

ITF Seniors 2021 - Tournament Structure, Grading Criteria & Rankings

In October 2019, [the ITF communicated a series of developments](#) for the ITF Seniors Circuit in 2020 and 2021 following the publication of the ITF Seniors Strategic Plan in January 2019.

Following consultation with the ITF Seniors Player Advisory Panel and the ITF Seniors Tournament Director & Referee Panel at various stages over the past 12 months, the ITF Seniors Committee are pleased to confirm details of Seniors Circuit changes that will come into effect on 1 January 2021.

Tournament Grading Criteria

Since 2019, the ITF Seniors Committee have reviewed tournaments against four (4) criteria to review tournament grading. Tournaments have been measured against these criteria to allow the Seniors Committee to determine whether a tournament upgrade or downgrade should be given.

The four criteria used to determine grading on the ITF Seniors Tour are:

1. ITF Tournament Evaluation Score

This is the primary measure used to determine grading. The evaluation reviews the quality and depth of player field at each tournament through an assessment of entry numbers and ranking points in each event.

The evaluation score calculates the total ranking points of all players competing within the tournament to provide a total combined evaluation score. This is further broken down based on the number of draws in a tournament to provide an average figure.

Tournaments that demonstrate a high-quality player field in comparison with tournaments in their nation, region and globally shall be considered favourably for upgrades. The same measures are applied to all tournaments on the circuit.

2. Player Satisfaction Results from Tournament Feedback Survey

Introduced in 2019, the tournament feedback survey provides an opportunity for all players who compete in an ITF Seniors tournament to provide feedback on their satisfaction on several key areas deemed important to players.

The questions included were formulated based upon a survey sent to all ITF Seniors players in 2018, asking players to identify the most important aspects for their enjoyment and satisfaction at ITF Seniors tournaments. These include value for money, match scheduling, standard of courts & facilities, player catering, social activity and excellent communication from tournament organisers before and during the event.

During 2019, over 8,700 surveys were completed. Players are asked to rate their experience on a 1 to 7 scale, with 7 being the best score possible. Players are asked to rate their Overall Tournament Satisfaction on this 1-7 scale. Based on all surveys completed during 2019, the average player satisfaction across all ITF Seniors tournaments was 5.68 out of 7.0 which highlights the general standard.

3. Tournament Director & Referee Report

The ITF consider the post-event report from both the Tournament Director and Tournament Referee/Supervisor to support the grading review. Both reports are viewed in conjunction with the player feedback survey to provide the ITF Seniors Committee with details of the tournament delivery standards in place such as quality of match courts, communication, officiating standards, social events and more.

4. National, Regional and Global Balance of Tournaments

The ITF Seniors Committee review grading of each tournament against the existing ITF Seniors tournaments within the nation and region. The ITF Seniors Circuit adopts a pyramid tournament structure on a global scale and as such, each nation and region is also measured against this to ensure the pyramid structure is consistently in place.

Tournament Recognition Scheme (New for 2021)

The ITF will introduce a Tournament Recognition Scheme in 2021 where tournaments that receive the very best player satisfaction feedback will be recognised on the ITF website and ITF Seniors tournament calendar. This feature will help new and existing players identify the tournaments that are providing the very best levels of player satisfaction, and to motivate and reward tournament organisers who are delivering an exceptional tournament experience.

The ITF website will highlight these tournaments on the Seniors Calendar on the ITF website as well as within each tournament page on the ITF website. Approximately 20% of ITF Seniors Tournaments will receive this recognition each year as decided by the ITF Seniors Committee. Further details including the number of tournaments who are eligible to receive the Tournament Recognition per grade and per region will be available later this year.

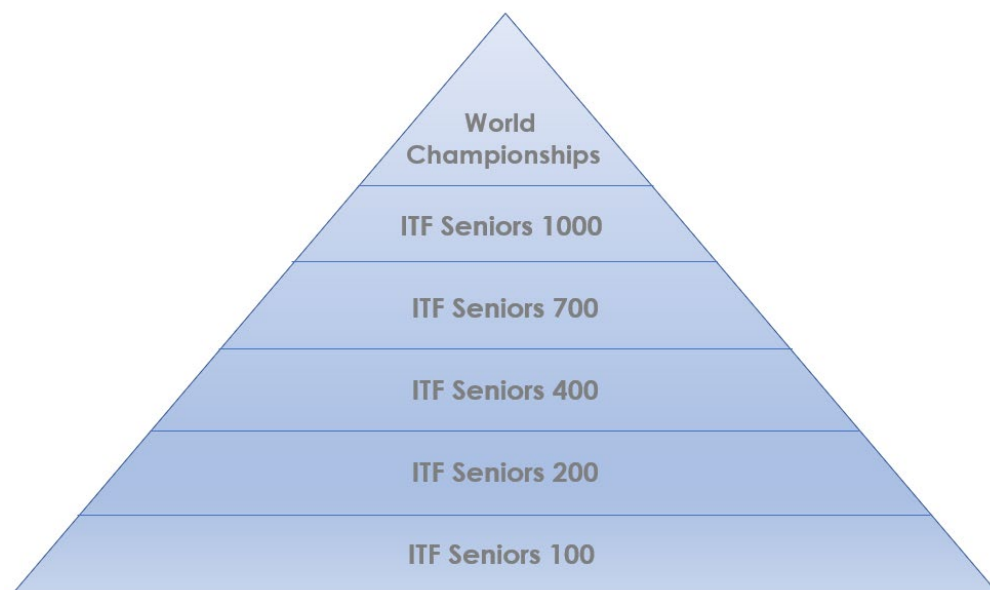
Only tournaments who receive a minimum of 15% of players who respond to the survey will be included. Therefore, players are strongly encouraged to complete the Player Feedback Survey after each tournament due to its importance as part of the grading process and in respect of the tournament recognition scheme. The ITF will promote this regularly to players and tournament organisers are asked to support the ITF with this before, during and after their tournament.

2021 ITF Seniors Tournament Structure

The ITF are making improvements to the 2021 ITF Seniors Tournament Structure. This follows consultation with the ITF Seniors Tournament Director & Referee Panel, and ITF Seniors Player Advisory Panel in 2019 and 2020.

The refined, simplified structure shall include 6 grades only (11 in 2018). Whilst National Closed events and Regional Championships will exist and are encouraged, all tournaments will be graded within this structure. The following Tournament Structure shall be in effect from 1 January 2021:

2021 ITF Seniors Tournament Structure



Key aspects of the 2021 ITF Seniors Tournament Structure:

- Reduced number of grades for existing tournaments to recognise the consistent, high quality delivery at ITF Seniors tournament, and similarities in player strength across some grades.
- Numeric figure within a grade to represent the value of Ranking Points awarded to winning Player or Pair. For example, ITF Seniors 1000 or ITF Seniors 400. This replaces the existing naming structure for grades from Grade A to Grade 4. Grades will appear in abbreviated form through the ITF website and IPIN Service, i.e. S100, S200, S400, S700 and S1000.
- Creation of a new, small tier of elite tournaments (1000 level) to support the highest ranked players on the circuit with appropriate, high quality competition. It is anticipated that 12 tournaments globally shall be awarded this grade. These will be the very best performing Regional Championships and/or Grade A tournaments from 2018-2020 based on the grading criteria outlined above.
- A specific initiative for Young-Seniors (up to 45 and over age group) to improve the suitability of the product for these age groups. Tournaments are strongly encouraged to complete events in 3 or less days and will have options to use alternative scoring methods combined with allowing players to compete in up to 2 singles matches a day to achieve this.

Description of Grades

ITF Seniors 100

Entry level tournaments (100) exist to better attract and retain host nations, tournament venues, organisers and players to the ITF Seniors Circuit. Most tournaments on the 2021 ITF Seniors Circuit will be ITF Seniors 100 tournaments. ITF Seniors 100 tournaments will consist of many existing Grade 4 tournaments, and new tournaments starting in 2021.

ITF Seniors 100 tournaments have reduced delivery requirements for tournament organisers to make it easier for nations, venues and tournament organisers to host ITF Seniors events and increase competitive participation of Seniors Tennis players in nations.

Some key criteria of the Seniors 100 grade include:

- Option for tournaments to offer a limited number of events that may be Singles, Doubles and/or Mixed Doubles only.
- Flexibility with tournament sanction fees at this grade where tournaments staging a small number of events and age groups pay a reduced sanction fee.
- Flexible Scoring & Draw Formats may be used in all events to provide a suitable tournament experience for players based on entry numbers and courts available. For example, two sets and a match tie-break in singles events.
- Possible for players to play 2 singles matches a day if an alternative scoring used, e.g. 2 short sets and a match tie-break to reduce the need for players to return on multiple days.
- Example 1: S100 Tournament: Men's 35 Singles event only. 16 player draw with consolation requiring 2 days only. All matches are played as short sets with a final set match tie-break.
- Example 2: S100 Tournament: Mixed Doubles 40 and 50 events only. 8 pairs in each draw played on 1 day. All matches play two tie-break sets and a 10-point tie-break in the final set.
- Tournaments at this grade are not aimed at elite players.

ITF Seniors 200

ITF Seniors 200 events are established tournaments with an extensive number of events offered for male and female players at different age groups. No ranking cut offs or limits at these events apply, so any player may enter, unless they are 'National Closed' events with entry restrictions. Most players will be from the home nation, with a small number of top 100 ITF ranked players taking part in the tournament. The following outlines the key elements of this grade:

- Established ITF Seniors tournaments with experienced Tournament Director and Referee.
- Multiple age group and gender events will be offered to players at entry stage.

- Singles to be played as Best of 3 tie-break sets or two tie-break sets and a match tie-break at the discretion of the tournament committee. Age groups from 80+ onwards are required to play a 10-point match tie-break in the final set of singles.
- Doubles events may use an abbreviated scoring format from Appendix V Rules of Tennis.
- Several good quality match courts will be used with good court availability.
- ITF White Badge Referee with additional off-court umpires. Chair Umpires not required.
- On-site catering option provided for players at a reasonable price.
- Stringer and Physio services to be provided for players, although not required to be on site.
- Tournaments encouraged to provide gift items for players at check in.
- Seniors 200 tournaments are likely to offer a tournament function evening, for example a Cocktail Party during the week at a reasonable charge to players and guests.
- Prizes for Winners & Runners Up. Prize Money not expected.
- All essential delivery standards expected of existing ITF Grade 2 and Grade 3 tournaments are met, including scoreboards on each court.

ITF Seniors 400

ITF Seniors 400 events are high quality international tournaments that have stronger player fields and/or enhanced delivery standards offered for players compared to Seniors 200 tournaments. All requirements of Seniors 200 events must be met with the additional criteria required at S400 grade:

- Higher caliber player field based on assessment of grading criteria. Entry lists will consist of more nationalities as more international players are expected to compete at S400 level.
- Excellent venue facilities, particularly match courts, changing rooms and viewing as demonstrated through Player Feedback Survey and TD/Referee Reports.
- Singles played as best of 3 tie-break sets or two tie-break sets and a match tie-break at the discretion of the tournament committee.
- Consolation should be offered to 1st round or 1st match singles losers. More than 1 consolation match can be played in a day provided an alternative scoring method from Appendix V of the ITF Rules of Tennis is used, e.g. 2 short sets and a match tie-break.
- High quality officiating standards, court availability and tournament scheduling.
- Minimum of 1 off-court umpire in addition to Referee for every 8 match courts.
- Chair Umpire is encouraged for Finals, although not a requirement.
- Tournaments must have a Stringer and Physio on-site or on-call locally throughout.
- High quality information to players regarding competitively priced hotel options.
- Some tournaments award Hospitality/Prize Money to Winner(s) and Runner(s) Up.

ITF Seniors 700

ITF Seniors 700 tournaments are amongst the very best tournaments on the Tour attracting the best players in the home nation, region and beyond to compete. A high value of ITF Seniors Ranking points are awarded at this level and tournament delivery standards are further enhanced.

In addition to Seniors 400 events, the following will define Seniors 700 tournaments:

- Increased standard of player field with increased volume of international players, including multiple players from outside of the region.
- Likely to be many existing Grade A tournaments from 2019 and 2020 and highest performing Grade 1's from 2019 or 2020. A limited number will exist in each nation and region.
- In exceptional cases, this tier may still consist of National Closed events where these tournaments satisfy all requirements of the grading criteria to be allocated this grade.
- Superb venue facilities, player services and viewing for spectators.
- Singles must be played using the best of 3 tie-break sets with limited exceptions, e.g. younger age groups up to 45+ can play a 10-point match tie-break in the final set of singles matches provided the event is completed in 3 or less days.
- Enhanced Officiating with strong provision of 1 off-court umpire for each 5 match courts.
- Excellent event marketing and promotion.
- Excellent match control for players as demonstrated through player feedback survey
- Excellent Player Satisfaction Score from players from previous year's Tournament Feedback Survey in comparison amongst other tournaments.

ITF Seniors 1000

ITF Seniors 1000 are the elite ITF Seniors tournaments taking place globally. These will likely consist of the strongest Regional Championships and Grade A events in 2018, 2019 and/or 2020 based on assessment against the Grading Criteria outlined above. The events offer a very high-ranking point allocation to players and as such the expected delivery standards are higher.

In addition to Seniors 700 events, the following will define Seniors 1000 tournaments:

- All tournaments must be 'Open' tournaments and accept players from any nation providing they're in good standing with their National Association.
- As an indication, a minimum of 1, and maximum of 4 tournaments of this grade shall take place in each ITF Region from 1 January 2021. A maximum of 12 tournaments globally.
- Exceptional player field among the very best tournaments across the global circuit. This is based on previous ITF evaluation scores in 2018, 2019 and 2020 (if held).
- Excellent range of Hotel & Catering options for players and spectators as demonstrated through Fact Sheet, Reports Forms & Player Feedback.
- Very high-quality venue facilities, courts and viewing as demonstrated through Reports Forms & Player Feedback Survey.
- A range of court surfaces will be considered by the ITF Seniors Committee at this grade
- Referee shall be ITF Silver Badge or ITF Gold Badge. An ITF White Badge Referee may be permitted by the ITF but only where they have Refereed the event in recent years.
- Chair Umpire expected for Singles Finals as a minimum.
- Likely to have Live Streaming on some match courts and/or results & draw screens on-site
- Exemplary Feedback from players through Players' Tournament Feedback Survey in 2019 and 2020 (if held).

All criteria listed above is indicative to help national associations, tournament organisers and players understand the key aspects of each grade and any significant changes that deviate from the 2020 ITF Seniors Regulations. The ITF Seniors Regulations include all delivery requirements for ITF Seniors tournaments and nations and tournament organisers are encouraged to continually review the regulations as they prepare for tournaments. The 2021 ITF Seniors Regulations will be available from December 2020 and shall take precedent over any detail listed in this document.

Grading Process & Timeline for 2021

All new and existing ITF Seniors tournaments shall be graded for 2021 based on the four factors of the ITF Seniors Circuit Tournament Grading Criteria outlined above. The following outlines the process and timeline for the grading of all tournaments in 2021:

- ITF Seniors Committee will decide on Tournament Grading for all new and existing tournaments in 2021 in line with the new tournament structure and grading criteria outlined.
- Grading Outcomes for tournaments taking place between January-June 2021 and for ITF Seniors 1000 tournaments for all of 2021 will be confirmed by 31 July 2020.
- Grading Outcomes for S100-S700 tournaments taking place between July-December 2021 will be confirmed by 31 January 2021.
- In exceptional cases, new tournaments may apply to the ITF Seniors Committee to host an event at any level up to ITF Seniors 400 in their first year. Tournament organisers must have an exceptional venue and/or experience in hosting ITF tournaments.
- National Closed Events may be graded up to a maximum of ITF Seniors 700.
- Grading will be reviewed every 6 months by the ITF Seniors Committee.
- National Associations may apply for a tournament upgrade during 2021 for 2022 with support of their National Association. All delivery standards outlined in the 2021 ITF Seniors Regulations must be met in order to apply for an upgrade.
- Tournaments may be downgraded in 2022 if the factors outlined in this document are sub-standard compared to other tournaments within current grade and the grade below.

2021 ITF Seniors Circuit Ranking Points

Changes were made to the ITF Seniors Rankings in July 2019. The changes introduced at that time are consistent with the 2021 structure changes outlined within this document.

This table demonstrates the 2021 ITF Seniors Ranking Points that will be earned by players or pairs based on the round reached in individual tournaments:

ITF Seniors Ranking Point Table from 1 January 2021											
	Winner	Finalist	SF	QF	R16	R32	R64	C-W	C-RU	C-SF	C-QF
World Championships	1600	1100	800	550	375	220	130	125	80	50	30
Seniors 1000	1000	700	500	330	210	140	75	75	50	35	20
Seniors 700	700	500	330	210	140	75	35	35	27	20	-
Seniors 400	400	280	190	120	80	40	0	25	17	10	-
Seniors 200	200	140	90	60	40	20	0	20	15	10	-
Seniors 100	100	70	45	30	20	10	0	15	10	-	-

The following table demonstrates the Ranking Points that will be earned by players or pairs based on the round reached in Round Robin events:

ITF Seniors 2021 Ranking Points - Round Robin Events				
	Winner	2 nd Place	3 rd or 4 th	5 th , 6 th or 7 th
World Championships	1600	1100	800	550
Seniors 1000	1000	700	500	330
Seniors 700	700	500	330	210
Seniors 400	400	280	190	120
Seniors 200	200	140	90	60
Seniors 100	100	70	45	30

Full points will only be earned by players in round robin events if they have won a minimum of 2 matches in the draw (50% of points earned if one match is won).

General Ranking Point Notes:

- 1 ranking point will be earned by all players who participate but lose their first-round match in the main draw.
- Where a consolation draw is offered, players who receive a walkover in their first main draw match, and then lose their subsequent main draw match, may compete in the consolation event. However, the player will be required to forfeit the ITF Seniors World Individual Ranking points gained due to advancement to the second round by virtue of a Walkover in order to compete in the consolation event.
- All other aspects of the 2021 rankings shall be consistent with the current regulations in place for the 2020 ITF Seniors Circuit.