

### **National & State Junior Championships – A strategy for the future**

#### **Frequently Asked Questions**

Starting with the December Showdown in 2013, the structure of national junior championships will undergo some slight changes. To help all our stakeholders understand the changes, we have developed this FAQ document to answer your questions.

#### **Q: The need for change?**

A: The challenge for all tournaments in the future is to remain relevant, in an environment where the competition to attract the best athletes is as fierce as ever. The number of AR tournaments has doubled since 2005, so we must ensure that the tournament structure is simple for athletes, parents and coaches. It must also provide reference points throughout an athletes' development whilst also reducing the expense burden that remains an impediment for many families.

#### **Q: What were the objectives?**

A: There were four objectives when we met with a number of groups to realign the structure of the National Junior Championships. They were:

- i. Create one "National Championships" during the year for all age groups that is respected by the tennis community, not only in Australia, but across Asia/Pacific.
- ii. Elevate the importance of already existing State Championship events and traditional team-based events like the Bruce and Pizzey Cups.
- iii. Ensure that all State Championships are held in school holiday periods (aside from the Bruce and Pizzey Cups).
- iv. Minimise the need to travel that currently exists amongst external stakeholders.

#### **Q: Have all of these objectives been achieved in the new structure?**

A: The first three objectives have been achieved with the end of year Australian Championships taking place in December. The goal in the future will be to grow this event into an Asia/Pacific Championships. Two major schools championships (the Bruce and Pizzey Cups) will be aligned with our structure and elevated in status as well as incorporate an individual championship event. All the State Championships will also be held in the School holiday periods. We will continue to monitor the amount of travel undertaken by our athletes. Certainly there is a need to travel at some point, but the message to all must be to communicate that players should only travel when they have achieved significant results within their own state or territory.

#### **Q: What will the new structure look like?**

A: The structure of National and State Championships from December 2013 will be as follows:

##### **Tier 1: National Championships**

- Australian Championships – December Showdown with Platinum (+) points on offer
- National Schools Championships – The Bruce Cup will be classified as a Platinum tournament, whilst the Pizzey Cup which will offer gold level points. These school events will now be fully integrated with both events hosting a team and individual event.

##### **Tier 2: State Championships (QLD, NSW and VIC)**

These events will offer a State Championship in the 12/u, 14/u, and 16/u age groups (with 18/u being optional). These events will offer Platinum (Tier 2) points and also incorporate a Junior ITF event either preceding or following. These three events will be held during one of the Term 1, 2 and 3 school holidays.

The winners of the 12/u, 14/u & 16/u singles events will receive a wildcard into the December Showdown regardless of residence. Platinum points will be on offer. If the winner also earns an invitation into the December Showdown due to their high ranking, the wildcard will be reallocated by the national selectors at their discretion.

### **Tier 3: State Championships (SA, WA, ACT, NT and TAS)**

These events will offer a State Championship in the 12/u, 14/u, and 16/u age groups (with 18/u being optional). These events will be treated by these states as of higher importance, but will still offer gold level points. Winners of these events will not receive a wildcard into the December Showdown.

### **Q: What surface will the State Championship events be held on?**

A: The majority of the state championship events will be held on Hardcourt or Plexicushion. The Victorian state championships and in the future and a portion of the ACT state championships will be held on clay/en-tou-cas. When possible, the Bruce and Pizzey Cup events will be held on Natural Grass.

### **Q: How many matches are players guaranteed in the NSW, QLD & VIC State Championships?**

A: Four singles matches are guaranteed for main draw players in these events. Qualifying players will be guaranteed two matches, although QLD will endeavor to offer additional matches. The doubles events will primarily be a knockout event.

### **Q: How many players will be accepted into the Australian Championships?**

A: There will be 32 players accepted into both the 12/u and 14/u Australian Championships, with the best players from around Australia being invited to compete either due to their high ranking or via a wildcard. The 16/u event will feature a 32-player qualifying event and 32-player main draw event and the 18/u event will feature a 16- player qualifying event and 32-player main draw. Both the 16/u and 18/u events will require players to enter online. Additional details are listed in the online fact sheets.

### **Q: Will there still be a 12/u and 14/u National Teams Championships?**

A: Yes, this event will still take place during the December Showdown, but will be played simultaneously and over a shortened three-day format. All states & territories, as well as invitational teams from New Zealand and Asia/Pacific team will be invited to compete.

### **Q: What if players are selected for the teams' event, but do not get invited to compete in the individual Australian Championships?**

A: Tennis Australia, in conjunction with Tennis Victoria and Tennis World has sanctioned a 14/u bronze level tournament to be played at Melbourne Park following the teams' championships. Athletes can enter this event and also enter the corresponding Gold level Victorian Schoolboys & girls championships held after the December Showdown.

### **Q: How do I get selected to compete in the Bruce and Pizzey Cups?**

A: In the majority of states and territories, it is a requirement to compete in various regional and state trials. Please refer to your State/Territory tournament calendars for further details.

### **Q: What funding opportunities are available to junior athletes?**

A: When athletes have reached the required level to travel to interstate tournaments, parents should investigate all possible fundraising opportunities available. There are also a number of external funding programs that are available to athletes, parents and coaches to help reduce travel to major tournaments. A number of tennis players have accessed the Local Sporting Champions Grants [http://www.ausport.gov.au/participating/schools\\_and\\_juniors/local\\_sporting\\_champions](http://www.ausport.gov.au/participating/schools_and_juniors/local_sporting_champions)

An example of another great program (in Victoria) for athletes and parents to be aware of is the Leader Community Newspaper grants - <http://leaderlocalgrants.com.au/faq>