

## 2016 Support for High Performance Players over 16 (Born 1998 or earlier)

2016 will see the development and roll-out of a new long-term High Performance (HP) strategy for British Tennis. Although work on this is advanced the process of consultation and refinement will not be complete until June and therefore any major changes to the way we support the development of players with the potential to excel on the international stage will not be confirmed and rolled out until the second half of the year.

However, we recognise that for players already competing at this level or aspiring to, clarity is needed now on the possible support available in order to plan the year ahead. This document therefore explains a series of changes we are making to individual player support that we will activate from February 1, 2016 and will run until December 31, 2016. As will become clear the February start date is necessary to allow time for applications to be made, considered and responded to.

In November we launched a pilot programme for ambitious players aged 12-16 designed to trial the Pro Scholarship Programme (PSP) we plan to launch in the autumn of 2016. A select group of players who applied for the limited places available on this pilot are currently being profiled to determine the nature of support we will provide. Our hope is that over the next few years the PSP will grow and evolve to provide a seamless pathway for our most promising young players to develop into successful Tour and Davis Cup/Federation Cup (DC/FC) players, but until this is achieved we know that we need to offer support to two categories of professional player who are above the age and performance level of the PSP pilot. These are:

**Aspirant Pro:** Players over 16 who are aspiring to break into the top 200 singles or top 50 doubles (Top 200S/50D)

**Senior Pro:** Players with an end of year ranking in the Top 200S/50D seeking to significantly improve their performance and ranking.

We recognise that players in the above categories operate with a high level of autonomy as a result of:

- The history and tradition in the sport
- The reality of life on the Tour requiring small, mobile, personal support teams for each player
- The commercial nature of tennis, especially towards the top of world rankings
- Influence and role of agents and management companies

Depending on financial resources and personal circumstances players typically contract directly a coach or coaching team, trainer/therapist, hitting partner(s) and occasionally specific expertise such as psychologists, medics etc.

Given this, our aspiration is to facilitate the success of British players striving to compete at this level by offering the following services to a select group of players, thus focusing our energy and

resources on those we believe are most likely to develop and compete for the highest level of individual and team honours:

1. A reflection and planning process that focuses on profiling players against a wide range of performance factors that we believe have the greatest influence on HP player development. The process asks all the key people supporting a player (coaches, parents, support staff) to independently profile the player and to share their insights in a meeting we facilitate. The process seeks to identify the areas where the greatest improvements can be made and to work towards a clear action plan and agreed inputs.
2. Expert technical coaching to support a player's personal coach or coaching team. We see our role as facilitating player and coach development, not directing it, and the process outlined above should help us identify specific areas where our coaching team may be able to add value.
3. Expert sports medicine and performance science support from our base at the National Training Centre (NTC) and at GB team events, training camps and major tournaments. Supervision, mentorship or Continuing Professional Development (CPD) may also be provided to a player's personal support providers if appropriate.
4. Direct financial support to help players reach a standard of performance likely to provide stable and complete financial independence from the LTA in the future. For players in the Top 200S/50D this will take the form of an annual underwrite of at least 50% of the costs associated with hiring personal coaching and support services, linked to an end of year Tour prize money payback. For players outside of the Top 200S/50D financial support will be in the form of a Career Development Grant.

Although we will be using slightly different approaches to determine the support available for Senior and Aspirant Pros, both will follow broadly the same sequence:

1. Players indicating a desire to work with and receive support from the LTA HP team will be taken through the profiling exercise described above to clarify their performance aspirations for the season ahead and identify the areas of greatest potential improvement.
2. When all players applying for support have been profiled The HP Selection Panel (see Appendix 1 for details) will confirm the list of supported players and the support offered.
3. Once the performance goals for the year have been agreed with the LTA HP Coach designated as the Lead for the player the specific support required from National Coaches and NTC HP support staff will be identified and integrated into the annual plan for the individuals concerned.
4. Where a player seeks direct financial assistance to pursue the agreed goals, either in the form of an underwrite (for Seniors) or Career Development Grant (for Aspirants) this will be considered in the context of the goals for the season, the existing resources available to the player and the likelihood of significant progression resulting from financial support. The details of both approaches are outlined separately below.

5. A player agreement will be produced, confirming the commitments of both player and LTA HP team to the agreed performance plan, which must be signed before support (including financial) can be activated.

## **Financial Underwrite for Senior Pros (Top 200S/50D End of Year Ranking)**

The primary purpose of this support mechanism is to provide established players with a level of financial security that enables them to plan a season-long campaign with increased confidence. In particular, we want to help players secure the level of personal coaching and conditioning support needed to make significant progress up the rankings. We will commit to providing an agreed monthly payment against a commitment by the player to pay back the total sum received by the end of the calendar year, or 25% of their listed Tour prize money, whichever is the **LOWER** figure.

When considering the level of underwrite we are able to offer we will evaluate the likelihood that the performance goals agreed with a player will yield a payback from prize money of at least 75% of the sum proposed.

For 2016 the maximum monthly payment we will consider is £12,500, equivalent to a full year underwrite of £150,000. However, as we will be operating this scheme from Feb 1 the maximum offer will be £137,500.

A mid-season review will be held with all recipients. Consideration may be given to adjusting the monthly payments in exceptional circumstances, but by no more than a maximum of 20%, with the upper ceiling still applying. This ensures that players and their support team not only have a degree of stability for 12 months, but also the possibility of receiving increased support if there is a strong performance rationale for this. Conversely, even if there is major underperformance in the first half of the season due to injury, illness etc., there will be a guaranteed level of support for the remainder of the year. The “lower of the two” principle will still apply to the prize money payback. Under normal circumstances we would expect an interim payback of 25% of prize money up to the value of the underwrite, after the mid-season review. The following worked examples are designed to illustrate typically how this process will work:

### **Female player, agreed aspiration to finish 2016 ranked within the top 30 Singles**

Predicted WTA prize money for final year ranking of 30 = £465,093 (Based on 2014 data)

Underwrite provided £137,500 = monthly payments of £12,500

25% of prize money = £116,273 payback, 85% of the underwrite

### **Male player, agreed aspiration to finish 2016 ranking within the top 60 Singles**

Predicted ATP prize money for final year ranking of 60 = £275,178 (Based on 2014 data)

Underwrite provided £90,000 = monthly payments of £8,182

25% of prize money = £68,794 payback, 76% of the underwrite

Our expectation is that from 2017 onwards all Senior Pro players supported with an underwrite will contract and resource their personal coaching and support team directly. However, for 2016 where the player profiling meeting results in an agreement that the LTA HP Team will employ or contract a personal coach and other personnel to provide support on Tour over and above the coaching and technical services available at the NTC the cost of this must be linked to a 25% payback of prize money agreement on exactly the same principles, and hence any such investment will fall within the upper ceiling threshold described above.

### **Key points of the Financial Underwrite Scheme**

Any players ranked in the Top 200S/50D at the end of 2015 who wish to be considered for financial assistance will need to go through the profiling exercise prior to an underwrite being offered.

Our primary aim is to make it easier for established players to invest in their further development by enabling them to plan ahead and secure key people to support them consistently through the season and in particular at key phases and events.

We acknowledge that where a player has a spectacular year, we may receive back the full sum of the underwrite, enabling us to invest more in junior development and emerging pro players.

We also recognise that where a player has a disappointing year against the agreed performance aspiration we may only recover a minor proportion of the underwrite, but fully accept that in offering the underwrite we are sharing the risk players must contend with every week.

The size of underwrite offered will reflect both the 2016 ranking aspiration of the player, and the degree of confidence that we have that they can achieve it.

### **Career Development Grants for Aspirant Pros Aiming for Top 200S/50D**

We recognise that for players who have yet to reach a ranking where prize money can cover the bulk of expenses significant financial support may be required to follow a performance programme capable of leading to a major improvement in ranking. To help manage this we have created a specific, ring-fenced Pro Player development fund from which to provide support to selected players in the form of a cash grant. For 2016 this fund will be set at £200,000.

We expect the size of individual grant awards to vary reflecting the different circumstances of individual players, but the maximum grant we will consider making is £30,000. We anticipate receiving significantly more requests than we can fund from the total resource available and will therefore apply a selection process designed to award grants to the players we believe are most likely to bridge the gap to the Top200S/50. Therefore, our expectation is that between 8 and 10 players will be successful in securing a Career Development Grant, assuming a typical award will be in the region of £20,000.

Players over 16 who believe they have a strong chance of making the Top 200S/50D in the next 3 years are encouraged to make an application for a 2016 Career Development Grant, payable in 3 instalments commencing 1 March.

## Application Process for a Career Development Grant

Applications should take the form of a short synopsis of the player's career to date, their long-term vision and their goals and aspirations for 2016. In addition to this, applicants must also submit a budgeted preparation and competition plan for the year based on indicative costs, together with known or expected sources of income and the size of grant requested.

A short-list of applicants will be determined by the Head Coach (Men), Head Coach (Women), Head Coach (Doubles) where applicable, and the Performance Director using the following criteria:

- Likelihood of breaking into the top 200S/50D based on performance profile to date
- Strength of the development plan submitted
- Developmental age and trajectory - likelihood of significant progression based on level of maturation and scope for improvement

Players on the short-list will be invited to undergo the profiling exercise outlined above to explore further their plans and aspirations.

The HP Selection Panel will then convene in late February to consider and agree the players to be supported and the level of grant aid offered (see appendix 1 for full details).

Players who wish to apply should send all materials via e-mail to Sophie Thomas ([Sophie.thomas@lta.org.uk](mailto:Sophie.thomas@lta.org.uk)). The deadline for receipt of applications is Sunday 31 January.

### Key points of the Career Development Grant opportunity

We are looking to support developing players striving to establish sustainable careers on the ATP/WTA tours at a performance level where they are strong candidates for selection to DC/FC teams in the future.

The cash grants are not linked to a prize money payback clause, and are intended to be a contribution to the costs of competing internationally. They are not intended to cover all costs of competing at this level.

Although it is still early in our planning, our hope is that over time the PSP programme will progressively replace the need for Career Development Grants for players aged 16-20.

## Tournament Bonus Scheme

The revised Tournament Bonus Scheme that operated in the 2015 season will remain in place and unchanged for the 2016 season.

## Appendix 1: LTA High Performance Player Support Selection policy

### 1. Introduction

This policy (the **Policy**) explains how players will be selected to receive support as outlined in the above document for the following categories:

**Aspirant Pro:** players over 16 who are aspiring to break into the top 200 singles or top 50 doubles (Top 200S/50D)

**Senior Pro:** Players with an end of year ranking in the Top 200S/50D seeking to significantly improve their performance and ranking.

Players selected to receive support will be required to enter into a formal player funding agreement with the LTA detailing their funding (which may be financial support or other 'in kind' support) and their responsibilities to the HP programme and the LTA.

### 2. Selection Process

#### 2.1 The Selection Panel

The Selection Panel will comprise of at least four of the following:

- (i) Performance Director;
- (ii) Head Coach, Women's Tennis;
- (iii) Head Coach, Men's Tennis;
- (iv) Head Coach, Doubles;
- (v) Head of HP Operations;
- (vi) External Selection Panel member;

The Performance Director will chair the Selection Panel and will retain the right of a casting vote should this be required. The Chair may nominate an additional member of the LTA High Performance Team to the Selection Panel to provide further relevant expertise from time to time.

A member of the LTA's legal team shall attend meetings of the Panel to advise on procedural issues and adherence to the Policy but shall not have voting rights. A member of the LTA High Performance Team may also be invited by the Chair to attend to record the selection decisions.

The Selection Panel will consider information it requests from the LTA High Performance Coaches or Tennis Managers or player concerned and will use its expert knowledge of tennis and trends within it to reach selection decisions. Discussion about players' progress is an on-going part of the work of the High Performance Team at the LTA, and players should expect that the content and conclusion of these discussions may be taken into account by the Selection Panel. The content and conclusions of any formal reviews undertaken in previous years (in respect of any particular player being considered for selection) will be given consideration in the Selection Panel meetings.

## 2.2 Selection Panel meetings

### 2.2.1 Structure of meetings

A list of eligible players applying for support, together with supporting documentation will be presented to the Chair prior and circulated in advance to all attendees to the meeting.

### 2.3.2 General Selection criteria

All players eligible will be considered by the Selection Panel in relation to the following selection criteria prior to a selection decision being made:

- (i) whether the player has shown consistent competitive performances at or approaching the standard required, at his/her stage of development, to indicate a likelihood of developing to a level where she/he is competitive at the highest level (Davis and Fed Cup World Group level, Grand Slam and ATP World Tour Masters/WTA Premiers main draws).
- (ii) whether the player has shown levels of proficiency in key components of their on-court game, excellence mindset and tennis athleticism necessary to be successful in professional tennis;
- (iii) whether the player is ready, willing and able to commit to the training, competition schedule and lifestyle required to succeed as a professional tennis player on the world tour.
- (iv) whether the player has any disciplinary and/or conduct issues.

### 2.3.3 Additional specific process for determining career development grants for Aspirant Pros.

When determining which applicants to select for a career development grant, the Selection Panel will employ the following process. The general selection criteria stated in 2.3.2 will first be applied to all Aspirant Pro applicants to confirm the validity of their place on the shortlist being considered. Following this, the relative strength of each applicant's case for financial support will be evaluated using a scoring matrix comprised of the following factors and score weightings:

Factor	Score	Guidance notes
Standard of current performance against global benchmarks for age and stage of development	1 - 10	Using both biological age and tennis development age, world ranking, and internationally relevant specific performances, benchmark against equivalent worlds best at equivalent developmental stage
Rate of progression over last 2 years	1 - 10	With reference to all available data, evaluate the likelihood of significant improvement or conversely a plateauing of performance
Scope for significant improvement identified through the player profiling exercise	1 - 10	With reference to the agreed player profile, consider the strength of evidence that significant improvements can be made in specific areas
Quality of the performance development plan submitted by the applicant	1 - 10	Consider the clarity of both outcome and process goals and the extent to which these tie to specificity of training phases and the logic of the competition schedule.
Quality of support system in place or available	1 - 10	Consider the coach and support service providers available, quality of training base and access to range and quality of training partners

Following completion of this evaluation a rank order of players based on overall score will be created and consideration given to the award requested by the highest ranked player. The panel may at its discretion offer a lower grant award than that requested but must record their reasons for doing so. This process will then be repeated for each subsequent player on the rank order until the resource available is fully allocated. Once this point is reached, the profile of the last player for which funding is available, together with that of the players immediately above and below in the rank order will be revisited as a final check to ensure the allocation of grants is as meritocratic as possible.

### **3. Deferral of decisions**

In the event of a long-term illness or injury to the player during the previous competitive year such that the Selection Panel is unable to determine the appropriate playing level of a player the Selection Panel may choose to defer a selection decision for a designated period based on the individual circumstances in order to provide the opportunity for the player to prove his/her eligibility for selection. The Selection Panel will agree a suitable date for a deferral meeting to re-consider the player based on the status of the illness or injury at the date of the Selection Meeting.

The Selection Panel will base their decision on whether to reinstate or continue to defer an injured/ill player on criteria set out above.

The outcome of the deferral meeting will be one of the following:

- (i) the player will be given an Agreement for the remainder of the current contractual year and will receive pro rata the funding amounts appropriate to him or her;
- (ii) the player will be de-selected for the remainder of the current contractual year;
- (iii) a decision on the player's status will be deferred again due to continued injury or illness that has meant the Selection Panel is unable to determine the appropriate playing level of the player. The Selection Panel will have been unable to make an objective decision on the player's status and will defer the decision again for another designated period.

The Selection Panel may only defer the decision regarding the selection of a player on a maximum of two consecutive occasions, after which a decision must be made by the Selection Panel as to whether the player should be selected or not.

### **4. Recording and Communication of Decision**

Each decision to select or not to select will be recorded on a Selection Panel Decision Form. The form is provided at Appendix 2. These documents will be retained by the Chair of the Selection Panel for five years and will represent the official record of selections.

The Chair of the Selection Panel will make reasonable efforts to ensure that players are notified of selection decisions within two weeks of the conclusion of the relevant selection meeting. The decisions that will be formally notified to players are:

- (i) Confirmation of selection;
- (ii) Confirmation that a currently contracted player has not been re-selected; and
- (iii) Confirmation that the selection decision has been deferred in accordance with section 3 of this Policy and provide the date on which the selection decision will be next considered.

Players that have been selected are not eligible to receive any funding or support for the calendar year to which selection relates until the Agreement has been signed.

## 5. Appeals

Both new applicants and players on existing Agreements who have not been selected by the Panel are entitled to appeal against the Selection Panel's decision. Such an appeal is to be made in writing within 21 days to the Chief Executive Officer of the LTA (the **Appeal Chair**) but only on one of the following grounds:

- (i) there has been a failure by the Selection Panel to follow this Selection Procedure (i.e. there has been a procedural defect); or
- (ii) the decision has been reached on the basis of an error of fact.

The Appeal Chair shall consider the player's appeal with either the LTA Legal Director or Head of Legal in attendance. The Appeal Chair can decide either:

- (i) to set aside the Selection Panel's decision as it was based on an error of fact or procedurally flawed and remit the matter of the player's contractual status to the Selection Panel; or
- (ii) to uphold the Selection Panel's decision.

## 6. Amendments to this Policy

The LTA may amend this Policy from time to time and shall publish any on its website

## Appendix 2 - Selection Panel Form for recording decisions

Date of Selection Meeting:		
Present:		
Players Name:	Year of Birth:	Age:
Currently on contract YES/NO		
Current Ranking	WTA/ATP	ITF
Date of rankings		
Information Considered		
Summary of discussion		
If the selection decision is to be deferred, give reasons in accordance with Section 3 of the Selection Policy:		
Give reasons for selection or non-selection based on Section 2.3 and Appendix 1 of this policy:		
Support offered YES / NO	Grant or Underwrite offered	