

Special Edition

Korea hosts outstanding ITF Annual General Meeting

- **Ricci Bitti to run again for ITF President**
- **Montenegro admitted as a Class B Nation**
- **Thirteen honoured with Services to the Game Award**

The 2006 ITF Annual General Meeting attracted 60 nations and 172 delegates, partners and staff to Seoul, Korea this week for two and a half days of meetings. Important Key Issues Sessions and the annual gatherings of the ITF Regional Associations were held ahead of the formal AGM on Friday. This year's AGM was hosted by the Korean Tennis Association and marked only the second time in its history that the ITF had held its annual meeting in Asia.

Key Issues Sessions

ITF President Francesco Ricci Bitti welcomed the delegates on Wednesday evening, thanking Dong-Kil Cho, the President of the Korean Tennis Association, and his team for their outstanding efforts on behalf of this AGM. Mr. Cho responded on behalf of the hosts, also welcoming the delegates to Seoul.

Following a morning of Regional Association meetings on Thursday morning, the Key Issues Sessions proceeded with reports from ITF Executive Vice President Juan Margets, Executive Director Davis Cup Bill Babcock, and Head of Professional Circuits Jackie Nesbitt on the current situation in Professional Tennis. As part of this presentation, the ITF asked and received the support of the delegates to reaffirm the ITF's key principles on the scheduling of its flagship competitions, Davis Cup by BNP Paribas and Fed Cup by BNP Paribas, as well as the importance of federation-owned tournaments to the long term health of the sport of tennis. In addition, delegates were given the opportunity to discuss rule changes that would be proposed in the formal session of the AGM.

As is the tradition at the AGM, the Lawn Tennis Association of Great Britain (LTA) hosted a luncheon that was, as ever, well received by all the delegates. ITF President Francesco Ricci Bitti noted the close relationship that existed between the ITF and the LTA, and how much the ITF was looking forward to welcoming the LTA to Roehampton when the new LTA National Tennis Centre is completed. LTA President Stuart Smith also welcomed the delegates and congratulated the Korean Tennis Association on their outstanding organisation of the event and on the opportunity to learn more about Korean culture.

In the afternoon session, the delegates received reports on Finance from Honorary Treasurer David Jude and John Garnham, Executive Director Finance and Administration; on Development from Dave Miley, Executive Director Development; on Junior Activities from Luca Santilli, Manager Junior and Senior Tennis and on the ITF Survey from Dr. Stuart Miller, Head of Science and Technical. Miller, who assumed responsibility for the ITF Tennis Anti-Doping Programme activities at the start of the year, gave a status report on the programme. Jan Menneken, Executive Director Commercial, reported to the delegates about the ITF's commercial and television activities. The final topic of the afternoon was the ITF's Marketing the Game programme that included an update on the Team ID project from Juan Margets and the introduction of a new participation initiative, "Tennis...Play and Stay", that will be launched with the support of the major tennis nations in 2007.

On Thursday night, delegates were guests of the Korean Tennis Association at the Changyong Palace, the oldest of all existing royal palaces in Korea, first built in 1419 and beautifully restored. It was a rare honour to be entertained in this historical monument and a mark of respect for the ITF Annual General Meeting.

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ITF AGM 2006 (Cont. from page 1)

The Formal AGM

The formal AGM on Friday was opened by Mr. Kim Myunggon, Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Korea, who expressed his view that it was a great honour for Korea to host the ITF AGM and his pleasure at seeing the rapid growth of tennis in Korea. He noted that Korea had joined the ITF in 1948 and began playing Davis Cup in 1962, and that Korea had also hosted the Olympic Games in 1988, a milestone for tennis as it made its formal return to the Olympic Movement. Mr. Dong-Kil Cho, President of the Korean Tennis Association, echoed the feelings of Mr. Kim Myunggon and asked the ITF to help create the conditions and infrastructure to assist in the growth of grass roots tennis.

Ricci Bitti to run again

ITF President Francesco Ricci Bitti opened the proceedings, formally welcoming the delegates and thanking them for their participation. Following the formal acceptance of the minutes of last year's AGM in Prague, Ricci Bitti updated the assembly on the activities of the ITF in the President's Annual Review of the Year. He announced that he will run for ITF President for a third term at next year's AGM, saying, "Because of the trust shown to our sport by the IOC and the support of our member nations, I want to let you know that I have decided, as I have already informed the Board, to stand for re-election as ITF President in 2007. I hope that you will continue to have the confidence in my ability to fulfil this role that you have shown since my election in 1999."



Francesco Ricci Bitti, President of the ITF

Davis and Fed Cup dates; federation-owned events

Ricci Bitti also reiterated the position stated in Thursday's Key Issues Session on professional tennis, saying, "Let me say now that we will not accept inferior dates for Davis Cup or Fed Cup by BNP Paribas and we will do everything in our power to assist federation-owned events so that these cornerstones of the game can continue to prosper... The ITF member nations are the gardens in which the players are grown. It is our events, from national to international competitions, at the junior and circuit levels, that provide the players with enough experience to play at tour-level. Without federation-owned tournaments, without Davis Cup and Fed Cup, many national associations would simply not have the resources or the playing opportunities necessary to develop players."

The AGM agreed the following:

- A change to the constitution regarding the appointment of the Executive Vice President or Chief Operation Officer
- The addition of the Tony Trabert Cup (the Men 40 Age Team Event) to the list of Official ITF Team Competitions
- The admission of Macau as a Class C Member from 2007
- The admission of Aruba as a Class B Member from 2007
- An increase in shares for Korea from 5 to 7 from 2007; for the People's Republic of China from 3 to 5 from 2007; and refusal to consider a late application by Croatia for an increase in shares from 5 to 7 but encouraged Croatia to apply in time for the 2007 AGM.
- A transfer for Kenya from Class B to Class C membership but refused a late application from Mali to transfer from Class B to Class C. Mali will be able to reapply in 2007.
- Suspension of Class B members: Mali, Mongolia and Togo
- Suspension of Class C members: Guinea-Bissau and Zambia
- Lifting of Suspension: Gambia and Cameroon
- Admission of Montenegro as a Class B Nation from 2007. Montenegro will be able to enter teams in Davis Cup by BNP Paribas and Fed Cup by BNP Paribas, and other ITF Team Competitions.

The AGM also approved amendments to Davis Cup and Fed Cup regulations including a clarification of anti-doping penalties to be assessed against players who have competed in either competition who are later found to have committed a doping offence.

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ITF AGM 2006 (Cont. from page 2)

King elected Honorary Life Counsellor; Awards for Services to the Game

Long-serving ITF Board Member Ian King of Great Britain was unanimously elected an Honorary Life Counsellor of the ITF and the AGM approved 13 Awards for Services to the Game for:

Barbara Schett (AUT), Jorge Paulo Lemann (BRA), Hisham Nasser (EGY); Kosei Kamo (JPN), Zina Garrison (USA), Anthony Ryan (AUS), Kurt Nielsen (DEN), Leander Paes (IND), Christine Ungricht (SUI), Anna Smashnova (ISR), Zsuzsa Kormoczy (HUN), Anne-Marie Rouchon (FRA) and Vicente Calderon Zeballos (BOL).

2007 AGM to be held in Tunis

The AGM was notified that the venue for next year's Annual General Meeting will be Tunis from 20-22 June 2007. Several nations put forward verbal bids to host the 2008 and 2009 ITF Annual General Meetings and were asked by the ITF President to submit a formal, written application stating their intentions.

The ITF President Francesco Ricci Bitti closed the meeting, thanking the ITF Board of Directors, the delegates and the ITF staff for their hard work and commitment.

Following the conclusion of the AGM, delegates were invited to a lunch hosted by Russia in honour of their 2005 championship Fed Cup team. Russian Tennis Association Vice President Aleksei Selivanenko welcomed the delegates on behalf of the Russian Tennis Federation President Shamil Tarpishev, and Fed Cup Committee chairman Georg von Waldenfels congratulated the Russian team on their victory and thanked them for their hospitality.

The final function of the AGM was the Gala Dinner hosted by Davis Cup champion nation Croatia and the ITF at the Shilla Hotel where the meetings took place. Radimir Cacic, the Croatian President, was on hand to welcome the delegates to this annual dinner and was congratulated on his team's historic victory by ITF Davis Cup Committee Chairman and Executive Vice President Juan Margets.

ITF President Francesco Ricci Bitti closed the evening with a final thanks to hosts the Korean Tennis Association, whose President Dong-Kil Cho handed the traditional AGM trophy to Tarak Cherif, President of the Tunisian Tennis Association, who will host the 2007 AGM.

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