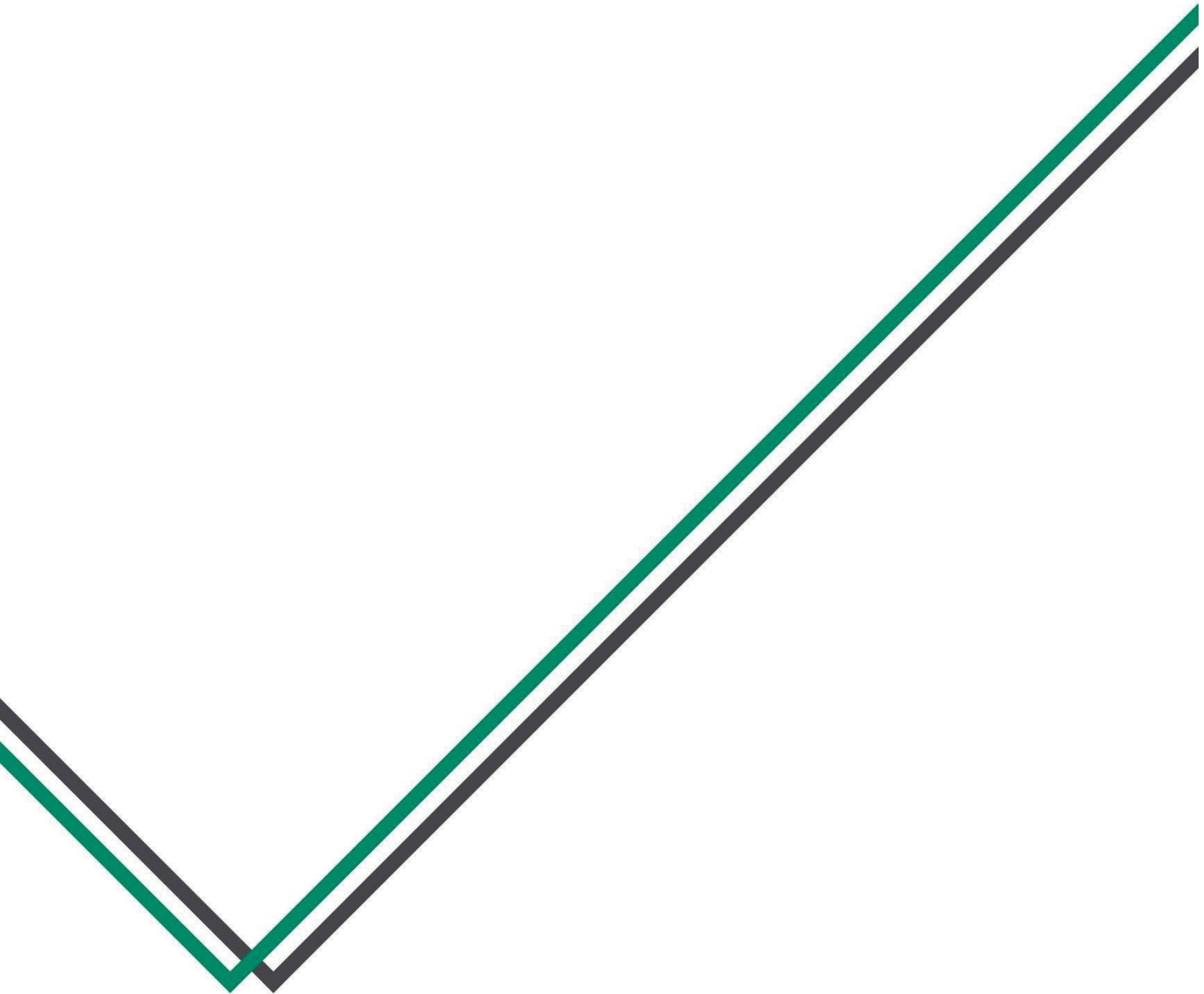


INTERNATIONAL TENNIS FEDERATION

# ITF WHEELCHAIR TENNIS PLAYER COUNCIL



Established in 2018, the purpose of the ITF Wheelchair Tennis Player Council Player Council is

- To represent the interests of all players across all divisions, rankings and world regions involved in ITF Wheelchair Tennis Competitions
- To advise and make recommendations to the ITF Wheelchair Tennis Committee on all issues of concern to players including but not limited to the ITF Rules and Regulations.

The Player Council is appointed for a period of 2 years and is administered by the ITF. It consists of:

7	Current Players	A Current Player is defined as having a 2023 IPIN Membership and a current ITF Wheelchair Tennis Ranking.
1	Former Player	A Former Player is a player who has not competed in any ITF sanctioned tournaments in the last two (2) years and/or has officially retired with the ITF. They must have previously competed in one or more of the Paralympics, BNP Paribas World Team Cup, UNIQLO Wheelchair Doubles Masters or NEC Wheelchair Tennis Masters.
1	Coach	A Coach is defined as holding a national coaching qualification and must have coached or be coaching a player within the Top 100 Men or Top 50 Women or Quads on the ITF Singles Ranking.

Elections for the third term of the Player Council were held in November 2022. The 2023-2024 Player Council consists of the following members:

- Alfie Hewett (GBR, Europe, Men’s Division, Current Player)
- Andrea D’Agostini (ITA, Europe, Men’s Division, Current Player)
- Andrea Saggion (ITA, Europe, Coach)
- Jane Ndenga (KEN, Africa, Women’s Division, Current Player)
- Lucy Shuker (GBR, Europe, Women’s Division, Current Player)
- Maikel Scheffers (NED, Europe, Men’s Division, Current Player)
- Nick Taylor (USA, Americas, Quad Division, Former Player)
- Robert Shaw (CAN, Americas, Quad Division, Current Player)
- Zhenzhen Zhu (CHN, Asia/Oceania, Women’s Division, Current Player)

## PLAYER COUNCIL MEMBERS

### **Alfie Hewett (GBR, Europe, Men's Division, Current Player)**

Alfie was introduced to wheelchair tennis when he was eight years old, attending weekly sessions with other young disabled people in his hometown of Norwich. He started playing professionally on the Wheelchair Tennis Tour in 2015, having played many junior and lower tier tournaments from the age of 10, becoming three-time Junior Masters champion between 2012 and 2014. A former world No. 1 in singles and doubles, he says his greatest achievement would be his men's singles silver medal at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. Alfie is looking forward to learning more about many aspects of the sport but has a particular desire to see participation grow at grass roots level on an international basis, so that as the sport gains greater exposure at the elite end of the sport, the opportunities funnel down and give everyone the chance to play.

### **Andrea D'Agostini (ITA, Europe, Men's Division, Current Player)**

Andrea started playing wheelchair tennis 15 years ago, approximately two years after being injured in a motorcycle accident. He played his first international tournament in 2015 and has a career-best singles ranking of No. 201 and a career-best doubles ranking of No. 312. Andrea is enjoying challenging himself and feels like he is constantly improving and becoming more confident. He believes the best is yet to come when it comes to his wheelchair tennis career. Andrea is looking forward to listening to the opinions of players and working towards an 'even better federation'.

### **Andrea Saggion (ITA, Europe, Coach)**

Andrea is a full-time tennis coach and a National Master in the FIT (Italian Tennis Federation) coaching system. Based in Turin, Andrea has coached several players at the top of the Italian national rankings and players who have reached the top 100 in the international pro rankings. Andrea's interest in wheelchair tennis began out of the belief that tennis is a sport that everyone can enjoy and at his club in Turin he coaches sessions where wheelchair and non-disabled player train together. Andrea is looking forward to putting himself 'completely at the disposal' of the Players Council using the opportunity to share experiences.

### **Jane Ndenga (KEN, Africa, Women's Division, Current Player)**

Jane started playing tennis in 2012 and has been playing in tournaments since 2015. Jane has helped her country qualify for three World Team Cup events. She has a career-best ranking of No. 67 for singles and No. 78 for doubles. Jane looks forward to working

with her fellow members of the Player Council and is thrilled to represent her region. She aims to leave behind a legacy for juniors developing through the system in Africa and would like to see the African continent stage more and more tournaments for junior and senior players in the future. Jane looks forward to representing and defending the rights of all the athletes, underpinned by her belief that human rights are rights for all people.

### **Lucy Shuker (GBR, Europe, Women's Division, Current Player)**

Lucy Shuker is a T4 Paraplegic as a result of a motorbike accident in 2001 when she was aged 21. A former badminton player she found wheelchair tennis after meeting former quad World No. 1 Pete Norfolk. Lucy has competed on the UNIQLO Wheelchair Tennis Tour since 2003 and has competed at all four major tennis Grand Slams making nine finals in women's doubles. She has reached a career best ranking of world No. 5 in singles and world No. 3 in doubles. Representing Great Britain at 11 World Team Cups and four Paralympic Games, Lucy's proudest achievements are the one silver and two bronze Paralympic medals she won alongside fellow Brit Jordanne Whiley in women's doubles. As one of the most disabled women on the UNIQLO Wheelchair Tennis Tour, Lucy aims to bring a balanced view to the Player Council, helping to develop a professional and sustainable tour that holds players' interests and welfare in high regard whilst working to appeal to media and sponsors.

### **Maikel Scheffers (NED, Europe, Men's Division, Current Player)**

Maikel was first introduced to wheelchair tennis when he was 11 years old and he has been playing on the Wheelchair Tennis Tour since the age of 15. A former ITF World Champion and a four-time Paralympian, he says his greatest achievements are winning his first Grand Slam singles title at Roland Garros in 2011 and winning the men's doubles bronze medal at the Tokyo Paralympics. Maikel has won seven Grand Slam titles across singles and doubles, reaching his career high No. 1 rankings in singles and doubles in 2011. As a member of the Player Council Maikel hopes to represent all the players and looks forward to working on a sustainable future for wheelchair tennis.

### **Nick Taylor (USA, Americas, Quad Division, Former Player)**

Nick began playing wheelchair tennis 25 years ago and played competitively from 1995 until retiring at the end of 2021. His passion for the sport has seen him travel to a total of six continents and over 25 countries. Nick is thankful he has made many friends all over the world because of Wheelchair tennis. Nick is a five-time Paralympic medallist, eleven-time grand slam winner and has had career highs of number 1 in both singles and doubles. He has served on the USTA national Wheelchair committee for a number of years, and also helps to run many tournaments and camps. Nick looks forward to

working with other members of the player council to bring the game to an even higher professional level, and also increase participation at the grass roots level worldwide.

**Robert Shaw (CAN, Americas, Quad Division, Current Player)**

Robert was introduced to wheelchair tennis at the age of 16 when he was a non-disabled tennis coach. Still aged 16, he gained his certification to coach wheelchair tennis and coached the sport recreationally for several years before being injured in a diving accident at the age of 21. He began playing wheelchair tennis when he was 23 and started playing on the UNIQLO Wheelchair Tennis Tour towards the end of 2013, with 2014 being his first full season as a player. His greatest achievement is winning the quad singles gold medal at the 2019 Parapan American Games in Lima, Peru. During his time on the Player Council Robert is looking forward to increasing the accountability for all decisions that are made, from improving communication channels between the ITF and players to ensuring that all decisions are well documented with proper audit trails.

**Zhenzhen Zhu (CHN, Asia/Oceania, Women's Division, Current Player)**

Zhu started playing wheelchair tennis in September 2006, at the age of 17, and she fell in love with the sport from the beginning. She played her first international tournament as part of a Chinese national team in 2007 and then played her first Wheelchair Tennis Tour event in 2016. Zhu has career-best women's singles and doubles ranking of No. 4. Among her career highlights she reached the women's singles quarterfinals at the Tokyo Paralympics, where she also contest the women's doubles bronze medal match. Zhu also reached the women's singles semi-finals and the women's doubles final at the 2020 Australian Open. During her time on the Player Council Zhu would like to see China become host to several tournaments annually on the UNIQLO Wheelchair Tennis Tour so that more Chinese players can experience international competition against top players from around the world.