

WHAT'S THE SCORE? WINTER 2009

Regularly competing juniors



(Each figure represents 1000, – we're at 26,732, the aim is for 40,000 by September '10)

Club and Local Authority
park courts



x **23,000** (Currently)

LTA licensed coaches



x **2,979** (Currently)

Competition organisers



x **1,487** (Currently)

x **3,620** (Target by Sep 10)

There's more...

Winning Player Pathway

British Tennis Annual

Watch British Tennis

(Click the above for more information)



BRITISH TENNIS
COMPETITION
YEARBOOK

2009

WINTER UPDATE

NEW TO COMPETITION

THE RIGHT COACH

AEGON

ENTER A COMPETITION

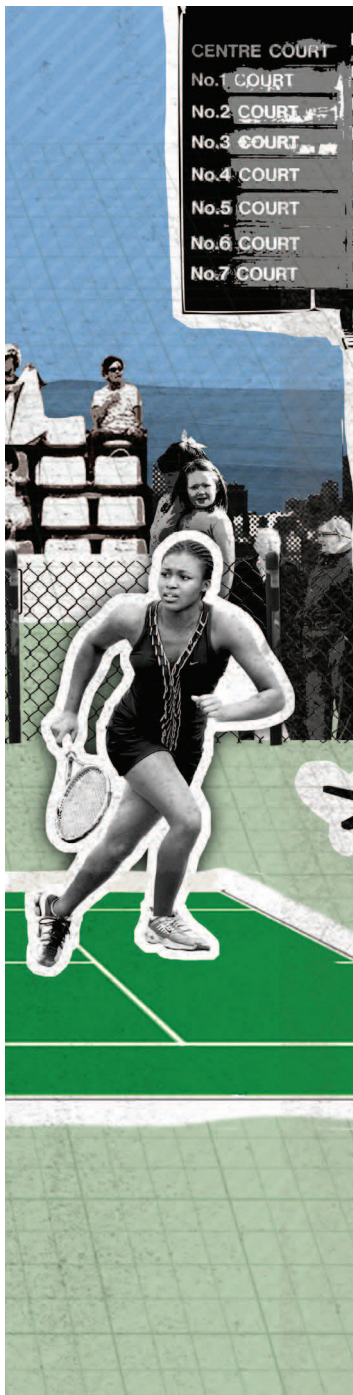
COMPETITION AGE GROUPS

HOW IT ALL JOINS UP

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PLACES TO PLAY



Winter Update

How it all joins up

Everything is connected to everything else...

Getting more players competing means a better chance of getting more winners – this means British players winning Slams, International Tournaments and, ultimately, the Davis and Federation Cup.

The proof is in the stats – the vast majority of players ranked in the world top 100 were playing regular competitive tennis by the age of 8. Successful tennis playing nations such as France and Spain have traditionally had far more juniors competing. Britain has not followed suit but the scene is changing...

It's been a case of sticking to the main factors that affect the

numbers competing which were established two years ago:

- Parental/player support**
- Competitive structure**
- Supportive coaches**
- Competition organisation**
- Local places to play**
- Enjoyable experiences for players**

Practical improvements have started to be made. There is a simpler competitive structure, more competition organisers and more local places to compete – and it's reflected in the numbers. There are now over 28,000 juniors competing regularly compared with 17,500 a year ago.

Competition is at the heart of British Tennis

Competition is at the heart of British Tennis. Healthy, enjoyable, easy-to-access competitions attract new players and keep players in the sport longer. Every aspect of British Tennis is able to support and benefit from a vibrant competitive environment:

- Competition relies on **volunteers** with the right energy and attitude to run professional but fun competitions that bring players back for more
- Improving **places to play** will increase the opportunity for you to compete locally. More facilities of a better standard are fundamental to the growth of the sport

- More **coaches** understanding the importance of competition in tennis – it's a great way to test and improve your ability. They are vital to introducing players to competition and supporting their development
- **Players and parents** play a key role too – playing the game in the right spirit and respecting the rules help to make competitions fun for everyone

There's more...

For more information on some of these areas visit the LTA website where you can find:

[Guidance](#) on volunteering in British Tennis if you're looking to get involved

[Tips](#) for recruiting volunteers if you're a club

[Advice](#) on improving your courts or facility

Back to the
competition

New to competition

There are over 3,000 competitions held throughout the year across the country – it's time to start competing...

Entering competitions for the first time can be daunting. You might not know which competitions to enter or whether you'll be playing people of a similar standard – but with some careful preparation you'll be in a position to get the most out of it. It's important to remember that competition is fun and players of all ages and abilities can get involved.

To get started, you'll need to be a British Tennis Member. It's free for those under 8 or if you're a member of an affiliated club and means all your match results are recorded.

To get the most out of competition it's best to play against players of a similar standard. To help with this, competitions are graded from 7-1 progressing from local club level to county, regional and finally national level. If you haven't played in a competition before, grades 6 and 7 are a great place to start. They're all about having fun and learning and developing the skills of the game.

Ratings

Ratings are a way of measuring your tennis ability so you can see how you're improving. You get a rating automatically when you become a British Tennis Member and it also helps to ensure you are entering the right level of competitions. There are 20 rating bands with 1.1 being the highest (your Andy Murrays) and 10.2 the lowest (those just starting out). To increase your rating you need to beat players of the same rating or higher without losing too many matches against players with a lower rating. Ratings are recalculated four times during the year – these are known as ratings runs.

Mini tennis

For children under 10, mini tennis is a great way to get started. You play with different balls and rackets on different sized courts depending on how old you are. It helps you have longer rallies, attack and defend, approach the net, try drop shots and develop an all-round game. Mini tennis ratings help young players get the most out of competition – you'll be playing more often against players of a similar standard which gives you a good idea of how you're improving.

More and more juniors are regularly competing – there are now over 28,000. The target for September 2010 is 40,000

There's more...

[Click here](#) for information on ratings and rankings and what they mean for you

If you're just getting started there's loads more information on the website. You can see what it's like from a [parent's](#) and [player's](#) point of view plus there's [general advice on the types of competitions you should be entering](#)

If you're under 10 and just getting started or already play mini tennis, [check out the juniors section](#) of the website where there's more advice on competing

Find out how to become a [British Tennis Member](#)



Competition Age Groups

Making sure matches are competitive is better for everyone...

In January, we asked for your help in introducing a more simple and fairer system for competition age groups that works for British Tennis. There has been a great deal of feedback – thank you to all those who have got involved – and the ball is now in our court to implement a system that will keep matches fun and easy-to-understand. This will mean more people playing and staying in the game.

As it stands, players only move age groups at the end of the season meaning players compete in the same age groups, against the same players for the whole

of the winter season. It's all determined by the age of a player on 1st September. In some cases, this has led to unfair matches.

From 1st September 2010, all junior age groups (up to 18) will be aligned with the competition seasons and be determined by your date of birth in relation to the season start and end dates. This means players could move age groups twice a year meaning that in mini tennis they will never be playing against someone more than a year older or younger than them.

How it works

If you are 10 on 31st March 2011, you will play 10s for the 2010/2011 winter season (1st September - 31st March)

If you are 12 on 31st August 2011, you will play 12s for the 2011 summer season (1st April - 31st August)

Other areas of British Tennis will be affected by these changes – the implications for talent ID, Player Matrix Funding and competition organisation still need to be assessed. There will be further updates over the next 12 months.

Unfair competition in tennis can be even more damaging to a player's progression than in other sports. Both the winner and loser gain little from one-sided matches. These changes to competition age groups will lead to more matches with players of a similar standard – that means more people enjoying their tennis and staying in the game.

There's more...

Find out more about the [current system for competition age groups](#) on the LTA website, but remember, these might change depending on your feedback





Unfair advantage

Keeping the competition intense but playing by the rules...

Some of you have contacted the LTA to raise concerns about behaviour at competitions. The first step has been to establish the extent of the issue across the sport.

Competition in any sport brings the best out of those taking part but keeping it fun and fair will get more people involved and keep people in tennis for longer.

The majority of competitions are played in the right spirit with the correct respect given to opponents, officials, coaches and volunteers. With all players

desperate to win, finding the balance between an intense competitive environment and overstepping the line is vital. Bad behaviour on and off the court, cheating and bullying mean less people will want to take part and more people dropping out of the game.

Taking a lead from some of the top players in the game on how they conduct themselves during matches as well as off the court will help to raise the bar. Tennis is lucky to have such strong role models but they didn't get to the top of the game by luck – hard

work and playing the game by the rules has made them succeed.

Across the country there are wide ranging views on this issue. It's positive that over 500 people have taken time out to answer – 50% agreed that it's a problem that needs to be addressed whilst 35% have experienced some form of unfair play a few times over the past year. The next steps are around helping coaches and officials promote the benefits of fair play and educate them on dealing with the offenders.

An improved disciplinary process will be introduced that ensures appropriate action is taken against those who repeatedly overstep the mark.

More comprehensive monitoring of competitions will give a better idea of progress that's been made and areas that still need work. The focus here will be on the organiser themselves and the quality of the competition. It's about rewarding and recognizing those who are performing well and improving weak areas.

...cheating and bullying mean less people will want to take part and more people dropping out of the game...

There's more...

For more information on some of these areas visit the LTA website where you can find:

[Advice](#) for parents on dealing with some of the behavioural aspects of the game

[Q & A](#) session with Judy Murray

More [information](#) on competition rules and regulations



Competition organisers

More of the right competition organisers

The quality of a competition is dependent on how well it's organised. British Tennis needs competition organisers to run more competitions of a higher standard. Competitions should be fun and enjoyable helping to keep people in the game – everyone will be looking to experience the winning feeling. Increasing the number of competition organisers will mean more competitions of a better standard in your local area. 2009 will see a continued effort

to recruit the right competition organisers. 2008 saw an increase in the number, the focus is now on recruiting the right people and giving them the support and training they need. It's all about volunteers with the right energy and attitude as well as a passion for tennis who have the ability, with training and support, to run professional but fun competitions. To support the delivery of quality competitions, competition organisers get a support network, regular training and a toolkit of resources. Perhaps you're interested in tennis or know

someone who might be keen to get involved. As well as a passion for the game, competition organisers will need to:

- Work well with others
- Have good empathy with players, parents and coaches
- Have basic computer skills and are confident using the internet
- Demonstrate enthusiasm and the drive to get things done

Think you've got what it takes?

[Click here to get in touch with your local Tennis Development Manager](#)

1400 Competition Organisers have been recruited since January 2009 with a target of 2770 by January 2010

There's more...

[A profile](#) of some competition organisers who have been through the training

The one-stop-shop for all you need to know on running competitions can be found at www.competitionorganiser.com (you need to register for full access)

Places to play

More local courts where you can compete

People play tennis in a variety of different places. It might be a high performance centre, a local club, school or in the park. Having courts close by will mean more opportunities for people to play, compete and get coaching.

Improving the right places to play is fundamental to the growth of the sport – there are benefits right across tennis. There'll be more opportunities:

- for players to compete locally
- for coaches to get on court
- for volunteers to organise competitions
- for clubs to retain and attract members
- for places to play to become financially sustainable and continue to professionalise the sport

It's important to quantify the return – the targets here are more playing hours, more competing hours and more coaching hours

The focus is on investing in the right places – only concentrating on the facilities that make a significant contribution to British Tennis. It will be clearer for tennis providers who apply for funding and support but, at the same time, there is a higher expectation on what they deliver – it's still dependent on the people in the facilities. Each year, the number of applications for support exceeds the resources available – changes this year mean a clearer qualification process and prioritising indoor courts, floodlit courts and renovation of park facilities (areas where investment is proven to increase the number of people competing).

There's more...

[The approach](#) for developing places to play is on the LTA website and there's also information on the [advice and support](#) available for those looking to develop tennis facilities





The right coach

By September 2010 the target is to have 3700 LTA accredited coaches and coaching assistants

More registered and licensed coaches will mean more opportunities for players to work with recognised quality coaches.

Tennis coaches play a key role at every level of the game from helping juniors starting out through to coaching top players. Working with the right coach will help you fulfill your potential and get more out of the game.

Finding this coach can be difficult. This year, there is a new qualification structure that provides coaches with qualifications that are relevant to where they work and who they coach.

This structure is split into two strands – Performance and Club. Following the Club

strand, coaches will learn skills relevant to recreational players of varying standards – it might be a group of kids in the park or individual lessons at your local club. Coaches following the performance strand will cover the skills needed for working at the top end of the game – it might be performance analysis or scouting.

Registration is a formal accreditation from the governing body of the sport for coaching assistants and part-time coaches. It's a simple way to show that coaches have a basic qualification, are committed to meeting the professional

standards of British Tennis for coaching assistants and that they have been through criminal record checks and first aid training. The Coach Licence scheme supports fully qualified coaches who are committed to continuing their development. Licensed coaches will be up to date on coaching techniques.

There's more...

For more in-depth information on either the Coach Qualification Structure or the new Registration and Licensing schemes, visit the [coaches area](#) of the website



Enter a competition

I'm interested, where do I start?

Details of all competitions are available on the LTA website. You can print off the sections relevant to you, either by location or by grade of tournament, and then decide which competitions you are going to enter. Having the competition listings online means they can be refreshed regularly to include any new competitions that need to be added, so it's important to keep checking back.

To get the most out of competing, it's a good idea to plan your competition schedule with your coach. They will know what stage you're at and will make sure you're entering the right number of competitions at the right level.

More and more competitions are offering online entry. As well as being able to enter your competition you can also view the entry list. There are some competitions where you need to complete an entry form – you can print one off [here](#) – and send it to the relevant competition organiser.

The Winter Circuit

The Winter Circuit consists of 2000 tournaments that take place between September and March. There are opportunities to compete for club players and players new to competition as well as for those who compete at county, regional and national level. The competitions are graded so you'll be playing people of a similar ability and check your progress.

High quality competition that's fun and fair
is the heartbeat of British Tennis

Get competing...

Local and county level [competition listings](#) are also supported by the Winter County Tournament [competition pack](#). This contains the information you need to know when entering and competing in these competitions

Regional and national level competition (Indoor Series and Grand Prix) have full listings within the Winter Junior Indoor Circuit [competition pack](#).

Each competition pack has information on who to contact for each level of competition if you have any further queries

The competitions listings are on the new county websites. [Click here to access them](#)



We're investing in the future of British Tennis.

As one of the UK's leading life insurance and pensions companies, we know quite a bit about investing for the future. Over the next five years we'll be working with the LTA to develop the future of British tennis at every level, from grass roots to the national team.

To find out more go to **aegon.co.uk/tennis**

