

Rothersey CLASSIC

BIRMINGHAM



**OFFICIAL
PROGRAMME**
15-23 JUNE 2024



Rothesay CLASSIC

BIRMINGHAM

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ORDER OF PLAY AND LIVE SCORING



TOURNAMENT GUIDE



PLAYER ENTRY LIST

For all the latest scores, results, draws, the daily order of play and the updated player entry list from this year's Rothesay Classic scan the QR codes above.

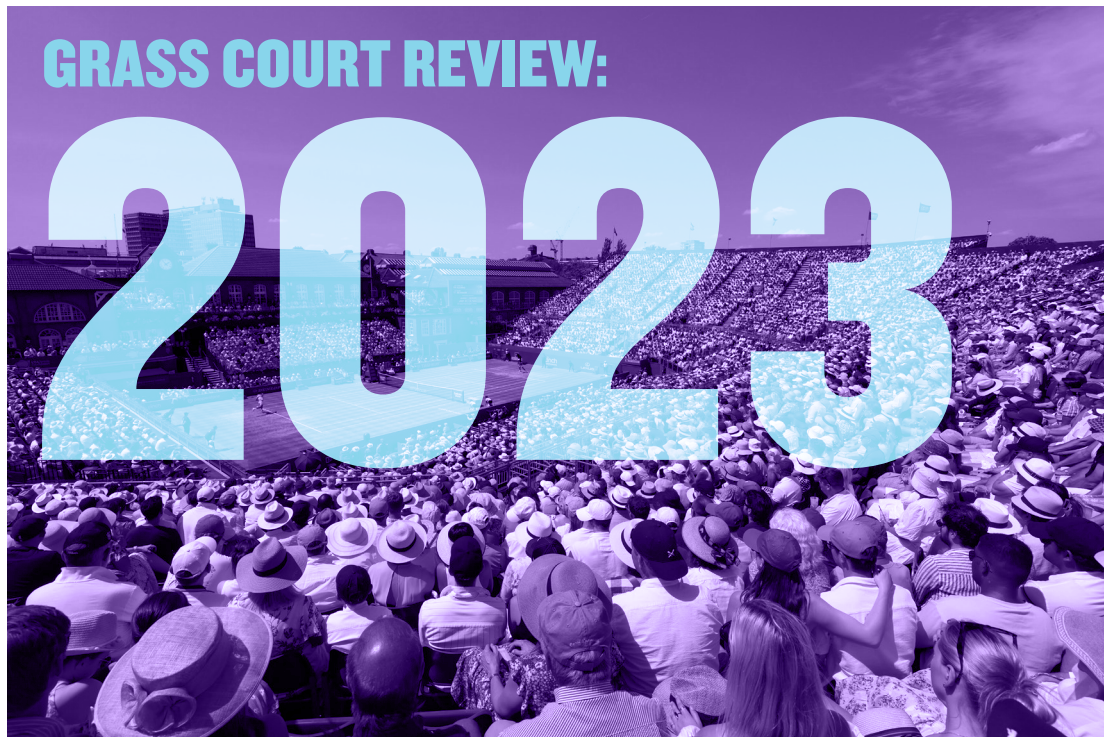


Throughout June, we'll be celebrating LGBTQ+ communities in tennis as part of Pride Month, including once again holding 'Friday Pride Days' at our events and telling stories from these communities, showing that tennis is a sport where everyone is welcome, whatever their sexuality or gender identity.



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ALL LTA PROGRAMMES FOR THE SUMMER EVENT SEASON HAVE BEEN PRODUCED USING CARBON NEUTRAL PAPER.



The 2023 grass court season was loaded with British success stories, star names rising to the top and some memories that will last a lifetime.

Here, we look back at the story of last year's LTA grass court events, with Andy Murray, Katie Boulter and Carlos Alcaraz among the star names taking centre stage.

SURBITON SUNSHINE

For only the second time in history, four British women made it through to the quarter-finals of last year's Lexus Surbiton Trophy.

Amongst them was 16-year-old Isabelle Lacy, who also recorded her first top 100 win in the opening round against Madison Brengle.

Lacy was also joined by 24-year-old Katie Swan, who would eventually go on to make the final after beating the top seed Tatjana Maria and then fellow Brit Lily Miyazaki. However, Swan finished runner-up to Yanina Wickmayer after losing 2-6, 6-4, 7-6(1).

On the men's side, the Brits took both the singles and doubles titles, with Andy Murray beating Jurij Rodionov 6-3, 6-2 to become the oldest player to win an ATP Challenger title on grass at 36.

Meanwhile, Liam Broady and Jonny O'Mara won the men's doubles.

BRITS DOMINATE IN NOTTINGHAM

British stars won three of the four titles at the Rothesay Open Nottingham.

Once again, there were four British players quarter-finalists, with Katie Boulter and Jodie Burrage contesting the final.

Newly crowned British No.1 Boulter prevailed 6-3, 6-3 to win her first WTA Tour title and set her on her way to the biggest 12 months of her career.

On the men's side, there were first-career ATP Challenger wins for Arthur Fery and quarter-finalist George Loffhagen, with Andy Murray clinching back-to-back titles with a 6-4, 6-4 win over Arthur Cazaux.

British wild cards Johannus Monday and Jacob Fearnley were the surprise package of the men's doubles – beating Broady and O'Mara in the final 6-3, 6-7(6), 10-7 – while Harriet Dart and Heather Watson finished as runners-up in the WTA event.

CLASSIC MATCHES IN BIRMINGHAM

Britain's Harriet Dart made it through to a quarter-final of a WTA Tour event for a second successive week, but it was the top two seeds who stole the show, with Barbora Krejčíková and Jelena Ostapenko meeting in the final for the right to hold the Maud Watson trophy.

No stranger to success on grass as a former Eastbourne champion, Ostapenko went on to life her second title on British soil with a 7-6(8), 6-4 win.

ALCARAZ LIGHTS UP QUEEN'S

British fans got to see British No. 1 Cam Norrie reach the quarter-finals at the Queen's Club, before Carlos Alcaraz stole all the headlines as he claimed his first grass court title.

The 20-year-old returned to the top of the world rankings after his win against Alex de Minaur in the final, with his win in the cinch Championships paving the way for his maiden Wimbledon title victory a few weeks later.

There was also British success to come at cinch Championships, as Alfie Hewett and Gordon Reid won their first doubles title together at the Queen's Club, with Hewett finishing runner-up in the singles to Joachim Gerard.



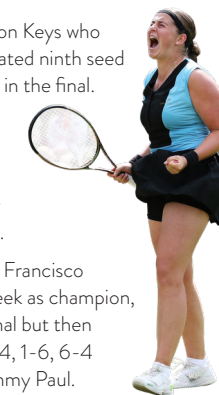
STARS COLLIDE IN EASTBOURNE

A strong lineup at the Rothesay International Eastbourne saw Ons Jabeur, Caroline Garcia and Coco Gauff make the trip to the south coast.

It was 2014 champion Madison Keys who came out on top, as she defeated ninth seed Daria Kasatkina 6-2, 7-6(13) in the final.

On the men's side, the tournament was thrown wide open with top seed and reigning champion Taylor Fritz exiting in the first round.

On finals day however, it was Francisco Cerundolo who ended the week as champion, not only finishing his semi-final but then closing out the title with a 6-4, 1-6, 6-4 victory over second seed Tommy Paul.



2024 GRASS COURT SEASON

Lexus Surbiton Trophy 2-9 June	Lexus Ilkley Trophy 15-22 June
Rothesay Open Nottingham 8-16 June	Rothesay International Eastbourne 22-29 June
cinch Championships 15-23 June	Lexus British Open Roehampton 30 June – 5 July
Rothesay Classic Birmingham 15-23 June	Wimbledon 1-14 July

ROTHESAY CLASSIC PEN PORTRAITS 2024

The entry list for the second WTA event of the 2024 British grass court season confirmed a stellar line-up will be taking centre stage at the Rothesay Classic Birmingham.



JELENA OSTAPENKO 🇷🇺

BORN: 8 JUNE 1997

Claimed two WTA titles in 2024 at the Upper Austria Ladies Linz and Adelaide International, taking her total to eight.

Won her maiden Grand Slam at the French Open in 2017 ranked No.47, the first unseeded player to win the event since 1933

Ostapenko is a two-time grass court champion, winning the Rothesay International Eastbourne in 2021 and she is reigning Rothesay Classic Birmingham champion.



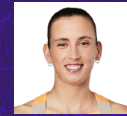
ANASTASIA POTAPOVA

BORN: 30 MARCH 2001

She is a two-time WTA tour title winner, claiming her first title in Istanbul as a qualifier in 2022 before picking up her second in Linz last year.

Achieved a career-high ranking of 21 in June 2023 before reaching her 11th WTA tour semi-final.

Potapova reached the third round of a Grand Slam at the Australian Open, Roland Garros and Wimbledon.



ELISE MERTENS 🇩🇪

BORN: 17 NOVEMBER 1995

A four-time Grand Slam women's doubles champion, winning two titles at the US Open and one each at Wimbledon and the Australian Open

Has won a total of 27 WTA Tour titles, comprising seven singles titles and 20 doubles titles

Ranked world no. 29 in singles at the end of 2023 - her seventh consecutive top-50 end-of-year finish - and world no. 2 in doubles.



KATIE BOULTER 🇬🇧

BORN: 1 AUGUST 1996

Claimed her first WTA-tour title last year at Rothesay Open Nottingham, defeating four Brits on the way to the crown.

Won her second WTA title and biggest of her career in March 2024 winning the San Diego Open, beating Beatriz Haddad Maia and Donna Vekic en-route to the title.

The current British No. 1, she achieved career-high ranking of No.27 in March 2024, 124 places higher than in March 2023.



YULIA PUTINTSEVA 🇷🇺

BORN: 7 JANUARY 1995

Across her career, she has won two WTA tour titles, both on clay, in Nurnberg in 2019 and Budapest in 2021.

Has reached the quarter-final of a Grand Slam on three occasions, twice at Roland Garros and once at the US Open.

Broke into the top 50 for the first time in June 2016, achieving a career-high ranking in February 2017 of No.27.



ARANTXA RUS 🇮🇪

BORN: 13 DECEMBER 1990

Clinched her first WTA tour title in Hamburg in July 2023 and two months later achieved her career-high ranking of No.41

Achieved her career-best run at a Grand Slam in 2012 at Roland Garros, reaching the fourth round.

Defeated then World No.2 Kim Clijsters at the 2011 French Open and No.5 Sam Stosur at Wimbledon in 2012.



MIRRA ANDREEVA

BORN: 29 APRIL 2007

One of the brightest young stars in the women's game reached the semi-finals of the French Open in Paris earlier this month.

Her Grand Slam breakthrough came as she reached the fourth round at Wimbledon last summer.

Became the youngest Grand Slam semi-finalist in 27 years earlier this month as her thrilling run at the French Open included a win against world No.2 Aryna Sabalenka.



HARRIET DART 🇬🇧

BORN: 28 JULY 1996

Broke into the top 100 for the first time in March 2022 before achieving a career-high ranking of No.84 in July 2022.

Has reached four WTA quarter-finals on home soil, twice at Nottingham and once at Eastbourne and Birmingham.

Achieved career-best run at a WTA event in February this year, reaching the semi-finals in Cluj-Napoca.



LEYLAH FERNANDEZ 🇨🇦

BORN: 6 SEPTEMBER 2002

Best run at a Grand Slam came at the 2021 US Open, where she reached the final and lost against Britain's Emma Raducanu.

Has won three WTA Tour titles, with the most recent coming in Hong Kong last October.

Helped Canada to win the Billie Jean King Cup last November.



AJLA TOMLJANOVIC 🇮🇪

BORN: 7 MAY 1993

Best run at a Grand Slam saw her reach the quarter-finals at Wimbledon 2021 and 2022, as well as a run to the last eight at the 2022 US Open.

Beat Serena Williams in her final match as a professional at the 2022 US Open.

Achieved a career-high ranking of No.32 in April 2023.



CAROLINE WOZNIACKI 🇩🇰

BORN: JUL 11 1990

Won the 2018 Australian Open and reached the final at the 2009 and 2014 US Open.

Became world No.1 for the first time in October 2010.

A two-time champion at the LTA's Rothesay International Eastbourne tournament (2009, 2018)

A mother of two children (Olivia and James), she made her comeback to tennis last year.



KAROLINA PLISKOVA 🇨🇪

BORN: MARCH 21 1992

Two-time Grand Slam finalist, appearing in the 2016 US Open final and the 2021 Wimbledon final.

Climbed to No.1 in the WTA Rankings for the first time in July 2017.

Has won 17 career titles on the WTA Tour, including wins at the 2016 Rothesay Open Nottingham and the 2017 and 2019 Rothesay International Eastbourne.

NOTRE DAME CLASSIC BIRMINGHAM



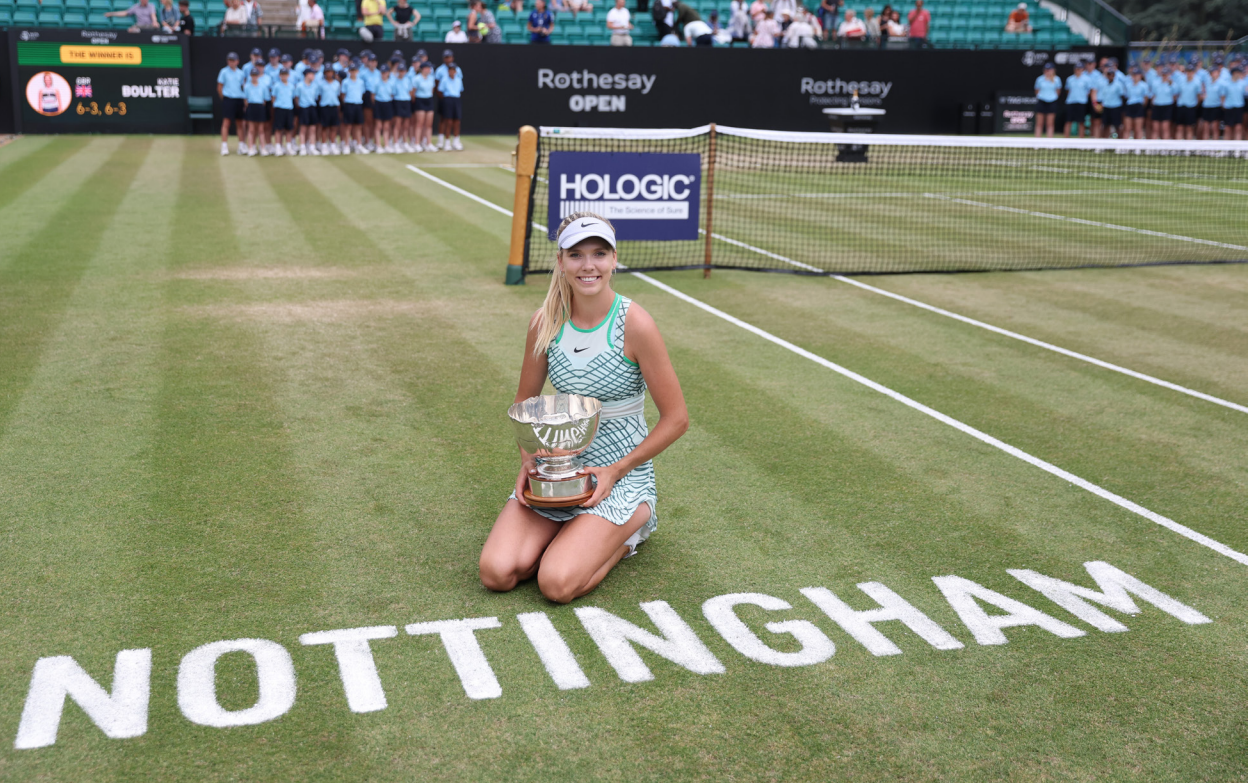
MOMENT IN TIME
Ons Jabeur at Edgbaston Priory Club on June 20, 2021 in Birmingham, England



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KATIE'S DREAM YEAR

As Katie Boulter stepped onto court for her first match at the Rothesay Open Nottingham last June, she could only dream about what lay in wait for her over the following 12 months.

Boulter's grass court season had already served up a notable milestone in her career, with her run to the semi-finals of the Lexus Surbiton Trophy a week before her trip to Nottingham securing her enough ranking points to become the British No.1 for the first time.

In doing so, she became the 23rd woman to top the domestic rankings since 1975 and the confidence that status brought inspired a series of impressive displays on the Nottingham grass courts.

Boulter beat British qualifier Emily Appleton 6-1, 6-3 in her opening match and backed that up with wins against Ukraine's Daria Snigur and an impressive victory against defending Nottingham champion Beatriz Haddad Maia.

Wins over fellow Brits Harriet Dart and Heather Watson secured her place in the final, where she beat another domestic friend and rival Jodie Burrage, in what was the first all-British WTA final for 46 years.



"I don't even know where to begin," she said after her 6-3, 6-3 win against Burrage. "I dreamt of this moment as a little girl when I was training here at four or five years old. Coming here as a fan and now as a player, this means more than everything to me.."

"We plug away behind-the-scenes and I'm so grateful to have my team by my side and I'm so appreciative to have them here with me."

"To have a home crowd and having played so many British players, it's been a massive privilege for me."

A run to the third round at Wimbledon cemented her rankings rise and gave Boulter opportunities to play in tournaments that were previously out of reach.

That gave a player who has been striving for this level of success for a decade to press the accelerator pedal in her career and she has done just that over the last year.

BRITISH No.1 PLAYERS SINCE 1975

- Virginia Wade
- Sue Barker
- Jo Durie
- Annabel Croft
- Anne Hobbs
- Sara Gomer
- Monique Javer
- Sarah Loosemore
- Clare Wood
- Lizzie Jelfs
- Rachel Viollet
- Sam Smith
- Louise Latimer
- Julie Pullin
- Lucie Ahl
- Elena Baltacha
- Anne Keothavong
- Katie O'Brien
- Heather Watson
- Laura Robson
- Johanna Konta
- Emma Raducanu
- Katie Boulter (since 12.06.23)

A third round appearance at the US Open last September was her best showing in New York and she carried her momentum forward in impressive fashion in 2024, winning her first WTA 500 title at the San Diego Open - defeating five top 50 players including a 5-7, 6-2, 6-2 victory over Marta Kostyuk in the final.

Boulter's break into the top 30 of the WTA Rankings has allowed her to be seeded in top level tour events for the first time in her career and she has adapted well to a level of success that is all the more rewarding given the number years that she has put in to make this breakthrough.

"Last year's grass court season was massive for me as I got a lot of wins and it gave me a chance to push on," said Boulter.

"I feel like I have grown a lot and I just want to consolidate my ranking and prove that I can get wins against these girls week in, week out."

"I didn't really do that when I got inside the top 100 the first time, but now is my moment to really push on."

"I feel like I've built a solid base now. It's taken me a long time, probably longer than a lot of people, but I feel like I'm in a position to springboard off this base."

"In every sport, it's going to take time to build something. I've played the long game and had to dig myself out of a few holes to get to where I am now."

Confidence and self-belief are commodities tennis players cannot acquire from hours practising and after a year that took Boulter's career to previously uncharted territory, she is back on grass and dreaming of more glory. ■



MOMENT IN TIME

Barbora Krejčíková of Czech Republic and Marta Kostyuk of Ukraine celebrate with the trophy after winning against Storm Hunter of Australia and Alycia Parks of the United States in the 2023 Women's Doubles Final during day nine of the Rothsay Classic Birmingham at Edgbaston Priory Club.

(Photo by Stephen Pond/Getty Images for LTA)



Mastering grass courts is one of the ultimate challenges in this sport, with the greatest names in the history of the sport cementing their legacy on a surface that has provided a stage for so many legends.

The last two decades have seen the tennis record books rewritten by icons of tennis such as Roger Federer, Serena Williams, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic and here, we salute the greats who have reigned supreme on grass in the Open Era of the sport.

FEDERER'S GENIUS

Roger Federer is the most prolific male champion on grass courts with eight Wimbledon titles on his record, with Novak Djokovic just one behind him in the race to win the most titles at the All England Club.



Yet Djokovic will not get close to matching Federer's total haul of grass court titles, with the Swiss maestro's relentless success winning in the pre-Wimbledon event at Halle in Germany helping the Swiss maestro to win a total of 19 tournaments on grass courts over the course of his decorated career.

Yet he will not get close to matching Federer's total haul of grass court titles, with his relentless success winning in the pre-Wimbledon event at Halle in Germany helping the Swiss maestro to win a total of 19 tournaments on grass courts over the course of his decorated career.

American Pete Sampras is the second most successful player on grass with 10 titles and America's Stan Smith is next on that list with nine.

Federer also holds the record for the best winning run on grass, as he claimed a remarkable 65 consecutive wins on the surface between 2003 and his defeat against Rafael Nadal in the 2008 Wimbledon final.

Finally, Federer has the most career wins on grass, with his 192 victories seven more than American great Jimmy Connors.



MARTINA THE GREAT

Nine-time Wimbledon champion Martina Navratilova dominates the record books in women's grass court tennis after her remarkable career that saw her collect a record 167 singles titles on all surfaces.

Grass was where she played some of her best tennis, with his dominance at Wimbledon matched by a magnificent 11 titles in Eastbourne.

In total, Navratilova won 309 and lost just 40 matches on grass, winning 32 titles on the surface.

Australian great Margaret Court holds the record for the most grass court title wins with 42, just ahead of her compatriot Evonne Goolagong, who won 38 at a time when there were a lot more grass court events on the tennis calendar.



THE BRITISH HEROES

British tennis fans waited 77 years for a homegrown men's singles champion at Wimbledon, with Andy Murray emerging as the hero the nation had been waiting for.

His 2013 Wimbledon win in the final against Novak Djokovic is one of the great moments in the nation's recent sporting folklore, with Murray backing up his win at the All England Club by lifting the trophy again three years later.

Murray also won Olympic gold on Wimbledon's Centre Court in 2012 and is a five-time winner of the cinch Championships at The Queen's Club, which is a record for that tournament.

Other British players who have won titles on grass include 1977 Wimbledon champion Virginia Wade, who claimed eight titles on grass, while Sue Barker won ten times on the surface.

MOST MATCH WINS ON GRASS - WOMEN

- 309** MARTINA NAVRATILOVA 🇸🇰
- 285** EVONNE GOOLAGONG 🇦🇺
- 264** MARGARET COURT 🇦🇺
- 212** VIRGINIA WADE 🇬🇧
- 208** CHRIS EVERT 🇺🇸

MOST MATCH WINS ON GRASS - MEN

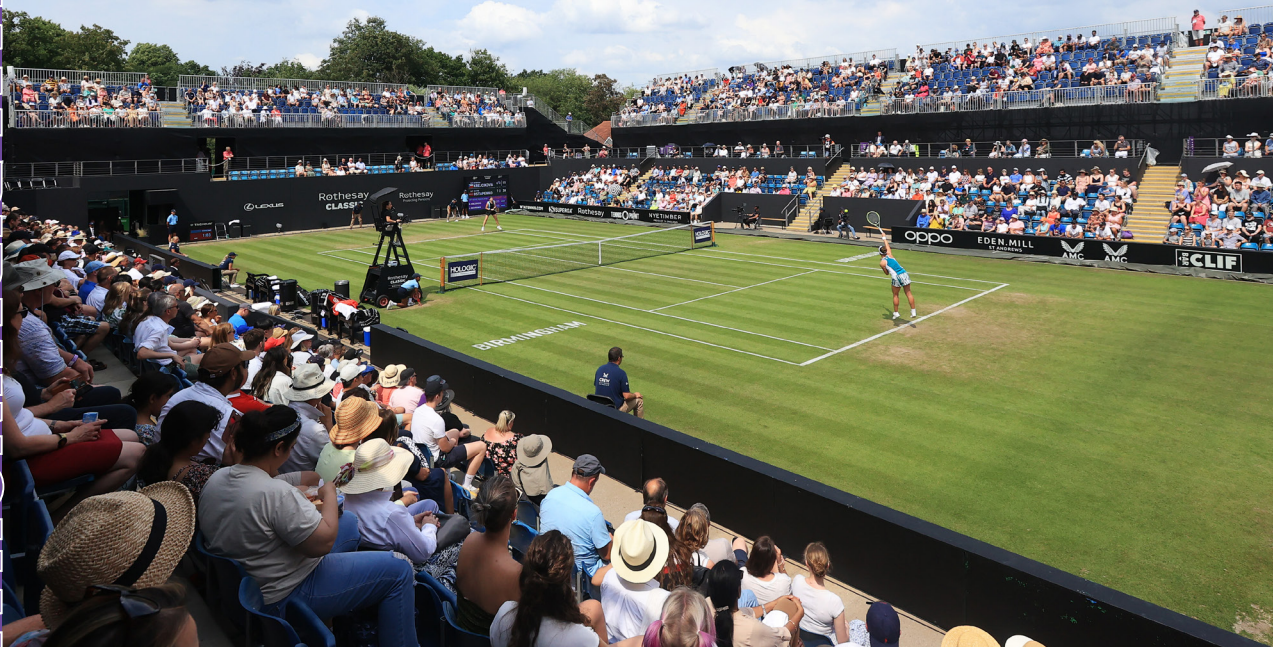
- 192** ROGER FEDERER 🇨🇭
- 185** JIMMY CONNORS 🇺🇸
- 164** JOHN NEWCOMBE 🇬🇧
- 157** PHIL DENT 🇬🇧
- 157** JOHN ALEXANDER 🇬🇧

TOP TEN MATCH WIN PERCENTAGES ON GRASS

- 92.63%** MARGARET COURT 🇦🇺 (264-21)
- 90%** PETE SAMPRAS 🇺🇸 (63-7)
- 89.3%** NOVAK DJOKOVIC 🇷🇸 (92-11)
- 88.54%** MARTINA NAVRATILOVA 🇸🇰 (309-40)
- 88.2%** ROGER FEDERER 🇨🇭 (105-14)
- 87.5%** BJORN BORG 🇸🇪 (56-8)
- 87.39%** CHRIS EVERT 🇺🇸 (208-30)
- 86.99%** SERENA WILLIAMS 🇺🇸 (107-16)
- 85.59%** BILLIE JEAN KING 🇺🇸 (190-32)
- 85%** STEFFI GRAF 🇩🇪 (85-15)



CHANGES FOR THE 2025 GRASS COURT SEASON



During the past two years, the LTA in consultation with the All England Club have been reviewing the entire grass court season with the intention of improving the experience for fans and players.

The purpose of the review has been to raise the profile and visibility of tennis in Britain during the run up to The Championships at Wimbledon.

The plans the LTA have unveiled will offer more fans the opportunity to watch professional tennis, particularly women's tennis, both live and on television, whilst ensuring that there are the same number of playing opportunities for British and overseas players across the four-week period.

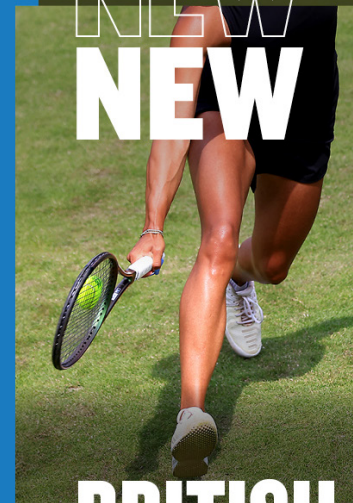
The new calendar of professional events for 2025 will:

- See high profile events at the start of the season to ensure maximum visibility for tennis
- Promote women's tennis to a larger audience and raise its profile
- Ensure every tournament venue will host both male and female events

While there are a number of changes to the calendar, in summary:

- A WTA event will return to London at The Queen's Club for the first time in over 50 years
- New combined event at Birmingham will be staged in the first week of the grass court swing
- Every tournament venue, Queen's, Eastbourne, Nottingham, Birmingham and Ilkley all now host men's and women's events

NEW
NEW
NEW



BRITISH
SUMMER
EVENTS
2025

- 02/06** Women's and Men's challenger level events
BIRMINGHAM
EDGBASTON PRIORY CLUB
- 09/06** **WTA 500**
LONDON
THE QUEEN'S CLUB
- 09/06** Women's and Men's challenger level events
ILKLEY
ILKLEY LAWN TENNIS CLUB
- 16/06** **ATP 500**
LONDON
THE QUEEN'S CLUB
- 16/06** **WTA 250 & ATP 125**
NOTTINGHAM
LEXUS NOTTINGHAM TENNIS CENTRE
- 23/06** **WTA 250 & ATP 250**
EASTBOURNE
DEVONSHIRE PARK
- 30/06** **GRAND SLAM**
WIMBLEDON
ALL ENGLAND LAWN TENNIS CLUB

CALENDAR

02 JUNE - 13 JULY 2025

The changes are an important step in increasing the visibility of our sport, particularly the women's game. The staging of a high-profile women's tour event in London for the first time in half a century will kick start interest in the sport at the beginning of the grass court season, meaning more public exposure for tennis in Britain, and more opportunities to inspire the next generation.

The LTA is also committed to protecting the geographical spread of our grass court

venues and every venue will now host both men's and women's tennis, meaning more chances for fans to watch British players in action closer to them.

The Edgbaston Priory Club will from next year, for the first time ever in Birmingham, host a combined professional men's and women's tennis event. The challenger level event will take place two weeks earlier in the calendar that this years tournament. This will be the first grass court event of the

year and draw players from around the world keen to get experience on the surface. Recent winners of the event, when it has been hosted in Surbiton, have included Andy Murray and Birmingham's own Dan Evans.

The LTA is very grateful to the Edgbaston Priory Club for all the hard work they have put into the event for the past 42 years and we look forward to working in partnership with them and the AELTC as we grow the event in the future. ●

LTA TENNIS FOUNDATION



The LTA Tennis Foundation's mission is to improve lives through tennis. We want to ensure that every child, young person, and adult can access the unique and life-changing benefits that tennis offers.

Working throughout Great Britain, we focus on underserved communities and under-represented groups, ensuring we reach those who face the biggest barriers to sport and who can benefit the most.

We partner and work with experts who are embedded within communities, ensuring the biggest impact is achieved for beneficiaries.

How we make an impact

Supporting organisations

- Financially supporting and collaborating with charities and organisations embedded within their communities, who use tennis as a force for good.

Enabling communities and schools

- Funding expertise and equipment to make tennis accessible to all.

Developing facilities

- Improving access to tennis by developing, often neglected, facilities and courts.

Since its launch in 2022, over half a million people have been positively impacted by the LTA Tennis Foundation.

"The grant from the LTA Tennis Foundation will prove transformational for so many lives in our local area. We want to make sure everybody has access to quality tennis provision, and healthy meals during school holidays" Founder, Playpoint Sports, funded by the LTA Tennis Foundation

Join the LTA Tennis Foundation community to keep up with the life-changing work taking place.

Registered Charity Number: 1148421



"THE GRANT FROM THE LTA TENNIS FOUNDATION WILL PROVE TRANSFORMATIONAL FOR SO MANY LIVES IN OUR LOCAL AREA. WE WANT TO MAKE SURE EVERYBODY HAS ACCESS TO QUALITY TENNIS PROVISION, AND HEALTHY MEALS DURING SCHOOL HOLIDAYS"

FOUNDER, PLAYPOINT SPORTS, FUNDED BY THE LTA TENNIS FOUNDATION

PROGRAMME SPOTLIGHT:

SAHELI SPORTS

Naseem, founder and CEO of Saheli Hub, is excited to be launching a brand-new programme – Saheli Tennis – with a grant from the LTA Tennis Foundation. Naseem set up Saheli Hub in 1998, a charity to encourage women and girls from underserved communities to get active, with a desire to transform her community through sport.

Naseem was driven by statistics that show that over 50% of Birmingham's population are from ethnically-diverse communities, and that Saheli Hub's research shows that women from these communities in inner-city Birmingham want to take part in exercise, fitness, and sport – but a lack of accessible, affordable, and culturally sensitive activities means they cannot participate, which is affecting their physical and mental health.

A successful pilot of the tennis programme ran in 2022, and the sessions saw 261 women and girls take part with amazing results. The sessions will now run weekly and take participants through basic tennis skills, resulting in them having the ability to rally with a partner, and then the opportunity to play matches if they want to.

One participant who took part in the pilot said; "I have watched tennis on the television before and I am so happy I get to do it in real life. I love coming here. I meet other women and we are all learning together."

Naseem says; "I want to break down the stereotypes that ethnic-minority women and girls do not like sport. They have just not been given the opportunity, or support to try it – everyone should have the chance to benefit from the amazing impact sport has."

The tennis sessions are completely free and there is no limit on how many and for how long people can attend. Naseem



saheli hub

commented "I want to remove as many barriers as possible for our community, with cost being one of the main ones".

What is wonderful about a programme like this is that you have women and girls coming together from all communities who would potentially not normally interact with each other, and sport, in this case tennis, unites them.

Scan the QR code to find out more about the Saheli Hub sessions



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LTA TENNISABLES

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RISING STARS



Tennis has lived through a glorious two decades dominated by a handful of legendary champions and now we are stepping into an exciting new era that will serve up fresh set of champions.

Roger Federer, Serena Williams, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic became sporting giants who transcended tennis, with the longevity of their success adding to their auras.

Their enduring presence in the final stages of Grand Slam events allowed them to build a global presence that will be hard to match, but tennis is fortunate to fresh batch of players ready to take centre stage.

Carlos Alcaraz, Iga Swiatek, Coco Gauff and Jannik Sinner have painted enchanting stories on tennis courts around the world in the last year, with the inspiration that has inspired more to follow in their footsteps.

A golden era in tennis may have reached a natural conclusion, but what comes next could be even more thrilling.

CLASS OF THE 2000s

“I feel like the new generation is definitely dominating. It’s a strong generation. We knew the group in 2002 was strong, and I think part of it helped us push each other growing up in juniors. We all had to compete with each other and strive on.”

The words of Britain’s Emma Raducanu highlighted the impressive collection of young stars making their mark in the women’s game, with her iconic victory at the 2021 US Open one of many moments that symbolised a changing of the guard in the women’s game.

Raducanu’s 2021 US Open final against fellow teenager Leylah Fernandez captured huge global television audiences, with the emergence of two young superstars of tennis a story that enchanted and fascinated sports fans in equal measure.

Injuries have hampered Raducanu’s progress over the last year, when world No.1 Iga Swiatek from Poland has grown into her role as the leading player in the women’s game.

Still only 22, the player who has topped the WTA Rankings with impressive consistency since Ashleigh Barty’s retirement in March 2022, Swiatek took on the mantle of becoming world No.1 and her success at the top level of the game confirms she has embraced the challenge.

It has also been a breakthrough 12 months for America’s Coco Gauff, who has got used to dealing with the glare of the spotlight since she beat her idol Venus Williams on Wimbledon’s Centre Court at the age of 15.

Gauff’s US Open win last September had an impact that revived memories of Raducanu’s success in the same tournament two years earlier, with the 20-year-old American one to watch during this summer’s British grass court season.

Emma Raducanu, 2021 US Open winner



ALCARAZ AND SINNER MAKE THEIR MARK

“I was never worried about what would happen when the ‘Big 3’ went. People said the same things before Roger Federer came along and then we had Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic soon after. There is always a new champion. Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner are so exciting to watch. They seem to enjoy playing as much as we enjoy watching them.”

The views of former British No.1 Laura Robson’s are echoed by tennis fans around the world who have witnessed some sensational sporting moments from the two most talked about young players in the men’s game over the last 12 months.

Alcaraz arrived at The Queen’s Club in London last June admitting his expectations on grass courts were limited, yet he finished the summer as a winner of the LTA’s cinch Championships and, famously, as Wimbledon champion after a thrilling win against Novak Djokovic in the final.

Alcaraz has backed up that success with some thrilling performances in 2024, including a hugely impressive win at the ATP 1000 tournament at Indian Wells in March.

Sinner’s rise has been even more meteoric, as his pivotal contribution to Italy’s Davis Cup win last November was backed up by his first Grand Slam triumph at the Australian Open in January.

“A new generation is here already,” believes Djokovic. “We’ve been saying this for years that we can expect that moment to come when you have a kind of shift of generations and it is happening now.”



YOUNG GUNS FIRING

Teenage stars have created some of the most captivating stories in tennis over the last year, with Mirra Andreeva leading the way as she made it through to the last-16 of last year’s Wimbledon Championship with some dynamic performances.

Czech teenager Linda Noskova has also caught the eye in 2024, with her memorable win against world No.1 Swiatek at the Australian Open in January highlighting her potential.

In the men’s game, Ben Shelton’s emergence was amplified when he became America’s No.1 player earlier this year, while Brazil’s Joao Fonseca and France’s Arthur Fils are being tipped to be champions of the future.

Britain also has high hopes of new stars emerging, with Jack Draper eager to make up for his absence from last year’s grass court season due to injury and 2023 Wimbledon Boys’ Singles champion Henry Searle striving to make his mark after impressive performances at junior level.



TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES AND INSPIRING FUTURES: THE HEART OF TENNIS IN BIRMINGHAM

With the Rothesay Classic Birmingham swinging into action, and a growing demand for access to tennis courts, communities across Britain are witnessing a transformation of their local park tennis courts.

What were once overlooked spaces are being revitalised and providing opportunities for people to pick up a racket and play, with many situated in Birmingham.

The Park Tennis Project, a landmark £30million investment supported by the LTA Tennis Foundation, delivered by the LTA, is making a significant impact by rejuvenating public tennis courts and supporting a renewed passion for tennis within communities. With a substantial investment, 3,000 courts will be transformed, ensuring welcoming and accessible facilities for people to play, no matter their age, gender, background, or ability.

A primary focus of the project is to engage women and give them the opportunity to pick up a racket and embrace tennis as a fun and active lifestyle choice, particularly as the Rothesay Classic Birmingham is a WTA event. Prior to this investment, 45% of park courts across Britain were in a very poor or unplayable condition.

This unprecedented investment is ensuring the courts in the worst condition are refurbished to bring them back to life, with introduction of gate access technology and online booking to make it easier for everyone to pick up a racket and get on court. This helps to tackle one of the main barriers to people playing tennis, which is finding and booking somewhere to play.

Huge progress has been made. Over 2000 courts have been transformed, bringing them



back to a high standard for the enjoyment of local communities up and down the country.

The LTA is on track to complete the project by the end of the summer, working with local authorities from Eastbourne to Inverness to help provide opportunities for many more people to pick up a racket. The aim is to get over 500,000 more people playing tennis in their local park every year.

This is a key way in which the LTA is delivering its vision of 'Tennis Opened Up', transforming communities through tennis



by making the sport welcoming, enjoyable and inspiring to everyone – regardless of their age, background, or ability.

In Birmingham alone, eight parks have received a total investment of £295,843 bringing them back to life and making tennis more accessible to the community. The refurbished parks across the city include Summerfield Park, Rookery Park, Gilbertstone Park, Cannon Hill Park, Lickey Hills Country Park, Pye Hayes Park, Bournville Park and Brookvale Park.

Meanwhile, more broadly across Warwickshire, 47 courts have been transformed through the project, bringing them back into long-term sustainable use, and providing more opportunities for children and adults to be active

These refurbished courts provide the local residents of Birmingham the opportunity to pick up a racket and access to tennis and there is no better time to get on court than during the sunshine months of summer.

Included as part of the project is Barclays Free Park Tennis, a free, weekly session in parks led by local volunteers, giving you the chance to meet new people and practice your skills. For competitive players who would like to be challenged, there is Barclays Local Tennis Leagues, whether you are a beginner or advanced, you can meet new people, power up your game and compete in a park court nearby.



As the Rothesay Classic Birmingham gets going, one of the eight park tennis courts in Birmingham receiving investment will welcome a host of local players of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds, focusing on women with the tournament being a WTA event, to celebrate the impact the Park Tennis Project has in the community, creates social connections, and keeps players active.

The refurbished courts in Birmingham symbolise opportunity and community engagement, embodying the transformative power of tennis. ■

Scan the QR code to book your local court.

BOOK A COURT





MENTAL HEALTH AND TENNIS IN WARWICKSHIRE

Tennis can change lives, and inspirational coaches like Matt Hillman, head coach at Kings Norton Tennis Club, are helping to highlight the power of the sport in the West Midlands through the LTA's Open Court programme.

A national scheme that actively promotes and delivers opportunities for disabled people to get involved in tennis and padel, the LTA's Open Court programme is jointly funded by Sport England and the LTA Tennis Foundation. It provides disability-specific sessions for tennis and padel – including learning disability, wheelchair, visually impaired and deaf, walking tennis and para-standing tennis.

The LTA is also expanding the programme into other long-term health conditions such as mental health and dementia, with Matthew playing a leading role as Open Court lead for Warwickshire LTA, as well as coaching tennis at Kings Norton Tennis Club in Birmingham.

“The main aim of the Open Court programme is a focus on inclusive tennis, predominantly aimed at disabled people,” begins Matt.

“When we say ‘disability’, we automatically think of wheelchair tennis, but there is a much broader range of people who have long-term health conditions, learning disabilities and mental health issues as well. The programme focuses on how we get more people involved in tennis.

“We have worked closely with Sport Birmingham and the main thing we have tried to set up is a network of coaches who can work together and spread the message of the Open Court programme.



“It started off slowly and with the help of some funding from the LTA, we’ve now got eight new venues on board who are starting their own disability sessions.

“Some are doing wheelchair tennis sessions, some are doing mental health sessions, some are working with people suffering from Parkinson’s and it has been great to see how the financial help from the LTA has taken the programme to the next level in Birmingham and Warwickshire.”

The LTA Open Court programme brings people into tennis who are new to the sport, with the Birmingham region offering a range of sessions for newcomers who may never have considered stepping on court before.

“Most of the people who come to our sessions are trying tennis for the first time,” added Matt. “I have worked with the Birmingham Solihull and Mental Health Foundation Trust and they have prescribed our sessions through our Moving Lives, Healthy Minds partnership with Sport Birmingham as a way to help people who are suffering from mental health issues.

“When they come to one of our sessions, the focus is not on how good they are at tennis, we only do a little coaching. It is a social session and we adapt the games and activities to suit their needs and abilities.

“It has been great to see some of the people who have come to our sessions improving their confidence and taking the step of joining a tennis club. People might see tennis on TV and think it looks beyond them, but we strip it down to the basics and ensure everyone can enjoy the sport.”

Matt Elkington, the LTA’s EDI Programme Manager for Disabled People, is clear about the importance of coaches like Matt’s work, saying “Matt and the network of Open Court leads throughout Britain (one in each County currently) are doing fantastic work to engage with disabled people and people with long term health conditions. Matt specifically has worked with his County Association to create resources to allow new venues to deliver disability tennis to audiences local to them.”

The impact of Matt’s coaching across Warwickshire has been clear, but wherever he coaches across the West Midlands, his goal and motivations remain crystal clear.

“Tennis has been a massive part of my life and ultimately, I want to offer as many people as possible in the Birmingham area opportunities to get into the sport.”

Whether you want to play, support or just find our more, read about disability tennis and LTA Open Court by scanning the QR code or heading to the LTA website





EMERGING TALENT

It has been a stellar year for British juniors around the world, with the 2024 Lexus Junior National Championships at the National Tennis Centre in April providing a stage to showcase an impressive array of talent emerging through the domestic tennis system.

Mimi Xu from South Wales was crowned as British champion in the 18U Girls event and Surrey's Oliver Bonding backed up his solid 12 months of success by becoming national champion in the 18U Boys tournament, with both players now set to play in Wimbledon Qualifying later this month.

The quality of the tennis on show highlighted the depth of talent among our young players, with ten British players making their mark in the top 100 of the ITF's Junior rankings and many of our hopefuls achieving notable achievements on the global stage.

The victory for Staffordshire's Henry Searle in last summer's Junior Wimbledon Boys' Singles Championship was a headline-grabbing moment that has been complemented by some notable results for British junior players over the last 12 months.

Searle, who won the 2022 16U Junior National Championships title and is a graduate of our National Tennis Academy at Loughborough University, is one of five British boys in the top 100 of the ITF

junior rankings, with his triumph on the All England Club's grass courts last July inspiring others to follow in his footsteps.

"What Henry did definitely created a positive mentality amongst our boys," said Martin Weston, LTA Men's National Coach.

"His success at Wimbledon would have been very relatable to our other junior players and they would be looking to match it or better it.

"Hopefully that has a knock-on effect on the younger players because they feel they are in touching distance with a player who has achieved something extraordinary.

"With the competition structure we now have in place in Britain, these players have opportunities to compete in high-level competitions regularly.

"We are constantly looking for depth of talent because when you have that depth, the top players grow. When they need to fight hard in their domestic matches, that helps when they play in the big wide world."



Bonding's success at the Junior National Championships added to his growing collection of titles after he achieved a notable victory when he won the J500 Blumenau title – also known as the Banana Bowl – in March.

Welshman Viktor Frydrych and Kent's Benjamin Gusic-Wan, who won last year's 16U Junior National Championships with a win against Bonding in the Final, are also prominent in the ITF Junior Rankings, with so many of our players are benefitting from the access to high-level competitive tournaments being staged in Britain as part of our Performance Competitions Calendar (PCC).

The PCC is designed to support the LTA Performance strategy, with several British juniors gaining valuable experience at the pro level following promising junior results.

Welsh No.1 and two-time 18U Junior National champion Xu reached the semi-finals at W60 Glasgow, while Surrey's Hannah Klugman reached the quarter-finals at W60 Glasgow and W100 Shrewsbury.

It's not just Xu and Klugman who are showing real promise among British junior girls, with Katie O'Brien, LTA Women's National Coach, optimistic about what lies ahead.

"We have really good depth of talent amongst our junior girls," said O'Brien. "Our girls all get along so well and it feels like they are driving each other on, while also inspiring the generation just behind them.

"These players are still very much at a developmental stage, but they are progressing quickly as they have played in some high profile and also have Junior Grand Slam experience.



Pictured:
Mimi Xu (top left), Hannah Klugman, Charlie Robertson (left), Oliver Bonding (right)

"Our domestic Competitions Calendar has been so important as we have been able to give our players a chance to test themselves against some of the best players in the world, which has helped to ensure our junior game is in a healthy state."

The transition from the junior ranks to the senior tour is always challenging, yet our brightest young starlets are being given every opportunity to go to the next level. ●



PERFORMANCE MATTERS

WITH MICHAEL BOURNE

Over the last year, performances from British players at the highest levels of the sport – professional and junior, tennis and wheelchair tennis - have been among the strongest we have seen for a long time.

As a national governing body, there are two ongoing aims for our performance programme:

Firstly, we're always trying to support more players to go on the performance journey towards playing elite level tennis. We want as many young people as we can, from all corners of the country, enjoying the game and aspiring to reach the elite end of tour tennis and representing their country.

Second, for players already at the elite end of the professional game, we want to continually improve the support we offer to enable them to occupy that elite level for as long as possible.

For our first goal, we've taken the time to examine our junior pathway from the national academies right down to looking at the 10 and under level. How we support those players to progress from county and 10U programme engagement through to our Regional Player Development Centres and onto the International Junior stage is something we're continually focused on making annual improvements, as we look bring through the next generation of pro players.

What's promising is we're starting to see more and more British junior success. In 2023, Henry Searle won the boys' singles at Wimbledon, the first winner in more than 50 years; Mark Ceban won the prestigious Les Petits As event in Tarbes; and Hannah Klugman won the 18U girls' singles at the Orange Bowl in Florida. We've also had real success in junior team competitions, including winning two Tennis Europe Winter Cups at Boys U14 and Girls U12 level and finishing third at the Junior Billie Jean King Cup. Great Britain also won the junior title at the Wheelchair Tennis World Team Cup, and Dahnon Ward won

the US Open wheelchair junior boys title, the second British player to do so in succession.

For our second goal, we continue to identify how we can add value to the programmes of our existing elite players.

We have further developed our female athlete support offer to include pre-season female athlete health-specific screening opportunities such as breast and bone health, sports gynaecology and we are introducing sports bra fitting. In 2024 we will also be communicating our first performance player pregnancy policy.

We are investing further in the National Tennis Centre in Roehampton. Working with Hawkeye for the past year, we are developing a game insights support service for coaches and players and are in the process of installing a full Hawkeye system, optimising our technical development service offer to players and coaches including the ability to compare between training and match performances. This will be one of only three permanent Hawkeye installations in the world.

Not to forget the basics, we are going to be adding a new Red Plus clay court to the centre this summer to complement the four clay surfaces already in place and provide more capacity to our players in a year when the Olympics and Paralympics are on clay. This will also give us the opportunity to further stress test the new court technology and its suitability for optimal clay court practice in Great Britain.

Whatever we do behind the scenes, our primary focus is to support British players to maximise their potential and be as well prepared as they can be on the match courts. ■



British Junior Hannah Klugman

PERFORMANCE COMPETITIONS CALENDAR: A CHANCE TO SHINE

Across Britain, rising stars of British tennis have once again had the opportunity to progress on both the domestic and international stage thanks to the LTA Performance Competitions Calendar.

Designed to give players of all ages more opportunities to progress, the calendar features a total of 40 weeks of ranking competition, from 10U junior tournaments to an expanded Lexus LTA British Tour all the way up to ITF World Tour events, staged across the country.

Among these events, the biggest women's tennis tournament in Britain outside of the grass court season will be staged in October, with the Lexus GB Pro Series returning to Shrewsbury.

The tournament, an ITF W100 event, has featured a host of established and burgeoning British players and some of the biggest names in the game over the last two years.

Last year alone, teenager Hannah Klugman became the youngest player to come through qualifying at an event of this level - taking that record off Coco Gauff - before going on to reach the quarter-finals, and Amarni Banks went on a captivating run to the final. While Billie Jean King Cup winner and an Olympic silver medallist Viktorija Golubic pipped Amarni Banks to the title in front of a sell-out crowd, and Marketa Vondrousova won the title in 2022 before going on to lift the singles' title at Wimbledon last summer.

Dave Courteen, The Shrewsbury Club's managing director, said: "It's fantastic for the town and the county that the LTA and ITF want to continue to bring an event of this stature to a relatively small town compared to others that host this level of event on the worldwide tennis circuit.

"The DMOS People Arena was sold out for Finals Day and it was the biggest crowd we've ever had, so it was wonderful to see so many people here. The support proves there is a real demand in Shropshire from people wanting to watch high-quality tennis."

Tournaments such as that held in Shrewsbury, that not only take world class tennis to new locations but also give players more opportunities to play more often on home soil outside of the British summer, are vital for helping to bring through the next generation of British talent. 2023 saw 134 British players lift titles across pro and junior level events held as part of the Performance Competitions Calendar, and with Brits already lifting silverware so far in 2024, players are taking the opportunity when given the chance to shine. ■



To find out more and to secure your seats at this year's Lexus GB Pro Series Shrewsbury, scan the QR code or visit worldtennistourshrewsbury.com

KIDS ON COURT: SO FAR, THE LTA YOUTH SCHOOLS PROGRAMME HAS HAD A MAJOR IMPACT



Every player that graces the courts this summer, from the Lexus Surbiton Trophy all the way through to The Championships, Wimbledon, started their journey as a young boy or girl picking up a racket for the first time. Given the opportunity, those children have gone on to star on the biggest stage in the sport and inspire millions of others.

It is our job to ensure that every child across Britain, no matter their background, has the opportunity to get on court and experience everything our sport has to offer. That is where LTA Youth comes in.

LTA Youth is the flagship junior programme, bringing together all of our expertise and drive to help children get involved in tennis, whether they want to try it in school or want to push themselves in competition. It connects all tennis activity for juniors so that the offer looks and feels the same, whether a child is playing in a school, park or club, helping create a simple and clear route into tennis for players and their parents.

LTA Youth Schools is the programme to help more schools deliver more tennis to more children, designed to be as impactful as possible both for students and their

teachers. The programme offers free teacher training, PE activities and content specifically created to develop traits like perseverance, resilience and respect which complement the PSHE curriculum, whilst helping to deal with the challenge of how to boost physical activity among children and young people. Thanks to the LTA Tennis Foundation,



each school that completes training receives a £250 voucher, which can be used either for 10 hours of LTA accredited coaching or tennis equipment.

LTA Youth Schools is just one of several success stories from the wider LTA Youth programme.

March this year marked one year since the LTA teamed up with Prime Video to launch Prime Video LTA Youth Girls, a new coaching programme to inspire thousands of girls to pick up a racket and start playing tennis. To date, the programme has seen over 6000 girls start to play tennis, and 500 coaches have been trained to deliver Prime Video LTA Youth Girls sessions – addressing some of the barriers girls face when coming into sport and creating the best environments to help girls thrive on the tennis court.

Across the country there are now 20 clubs and venues that have achieved LTA Youth ‘Recognised Venue’ status. These venues have demonstrated that they are committed to delivering an excellent junior programme that offers high quality coaching and regular competitive opportunities for young players. The recognition is not only a reward for all their efforts, but can be used as a key tool to promote their venue, attract more players and grow even further.

For those young players looking for competition, 2023 was a bumper year for more than 71,000 children across 841 venues taking part in the LTA Youth Team Challenge, the fun competition designed

SO FAR, OUR SCHOOLS PROGRAMME HAS HAD A MAJOR IMPACT:

- 13,566** SCHOOLS REGISTERED
- 23,122** REGISTERED TEACHERS
- 21,048** TEACHERS HAVE COMPLETED TRAINING
- 8,103** SCHOOLS HAVE RECEIVED A £250 VOUCHER FROM THE LTA TENNIS FOUNDATION

for junior tennis players. More widely, there were more events than ever for juniors to get involved in, with more than 6,000 LTA Youth Local Tour events in 2023, and over 4000 teams entered in LTA Youth leagues for summer 2023.

Taken together, the impact of LTA Youth has been huge for junior participation in Britain. Weekly participation among four to 15-year-olds is at its highest level since records began, with just over 600,000 taking to Britain’s courts every week, while insight from teachers registered to our schools programme tells us that almost 90,000 pupils are playing more tennis than they would otherwise.

Jo-Anne Downing, Product and Programme Manager at the LTA, is excited not just about the success LTA Youth has already seen, but about what the programme could achieve in the near future. “Over the last 12 months,

we’ve seen fantastic growth in the number of children playing tennis. Whether they’re picking up a racket for the first time or becoming more competitive, there are more opportunities than ever for kids to get on court. We’re hopeful that this summer and beyond, even more kids can enjoy the benefits of playing and staying in tennis, whatever their age, gender, ability, disability or background.”

Not every child that picks up a racket will go on to become a tennis champion, but through LTA Youth we can make sure that any child can enjoy their journey in the sport, and we can ensure that children from across the country can develop life skills, get active and most importantly, have fun. ■

Find an LTA Youth course near you on the LTA website:





The Brits have been drawn in Group D, which will once again return to Manchester's AO Arena later this year.

The team will compete across the week in a round-robin group with Canada, Finland and Argentina. The top two nations in the group will progress to the final 8 in Malaga between 19-24 November.

Lexus GB Davis Cup captain and Head of Men's Tennis at the LTA Leon Smith said: "We were expecting a tough challenge whatever group we were drawn in. With Canada as 2022 champs, Finland made semis last year and Argentina won the title in 2016 and have good depth in their team. But we also have very good players and have proven time and again we can deliver as a team. So it's a fairly even group on paper.

"Our team are really excited to be going back to Manchester where we had such amazing support and this makes a massive difference when it comes to getting GB over the line."

Last year, the Brits defeated Australia, Switzerland and France to finish top of Group B but eventually lost out in the quarter-finals to Serbia. The Lexus GB Davis Cup team are one of two wildcard teams to gain automatic qualification for the Finals Group Stage.

Canada were crowned Davis Cup champions for the first time back in 2022 and come into this year's event as the third seeded nation. They reached the Final 8 again last season but narrowly lost to Finland 2-1 in the quarter-finals. The Canadian side defeated Korea Republic 3-1 in their qualifying tie earlier this year to secure a spot in the Finals.

Finland head to Manchester off the back of its best Davis Cup performance in 2023 after reaching the semi-finals for the first time. They beat former champions Croatia, USA and Canada en route to the semis, where they lost to Australia. Off the back of a 3-1 win over Portugal in their Qualifier, the Finnish side will be ones to watch again.

Four-time champions Argentina complete Group D having missed out on a place in the Finals last year. In February, they clinched a 3-2 victory over Kazakhstan to reestablish themselves among the top sides in the world. Argentina and Great Britain last faced each other in the semi-finals back in 2016 where the South Americans won 3-2 in Glasgow. [▶](#)



Tickets and hospitality packages on sale now: scan the QR code



The Lexus Great Britain Billie Jean King Cup team will take on two-time former champions Germany in the opening round of the 2024 Finals, with captain Anne Keothavong relishing the chance to lead her team at La Cartuja Stadium in Seville, Spain, from Tuesday 12 to Wednesday 20 November.

Great Britain secured their place in the Finals after a thrilling win against France in April, as Emma Raducanu won two singles matches and Katie Boulter added the other win to seal a memorable 3-1 victory at Le Chaudron in Le Portel.

"It's going to take a lot of work to try and wipe that smile off my face," said captain Anne Keothavong after the win in France. "The atmosphere was just rocking, but Katie and Emma came to play and put in some fantastic performances against tough opposition.

"I'm just so chuffed for the team. We came here and we knew it was going to be difficult. But we came, we performed, and we're all leaving with a big smile.

"It's incredible because two years ago we were the host nation of the Finals. We were the wildcard entry but we still made the semifinals and that was a fantastic week for the team, but on this occasion, we've qualified ourselves.

"The players have done it, the team have worked together really well, and we deserve our spot there.

"That's where I believe this team belongs. The girls are all hungry to go out there and perform. They've got a lot of things to do before then, but why not, it's all to play for."

A straight knock-out format will be in place for the finals, with a match against top seeds and defending champions Canada awaiting

in the quarter-finals for Great Britain if they can get past Germany.

"Germany are an experienced team with players we're all familiar with and who our British players have had matches and wins against," added Keothavong. "No matches will be straightforward but we're excited as a team to be involved in the Finals and we'll give it our all as always."

Great Britain and Germany have faced each other six times in the competition, with the Brits leading the head-to-head 4-2.

Their last meeting was in 1985 where Great Britain ran out 3-0 winners thanks to victories from Jo Durie, Annabelle Croft and Anne Hobbs. [▶](#)

For information on how you can cheer on the Great Britain team in Seville in November, visit www.lta.org.uk/fan-zone/gb-teams/billie-jean-king-cup/match-centre/ or click on the QR code here:





RETURN ON INVESTMENT

How one coach is giving back to the community that gave him tennis

LTA SERVES Tennis Activator Thabo Glen Ngcobo dedicates his life to giving back to his local community, taking tennis into the heart of central Birmingham and its surrounding areas.

Growing up in South Africa, the now-24-year-old Thabo moved to Hampton-in-Arden, a village south east of Birmingham, over a decade ago, and having grown up a football fan, it was a meeting with local tennis coach, Ian Poole, which sparked his initial love for tennis.

“My mum was working at the tennis club in Hampton, and she introduced me to Ian who is the Head Coach and Tennis Manager at the club,” Thabo said. “After having a

conversation with my mum, he very kindly took me under his wing, and from then on, my love for both coaching and tennis just grew.”

“As a kid I didn’t play tennis. Even when I was enrolled in school over here, it wasn’t a sport that was massively accessible in my area at the time. But once I started, I just fell in love with it.

“I loved being on court, and I knew that I wanted to work with kids, so as soon as the opportunity arose to run the tennis sessions, I knew I’d found the career path that I wanted to pursue. It is without a doubt my favourite sport to coach.”

It was Ian who also pointed Thabo in the direction of

the Inner-City Diversity Project, developed by community organisation, Everyone 4 Sport, to tackle inequalities and challenge the sports’ conventional image by taking tennis into underserved communities.

Both Thabo and his twin brother have since worked to deliver sessions, including the delivery of the LTA SERVES programme, that present minimal barriers across Solihull, Birmingham and Sandwell.

Yet, Thabo soon saw opportunities to expand his reach outside of just running sessions at local community centres alone.

Not only did he provide a route for his church to



I LOVE PEOPLE. I THINK I’M ONE OF THE LUCKY ONES BECAUSE I JUST TRULY LOVE AND ENJOY WHAT I DO.

THABO NGCOBO

become an LTA SERVES community centre, establishing a team of tennis leaders and activators to host tennis programmes, but he also volunteers his time to running sessions for young people that are suffering with mental health in a project that is closely connected with the NHS.

“My work with the NHS developed through working closely with Ian,” said Thabo.

“I ran one or two sessions a month and it’s something

that I just fell in love with. It can be tough at times because people may say, ‘I don’t want to do this’ and ‘I don’t want to do that’, but the smile it brings to their faces makes it all worth it. I’m there for them.

“As soon as you tell members they’re playing tennis, they’re mood just instantly changes for the better.

“It’s also massively beneficial for kids’ overall mental health. They may have had a bad day at school, but five minutes into their tennis session and they’re smiling and having fun again. As soon as they have a racket and ball to hand, all the negativity that’s built up during the day just disappears.”

Always genial and welcoming, Thabo’s approachable manner has made him a hit amongst the young people he coaches, and his role, in turn, has equally been a smash hit in his own life.

Reflecting on his experience as a volunteer coach and LTA SERVES Tennis Activator, Thabo continued, “I love people. I think I’m one of the lucky ones because I just truly love and enjoy what I do.

“For me, the number one thing is for the kids to enjoy themselves. For an hour a week, they just forget about whatever else is going on in their life and they focus on their tennis. That’s what it’s all about.”

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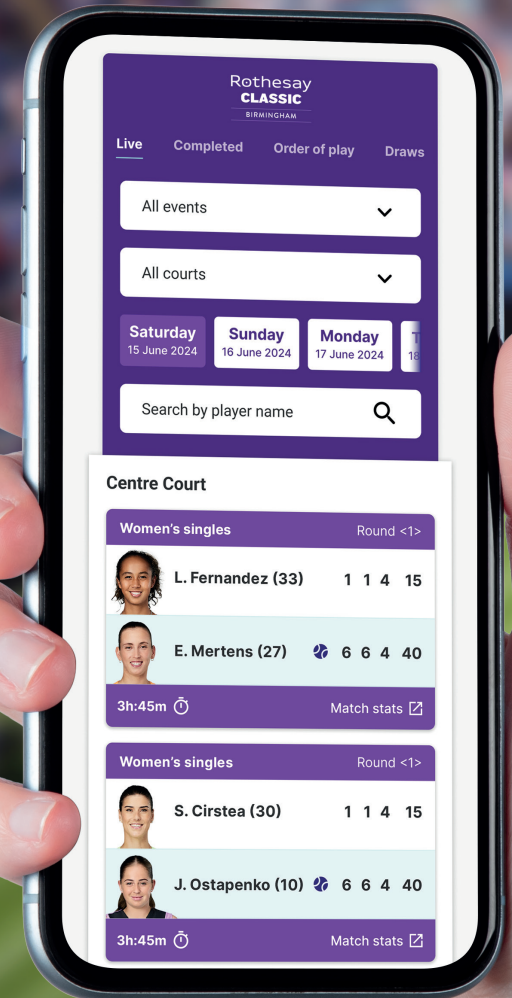
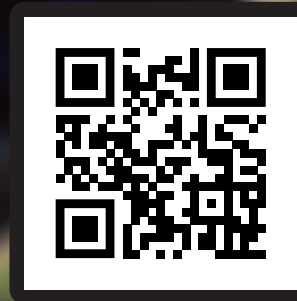


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GRASS COURT TENNIS IN NUMBERS



1 Virginia Wade is the only British woman to win the Eastbourne title in its 50-year history.



13 Martina Navratilova reached 13 Eastbourne International finals, winning 11 of them over a 16 year period.



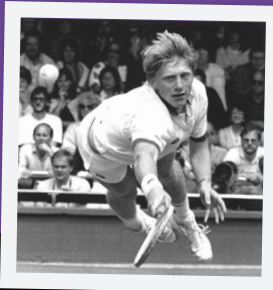
3 British men have won three of the last four titles at the Nottingham Open, with Dan Evans winning in 2019 and 2022 and Andy Murray taking the title last year.



6 Britain's Andy Murray holds the record for most wins at The Queen's Club, winning five singles titles and one doubles title.



17 Germany's Boris Becker is the youngest winner of The Queen's Club Championship after winning the title in 1985 aged 17 years 207 days.



10 Katie Boulter was the latest British player to win the Rothesay Open Nottingham last year, as she lifted the trophy 10 years after Elena Baltacha won her third title at the tournament.



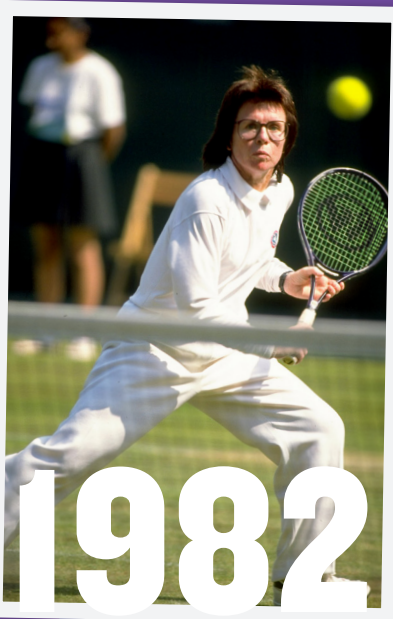
19 Roger Federer holds the record for winning the most titles on grass courts, with his haul of 19 including a record eight Wimbledon titles.



33 The number of American players to win The Queen's Club Championship, with the most recent being Sam Querrey in 2010.



153 American Andy Roddick recorded the fastest serve at The Queen's Club Championships, with his 153mph serve against Thailand's Paradorn Srichaphan delivered in a 2003 quarter-final.



1982 Billie Jean King won the first Birmingham Classic in 1982



28 Novak Djokovic went on a 28-match unbeaten run on grass courts between 2018 and last year's Wimbledon final, when he lost to Carlos Alcaraz.



134 From June 1982 to June 1991, Martina Navratilova boasted a record of 134-3 on British grass courts – during the eight-year run in Britain, she won 70-straight matches and amassed 18 titles.



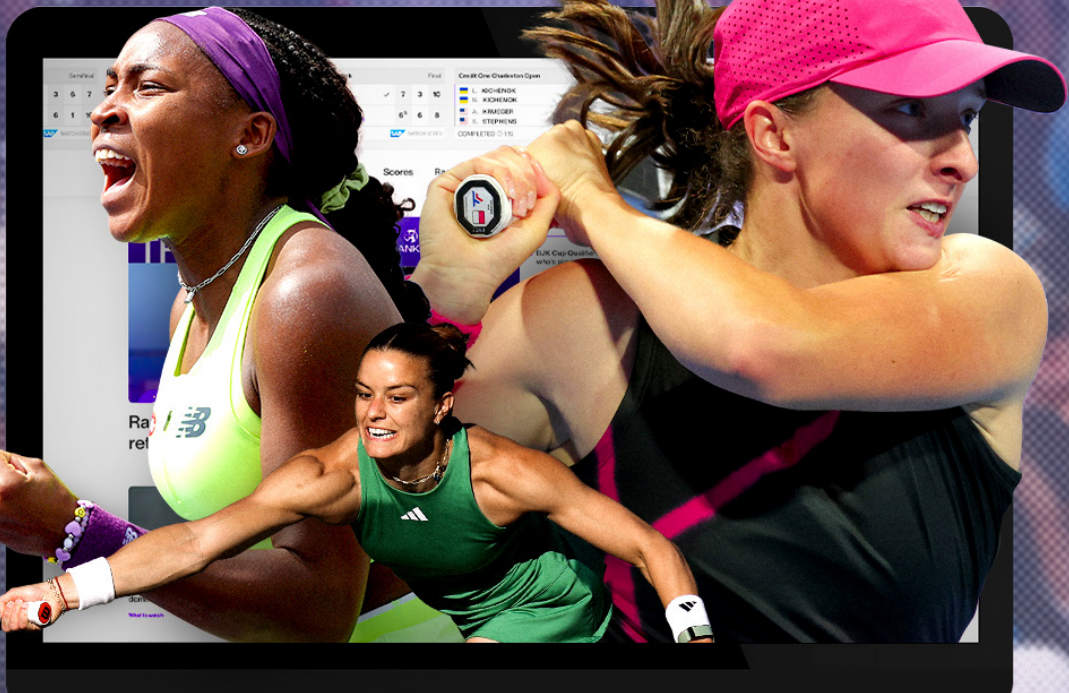
41 Bjorn Borg went on a 41-match unbeaten run on grass courts from 1976 to 1981, with his run ended by John McEnroe in the Wimbledon final.



113 Spain's Feliciano Lopez was the lowest-ranked player to win The Queen's Club tournament when he lifted the title in 2019 at No.113 in the ATP rankings.



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MOMENT IN TIME

Maria Sharapova signs autographs after her third round match against Samantha Stosur of Australia, at the Edgbaston Priory Club on June 10, 2004 in Birmingham, England

PLAYER, COACH AND MEDIA EXTRAORDINAIRE

The Midlands' own Yasmin Clarke's tennis journey is one unlike many others.

Having progressed from a bright young star on court, through to coaching her brother Jay on the pro tour, and now commentating on coverage of the Grand Slams, Yasmin has been at the forefront of the game throughout her career.

Like many, Yasmin's first introduction to tennis came from her family – with a helping hand from two role models who were taking the world by storm.

"I was really lucky – I started playing tennis with my Dad and my sister when I was young," Yasmin said. "We lived about 60 metres away from a tennis club and at the time Serena

and Venus Williams were just coming on the scene. I was the younger sister and a bit shorter so I was always Serena and she was older and taller so she was Venus. We'd play on the driveway or down at the club and that was where it all started for me."

Following her playing career where she was British junior No. 1, Yasmin decided to move into coaching, becoming a Level 5 Master Coach and eventually working alongside her other brother Curtis to support Jay on tour.

"I had too many injuries so I decided to get into coaching and I found I really enjoyed it... I've loved working with my family.



I'm a bit older than they are, so being able to share my knowledge with them and have them take it on and run with it themselves was great. For me, your family always want what's best for you, not that other coaches don't, but family are always willing to go above and beyond, and I felt we did that."

FROM COURT TO COMMENTARY

At the inaugural Tennis Black List that took place last June, Yasmin received an award for her work in media – a new career path that she's seizing with both hands.

"I'd always been interested in the media – it's seemed like a dream job. I was lucky that the LTA helped me get an opportunity to do some commentary at the Battle of the Brits and then it progressed to doing a bit for Eurosport and some Grand Slams in 2023.

"Having this recognition and celebration of black people within tennis is fantastic. When I was younger there weren't many other black people involved in the sport in any way and now, I'm seeing a lot more representation and we should be highlighting that.

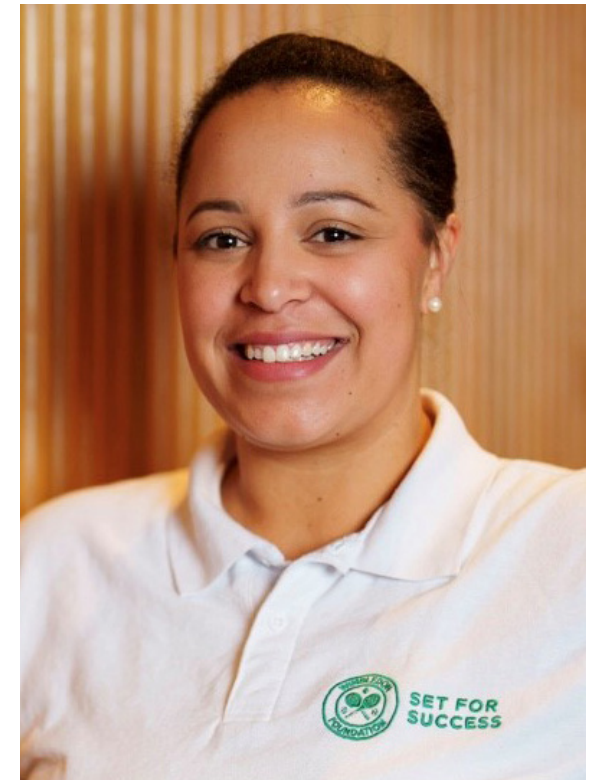
"Increasing diversity in media is a bit like how tennis started for me – Serena and Venus were the trailblazers and that's paved the way for people like myself, my brother and so many other players, who all site them as their inspiration. I think it will be the same in the media – if you can see it, you can believe it, you can be it. It's important that we have that representation and there are diverse voices in the media."

DRIVING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Alongside her continued work as a coach, media broadcaster and mentor, in 2021, Yasmin became an LTA Councillor to help drive forward diversity and inclusion in Britain – something that she's incredibly passionate about.

"The LTA's vision is to open tennis up to people from backgrounds who wouldn't normally play and what they've done over the past few years is work really hard to get people involved who haven't been before. That's where my role has come in.

"I've worked on the coaching side to help develop a diversity and inclusion bursary. If you want to have a diverse workforce then you need to invest in them so that's very important and they've also set up a mentoring scheme, which I'm a part of as well.



"I'VE WORKED ON THE COACHING SIDE TO HELP DEVELOP A DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION BURSARY. IF YOU WANT TO HAVE A DIVERSE WORKFORCE THEN YOU NEED TO INVEST IN THEM SO THAT'S VERY IMPORTANT"

YASMIN CLARKE ON HER WORK AS AN LTA COUNCILLOR

"It's a brilliant job. It's something that I wasn't sure I'd be the right fit for but I have a lot of experience in a lot of different areas, so I just want to share my knowledge and experience with other people."

It's thanks to the support and contributions of role models like Yasmin, that we're able to take our sport to people and places it's never been before. With an infectious enthusiasm and passion for the sport, as well as a career that has spanned almost every area of the game already, it's safe to say that Yasmin is helping to shape a more diverse and inclusive sport for the future. ▣

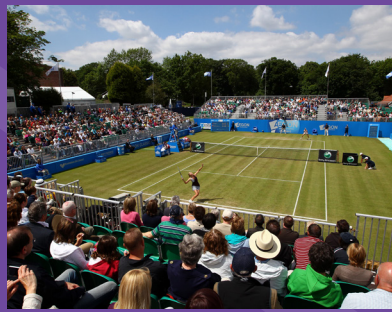


Beatriz Haddad Maia in 2022



Australia's Ashleigh Barty was Birmingham Classic winner in 2019

WALL OF CHAMPIONS



General view of Maria Sharapova of Russia serving in her match against Alison Riske of USA in 2010



Nathalie Tauziat in 2001



Petra Kvitova in 2017



Jelena Dokic 2002



Ashleigh Barty and Casey Dellacqua Doubles champion in 2016



Daniela Hantuchova 2013



Jelena Ostapenko celebrates with the trophy after winning against Czech Republic's Barbora Krejckova in 2023

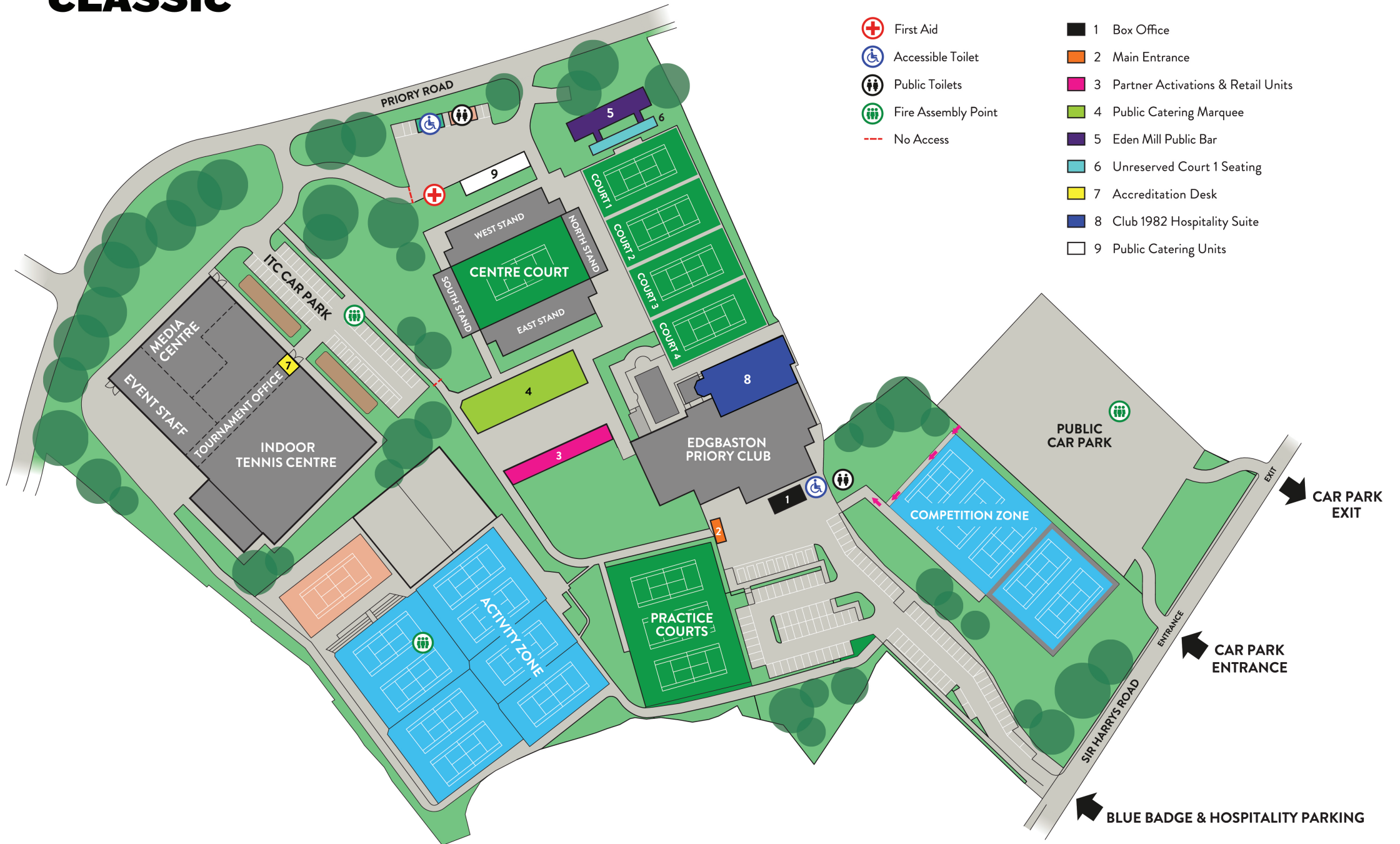


Maria Sharpova 2004

Rothesay CLASSIC



ROTHESAY CLASSIC BIRMINGHAM EDGBASTON PRIORY CLUB SITE MAP





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