world's top 20.		
JUNIOR PLAYER OF THE YEAR	BEN BARTRAM (NORFOLK)	⑤
Ben Bartram started off 2021 by becoming the new World Junior No.1 in the ITF wheelchair tennis world rankings, before going on to win three gold medals at the School Games National Finals, and the singles and doubles at the prestigious British Open Wheelchair Tennis Championships ITF Junior Series in July.		
PADEL PLAYER OF THE YEAR	TIA NORTON (WARWICKSHIRE)	⑥
Tia Norton became the first ever winner of the LTA Padel Player of the Year. Tia started playing padel aged 12, and after six years in the sport turned professional in August last year after becoming the first British woman to compete on the professional circuit.		
PERFORMANCE COACH OF THE YEAR	BEN HARAN (SURREY)	
Ben Haran is the current coach of Hannah Klugman, William Jansen and Sophie Bekker, helping Hannah to wins at the LTA 14 & Under Nationals and Tennis Europe Super 12 event at Auray. He coached William through qualifying to win the LTA 18 & Under Nationals, gaining a wildcard into Wimbledon qualifying.		



DEVELOPMENT COACH OF THE YEAR	JIMMY SMITH (SUSSEX)	⑦
Jimmy Smith delivers high quality programmes across multiple venues. No-one in Sussex has deployed more LTA Youth courses and his innovative disability programmes involve local charities delivering tennis to children, people with learning disabilities, autism and mental health problems.		
CLUB OF THE YEAR	GRANTHAM TENNIS CLUB (LINCOLNSHIRE)	
Grantham Tennis Club's membership has increased by 44% to over 1,200. Inclusion sits at the heart of the club and their vast programmes include coaching for all levels and ages, walking tennis, box leagues, LTA Youth and one of largest disability programmes in the UK.		
SCHOOL OF THE YEAR	DEAL PAROCHIAL PRIMARY SCHOOL (KENT)	
Deal Parochial Primary School enhanced their free, in-school tennis provision for all 200 pupils. Following the relaxation of COVID restrictions, they quickly recommenced after-school tennis with staff attending LTA teacher training for LTA Youth, improving and broadening the school's capacity to deliver consistent, quality tennis.		
UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR	UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD (YORKSHIRE)	⑧
The University of Sheffield doubled membership with a club record of over 300 members and court hours up 130% on the previous year. To satisfy the demand for competitive tennis, Sheffield created two men's development teams and one women's team, offering players exclusive coaching and match play to develop their games.		
COMPETITION OF THE YEAR	SUFFOLK TENNIS GRAND PRIX (SUFFOLK)	
Suffolk Tennis Grand Prix saw a collaboration between 10 coaches and their venues. To bridge the gap in young players competing regularly, they created competitions for beginner and improving players, providing monthly competitions for Red, Orange, Green and Under 18 categories.		
OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR	MIKE CROSSLEY (SUSSEX)	
Mike Crossley officiated at Wimbledon qualifying and in the main draw, meaning three weeks in a secure bubble away from family. His performance as a Line Umpire culminated in his selection for the Women's singles final.		
DISABILITY AWARD	LUSU SPORTS (CHESHIRE)	
LUSU Sports was set up to change the attitudes, techniques and skills of people within educational and sporting environments. They have designed a washable kit bag with activity cards to become a "lesson in a bag", specifically for people with a wide range of disabilities.		
COMMUNITIES & PARKS AWARD	G TENNIS AND CHRIS MARSHALL (SURREY)	
The G Tennis programme led by Chris Marshall has been a pioneer in providing free and affordable tennis coaching sessions to those on low incomes. Chris has embraced a diverse community, presenting a positive image for tennis and delivering a comprehensive LTA Youth programme.		
PRESIDENT'S AWARD	SARA BUTLER (WARWICKSHIRE)	
Sara Butler was undoubtedly the saviour of the Seniors Tennis GB programme in 2021! With Covid threatening the cancellation of the Seniors circuit, Sara stepped in. She swiftly took on the whole ITF Covid response for every day of four week-long tournaments, from Wimbledon to Wrexham, volunteering 29 days in total.		
SENIOR PLAYERS OF THE YEAR	MARJORY LOVE & CHRIS ORNSTEIN	
Marjory Love was winner of the 2021 Over 70s Singles and Doubles at Wimbledon and the Over 70s Singles at the British Indoors at Wrexham. Marjory is currently top of her GB age group and captain of the GB 70s team for the World Championships in Florida. Chris Ornstein had an exceptional 2021 reaching his first World Championships Singles Final in Mallorca, having defeated both the world No.1 and the 3rd seed.		

BREAKING BARRIERS

How tennis has blazed a trail for women's sport



This year is arguably the biggest ever for women's sport, and tennis, as always, will be a central part of that.

In an era when we're seeing women's sport increasingly getting a greater but not yet fair share of the headlines and coverage, and every week there being positive signs contributing to what is hoped will be the unstoppable rise of women's sport, it's worth reflecting on the agenda-setting role tennis has played for well over a century.

Sport can be one of the most powerful platforms for promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls, and tennis has led the way for that. From Britain's Charlotte Cooper winning the first-

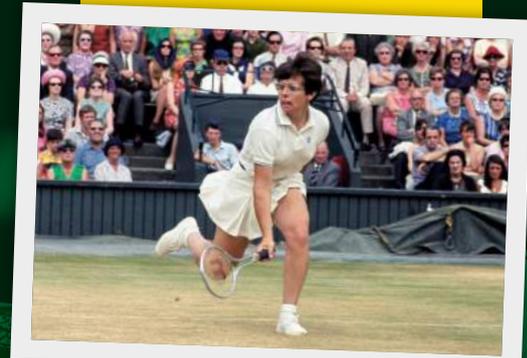
ever women's gold medal in any sport at the 1900 Paris Olympics, to the likes of Billie Jean King, Martina Navratilova and Venus Williams, there have been a host of women's tennis trailblazers and changemakers – truly iconic names not just in tennis, but in the development of women's sport.

Their legacy is that tennis is now often regarded as the most gender-equal sport and the benchmark many other women's sports are aiming for, while it is also one of the few sports that can attract more female fans than male – a position that's been almost 150 years in the making.

Ever since the late 1800's, women have been competing alongside men at tennis' major events, with



Birmingham's Maud Watson claiming the first-ever Ladies' Singles title at Wimbledon in 1884, winning a silver rose bowl valued at 20 guineas. That same trophy is now called the 'Maud Watson Trophy' and is the one held aloft by the winner of the LTA's Rothesay Classic event in Birmingham each year, having been donated to the Edgbaston Priory Club by Watson. While things were not quite equal (the first men's event at Wimbledon had been seven years earlier, and the men's trophy was worth 30 guineas), the concept





of women competing alongside men on the sport's biggest stages that was established back then has been integral to the development of tennis as arguably the leading women's sport on the planet that it is today. It's helped drive visibility, and in turn set tennis apart in terms of earning potential for leading sportswomen, and is a concept that has been gradually adopted by other sports over the intervening decades, particularly more recently as efforts are made to close the women's sport visibility gap.

Tennis is also the original mixed sport. The addition of mixed relay events in sports such as athletics, swimming and triathlon at Tokyo 2020 was much heralded, and rightly so as yet another step forward towards gender equality in sport. Yet in tennis, men and women have been competing on the same side of the net now for well over a 100 years, with mixed doubles played from Grand Slams to the grassroots.

Despite the established presence of women alongside men in tennis, there remained inequality. In 1970, against the backdrop of the women's liberation movement, nine players, known as the 'Original Nine', took a stand to create the first women's tennis circuit. They were concerned not just about disparate prize money, but also that fewer tournaments were available for women to play. It would eventually lead to the formation of the WTA, and was yet another pivotal moment in the history of women's sport.

As a demonstration of the progress that had been achieved, in 1982, Martina Navratilova became the richest tennis player on the planet,

male or female. The Noughties then saw tennis reach a milestone moment for sport, with all four major tournaments paying men and women identical prize money – a stance the US Open had been the first to adopt in the 1970's.

It was as a result of this platform of continued progress that Emma Raducanu's sensational US Open win last year didn't just rewrite the record books on the court, but also set new records off the court. The match generated what is the highest TV audience for any women's tennis match in Britain in at least the last 30 years. Alongside becoming the most streamed tennis match on Amazon Prime Video ever, 12.5 million people also tuned in to Channel 4 for the coverage, seeing them claim a 40% share of the total TV audience including half of 16 to 34 year olds and a 50:50 gender split among viewers.

However, despite all of this, there remain many areas where further progress is needed, with one key area being visibility. Earlier this year, the LTA issued a call to boost the visibility of women's sport by removing the inherent gender bias that exists within the results people see in search engine results about sport.

It follows a report commissioned by the LTA that starkly highlighted

the extent to which male-focused content and information dominates results provided for generic search terms about tennis players.

Reduced visibility of women's sport is a situation that contributes to a perception that sport is more for men than for women, and which in turn can lead to lower participation in sport by women, as well as impacting on the earning potential of sportswomen.

The report found that for generic search queries about tennis players such as those regarding rankings or player performance (for example "best tennis players", "best tennis players in the world", or "who is the number 1 tennis player"), the results are shockingly heavily skewed towards showing male information rather than female.

So, while there remains more progress to be made, names like Billie Jean, Martina, Venus, Serena and Emma have given women's tennis a platform to inspire girls to believe in their dreams and show that tennis is a sport that has no limits, whoever you are. Barriers, after all, are there to be broken. ●

From left to right: Charlotte Cooper in action at Wimbledon; Maud Watson, the first ever Ladies' Singles champion at Wimbledon; Billie Jean King pictured in 1968; Venus Williams with fans in Birmingham back in 2019; Emma Raducanu receives her trophy from Billie Jean King after her 2021 US Open Tennis triumph





BECOMING ONE OF BRITAIN'S GREATEST CHAMPIONS

JORDANNE WHILEY

When Jordanne Whiley announced her retirement in November 2021 it brought to an end a career that saw her become Britain's most decorated female wheelchair tennis player of all time.

The 30-year-old's incredible journey – which started at just three-years-old when she was unexpectedly awarded her first trophy in Israel – led to Whiley becoming a history-making Grand Slam champion and four-time Paralympic medallist.

Along the way, Whiley has been supported by the LTA's Elite Wheelchair programme for the highest performing players targeting major tournament success, which has never been in short supply...

Here we look back on the career of one of British tennis' greatest champions.

Early beginnings and first trophies

With dad Keith a keen multi-sport athlete and a former Paralympic bronze medallist in wheelchair racing, Whiley's own path to sporting success was maybe written from the start.

Her first wheelchair tennis trophy came aged three while Keith was competing at the Israel Open. It was there that Whiley picked up a racket and started hitting balls for the first time and the tournament were so taken by what they saw they presented a young Jordanne with her own trophy.

It wasn't long before Whiley started to catch the wheelchair tennis bug at beginners' camps organised by the Tennis Foundation, whose activities have since been integrated into the LTA. That offered an introduction to the sport and, just as importantly, allowed her to form new friendships, some of which continue to this day.

And so, a successful junior career began, with Whiley winning her first international junior and senior titles in 2006 and lifting the first of three successive Junior Masters singles titles in 2007, aged 14.



Above: Jordanne Whiley competes at the British Open 2011

While she was still 14, Whiley made history on home soil, becoming the youngest ever women's singles National champion. In the same year, she was also part of the Great Britain team that won a first ever World Team Cup junior gold medal.

A year later Whiley made her Paralympic Games debut in Beijing, aged 16, representing Great Britain in the singles and doubles. All her early victories and milestones led to the young Brit becoming junior world No.1 for the first time in 2009.

Grand Slam history beckons

Whiley's achievements as a former Junior Masters champion and world No.1 junior are among the many things she shares with now best friend and long-time doubles partner, Yui Kamiji.

The British-Japanese team first came together in the second half of 2013 and was successful from the start, winning three of their first four tournaments and ending the year with the first of their two Doubles Masters titles. That year they also finished as runners-up at their first Wimbledon together in July 2013.

However, their success reached a whole new level in 2014, starting with the Australian Open, where Whiley and Kamiji faced the first of many all-Dutch challenges over the years, defeating Jiske Griffioen and Marjolein Buis 6-2, 6-7(3), 6-2 to win the first of their 12 Grand Slam titles together.

With Whiley now the first British female wheelchair tennis player to win a Grand Slam title, another championship decider against Dutch opposition came at Roland Garros. With Griffioen now partnering Aniek van Koot, Whiley and Kamiji emerged as victors again, prevailing 7-6(3), 3-6, 10-8 and raising the possibility of completing the calendar Grand Slam.

Having lost out to Griffioen and Van Koot in the final on their Wimbledon debut in 2013, Whiley and Kamiji now had the chance to avenge that loss and that's exactly what they did. But this time there was no match tie-break required as Whiley and Kamiji fought back to win 2-6, 6-2, 7-5. The history-making feat of the calendar Grand Slam was now just one tournament away.

Up until September 2014 no Brit had ever won a calendar Grand Slam in any singles or doubles draw, senior or junior – but that was all about to change.



The opponents were familiar – Griffioen and Van Koot; the match score was familiar – three sets; but once again Whiley and Kamiji showed their resilience and emerged victorious 6-4, 3-6, 6-3. Whiley was now the first Brit to complete a Grand Slam – a record she continued to hold until last year, when Alfie Hewett and Gordon Reid achieved the same in men’s doubles.

New York, New York - so good to win there twice

After making history in 2014, 2015 brought an MBE for Whiley for services to wheelchair tennis, while on the court the Grand Slam titles began to mount up.

Whiley and Kamiji claimed the second of their three Australian Open titles and the second of their five Wimbledon titles together.

The US Open brought defeat for Whiley and Kamiji in their doubles semi-final, but other exciting things were happening on the court and Whiley beat second seed Van Koot 6-7(1), 6-4, 6-3 to earn her place in her first Grand Slam singles final. Awaiting her in the decider was Kamiji.

After completing the calendar Grand Slam in doubles in 2014, Whiley had the word ‘unprecedented’ tattooed in Japanese on the back of one her arms – very fitting for what was to come next.

Whiley recovered from losing the second set of her US Open singles final against Kamiji without winning a game to claim the title 6-4, 0-6, 6-1. After nine championships points Whiley had become the first British female wheelchair tennis player to win a Grand Slam singles title.

Back-to-back success at the British Open

If events in New York in September 2015 were momentous, Whiley had already demonstrated that she was in fine form, physically and mentally, just six weeks earlier in Nottingham.

Since she was a child Whiley had accompanied dad Keith and mum Julie to the British Open, one of the highest-level tournaments on the tour outside of the Grand Slams. In 2015 and 2016, Whiley became the first British female to win such a prestigious event at the British Open, defeating Van Koot in the semi-finals and Griffioen in the finals of both tournaments.

Whiley had already arrived in Nottingham in 2015 as the first player to become world No.1 in the women’s doubles rankings, but her week was to get better and better after beating both Griffioen and Van Koot in three sets to lift the singles trophy.





“WHILE SHE WAS STILL 14, WHILEY MADE HISTORY ON HOME SOIL, BECOMING THE YOUNGEST EVER WOMEN’S SINGLES NATIONAL CHAMPION. IN THE SAME YEAR, SHE WAS ALSO PART OF THE GREAT BRITAIN TEAM THAT WON A FIRST EVER WORLD TEAM CUP JUNIOR GOLD MEDAL”

Eight World Team Cup medals in nine senior appearances

Off the court, Nottingham Tennis Centre has held predominantly happy memories for Whiley, although as a young girl born with osteogenesis imperfecta (Brittle Bone Disease) it was one of the places where she endured one of more than 25 bone breaks during her childhood.

On the court, the East Midlands venue has many happy memories, too, from wheelchair tennis beginners’ camps through to being the place where she won the first of eight senior World Team Cup medals representing Great Britain’s women. In 2009 Whiley joined forces with teammates Lucy Shuker and Louise Hunt to finish runners-up, for the first time, against the Dutch women’s team.

It was a result they would repeat again in Turkey in 2013 and the Netherlands in 2014, while around the three silver medals, Whiley also ended her career with a further five bronze medals as a senior player, additional to the junior World Team Cup medal won in 2007.

Tokyo – a record-breaking Paralympics

Although Whiley has won all her Grand Slam doubles titles partnering Kamiji, in World Team Cups and four Paralympic Games, Shuker has been a constant by Whiley’s side.

Although they made an early exit in Beijing in 2008, in London in 2012 Shuker and Whiley became the first female wheelchair tennis medallists for ParalympicsGB after defeating Thailand’s Sakhorn Khanthasit and Ratana Techamaneewat in the closest of bronze medal play-offs.



This page:

Jordanne Whiley celebrates winning the bronze medal in the Wheelchair Tennis Women’s Singles at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games. Getty Images

Jordanne Whiley, son Jackson, and Yui Kamiji celebrate after winning the 2021 Wimbledon Ladies’ Wheelchair Doubles Final. Getty Images

Jordanne Whiley wins the 2015 US Open

Opposite page:

Jordanne Whiley and partner Marc McCarroll won the 2013 British Open Mixed Doubles

Jordanne Whiley and Yui Kamiji become 2014 Wimbledon Ladies’ Wheelchair Doubles Champions. Getty Images.

Jordanne Whiley takes a selfie after winning the 2016 British Open Women’s Wheelchair title.

A second Paralympic bronze medal followed in Rio in 2016, where Whiley played with a stress fracture in her wrist, an injury that played a major factor in a heartbreaking singles quarter-final loss.

However, with Whiley having already determined that Tokyo would be her final Paralympic Games, her and Shuker’s fortunes improved dramatically in September last year as they made history as the first British partnership to reach the women’s doubles final, ending with a silver medal after being beaten by the Dutch top seeds.

Meanwhile, Whiley’s dream to end her career with a Paralympic medal in singles competition continued to burn strong. As fourth seed, she achieved just that after battling past third seed Van Koot 6-4, 6-7(7), 6-4 to win a memorable bronze and take her collection of Paralympic medals to four.

A final Wimbledon title for Mum

Whiley always maintained that Wimbledon, her home Grand Slam, was her favourite tournament. Having made history at The Championships with Kamiji during their ground-breaking 2014 season, the dynamic duo won

their fourth successive title on the hallowed grass courts in 2017, with Whiley revealing a few days later that she had played whilst 11 weeks pregnant.

Her son, Jackson, was born at the end of January 2018 and it was while commentating for BBC TV on the 2018 Championships that Whiley decided that she definitely wanted to make her comeback to wheelchair tennis. She did so in early 2019, ending the season with six singles titles and six doubles titles.

So it was entirely fitting that Whiley’s last title as player came at Wimbledon last year as she and Kamiji beat Shuker and South Africa’s Kgotatso Montjane in the first Grand Slam women’s wheelchair doubles final to feature Brits on either side of the net. Watching on and desperate to come on court after match point was won was Jackson, who got to parade the trophy around with his mum. Since her comeback in 2019, Whiley has naturally and correctly considered herself to be mum first and athlete second. As Whiley enjoys retirement, her number one priority has not changed. ●



DUTCH MASTER: ESTHER VERGEER

When it comes to wheelchair tennis, there is arguably no more iconic a name than that of Esther Vergeer.





“She is an astonishing athlete, a huge personality, and she has achieved one of the most amazing feats in our sport.” Those were the words that Roger Federer wrote in Vergeer’s autobiography back in 2013 when she retired from the sport at the age of 31. And he wasn’t alone among tennis greats in showering praise on her, with the likes of Maria Sharapova, Rafael Nadal, Richard Krajicek and Pam Shriver being her biggest fans too.

The Dutch player won the women’s singles title here at the British Open a record 12 times in a row from 2001 to 2012. The final 10 of those victories came as part of an incredible run that saw her finish her career unbeaten in 470 singles matches that stretched back a decade to the end of January 2003.

She won eight medals – seven of them gold medals – in four successive Paralympic Games between 2000 and 2012. Her women’s singles and doubles gold medal matches at the London 2012 Paralympic Games turned out to be the final matches she would play.

It brought to an end one of the most illustrious careers in sport, let alone tennis. Her 12 singles titles here in Nottingham were part of an astonishing 169 singles titles and 136 doubles titles she won, while she was named ITF World Champion (the year-end world No.1) for 13 successive years and spent an incredible 668 weeks as world No.1.

During that time, the biggest threat to her winning streak had been when she faced a match point against fellow Dutchwoman, Korie Homan, in the women’s singles gold medal showdown at the Beijing 2008 Paralympics – something she regards as the best match of her career.

“I was match point down, and I felt a lot of pressure on my shoulders for having to win that gold medal. Being able to turn it around and being mentally tough enough to win that gold medal was the best moment for me,” she later told the Paralympics website.

Coming that close to losing was not something Vergeer was used to. In the final decade of her career, she won 120 successive tournaments, beat 73 different opponents, won 95 matches 6-0, 6-0 and dropped just 18 sets of tennis. Her total of 44 Grand Slam titles (21 singles and 23 doubles), would undoubtedly have been higher had there been more opportunities – wheelchair tennis was only introduced to Grand Slams at the 2002 Australian Open. It wasn’t until 2009 that it featured across all four Slams and singles draws weren’t introduced at Wimbledon until after Vergeer had retired.

All that success, though, might never have happened as it was wheelchair basketball where she first shone – it was only after she won gold at the European



This page:

Esther Vergeer competes at the 2007 British Open. Getty Images.

Esther Vergeer shows off her gold medal at the London 2012 Paralympic Games. Getty Images.

Esther Vergeer being interviewed by LTA wheelchair tennis press officer Marshall Thomas after claiming the 2009 British Open women’s singles title



Championships as a wheelchair basketball player with the Dutch team that she finally chose tennis in 1998.

Vergeer had first been introduced to wheelchair tennis as a 12-year-old a few years after she was left paralysed following surgery to her spinal cord as a young child. “The moment they told me I would never be able to walk again is not the moment I remember very much,” Vergeer told CNN, saying that it was her first competitive tennis match a few years later that she remembers. “I was so excited and nervous. It gave me goose bumps and adrenaline. I really enjoyed it,” she said.

Since retiring, Vergeer has kept herself busy on separate fronts. She is now the tournament director of the ABN AMRO World Wheelchair Tennis Tournament in Rotterdam, where alongside Richard Krajicek, she has been responsible for the organisation of the event and integrating it with the ATP 500 tournament – in the same way the LTA has integrated wheelchair draws alongside its ATP and WTA summer grass court events. Promoting wheelchair tennis alongside tennis is something Vergeer is particularly passionate about.

She is also the founder of and a figurehead for the Esther Vergeer Foundation, which since 2004 has introduced children with a disability to sports and its positive effects. “We try to inspire, motivate and encourage the children to be pro-active,” she said. “The focus of our activities is on the fun side of sports, not on the disability of the young athlete. Sports strengthens your health, self-reliance and self-confidence and provides opportunities for them; the kids can join in and get a chance for a future.” ●

Opposite page:

Esther Vergeer after winning the 2012 Australian Open at Melbourne Park. Getty Images.



LTA TENNIS FOUNDATION

By Tim Lawler MBE – Chair of Trustees, LTA Tennis Foundation



Thank you to the LTA for giving me the opportunity to introduce our new charity, the LTA Tennis Foundation, and explain a little about what we do.

We are a new tennis charity that partners with brilliant people and organisations to improve lives through tennis.

We share the LTA's vision of 'tennis opened up', and we want to use our sport to make a real difference to people across the whole country.

Our goal is to inspire more people from all backgrounds to discover the joy of tennis, challenge the status quo to open the sport up, work collaboratively with existing charities and partners, and invest in people, programmes and places to play.

“OUR GOAL IS TO INSPIRE MORE PEOPLE FROM ALL BACKGROUNDS TO DISCOVER THE JOY OF TENNIS”

TIM LAWLER MBE

In short we want as many people as possible to share in the enjoyment and benefits of taking part in tennis.

The funding we provide is solely for the grassroots of the game, and as the LTA's charity we are committed to working in all parts of Great Britain with a particular focus on diverse and disadvantaged communities where the game is less well established.

OUR BACKGROUND

We are lucky to benefit from the legacy and support of two charities that have gone before us.

Many of you will be familiar with the historical work of the Tennis Foundation and the LTA Trust. The Tennis Foundation was an independent charity which was fully incorporated into the LTA in 2018. The LTA Trust was

BY MARSHALL THOMAS

HEWETT THE HISTORY MAKER

British hero ready to shine on grass courts



Whether it be at The Queen's Club, Wimbledon or Nottingham Tennis Centre, Alfie Hewett is no stranger to making history.

At the former, he won the inaugural men's wheelchair singles world ranking event in 2019, beating fellow Brit and doubles partner Gordon Reid in the final. In Nottingham last year he became the first British men's player to win the British Open singles title to add to his doubles title alongside partner, Gordon Reid.

A landmark summer for wheelchair tennis featured the inclusion of three world ranking events at three of the LTA's summer grass court tournaments, with the cinch Championships at The Queen's Club hosting a men's wheelchair event for the fourth year in a row, the Rothesay International Eastbourne hosting a women's wheelchair event for the first time and the Rothesay Classic Birmingham hosting the first world ranking grass court event for quad division players outside of Wimbledon. Just two days after Wimbledon ends, many of the world's best wheelchair players return to hard courts in Nottingham in a bid for British Open glory.

Hewett, who has spent much of 2022 as world No.1 and is currently ranked world No.2, said: "It's a really difficult task to achieve the number one ranking – you have to deliver regularly to be able to get enough points to get to the top of the world.

"I've had a really positive and encouraging year so far, but it has been backed up by a good 18 months behind me, so to get the reward for the long hours of training and all the effort that people behind the scenes put in to help me get to this has been great.

"Winning the Slams is a special privilege, and it's not easy to win a Slam, but to consistently do well across a year when the competition is so good at the moment – I think it is probably one of the highest standard competitive fields I've seen in wheelchair tennis for a long while."

Hewett, 24, started the year as three-time French Open and two-time US Open singles champion. However, his hopes of becoming Wimbledon champion were dashed at the last hurdle when he lost a gruelling final against Shingo Kunieda – the current world no.1 who he beat so comprehensively in the men's singles final at Nottingham last year.

"It's always been an ambition of mine (to be world No.1) – you have to do consistently well at tournaments and in Slams, and that comes from what you do behind the scenes on the practice courts," explained Hewett, who rose to the top of the rankings for the second time in his career in March, a little over four years after beginning a four-month reign as world No.1 in 2018. "I feel like I've been working hard and achieving my personal process goals along the way.

"What I am most proud about of my game is that I am still always looking to develop. The Cajun Classic (the

Super Series tournament he won in March to cement his return to the top spot) was probably one of my strongest weeks on tour, but there were still multiple things I was trying to work on whilst playing. You can't rest on your laurels in sport these days.

"There are the Slams which I am getting excited for, and a busy summer coming up. It's always a pleasure to be there (playing on home soil). Doubles has obviously been so successful recently – me and Gordon will be looking to maintain our levels and bring back a few more trophies, whether that be in Slams or ITF events."

For all their success as a doubles partnership, Hewett and Reid have yet to lift the men's doubles title at The Queen's Club, having finished runners-up in 2018 (when the wheelchair tournament was an exhibition event) and in 2019. They entered the British summer as the world's top doubles partnership, with Reid at world No.1 by virtue of having played fewer tournaments than Hewett. However, their points titles are identical, having broken the record for the most consecutive Grand Slam titles won by any partnership when they clinched their ninth major in a row at the Australian Open.

Their success saw Reid complete 2021 as year-end No.1 in doubles. Hewett hopes to achieve the same in singles in 2022. "I'm just taking it one tournament at a time. I would love to be able to say at the end of the year that I am world No.1 – to finish end of year No.1 would be a first for me," says Hewett, who ended 2021 by winning the Wheelchair Singles Masters title for the second time, while adding a second Doubles Masters partnering Reid. "Maybe sweep up at a few other events would be a dream, but it's not easy to do that and people will be gunning for me. That's what a lot of people in sport will say when they become No.1 in their category, you become the hunted rather than the hunter.

"It's difficult to stay there, it's not going to be easy, I'm aware of that, but I am going to enjoy every week and every moment that I'm able to say I am No.1 in the world, it's something I have worked hard for and I am proud of. The hard work does continue, there is no rest now – it's just getting on with the rest of the season." ●

FACTFILE ALFIE HEWETT

AGE: 24

LIVES: CANTLEY, NORFOLK

CAREER TITLES:

48 (SINGLES); 65 (DOUBLES)

MAJOR TITLES: 19 (5 SINGLES, 16 DOUBLES)

PARALYMPIC MEDALS: 3 SILVER – MEN'S SINGLES RIO 2016, MEN'S DOUBLES RIO 2016 AND TOKYO 2020



The National Tennis Centre in Roehampton has become a home for British tennis to be proud of.

Gary Stewart, LTA Head of Operations, takes us on a tour of the centre in south-west London. Fifteen years on from its opening, the LTA's National Tennis Centre has been transformed in recent years as a training and competition base, with new state-of-the-art courts and facilities making it one of the leading national training centres in the world.

"The National Tennis Centre, or NTC for short, is both the LTA's HQ and also the training base for Britain's elite players.

It was opened in 2007 by Her Majesty the Queen and in recent years has seen a number of upgrades and investment in order to bring it up to the highest international standards. Alongside the significant capital investment we have put in in recent years, the center's operation was also brought back in-house in 2018 and is now run by the LTA's own operations team, with tennis at the core of everything we do.

As the home of British tennis the centre has an important role to play

GOLD STANDARD





in giving our players the best possible facilities to allow them to train and prepare for competition.

We have 20 world class tennis courts on all Grand Slam surfaces to the highest specification. This includes six indoor hard courts and six recently re-laid outdoor hard courts that play in a similar fashion to the US Open and Australian Open courts. There are four clay courts (including two under a double skin air bubblecover) which use the same Italian clay as used at the Monte Carlo Masters and, of course, four grass courts, with similar characteristics as those used at the All England Lawn Tennis Club that are very popular at this time of the year. This way, whatever the time of year or upcoming event there will always be an appropriate surface for our British players to practice on.

There is also a dedicated player lounge, changing facilities, performance gym (containing state-of-the-art athlete strength and conditioning equipment), ice baths, medical suite and on-site café.

The elite players using the centre have access to performance analysis, fitness, psychology and rehab, strength and conditioning, medical support

and nutrition support. For players or support staff who wish to stay overnight, there are 22 overnight ensuite residential bedrooms.

We're always looking to improve the facilities and we've recently added speed guns on the indoor courts, to allow players to monitor their serve speed. We're also increasingly using the centre as a competition base. We hosted Great Britain's behind-closed-doors Billie Jean King Cup tie against Mexico during the pandemic and more recently the Great Britain 16U and 18U Junior Nationals this April. We have also installed mobile scoreboards and new spectator seating ahead of us hosting a women's ITF World Tennis Tour 25K event in July.

We are also keen to use our facilities to help promote padel, one of the fastest growing sports in this country. We have three high-quality padel courts on site. These are used for competitions, padel coach education classes, test and learn session on new products and are available to the local community to book on a pay-and-play basis. We also act as a training base for Great Britain's padel team. We expect more and more tennis centres around the country to

integrate padel into their operations in the coming years, so it is important we can pass on our knowledge of what works.

Beyond the professional game we have a strong relationship with the local community and currently provide LTA Youth classes to 250 local children on site. We are taking more classes into local schools to expand our reach and our goal is to give 1000 local children the opportunity to pick up a racket and receive coaching.

We also use the NTC's facilities to experiment and innovate with new products that tennis coaches and venues may find useful in growing the game. So we have a specially designed cardio tennis court as well as an interactive hitting wall on site. We are keen to expand this area of our work so we can be a test bed for the tennis community, as we try to open tennis up to more people.

For those who are tennis fans and want to experience the centre's facilities for themselves we offer our LTA Advantage Play+ and Advantage Compete, giving members the opportunity to play and stay at the NTC.

In November 2021, the centre was awarded the ITF's Gold Level status in recognition of the high quality of its facilities. It's only the third centre in the world to receive this accolade, joining the French Tennis Federation's national training centre in Paris and the USTA National Campus in Florida.

It was a proud moment for me and my team, but we know that if we want to carry on offering the best possible support to British players then we need to keep investing in the centre and keep improving everything we do." ●

PARK LIFE



When Arum Akom first made the short journey from his home in Camberwell to Burgess Park tennis courts as a young child, he had no idea just how big a part the sport and those courts would play in his life. Nor could he have envisaged the role he himself would go on to play in helping others in his community to progress in tennis and enjoy the benefits of the sport.

“I grew up on these courts,” says Arum “It’s like a family here.

“My earliest memory of tennis was coming to this club,” recalls Arum, who followed his older brother in picking up a racket. “I only live two or three minutes from here – I just came along and wanted to learn how to play. I then started just coming down and doing squad classes with the other kids – I did that on a regular basis and then started playing consistently.”

Arum, now in his twenties, is a student at the University of East London and LTA Level 3 Accredited Coach who was a national runner-up at this year’s LTA Tennis Awards in recognition of his work

Right:
Arum Akom





to promote diversity within the sport through working with disadvantaged children. He has delivered sessions for talented local juniors on the same park courts where he himself first picked up a racket, and is passionate about increasing the numbers of young black players and making positive changes in the community.

Park tennis courts are one of the most crucial parts of the tennis infrastructure in Britain. Owned by Local Authorities, they are vital community assets that can help widen the impact of the physical and mental health benefits that being active through tennis can bring. As Arum's story highlights, the access they provide to the sport can positively change and shape lives.

In particular, park courts are the place where many who play tennis at least once during the year choose to pick up a racket and get on court, and they help make the sport feel open and accessible to new audience groups.

There are currently 1.7 million adults and many more children who play tennis in a local park every year, with a significant proportion being from lower socio-economic groups. Female participation is also heavily driven by park tennis facilities, with park tennis courts the most popular venue for women to play after they have left education.

Not far away from the park courts where Arum developed his passion, Melissa Sack is a regular player at Ladywell Fields park courts in Lewisham, and enjoyed returning to the court after the COVID-19 lockdowns. "I started playing tennis at this park three years ago," she said. "It's been great for my health and social life. Having a public park court in walking distance from my house is so valuable for me."

Also on the Ladywell Fields courts was teenager Maya Dodds, who added: "When I first started coming to tennis sessions I wasn't very confident at all,

“THE PERCEPTION OF TENNIS IS THAT IT’S JUST FOR RICH PEOPLE, COMING HERE YOU CAN SEE IT’S FOR ANYONE”

MAYA DODDS

but tennis has given me a lot more belief in myself and I'm now leading sessions here. The perception of tennis is that it's just for rich people, coming here you can see it's for anyone."

However, in many areas of the country park courts have become dilapidated. Currently across England, Wales and Scotland around 45% of park courts are categorised as being in poor, very poor or unplayable condition, preventing many from picking up a racket and getting active. Critically, half of unplayable venues are in the most socially deprived areas of the country.

That's why, over the next two years, the LTA is leading the delivery of a multi-million pound investment programme into public park tennis facilities across Britain as part of a project that is being seen as transformational for the sport.

The move will see the UK Government commit a total of £22m together with an investment from the LTA of £8.5m via the LTA Tennis Foundation, and will result in thousands of public park tennis courts in poor or unplayable condition brought back to life for the benefit of their local community.

The ambition is to drive participation across park tennis sites, as well as ensuring the future sustainability of these facilities. Crucially, in addition to paying for the refurbishment of public park courts, the new investment will also pay for the implementation of sustainable operating models for the facilities, with specialist programmes and support to ensure courts are both affordable and utilised.

The approach has already been successfully trialled over the past three years, including in cities such as Manchester and Sheffield.

For example in St Mary's Park in Bury where the local authority and LTA went into partnership to renovate the courts in 2017 and introduce new tennis programmes, bookings have since quadrupled and there are now nine times as many registered users as before the work began. If that success can be replicated across other sites, the national investment into parks facilities over the next two years truly will be transformational for tennis. ●

▶ WATCH...



The human value of park courts

THE QUADFATHER: PETER NORFOLK

When it comes to sporting achievements, trophies, titles and medals are often used to define the greatest of all-time – but there can only ever be one person in history who can claim they are their sport's first ever champion, paving the way for future generations.

In 2004, Peter Norfolk – also known as 'The Quadfather' – etched his name in the history books, becoming the first person to win a Paralympic gold medal in the inaugural wheelchair tennis quad singles event in Athens.

This would be the first of five Paralympic medals that Norfolk won throughout his career – adding to a further 49 quad singles and 19 quad doubles titles, including a total of 22 singles titles at Grand Slam or Super Series level. He was quad singles champion at the British Open here in Nottingham no less than five times after triumphs in 2003, 2005, 2006, 2008 and 2011.

Norfolk's historic career saw him become Britain's most successful Paralympic wheelchair tennis player of all-time; leaving behind a legacy that will last for many years to come.

In 1979 Norfolk was involved in a motorcycle accident which left him with a spinal cord injury at T4/5 level. His wheelchair tennis journey began

almost 10 years later after he saw a demonstration at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. He was inspired by both the physical and mental benefits the sport had to offer, decided to give it a try and became instantly hooked.

During the next decade he competed in the men's wheelchair tennis Open Division. But as a growth on his spine continued to grow, Norfolk required further surgeries which subsequently led him to take part in the quad division from 2000.

Norfolk started strongly in the quad events – going on to win his first major title at the US Open USTA Championships Super Series tournament just one year after starting out. The British star had firmly put his name down as one of the toughest competitors on the tour and would soon break into the top 10 rankings.

With the 2004 Athens Paralympics on the horizon, Norfolk's form continued to build. He won the Wheelchair Tennis Masters doubles crown in 2003



Peter Norfolk wins the 2008 Australian Open. Getty Images.



Peter Norfolk celebrates at the 2011 British Open in Nottingham



Peter Norfolk is a legend in the sport of wheelchair quad tennis



Peter Norfolk with his quad singles gold medal at the 2004 Paralympic Games in Athens. Getty Images.



Peter Norfolk with his quad singles gold medal at the 2008 Paralympic Games in Beijing. Getty Images.

and 2004, rising to World No.1 in the rankings – a position he held for almost 250 weeks in his career.

Eventually, the opportunity came for Norfolk to cement his place in history – the introduction of quad events at the Paralympics in 2004. Coming in as hot favourite, the Brit didn't drop a set on his way to the final and claimed the gold medal with a 6-3, 6-2 victory over America's David Wagner.

In a career-defining moment, Norfolk became the first British player to win a medal in wheelchair tennis at the Paralympic Games. He also went on to take silver in the quad doubles that year, partnering Mark Eccleston.

With two medals already to his name, Norfolk went into the 2008 Games in Beijing with great expectations on his shoulders – but the second seed never flustered. He dropped only six games in three matches en route to the final, where he faced Sweden's Johan Andersson, who defeated the Brit's arch rival, Wagner, in the semi-finals.

Norfolk beat Andersson 6-2, 6-2 in the final to successfully defend his gold medal, before winning bronze in the doubles with Jamie Burdekin. Four medals in two Paralympic Games was quite some achievement!

In the years that followed Norfolk won four Australian quad singles titles, two US Open quad singles titles and in 2010 he claimed his third NEC Wheelchair Tennis Masters crown, having become

the first Brit to triumph at the year-end singles championship in 2006.

In 2009, Norfolk also led Great Britain to a third quad title in nine years at the ITF's World Team Cup, doing so on home soil in Nottingham, where he amassed five British Open titles.

During this period, Norfolk was also made an OBE, having been included in the Queen's birthday honours list in 2009.

In 2012, Norfolk was given the honour of being the ParalympicsGB flagbearer at the opening ceremony for his home Games in London, in recognition of his incredible achievements in wheelchair tennis.

The Brit teamed up with a young Andy Lapthorne as the pair went on to claim the silver medal in the quad doubles after narrowly losing a close final against American duo Wagner and Nicholas Taylor.

This would be the final chapter in Norfolk's glittering career as he announced his retirement in January 2013.

One of the greatest Paralympians in British sporting history, Norfolk will forever be known for his unwavering competitiveness and commitment to his sport. He remains closely involved with the sport and these days is regularly found in the commentary box for wheelchair tennis matches at Wimbledon and Paralympic Games. ●

COACHING THE COACHES

The LTA has set out on an ambitious mission to revolutionise coaching qualification courses in Britain in recent months, with the new programmes being rolled out for thousands of candidates.

Following the inspirational successes for British tennis over the last year that has included Emma Raducanu's US Open win, Cameron Norrie's victory at the Indian Wells Masters, as well as Joe Salisbury's rise to the top of the doubles rankings and Alfie Hewett's rise to world No.1 in the wheelchair rankings, the drive to build on the momentum behind tennis in Britain has included a bid to increase the numbers entering the coaching pathway and the quality of those graduating from it.

Here, Merlin Van de Braam (right), Head of Coach Development and Support at the LTA, guides us through the evolution of the new-look coaching qualification programmes on offer...

CAN YOU TAKE US THROUGH THE JOURNEY OF CHANGE FOR THE LTA COACHING PROGRAMME?

About two and a half years ago, we conducted a systematic industry review to look at what was good, where coach education could improve and what were the key challenges moving forward that may act as a barrier to quality coaching and ultimately participation growth. We listened to coaches, coach developers, employers and deployers and asked them what they needed from a coach or assistant coach to run a thriving tennis business. We then set out to develop qualification courses and products that

serve the needs of the tennis industry now and for the future. This was a systematic review to understand also what employers wanted and from that, we have put our courses together that fits their needs.

WHAT HAS CHANGED ON A LEVEL 1 COACHING COURSE COMPARED TO THE START OF 2021?

The most common role for an assistant coach is helping run a larger session, or a smaller session with more quality and input from a trained expert. To be a great assistant you need to be a great communicator, inspiring and motivating. You also need to be able to give support to the lead coach as they implement the lesson plan and structure of the session. Communication, demonstration, organisation and feeding were all key aspects that employers told us are required to be a great assistant, so we have put that at the core of the LTA Assistant (Level 1) qualification. For example, being able to organise large groups in small spaces is key to ensure a child remains active and engaged. The qualification works hard to ensure coaches don't revert back to the old fashioned 'queue method' whereby children stand around waiting to hit a ball every 45 seconds from the coach. A great assistant will keep everyone active and appropriately challenged, with exercises that look and feel like tennis.



THE COACHING PATHWAY

LTA Assistant (Level 1)

This two-day qualification is ideal for tennis parents, enthusiasts, or keen players looking for the knowledge and skills to support group coaching sessions, alongside a lead coach.

Learning outcomes include:

- Communication, organisation and differentiation skills for group coaching
- Basic tactical, technical, physical and mental development frameworks
- Other key assistant skills; from safeguarding to LTA Youth delivery



LTA Instructor (Level 2)

This five-day qualification (split into four core and one elective day), is ideal for those looking to build on the coaching foundations of LTA Assistant (Level 1), enabling you to lead in the delivery of group coaching. This is the equivalent of a group exercise instructor for tennis.

Learning outcomes include:

- Develop more advanced skills in communication and organisation
- Have introductory knowledge of 'observation and analysis' of players
- Be able to provide general coaching advice across physical, mental, tactical, and technical domains
- Plan and deliver structured lessons from official LTA Adult and Junior coaching products e.g., Cardio Tennis, Tennis Xpress, LTA Youth
- Understand basic principles of skill acquisition, safeguarding and player development

Coach qualification (Level 3)

The level 3 coach qualification course is for people who want to work full time within the tennis coaching profession. On successful completion of the coach qualification candidates will be trained to:

- Coach beginners and improvers in groups and as individuals
- Gain an expert understanding and ability to apply the coaching process in tennis
- Understand the basics of business management
- Manage the work of level 1 and 2 coaching assistants

Senior Coach and Senior Performance Coach qualifications (Level 4)

The LTA Senior Coach and Senior Performance Coach (SPC) qualifications (Level 4) are for coaches committed to developing their on and off court coaching skills beyond Level 3 Coach competencies across technical, tactical, physical and mental development frameworks. Business management, leadership and communication become a key focus to enable graduates to navigate the industry and their career with success

Master Coach qualification (Level 5)

The Master Club coach qualification is for coaches who are or who aspire to work at the very highest level of grassroots and development coaching.

On completion of the course, a master coach will be trained to:

- Deliver on court sessions of the highest quality and expertise
- Design, implement and evaluate the process and outcome of club programmes
- Display leadership skills to create and manage change in dynamic club environments
- Mentor a team of coaches to ensure delivery of a quality programme

Coaching is exciting, active, flexible and rewarding. If you are interested in getting involved in delivering tennis coaching, you can find more information on LTA coaching courses, [click here](#)



WHY DID YOU NEED TO CHANGE THE COACHING COURSES?

The industry insight suggested that it was too easy to pass Levels 1 and 2 and also that coaches were not 'deployment ready' when they graduated. This meant we had to go further, faster with our qualification curricula. There was a real perception that you could just move through the course, fill in the forms properly and you would get through. That's how I felt when I re-did the Level 1 course a few years back, to get a flavour for what the LTA were offering at the time.

WHAT CAN CANDIDATES EXPECT IF THEY SIGN UP FOR A COACH QUALIFICATION COURSE?

We have bolstered the curriculum through our LTA Learn online platform that has invaluable coursework and video content on there for students. In the past, you could fill in forms and say you have done certain tasks, but you didn't need to provide evidence on video so that is a key area we have changed. The industry research told us that communication, demonstration and feeding balls were the areas that were weak in the previous Level 1 and 2 courses, so we have focused on making them a priority now and you can expect lots of helpful tips on how to feed, communicate and demonstrate with excellence, alongside fun drills and exercises.

DO WE NEED TO TRY AND ATTRACT MORE FEMALE COACHING TALENT?

We absolutely want to grow the number of females who choose a career in coaching and we know we have a lot of work to do in this area, with just 23% of LTA Accredited Coaches being female. After Emma's win in 2021, we reached out to 3,500 female players who have experience in coaching and encouraged them to consider starting a journey on our coaching pathway. Delivering tennis to players of all ages and standards is a lot of fun and it would be great to see more female coaching talent coming with us on that journey. Through our LTA Coach Development Centres, we are funding a free pre-Level 1 taster course for females to have a look at tennis coaching to see if it is for them and it is an area we are keen to promote. We also have modules within our pathway now that cover off how best to coach males and females, and what the similarities and differences are from a tactical, technical, physical and psychological perspective. ●

▶ **WATCH...**



LTA Coach Development Plan

SERVING A WHOLE NEW AUDIENCE

Groundbreaking programmes reaching out to the masses

British icons Andy Murray, Emma Raducanu, Joe Salisbury, Alfie Hewett and our other elite players make all the headlines in the national tennis media, but there are also unsung heroes at grassroots level who are helping to ensure we are capitalising on the surge in interest in our sport.

SERVES is the LTA's leading sport for development programme, it takes tennis into the heart of local communities, and to children and young people who may have never picked up a racket or thought tennis was a sport for them. To date LTA SERVES has reached over 35,000 children and young people from some of the most deprived communities and has big ambitions to open tennis up to even more.

Across England, Scotland and Wales over 1,000 trusted community leaders have been trained to confidently deliver tennis sessions as part of the SERVES programme to the children and young people that attend community venues (youth clubs, community centres and faith venues) regularly. Tennis Activators take centre stage and are the glue that brings it all together. Nari Sohal from SWAT (Sikh Welfare Awareness Team) Youth Club in Slough is one of those passionately delivering tennis to the masses.

"Our youth club was newly opened, and we were looking for fresh activities to

put on, and tennis was something we might not have thought about until the LTA approached us," said Nari.

"It was free to get involved, which was amazing because many of the children and young people have never played before and can't afford to join tennis clubs. We were given rackets, pop-up mini nets, resources for social change activities, and access to Tennis Activator training.

"We play indoors at our youth club, and we have outdoor facilities. SERVES has shown us that tennis can be played anywhere, you don't just have to play on a tennis court.

"Implementing tennis into our activities, and being able to deliver as part of camps has helped us to create a sense of belonging to children and young people who have never had the opportunity to play or never saw anyone like them playing.

"We have seen a big surge in interest in our tennis sessions since Emma Raducanu's US Open win last summer. There was a buzz, and the children look up to role models that they can see a bit of themselves in. So many children are now playing tennis at our Youth Club, and they may never have got involved if it wasn't for SERVES.

"The LTA gave us the opportunity to take our group to Wimbledon. For so many children, going to a world-class event like Wimbledon is simply



“OUR YOUTH CLUB WAS NEWLY OPENED, AND WE WERE LOOKING FOR FRESH ACTIVITIES TO PUT ON, AND TENNIS WAS SOMETHING WE MIGHT NOT HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT UNTIL THE LTA APPROACHED US”

NARI SOHAL, TEAM LEAD - SWAT YOUTH CLUB



LTA SERVES

- Provides FREE access to tennis, removing barriers like cost and travel
- Targets children and young people (aged 5-18) working with community organisations in England, Scotland, and Wales, ensuring tennis can be delivered in any space or venue they have available, and in a way that is right for their community
- Trains up those aged 16+ to feel confident and empowered to facilitate their tennis sessions
- Takes tennis to more places, children, and young people

GET INVOLVED:

- If you're from a community organisation or venue (youth clubs or groups, community centres or venues, or faith venues or organisations) you can register your interest in signing up by completing the online form



a dream come true. It really is a life-changing experience, one that they will never forget.”

SERVES Tennis Activators are given equipment and guidance by the LTA, as they deliver tennis to new audiences, with the range of activities on offer ensuring this is not just a programme for those looking to reach a high level of tennis excellence, it's supporting

inequalities in the sport and paving the way to get more children and young people involved in tennis for the longer term no matter their background.

“There are so many fun activities you can do.

We have managed to deliver tennis to a wide range of people in our community.

The SERVES programme isn't

just about hitting a ball back and

forward, it supports children to become more confident and to make better and healthier life choices, which can be more difficult when you live in communities where crime rates and obesity levels are generally higher,” added Sohal.

“We offer fun activities for anyone who is looking to do some fitness, have some fun, meet new people and enjoy a new sport.

“I loved tennis as a kid, but my brothers would never play with me and it meant I had to hit a ball against a wall on my own. I loved that, but if we had a programme like LTA SERVES around when I was young, it would have been perfect for me on so many levels and I would have been able to have progressed further. You meet new people, get familiar with a new sport and hopefully start your journey in tennis.

“It's fantastic to see more children from a diversity of backgrounds, and those from more working-class families get involved in tennis, it really is a sport for everyone.” ●

Read more:
The LTA SERVES programme



BY AMY FLATMAN

TENNIS IN NUMBERS

100 litres of white marking paints are used during the **Rothsay International Eastbourne**. Chalk has not been used to mark courts for a number of years. The paint does not damage plant or soil structure



Above: Novak Djokovic lifted the Eastbourne title in 2017



11 The number of times **Martina Navratilova** won the singles title in Eastbourne



Above: Tunisia's Ons Jabeur was a champion in Birmingham last year

40th anniversary of the **Birmingham Classic** in 2022

FACT:
The **Queen's Club** opened for Tennis in 1887 after the conversion of an 11-acre site that previously housed market gardens and a cricket pitch

5 blends of grass species are used in **The Queen's Club's** grass courts. There are 5 different 'cultivars' of grass (only 3 different species) 2 types of perennial 'rye' grass, 2 types of 'fescue' and one type of 'bent' grass. All the courts are constructed from Ongar Loam - i.e. from Ongar in Essex. It has a clay content of 23%



Above: Crowd numbers were limited for last year's cinch Championships at the Queen's Club



Above: Ashleigh Barty won the Birmingham title in 2019

3 Birmingham Champions have won the women's singles title at Wimbledon – Maud Watson, Lottie Dod and Ann Jones

1890

Harry S Barlow was the first champion at the Queen's Club, after the tournament was moved to its current location 132 years ago

113

Feliciano Lopez was the lowest-ranked player to win the Queen's Club Championships in the open era, lifting the title when he was ranked at 113 in 2019



1 species of grass called 'monoculture' is used at the **Rothsay International Eastbourne**. The courts are 100% 'rye' grass



Above: Preparing to play at Queen's Club in 1918

DID YOU KNOW:

The Queen's Club

Championships has been staged at The Queen's Club since 1890. The tournament was initially held at Stamford Bridge, home of Chelsea football club, between 1884 and 1889 before moving to The Queen's Club in 1890

32

the number of inches in height of the **cinch Championships** winner's trophy

Right: Weather closing in at Queen's Club



23

The number of times an American has lifted the women's title in **Eastbourne**

33

Record number of titles won by American players at the **Queen's Club**

DID YOU KNOW:

Since 1979, **John McEnroe, Jimmy Connors, Boris Becker, Pete Sampras, Lleyton Hewitt, Rafael Nadal** and **Andy Murray** (twice) have all won both The Queen's Club Championships and The Championships, Wimbledon in the same year

Left: John McEnroe is on the long list of American winners at the Queen's Club

31

The number of matches **Andy Murray** won at the **Queen's Club** heading into this year's **cinch Championships**

DID YOU KNOW:

In 1895, 20,000 people came to **The Queen's Club** to see England play a football international against Wales. It was also one of the main venues for the London Olympics in 1908



Above: Andy Murray with coach Ivan Lendl after his win at the Queen's Club in 2016

6 record number of occasions **Andy Murray** has won titles at the **Queen's Club**, including five singles wins and one doubles triumph



Above: Inspiring the next generation at the Birmingham Classic

1974

Chris Evert won the first **Eastbourne** tournament staged 48 years ago



8 the mm length of grass on Centre Court at the **Rothsay International Eastbourne** (the same as **The All England Club**)

2,710

Centre Court capacity at the **Rothsay Classic Birmingham**

6,000

metres of data cable is temporarily installed at the **Rothsay International Eastbourne**

1970 the year that the **Nottingham Open** commenced. Stan Smith, who is known as the namesake of a popular brand of Adidas tennis shoes, first won the event



THE INVENTOR: BRAD PARKS

When it comes to icons of wheelchair tennis, Brad Parks has a unique place among them.

It's a proud moment for anyone to win a Paralympic gold medal.

But when Brad Parks received his, having won the men's doubles at the 1992 Barcelona Games, it was particularly special, as it is only because of Parks that the sport exists.

Parks was an 18-year-old freestyle skier from California when a life-changing accident at a competition in Utah left him paralyzed from the hips down.

It was during his rehabilitation in the mid-1970s that Parks and wheelchair athlete Jeff Minnebraker began conceptualising the possibilities of wheelchair tennis. "I was sitting in the hospital, thinking, what am I going to do now?" Parks told the International Tennis Hall of Fame. "I knew I had to make the best of the situation. I started thinking, 'I wonder if you can play tennis in a wheelchair?'"

The concept caught the interest of a number of players and Parks joined forces with David Saltz, Jim Worth, and Dave Kiley to form the National Foundation of Wheelchair Tennis (NFWT), creating a 10-tournament circuit throughout the United States that culminated in a national championship event played in Irvine, California. By today's standards, the hundred players that competed were modest, but at the time it was a real sign of the potential that existed.

"I had the opportunity to start an organisation to develop the sport, organise tournaments and give exhibitions and clinics to show and teach others to play," Parks said. "It

caught on and we all felt this was a very special sport at that time."

So many aspects of the sport bear Parks' fingerprints, from the two-bounce rule devised with Minnebraker, who developed the sport's first tennis-specific chairs, to the promotional campaign he drove across the United States that went on to become an international movement – Parks is credited for spreading the sport internationally, holding clinics throughout Europe and Asia in the 1980s.

Tennis fans will be familiar with the Davis Cup and Billie Jean King Cup, and in 1985 the wheelchair tennis equivalent was started – the World Team Cup – with Parks as its original tournament director. Initially with just five nations, the event has grown to become one of the most prestigious team tennis tournaments alongside its most established counterparts. The team event has now been contested by over 50 different nations in its 37-year history, and features men's women's, quad and junior competitions.

After being a demonstration sport in 1988, wheelchair tennis became a fully-fledged medal sport at the Paralympic Games for the first time in Barcelona, where Parks partnered Randy Snow to win the men's doubles gold medal in the sport that he created. That was the only occasion the two rivals of Parks and Snow played together as a pair, and it was also the point at which Parks decided to hang up his racket.



Above: Brad Parks in action (ITF), Parks and Randy Snow, Parks plays a backhand (ITF)



Brad Parks, centre, was inducted into the ITF Hall of Fame.



Brad Parks with Dutch Juniors at the Nottingham Tennis Centre in 2009. Ben Queenborough & Roy Smiljanovic.



Brad Parks, right, and Randy Snow with their men's doubles gold medals at the 1992 Barcelona Paralympic Games. ITF.



Brad Parks receives the Philippe Chatrier Award in 2016. ITF.

By that time, the International Wheelchair Tennis Federation (IWTF) had been in operation for four years, with Parks as the inaugural president. Approaching the end of the century, the IWTF was fully integrated into the International Tennis Federation, making it the first disability sport to do so at an international level.

It's been a long and progressive journey, but roll on 45 years since those initial thoughts of Parks about playing tennis in a wheelchair, and the sport is now not only an established and central Paralympic sport, but one that is showcased in the major arenas at all four tennis Grand Slam tournaments. Only last week the sport was catapulted to new levels and put in front of new audiences as Britain's Alfie Hewett and Argentina's Gustavo Fernandez took to Wimbledon's No.1 Court for their semi-final and a pivotal moment that enthralled the crowds in the stands, on the famous Wimbledon Hill and the millions watching on TV and listening on radio.

The sport is now played in almost 100 countries around the world and this week's British Open, first played back in 1990, is one of the most pre-eminent tournaments of 160 events that make up the ITF's UNIQLO Wheelchair Tennis World Tour.

Parks' contribution to founding and developing the sport is reflected by the numerous honours he has received, including his induction into the International Tennis Hall of Fame in

2010 and receiving the ITF's Philippe Chatrier Award – the ITF's highest accolade – in 2016. Additionally, the ITF established The Brad Parks Award in 1993, presented to an individual or organisation that has made a significant contribution to wheelchair tennis on an international basis.

"The sport has achieved more than I thought possible," admitted Parks when speaking to the ITF a couple of years ago. "I have to say that the ITF and the National Associations have done a remarkable job of helping grow the game. I did not think it was possible that wheelchair tennis would be run by the national tennis bodies – this was unthinkable in the 70's and 80's.

"I never expected wheelchair tennis to be in the Paralympics, the Grand Slams or the International Tennis Hall of Fame, so it is way past what I could have imagined."

As for the future, Parks has his own thoughts on what he would like to see next from the game, telling the ITF: "I would love to see the athletes become more well-known worldwide, and appreciated for not only their life story but their extreme talents as athletes. I would love to have live streaming to a point where fans could tune in on a regular basis to the most important wheelchair tennis events. And I would love to see more spectators attend and follow our players and the sport. This, with more interest from sponsors and media coverage, would help take wheelchair tennis to the next level." ●

ESAH HAYAT'S WINNING FORMULA

Introducing one of the world's best deaf tennis players



Success stories are flowing in British tennis and Esah Hayat is adding to the narrative.

As the leading deaf tennis player in the country, the 20-year-old Cambridge University student has achieved impressive results, winning his fourth title at the National Deaf Tennis Championships at the LTA's National Tennis Centre last November.

Yet his ambitions on the court will not stop there, with Esah aiming for the stars as he lays out his vision for a bright tennis future.

TELL US HOW YOU STARTED YOUR JOURNEY IN TENNIS?

It began with watching my older brother's tennis lessons on Saturday mornings, while not having any interest in the sport myself. That carried on for a couple of years until a switch flicked in my head and I just decided to join in. The coach thought I had potential and suggested I join in more often. From there, I went from 15 minutes of tennis a week, to an hour a week, and multiple lessons a week.

HOW HAVE YOU OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATING INTO A HEARING TENNIS ENVIRONMENT?

Tennis is an individual sport, so I actually think it's one of the best sports for deaf people to play, since the communication barriers many deaf people face aren't as big an issue. That being said, there is still an element of communication with the opponent/officials/coaches that can be challenging. I always found it difficult to hear my coaches if they were on the other side of the court. The main way I overcame this was simply building the confidence to inform people around me (coaches and hitting partners) of my difficulty and ask that they make an extra effort to make sure I can hear them. Everyone I've met has always been happy to help, so I would advise that to any younger deaf players who may struggle with the same issue.

GETTING TO KNOW... ESAH HAYAT

Born: 13.03.2002

Achievements: 4 National Deaf Tennis Championships singles titles in six years

Tennis idols: Andy Murray, Rafael Nadal and Lee Duck-Hee.



To find out more about how to get involved in deaf tennis, please [click here](#).



Above: Esah in 2015 when he won gold at the Junior World Deaf Tennis Championships

EXPLAIN THE CHALLENGES YOU FACE IN YOUR EFFORTS TO REACH YOUR POTENTIAL IN THE GAME.

Reaching my full potential in tennis is down to a variety of factors, both within and out of my control. I like to think of reaching potential as a matter of having the right mindset, before anything. Only I can control my attitude towards tennis, and so I always try to be as committed as I can to improving. I think that any player who has the right mindset is halfway there to reaching their potential, before considering any external factors.

WHAT ARE YOUR BIG AMBITIONS IN TENNIS?

I have many ambitions in tennis, including getting ATP points and playing on the professional circuit. I play for my university and tennis clubs and have specific goals year by year that I and the team work to achieve. In deaf tennis, I would like to get more medals, including doubles medals with the other GB team members, and to continue doing my country proud.

HOW DO YOU FEEL TENNIS PERFORMS COMPARED TO OTHER SPORTS IN TERMS OF EMBRACING COMPETITORS WITH SENSOY OR PHYSICAL DISABILITIES?

Playing sports as a young deaf person can be a tricky experience, especially when it involves communication with other players/teammates. But as I mentioned earlier, tennis was always an easy sport for me to fit into as a deaf player, as communication was less crucial in the game, meaning my deafness was not an issue for me. I was also lucky enough to always be surrounded by people who were both deaf-aware, and very accepting of my situation. I was never made to feel like less of a player in anyone's eyes, and I do think that positive attitude extends to the tennis community in the UK. I think that if more deaf people were aware of how easy it is to get started in tennis, and how their deafness won't hinder them in this sport, the participation rates would increase quickly - it's just a matter of spreading the word. ●

OPEN COURT: MAKING TENNIS A SPORT FOR ANYONE

You might think it's not for you, but tennis is a sport that can be adapted for any level of ability, as well as for players with different disabilities. We can supply all the equipment and aids you need - we've got sports wheelchairs if you have a physical impairment, and tennis balls that make a noise when they bounce if you're blind or partially sighted. There's nothing stopping you from giving it a go and having just as much fun playing the game as everyone else.

Great Britain is one of the leading nations in the world for disability tennis, and the LTA's Open Court disability tennis programme is one of the largest of its kind across any sport. Since its launch following the London 2012 Paralympics and with the support of Sport England, it has helped a record number of disabled people and those with long term health conditions pick up a racket and enjoy the benefits of being active through tennis.

As part of the programme, the LTA supplies over 400 Open Court venues with adaptive equipment, training, grant funding and resources to increase opportunities for disabled people to get involved in tennis, as well as dedicated support and advice from the LTA team.

We also support and run local, regional and national disability tennis competitions for any and all abilities, and for the very best players there are opportunities to play for Great Britain too!

If you want to find out more about playing disability tennis, visit <http://www.lta.org.uk/play/inclusion-disability>

A GREEN GAME

Environmental sustainability is high on the agenda at the LTA this year.

The LTA recently announced a long-term commitment for tennis in Britain to addressing issues related to environmental sustainability, protecting and supporting the environment and tackling climate impacts.

As the national governing body for tennis, the LTA has recognised the important role it has to play with the publication of its Environmental Sustainability Plan, which sets out how it will help secure a lasting future for tennis in Britain, through positive action on climate change and leadership in sustainability.

The plan acknowledges that the climate crisis, resource scarcity and changes to the natural environment not only represent global challenges but will also have an impact on tennis in Britain at all levels. Whether it be the impact of more extreme temperatures on grass court tennis at Britain's major events, or rising sea levels and severe weather meaning a higher proportion of tennis venues at risk of regular flooding, it is critical that tennis plays its part in tackling these issues.

The LTA knows it has a role to play in tackling its direct impact as a responsible organisation and event owner and operator, and in its Environmental Sustainability Plan has set out some specific actions to do this.

As a result, the LTA's summer grass court events looked a little different.

Single-use plastic cups were removed, with the introduction of a reusable cup initiative. At the same time, visitors were encouraged to top



up their reusable bottles from free water filling stations, again greatly reducing reliance on single-use plastic.

Other eco-friendly initiatives put in place saw carbon neutral waste management company, B&S Services, harness energy from waste produced and enhance the commitment to achieving 'zero waste to landfill'. After removing all recyclables such as cardboard, wood and metals, any non-recyclable waste is compacted into bales and transported to a Combined Heat and Power Facility where energy is harvested to produce electricity, steam and thermal heating. Meanwhile, discarded food waste is now sent to an Anaerobic Digestion facility, which also generates enough renewable electricity to power 4,500 homes. At the same facility, micro-organisms break food down into agricultural compost. In another green move, HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil) fuel – made from 100% renewable materials – is used in temporary generators which can produce 90% less greenhouse gases and emissions, reducing carbon footprints significantly.

Cam Norrie, British men's singles No.1 welcomed the publication of plans, saying: "Changes to our climate and environment are the greatest challenge we face globally, and we have already begun to see the impact on tennis.

"I'm really pleased that the LTA are making a long-term commitment to both reduce its own impacts, and work with everyone involved in tennis in Britain to protect and support the environment.

"It's really important that we all play our part, however big or small, to ensure that tennis is here to enjoy for generations to come."

You can read the full LTA Environmental Sustainability Plan here: www.lta.org.uk/sustainability.



BRITISH - OPEN - WHEELCHAIR TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS



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