

Marketing the Game Report 2004 / 2005

The following is a report on the International Tennis Number (ITN) and the Intro to Tennis Taskforce.

ITN

Following the launch of the International Tennis Number (ITN) in January 2003, the ITF has continued to work with ITF member nations to help increase tennis participation in their countries. There are now 34 nations that have begun to implement the ITN as their national rating system.

Argentina	Colombia	Iceland	Peru
Australia	Denmark	India	Poland
Austria	Ecuador	Ireland	Singapore
Bhutan	El Salvador	Italy	Slovakia
Bolivia	Finland	Japan	South Africa
Brazil	Germany	Luxembourg	Uruguay
Chile	Honduras	Malta	Venezuela
China	Hong Kong	Mexico	Vietnam
Cuba		Paraguay	

The ITN Manual was completed in early January 2004 and is now available in PDF format on the new ITN weblet (www.itftennis.com/itn) along with all the other supporting ITN material. The new weblet provides nations with all the tools needed to implement the ITN on a national and club level as well as showcasing the latest news from participating ITN nations from around the globe.



An ITN e-mail newsletter is also now being produced. The newsletter is distributed to 4400 recipients including coaches, players, clubs, tournament administrators, key media, manufacturers, commercial contacts and all national and regional associations and is designed to keep them up-to-date on the latest ITN developments and encourage more nations / clubs to implement the ITN.

An ITN On Court Assessment has also been developed and was launched at the ITF AGM in 2003 on a trial basis. The On Court Assessment acts as an objective method of initially rating recreational players that don't play competition on a regular basis. A flash programme demonstration of the On Court Assessment is also available on the ITN weblet along with an On Court Assessment booklet in English, French and Spanish.

The On Court Assessment website, www.ontcourtassessment.com (launched at the ITF AGM 2003) is designed to support the On Court Assessment, and running alongside the official ITN website. Coaches are encouraged to register as ITN On Court Assessors and enter assessment results of all their players. Players can then login in and start charting their own development and improvement over time. It also allows players to compare their scores to other players on a local, national and international basis as well as print out their own ITN certificate. To date ITN assessors in 73 countries are using the On Court Assessment website to enter On Court Assessment scores:





INTRO TO TENNIS PROJECT

Part of the Marketing the Game initiative, the Intro to Tennis project aims to look closely at how tennis is currently being introduced to juniors and adults worldwide and look at ways that it could be done more effectively.

Following on from work already started in 2003 and 2004, a meeting of the Intro to Tennis task force took place on 15th & 16th February 2005. This was the 3rd meeting of the group and considerable progress was made regarding the way to proceed in this area of increasing participation in tennis.

- DVDs and tennis manuals on adult tennis (produced by the French Tennis Federation) have been translated into Spanish and English and are now available.
- Extensive research and consultation with manufacturers, the ITF technical and development department took place to study the specifications of the various types of modified balls currently on the market and that are used for introductory tennis. Research is also being done to determine which colour of modified ball is best suited for adult beginner play. A ball approval scheme for introductory tennis balls was launched in January 2005.

A number of additional projects have been identified for further research in 2005 such as promoting the health benefits of tennis and also promoting a “games based” teaching methodology when introducing adults and children to tennis, in an effort to attract and retain more people in the game.

The group has agreed to focus on certain specific concepts that they feel should be promoted jointly by the ITF major nations. These include:

- ITN & Assessment Award Schemes.
- A new practical 28 hour “Play Tennis” coaches course for coaches working with starter players.
- Promotion of the red orange and green balls (modified balls) for use with starter players.
- Promotion of effective competition formats for use in Intro programmes involving all ages.
- Health benefits of tennis – development of a “Fit for Tennis” template - and conduct research into the health benefits of tennis.
- Development of a Play Tennis website.