



PRESS RELEASE

International Tennis Federation and National Associations announce World Tennis Number project

The International Tennis Federation (ITF) and leading National Tennis Associations today announced a strategic project to develop and implement a global, level-based tennis rating, designed to enable more matches to be played between players of similar levels, from beginners to professionals.

The new rating, called the **World Tennis Number (WTN)**, will aim to break down one of sport's key barriers to participation – uneven match-ups - allowing players of all abilities to determine their individual level. This will help players identify opponents and competitions of an appropriate standard and access to more competitive and enjoyable playing opportunities.

ITF President, David Haggerty, said: “Our vision is simple, to create local online communities of tennis players sharing meaningful and enjoyable tennis experiences through level-based play. With this new platform, we have the means to connect a worldwide community of 87 million tennis players and fans.”

The WTN project, approved by the ITF Board of Directors in March 2018, is led by a steering committee composed of executives from the ITF, French Tennis Federation (FFT), LTA and United States Tennis Association (USTA), and supported by a project team and an advisory group of nations that also includes experts from the National Associations of Canada, China, Ireland, Netherlands and Switzerland.

Sports technology experts, Club Spark, have been selected to build the World Tennis Number digital platform. This platform will create a global online tennis community, enabling players to access their WTN from anywhere in the world, record and measure their progress, and interact with other tennis players. The digital platform will also assist tournament organisers in the staging of competitions based on ability levels.

The scale and algorithm for the World Tennis Number is currently being modelled and refined using a database of millions of match records, and through worldwide player consultation. The project has already received significant input from nations representing the majority of the world's tennis players.

“The goal is more people playing more tennis more often,” explained Luca Santilli, ITF Executive Director of Tennis Development. “Creating a rating system for players of all levels that is commercially independent has been a very positive step; but what is really exciting is the potential for the World Tennis Number to become a giant leap forward for the sport. With the correct algorithm and adoption on a worldwide basis, it could be game changing.”

The World Tennis Number is planned to be in operation towards the end of 2019, with National Associations launching officially within each country from 2020.

FFT President, Bernard Giudicelli, said: “France will always be supportive of initiatives enabling tennis to grow worldwide and will share its experience with other nations to build their own grassroots development plan. Competition is the best leverage to achieve that aim. The World Tennis Number platform is a ten-year dream come true. This is Tennis 4.0, using technology to provide easier access to tennis and deepen the connection between local players and worldwide tennis.”



LTA CEO, Scott Lloyd, said: “We are delighted to be partnering with the ITF and leading tennis nations to create the new World Tennis Number. The LTA is working hard to open tennis up to anyone who wants to play, and we believe that a new rating system will support our plans to offer players appropriate and enjoyable matches at every level of the sport.”

USTA CEO Gordon Smith, said: “One of the USTA's top priorities is to elevate all aspects of the tennis player's experience, regardless of their age, background or skill level. As a nation with one of the largest tennis player communities on the planet, the USTA constantly strives to utilise best-in-class technology to improve products for the needs of players and fans. We believe the new World Tennis Number platform will foster relationships, increase opportunities to play and connect US players with the global community.”

The ITF and steering committee nations believe that the World Tennis Number will be a powerful enabler in fulfilling the fundamental objectives of increasing participation, and recruiting and retaining players of any age, gender and ability.