



15 November 2024

RULES FOR THE LADIES' WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

1. These Championships shall take place every two years and shall rotate round the following countries: USA, Australia, France and UK. They shall consist of a Singles Championship and a Doubles Championship. The host country's Governing Body shall appoint a Championships Committee, whose contact details will be advised to all Associations no later than twelve months before the start of the Championships.

For the purposes of these Rules, the Governing Bodies are: The Ladies Real Tennis Association, The Tennis & Rackets Association, The Australian Real Tennis Association, The United States Court Tennis Association and The Comité Français du Jeu de Courte Paume.

2. The responsibility for holding the Championships transfers immediately upon completion of one event to the Governing Body in the country where they will next be held.

3. The host country's Governing Body must nominate a host club, Championships date and guaranteed minimum prize pool by no later than 30 June of the calendar year preceding the year of the next Championships and communicate this to the other governing bodies in Rule 1. Any delay to this notification only by prior agreement with the Associations. A court must be considered by the Governing Bodies to be of a championship standard and also meet the requirements in Rule 14 below.

4. These World Championships Rules, along with home court and host country Laws of Tennis, shall apply each time. ("Home court" rules are those which apply to that court only, for example, whether balls hit over roof beams are still in play or not.) In the event that such National Laws, Tournament Rules or Procedures should be inconsistent with these Championship Rules, the provisions of these Rules shall prevail.

5. Apart from the Finals of both the Singles and Doubles which shall be best of five first-to-six games sets, all others matches will be best of three first-to-six games sets. Competitors shall not be required to play more than one match per day in the main event. If, due to unforeseen circumstances, competitors are required to play both a singles and a doubles match on the same day, the singles match shall be played first. There shall also be a break of at least an hour between the two matches, the start of the second match being delayed if necessary to ensure an hour's break after the conclusion of the first match.

6. Players shall go on court at times allocated by the Championships Committee and shall be ready to play 15 minutes before the allocated time. The warm-up shall be limited to five minutes. Late arrivals shall be scratched if not ready to go on court at the allocated time. If the Championships Committee operate a 'continuous play' draw where no times are allocated other than a start time for the morning, lunchtime and evening sessions, players of the first match of each session shall be ready to play 15 minutes before the start time and the remaining players scheduled to play in each session shall be ready to play as soon as the previous match has finished. Any players not ready to play immediately following the end of the previous match will be scratched and in the case of doubles, a pair will be scratched if one or both players are not ready to play immediately following the end of the previous match. Decisions regarding the scratching of players shall be at the discretion of the Championships Committee.

7. It is the responsibility of the Championships Committee to decide on the availability of practice courts and to allocate these fairly between the competitors. The method for allocating and booking such courts and the cost (if any) shall be sent out to competitors, if possible, with the entry forms but certainly with the draw. However, the host club will allocate at least one full day for practice on the day prior to the start of the main tournament. If any courts become free unexpectedly during the tournament, these may be allocated for practice at the discretion of the Championship Committee but with fairness to all competitors being the primary consideration.

No player may use a court for practice in the hour immediately preceding a match in which they are playing, unless it is an official scheduled pre-match practice session. Official practice times will be displayed in the draw at the start of the tournament and will be allocated fairly to all players.

8. A copy of the final draws shall be on public display at the court and online at least 72 hours before the start of the tournament. This version of the draws is that to which the tournament shall be played and no change may be made to these draws once the first ball of the tournament has been struck. In the event a draw has been altered due to the withdrawal of seeds (see Rule 13 below), a copy of the draw(s) as sent to competitors will be displayed alongside the new draw(s) with a clear indication as to which draw is which and that the original draw has been superseded.

9. Play shall be continuous as per the Laws of Tennis in each country, including in relation to injuries during a match. If a player needs to leave the court at any time during the match, officials should ensure there is no opportunity for coaching but that a player's privacy is also maintained.

10. The position of the marker shall be in line with the Laws of Tennis where the tournament is being held. However, marking from the net is strongly recommended wherever possible, and especially for the Finals. A Marker's Assistant may be appointed for any or all matches, with the same duties as described in the Host Country's Laws of Tennis.

11. Each Governing Body, with its Championships Committee, shall be responsible for the World Championships when they are held in that country. The Committee shall be responsible for:

11.1 ENTRY FORMS & INVITATIONS TO PLAY

11.1.1 Entry forms must be completed and submitted on time by all players, including those invited to play in the Singles. The host country will decide what supporting tournaments (eg handicap events) will be held along with the Singles and Doubles, and also the format for such supporting events.

11.1.2 The Championships Committee shall decide what (if any) entry fees amateurs should pay. Professionals are not charged entry fees.

11.1.3 World Championship Singles. Invitations will be issued by the Championships Committee in accordance with Appendix 2.

11.1.4 World Championship Doubles. There will be four pairs in the Doubles. The matches will be played as follows:
Semi-finals: The current World Champions will be seeded one. If the previous Champions are unable to defend their title, then the top-ranked pair on doubles handicap will meet the fourth-ranked pair, and the second-ranked pair will meet the third ranked pair.

Pairs will be selected from the entries received based on combined doubles handicaps at the close of entries.

The doubles final shall be held on the day following the singles final. Semi-final matches will be best of three first-to-six games sets; the final shall be the best of five first-to-six games sets.

Entry forms will:

11.2.1 be sent out by the Championships Committee to all Governing Bodies no later than 12 weeks before the start of the Championships. The closing date for entries shall be set not less than six weeks before the start of the Championships. The tournament is open to the best four pairs, based on RTO doubles handicaps at close of entries. The draw shall be sent to players not less than four weeks before the start of the Championships.

11.2.2 be sent to all clubs where ladies play. The method of distribution of the entry forms to be agreed with each country. Entry information should also be put on the major real tennis websites.

11.3.1 State clearly the formats of all events, including any handicap or other events, any eligibility requirements and any limits on numbers of entries. Details of the website where these Rules can be accessed should also be included and attention of entrants should be drawn to Appendix 1, Handicaps – Statement of Principles.

11.3.2 State that predominantly white clothing, excluding shoes, is to be worn, although coloured tracksuits are permissible during warm-ups. Clothing may only bear a manufacturer's small emblem, not exceeding 26 sq cms on shirts or shorts/skirts. Otherwise, Club logos and advertising on clothing shall be restricted to three separate areas of

up to 26 sq cms and one of up to 52 sq cms.

11.3.3 State clearly the place, date and time of the draw, and that the draw shall be streamed, with details of how to view the draw.

11.3.4 The closing date for entries, that late entrants shall not be accepted and that players must be available to play at any time during the Championships.

11.3.5 State clearly any Championships entry fee for amateurs and what charges there will be (if any) for social functions. Details of social functions and any dress code requirements should be covered if possible.

11.3.6 Detail the availability, booking process and any charges for practice courts during the event.

11.3.7 Detail the options for player accommodation during the event.

12.1 TOURNAMENT SEEDING AND DRAW

Singles:

12.1 There will be a maximum of six players in the Singles, four players who are accepted into the main draw (see Appendix 2) and two players who gain entry via the Qualifying Singles, Qualifiers A and B.

The Qualifying Singles event will be a knockout event for a maximum of eight players not already in the main draw, based on RTO singles handicap at the close of entries. There will be up to four seeds, based on handicap, with seed 1 at the top the draw, seed 2 at the bottom, seed 3 in the top of the bottom half and seed 4 in the bottom of the top half of the draw.

Qualifying tournament matches will be best of three first-to-six game sets, played over two days, and two players will win the right to join the main World Championship Singles event as Qualifiers A and B. A rest day after the conclusion of the Qualifying event and before the main draw is desirable but at the discretion of the Championships Committee.

12.2.2 Main draw. If the Champion is playing, they shall be ranked one and all other players ranked on RTO Singles Handicap at time of acceptance of entries (see Appendix 1). In the first round of matches, held on the same day, Qualifier B will play the third ranked player and Qualifier A will play the fourth ranked player. The winners of these two matches will meet the following day. Day 3 will be a rest day for singles following these matches.

The winner of the second day's match will then meet the second ranked player on Day 4. Day 5 will be a rest day for singles following this match. The winner of this match will then meet current World Champion (or the top ranked player if the previous World Champion is not playing) on Day 6 in the Final of the World Championship Singles.

The Final shall be the best of five first-to-six games sets, all other matches will be the best of three first-to-six games sets. See 13 below if a player withdraws after the draw is confirmed but before play begins.

13. WITHDRAWALS

13.1 If any player in the Singles withdraws from the Championship before it begins, the Championships Committee shall alter the draw in the interests of balance, by moving lower ranked players up. With only five players, the order of play will be as follows:

On Day 1, the fifth ranked player on handicap will play the fourth ranked player. The winners of this match will meet the third ranked player following day. Day 3 will be a rest day for singles following these matches.

The winner of the second day's match will then meet the second ranked player on Day 4. Day 5 will be a rest day for singles following this match. The winner of this match will then meet the top ranked player on Day 6 in the Final of the World Championship Singles.

13.2 In the doubles, if one player of a pair withdraws after the draw has been done, the pair withdraws. If a pair can then be made up of original doubles competitors forced by their partners to withdraw, this is permitted, but the new pair shall be placed in the draw in the initial position of the better handicap player. Under no circumstances shall a player be allowed to withdraw from a pair and be reinstated in another pair.

14 TOURNAMENT INCOME & HOST CLUB OBLIGATIONS

It is up to the host country's Championships Committee to decide how the Championships shall be funded when they are hosting them. It is their decision how any sponsorship money, entry fees, charges for entertainment or other donations are used. Please note that the title of the event cannot be sold to a sponsor. The wording has to be 'Ladies World Championship sponsored by x'.

For example, funds can be used for:

- reducing the entry fees for amateurs;
- providing trophies or permanent mementoes that may be kept by winners and/or runners up;
- providing subsidised entertainment for all competitors;
- paying prize money and/or appearance money to professionals (see below);
- providing tournament clothing/equipment/commemorative gifts to competitors;
- providing prize vouchers for amateurs;
- or any other use the Championships Committee deems suitable.

It must ensure that any gifts or vouchers for amateurs do not break Amateur Status rules which vary between the different countries and that the host country's rules will apply in this regard.

A minimum prize pool of US\$10,000 money to be offered, with rules for its allocation clearly documented at the time the entry forms are sent out (Where possible, the Championships Committee should follow the IRTPA rules for prize money). The minimum prize pool will be reviewed by the Governing Bodies and confirmed for the following World Championships within sixty days of the completion of the previous event.

The Host Club must provide streaming of the Championships and must also provide the players in Ladies World Championship Singles and Doubles with billets in suitable accommodation in reasonable travelling distance from the Club.

The Host Club must provide at least 140 legal balls for the event (including practice days). The host club's Governing Body must verify this prior to the start of the Championships. Balls must meet the specifications of the host country's Laws of Tennis.

The lighting minimum for a host club should be at 500 Lux, but with a minimum of at least 400 Lux measured at a height of 700mm above the floor. The host club's Governing Body must verify this prior to the start of the Championships.

The Championships Committee will be the final arbiter in all matters relating to the conduct of the match and halting play should court conditions be deemed unsafe in conjunction with the marker.

15. The country holding the World Championships is responsible for:

- supplying the Chairs of all Governing Bodies, within four weeks following the conclusion of the World Championships, with the full results, a tournament report and memorabilia, e.g. poster, programme, photos, dinner menus etc. for inclusion in the LRTA World Championships Book.
- the cost of engraving the silver trophies and ensuring the engraving is completed promptly if possible.

16. The new host country is responsible for liaising with the current holders of trophies to ensure that the trophies are passed to the new hosts in a timely fashion ready to be presented following the next World Championships finals and engraved if needed.

APPENDIX 1

Handicaps – Statement of Principles

- Since qualification for the Ladies World Championship will be based on a player's handicap, it is expected that all players will abide by both the spirit and intent of this change, ie that only the best players qualify for the event.
- Qualification for the Singles and Doubles Championships will be based on a player's RTO singles and doubles handicaps.
- The Championships Committee will have the discretion after approval from the International Handicap Sub-Committee to discount a player's home club local results when assessing the handicap of that player for acceptance into the Championships.
- In the 12 months before the event, no manual adjustments should be made to the singles or doubles handicaps of all women players under handicap 40 without the prior express approval of the International Handicap Sub-Committee. Before finalising invitations for the event the Championships Committee will collate any manual adjustments for players under handicap 40 in the previous three months and pass any manual adjustments to the IHSC for review and confirmation.
- The Championship Committee shall have the handicaps of players with dormant handicaps reviewed by the International Handicap Sub-Committee before confirming their entry.
- These Handicap Principles to be highlighted in the Championship Entry Form when issued.

APPENDIX 2

World Championship Singles Selection Process

The Championships Committee will confirm the RTO Singles Handicaps of the top four women players at six months before the advertised start of the next Championships to all Governing Bodies. This confirmation of players to be communicated to all Governing Bodies within one week of this date, seeking confirmation of the four women to be invited within seven days.

If no objections raised at that point, then the host Governing Body will issue invitations by email to those four players, seeking their confirmation within fourteen days that they wish to compete in the event. Otherwise, it will be assumed that they do not wish to accept.

If less than four players are confirmed, then the Championships Committee may seek approval from the other Governing Bodies to invite the next best players on singles handicap. The field must be confirmed by no later five months before the start of the Championships and advised to all competing players and Governing Bodies. This advice will include the ranking of all four players. No player with a handicap of higher than 40 may be invited to compete.

APPENDIX 3

Players' Obligations to the Host Club

In order to avoid conflicts with the Host Club's Sponsors, to submit to the Championships Committee in advance for approval, any contractual obligations the player has already or would like to enter into with third parties (e.g. Clothing Companies, Media, etc.).

To comply with any reasonable request to wear the clothing on court provided by the Host Club, or its Sponsors, if a player does not have a clothing contract.

To comply with any reasonable request to sign medical forms for reasons of event insurance.

To comply with any reasonable request to promote the event, such reasonableness to be determined by the Championships Committee.

To be available for media interview before and/or after play on each day of play.

To attend any pre-event World Championship Press Conference as long as it falls with the dates of the Championship, and to any events outside these dates only with players' agreement.

To attend the Championship Dinner and other social functions organised by the host club (NB if this is a requirement, then the players' costs should be covered).