

The ITF Board of Directors gathered in Miami for its first meeting of the year. The meeting was very productive and covered many strategic as well as operational matters.

### **ITF 2024 STRATEGIC PILLARS – PROGRESS REPORT**

ITF COO Kelly Fairweather updated the Board regarding ongoing work to align the overall goals of ITF2024. All department and individual objectives and KPIs, as well as key projects, have been finalised in the business planning process for 2019. Through a focussed planning process, the programmes of work for 2019 were identified and the specific projects listed for the Board. Reporting will take place three times a year. Following each review a summary will be circulated.

The ITF is reviewing the high-level recommendations from the ASOIF report on "The Future of Sport Recommendations" report and assessing how ITF is tracking against them through ITF2024.

### **PROFESSIONAL TENNIS**

#### **ITF World Tennis Tour**

In January 2019, the ITF launched its restructured professional tennis circuits under a single banner, the ITF World Tennis Tour. The Board reviewed first quarter performance indicators. Initial statistics show: an increase in the number of women's tournaments with more at a higher prize money category; after a fall in Q1, the number of men's tournaments has stabilised in April and May; new series of tournaments providing a much-needed platform for the development of professional tennis in Central and South America; new hosting countries, such as Ghana, Norway and Kenya; the effect of the increase to a 32 qualifying draw on playing opportunities; and the positive impact of the system of reserved places for emerging talent, particularly at the \$15,000 level.

The new ITF World Tennis Tour is the second stage of the reform process and follows the increases in prize money implemented in 2016 and 2017, which saw a 23% increase in total ITF prize money to \$23.5 million in 2018 from \$19.1 million in 2015.

The Board acknowledged that there are encouraging positive signs, however, criticism has been noted and concerns are being raised regarding job opportunities and player progression. The ITF outlined the support it is providing to handle enquiries from players and coaches, such as a permanent email service, regular proactive communications via the iPIN player newsletter, personal face to face meetings on site at events, and a call for questions addressed in real-time via Q&A sessions hosted on itftennis.com. The Board reiterated the need for the ITF to work with the full support of the WTA and the ATP for permanent allocation of tour ranking points, and to continue discussions with the ATP in light of the impact of the current ATP position not to provide points at \$25k tournament level.

The Board recognised that the ITF World Tennis Tour is a long-term project requiring continued assessment and discussed adjustments when and where justified within the limits imposed by the Independent Review recommendations.

The Board approved a motion to evaluate an investment strategy and establish an investment plan to ensure a sufficient and balanced number of playing opportunities provided for both female and male players. Based on the feedback and data provided by the ITF, the Board discussed adjustments within its authority that would serve to increase the number of playing opportunities at both \$15,000 and \$25,000 tier levels. The ITF Board approved the following adjustments to the ITF World Tennis Tour to be implemented as soon as possible:

- Where Pre-Qualifying / Wild Card competitions are created to offer additional playing opportunities, such events will be governed by the ITF World Tennis Tour regulations;
- An increase in the Singles Qualifying Draw at Women's World Tennis Tour \$60,000, \$80,000 and \$100,000 tournaments from 24 to 32, where tournaments have the capacity;
- The introduction of a Protected Ranking for the ITF World Tennis Singles and Doubles Rankings;
- Introduction of two (2) reserved places in \$15,000 tournament Doubles Draws for teams to be accepted by ATP/WTA/ITF Doubles ranking;
- Introduction of two (2) reserved places in \$25,000 tournament Doubles Draws for teams to be accepted by ITF Doubles ranking;

- Improved processing of Tournament Acceptance Lists after the Freeze Deadline to display withdrawals and remove Alternates from all but their highest priority tournament in order to provide more predictable playing opportunities for players;
- An increase in the number of year-end Junior Exempt Project places from three (3) to five (5) for elite ITF Junior players.

These changes follow the increase in qualifying draws from 24 to 32 players at \$25,000 and \$15,000 levels announced in February.

### **Davis Cup**

The Davis Cup Committee Chairman confirmed that the first phase of the new format, the 2019 Qualifier round in February, was successful. The Board heard that the Davis Cup Committee and Davis Cup & Fed Cup Taskforce had discussed possible new approaches regarding the composition and format of Groups I and below in 2020. The Board was reminded that 2019 had required a format that would allow successful transition from the former 16-team World Group format to the new 18-team finals structure. The transition has been completed and the approach for 2020 is now being reviewed.

The Board agreed with the direction from the Committee and Taskforce to try and avoid retrospective promotion and relegation in the Zone Groups from 2020. The Board requested the ITF executive to research and review possible format options, to be presented at the next Committee meeting in June 2019. The Board agreed to ensure consistency in Men's and Women's tennis and both Davis Cup and Fed Cup Committees are to be approached whenever a rule is under review.

### **Fed Cup**

The Chair of the Fed Cup Committee (FCC) reported that, following the recent FCC meeting, the Committee fully supports the proposed Fed Cup reforms from 2020. ITF discussions with the WTA and feedback from the members of the WTA Player Council has been positive and constructive. The ITF Board will review proposals for a new competition format and a shortlist of host city bids at its Roland Garros meetings in June 2019. The current tender and submission process is due to close on April 26.

### **Hopman Cup**

The Board noted the conclusion of the licensing agreement with Tennis Australia to run the Hopman Cup. The ITF acknowledged Tennis Australia's contribution to building this event. The ITF underlined its commitment to ensuring the Hopman Cup and format continues and confirmed that a search for a new licensee and host city is underway with several parties already expressing interest.

### **Olympic Tennis Event**

The issue of a congested schedule for the Olympic Tennis Event, with three events taking place over a nine-day period, was raised by players and the national associations in Rio 2016. As a result of this feedback and after consultation with players, former Olympians, tournament directors and officials, the ITF Olympic Committee presented a motion to the ITF Board to amend the Men's Singles Final to best-of-three tiebreak sets in alignment with all other rounds and the Women's Singles Finals. The Doubles format has been amended to a 10-point tiebreak in the third set. This format is already in use in the mixed doubles event.

## **DEVELOPMENT**

The ITF provided the ITF Board with an overview of the strategic priorities and evolution of the 2017-2020 ITF Development Strategy. The ITF presented a restructure of the Development department and indicated that decentralising the recruitment of ITF experts in each region has further enhanced the impact of the programme worldwide by supporting the work of the ITF Development Officers in each region. Over the last 3 years, the Development budget has been doubled and this investment has resulted in the following:

- Provided lesser-developed regions the means to host more events and by doing so increased the number of competitive opportunities.
- Increased the number of visits from ITF staff and experts.
- Increased the support to the ITF Junior Tennis Initiative, including significant growth in the resources allocated to active nations (subsidy and equipment), the redevelopment of the School Tennis resource and piloting the ITF Tennis Festivals app.
- Launch of the ITF Recognition of National Training Centres, which aims to increase the standards of NTC's worldwide.

- Launch of the National Training Centre Network Programme which supports National Associations to develop their existing NTC's and to identify areas for improvement with the assistance of an ITF-approved expert. Twenty-four nations visited in 2018 with a similar number of visits planned for 2019.
- Increased the number of coaches' courses worldwide
- Launched the ITF Academy on 22 March 2019, an online platform to support the education and certification of national coach education systems.
- Increased the number of Grand Slam Player Grants from 14 players in 2017 to 29 players in 2018 and 30 players in 2019 for a total investment of \$1.95 million.
- Significantly increased the number of GSDF Touring teams internationally and regionally.
- ITF introduced Junior Player Grant programme to support an additional 15 talented junior players in 2018 and 15 players in 2019.
- 187 delegates attended the inaugural 2018 ITF Worldwide Participation Conference. The second edition will take place on 7 and 8 July 2019 at Chelsea FC in London.

Due to the increasing engagement of National Associations, the ITF was able to collate online and analyse specific data from 195 countries and produce the first-ever global report. This report benchmarks the number of tennis players, the level of participation worldwide and provides National Associations with both participation and competition analytics. The data and analytics report will be updated annually, enabling the ITF to identify global trends going forward.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Following the Finance Committee meeting held on March 17, the Board received an update to the Operating result for the year ended 31 December 2018 which showed a surplus of \$0.1m after tax, a slight improvement against budget. Expenditure on Strategic Initiatives primarily focussed on Davis Cup reforms and IT projects and amounted to \$3.7m in the year. This is part of the \$10.5m utilisation of Reserves approved by the Board, which will have been spent by the end of 2020 on strategic initiatives to support ITF2024. The investment portfolios suffered losses of \$1.8m in the year, largely due to adverse equity market movements in the final quarter, which have subsequently been recouped when markets rallied after the year end. The Board approved the 2018 Financial Statements.

## **GOVERNANCE**

### **AGM – ITF Presidential and Board candidate presentations:**

The Board noted that nomination forms for Presidential and Board candidates are available. The Board was advised that candidates will be given the opportunity to present to Member Nations at the 2019 ITF AGM. The Board discussed and agreed the appointment of a Parliamentarian as has been past practice to guide an efficient and effective AGM.

### **IRP - Data Sales Agreement:**

The ITF outlined to the Board its work with the Tennis Integrity Unit Supervisory Board and the other governing bodies of the sport to develop and agree implementation of the IRP's recommendations around data sales. The ITF outlined the six key elements of Recommendation 1 from the December 2016 IRP report which are to be implemented by tennis' governing bodies. In October 2018, the ITF and SportRadar implemented targeted restrictions to limit the supply of live data from certain players' matches at ITF events. Further measures to protect the integrity of ITF events are currently in the planning or implementation stage.

## **ITF ETHICS COMMISSION CHAIR REPORT**

The Chair of the independent ITF Ethics Commission reported on the Commission's activities since December 2018, primarily, the appointment of further Commission members, approval of the Candidacy Rules for the 2019 elections for a fair and transparent election process for all candidates, and issuance of the Election Pack to member nations. The election for the 2019 ITF President and Board of Directors will be managed by an external and independent Election Panel, comprised of three ITF Ethics Commission members, to ensure the election process is conducted with integrity and fairness to all candidates. Conflict of Interest declaration forms have been sent to all committee, commission and taskforce members for transparency purposes. It was reiterated that the Commission will assist with any queries regarding the Code or the 2019 elections.

**Dave Haggerty**  
President