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# ATP CHALLENGER TOUR SET FOR SIGNIFICANT REVAMP FROM 2019

LONDON – The ATP Challenger Tour will undergo wholesale changes from 2019 that will further professionalise the sport, unlock significant investment and growth in prize money at the lower levels of men’s professional tennis, and lead to a greatly enhanced player pathway, the ATP announced on Monday.

The changes announced for 2019 are the result of an extensive strategic review the ATP has undertaken as it strives to enhance the player pathway and improve the viability of professional tennis at the lower levels of the sport. The changes will take place across the following key areas of the ATP Challenger Tour:

### ➤ **Draw Size**

The Singles Main Draw size at ATP Challenger Tour events will increase from 32 to 48, leading to an annual increase of approximately 2,400 available professional job opportunities with prize money and hotel accommodation included. Tournaments will also feature a 4-player qualifying event, with two qualifiers advancing into the Main Draw. In Doubles, a 16-team draw will continue to feature.

### ➤ **Tournament Schedule**

Tournaments will take place across 7 days from Monday to Sunday including qualifying, leading to optimized player flow with facilitated player scheduling due to no overlap from week to week between respective tournaments.

### ➤ **Hospitality**

Starting in 2019, all ATP Challenger tournaments will provide hotel accommodation for all Main Draw players. In total, this will constitute an approximate 20,000 additional room nights provided for players throughout the season.

### ➤ **Prize Money**

All Main Draw players will earn prize money. The increased Singles Main Draw size (from 32 to 48) will lead to 16 more players per tournament earning prize money from 2019. Based on the same number of events taking place as today, it is estimated that an additional US\$ 1 million will be generated through prize money. The highest-level Challengers will offer US\$ 162,480 in 2019.

### ➤ **Branding**

ATP Challenger Tour tournament categories will be re-branded in accordance with the number of ATP Rankings points on offer to the respective tournament champion, as is currently the case on the ATP World Tour (ATP World Tour 250, 500, and Masters 1000). There will be five ATP Challenger Tour categories – ATP Challenger 70, 80, 95, 110 and 125 – providing the Tour with a clear structure and easily defined brand to facilitate communication and marketing opportunities.

## ➤ **On-Site Facilities, Conditions & Streaming**

Increased services will be offered across ATP Officiating as well as ATP Medical Services, with better access on offer to qualified Physiotherapists. Several enhancements will also be made to on-site conditions with more practice courts available, as well as improved player treatment facilities. In addition, from 2019 all Main Draw Singles matches are intended to be streamed online, meaning the number of matches available to viewers worldwide will more than double.

Chris Kermode, ATP Executive Chairman & President, said: "These are significant changes that will lead to a real enhancement of the ATP Challenger Tour, particularly as we seek to provide more earning opportunities for players at the entry level into men's professional tennis. A big priority for us is to ensure we have a healthy player pathway and that we improve the viability of a career in men's professional tennis. These changes represent an important step in the right direction for our sport."

The changes announced for 2019 reflect the latest in a series of initiatives by ATP in recent years to bolster the ATP Challenger Tour which has seen overall prize money levels increase by approximately 28% since 2014. The Challenger Tour in 2018 will feature more than 160 tournaments worldwide.

From 2020, ATP Ranking points will begin at the ATP Challenger Tour only, a change that will significantly reduce the number of ATP-ranked players. The move is aimed at improving the player pathway up and down the tennis ecosystem, while positioning the ATP Challenger Tour as the first stage of professional tennis. The change will also serve to more accurately define the breadth of men's professional tennis, leading to better services and conditions provided for true professional players, while providing a clear delineation between the professional ranks and the transitional ranks beneath.

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### **About the ATP**

The ATP is the governing body of the men's professional tennis circuits - the ATP World Tour, the ATP Challenger Tour and the ATP Champions Tour. With 64 tournaments in 31 countries, the ATP World Tour showcases the finest male athletes competing in the world's most exciting venues. From Australia to Europe and the Americas to Asia, the stars of the 2018 ATP World Tour will battle for prestigious titles and ATP Rankings points at ATP World Tour Masters 1000, 500 and 250 events, as well as Grand Slams (non-ATP events). At the end of the season only the world's top 8 qualified singles players and doubles teams will qualify to compete for the last title of the season at the Nitto ATP Finals. Held at The O2 in London, the event will officially crown the 2018 ATP World Tour No. 1. For more information, please visit [www.ATPWorldTour.com](http://www.ATPWorldTour.com).