



# COMPETITIVE OPPORTUNITIES

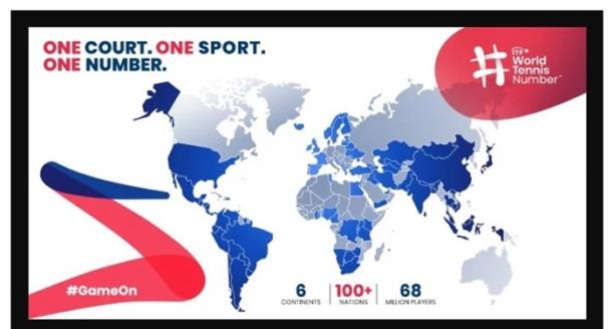
## WHY COMPETITION?

Most people who join a club, practice and get coaching, want to test themselves at the right level in a competitive environment. Competitions allow a player an opportunity to discover if they are improving, and by how much. They also provide a perfect backdrop for a social event afterwards, thereby combining two of the things club members most often seek. A tennis club needs a dedicated competitions committee, which will set up and run a range of events on a regular basis, ensuring that all standards and ages are catered for. Make sure to plan well in advance, and issue an event calendar to all members that allows them to plan what tournaments they would like to participate in.

## TO ASSIST YOU

1. The World Tennis Number (WTN) is an important development from the International Tennis Federation (World Governing Body). It is for all tennis players, regardless of age or ability and is

- A real-time skill level rating.
- A way to find opponents evenly matched to you, wherever you are.
- A tool to track your tennis progress based on your actual performance.



One of the challenges in organising tournaments is ensuring that players are not mis-matched. A strong player competing against a much weaker player is not a useful or enjoyable game for either party. The WTN is an invaluable resource to help avoid this situation.

**MORE:** [worldtennisnumber.com](http://worldtennisnumber.com) and [tennisireland.ie](http://tennisireland.ie).

2. Many tournament formats are supported on the **Tournament Software** platform - [ti.tournamentsoftware.com](http://ti.tournamentsoftware.com). This makes it easy to register players, issue schedules and record results online. All clubs that are affiliated to Tennis Ireland receive free access to the system.

**MORE:** [competitions@tennisireland.ie](mailto:competitions@tennisireland.ie)

3. Tennis Ireland has developed a **Club Competition Organiser** course – ideally those who will run competitions at your club should sign up for this course. Call your provincial number below for full details.

## PREPARING FOR AN EVENT

### – KEY PRINCIPLES

1. For a larger-scale event, appoint a team to run the competition, including a Tournament Director, a referee, court supervisors and support volunteers (to provide refreshments etc).

2. If the tournament involves junior players or vulnerable adults, ensure that two Garda Vetted adults are present at all times. Ensure compliance with the Tennis Ireland Code of Conduct (see Appendix 10 of ‘Safeguarding Guidance for Children and Young People in Tennis’ (available at [tennisireland.ie](http://tennisireland.ie))).



3. Before players show up and play begins, make a survey of the courts and facilities to ensure that there are no hazards e.g. broken glass on court.

4. A tournament provides an excellent opportunity to generate publicity for the club. Photographs of the event are important for publicity. Under GDPR laws you will need permission to take and publish photos. Include a statement granting the club this permission on the entry form or during the sign-up process.

## THE COACH AND COMPETITION

Coaches and coaching play vital roles in helping players to improve, and improvement is an important motivational factor for staying in the game.

It's also vital that players get to practice and improve the skills they learn at coaching. The most realistic situation for this to happen is in an appropriate level competition. Therefore it is very important for coaches to be directly involved in providing competitive opportunities.

- Players get coaching in order to play better in matches. If they do not have the opportunity to play matches on a regular basis, many will lose the motivation to stay in the sport.
- Crucially for coaches, supervising a competitive event provides an opportunity to see their pupils perform in a ‘real-world’ situation, and therefore be able to plan effectively what they need to work on next.
- Organising competitive events that a coach's pupils and prospective pupils can play in is part of the ‘Role of the Coach’.

Competition as part of the coaching programme.

#### **Quote from a coach:**

*“We do a match play segment at the end of every session for 15 minutes, regardless of the age or level.*

*Every third week the entire session is devoted to match play, short multi match formats and conditioned points/matches e.g. you only have a second serve, the point only begins when there is a ‘serve and return in play’ etc.”*

## TYPES OF EVENTS

Variety is key – there are many different categories of events, and each one can be run under a different format/rules/scoring.

One important consideration when you are deciding what type of event to run is to try and provide entrants with as much play and competition as possible. In a single elimination event, you exit the event when you lose a match, meaning half the entrants are out after the first round. This type of event may be useful for a tournament like the club championships, but otherwise holds very little appeal, and can be demotivational for many players.

‘Themed’ competitive events as detailed below add fun, excitement and novelty to more informal events. As ‘less-serious’ events they can provide the opportunity to mix players of different ages and standards in a way that might not work in other scenarios. They also provide unique opportunities to highlight the club in local media.

**MORE:** [tennisplayandstay.com](http://tennisplayandstay.com)



## INVENT AN EVENT!

Take a listing from two or more of the boxes below, and you’ve just invented an event to run at your club. In the highlighted example, “our next competition will be held at Easter, it’s a *Compass Draw Mixed Doubles tournament, short sets (up to 4 games)*”.

### CATEGORIES:

Internal events just for club members  
Team play against other clubs  
Singles  
Doubles  
**Mixed Doubles**  
Parent and Child  
Ladder Challenges

### FORMATS:

Round Robin  
Round Robin into Knockout  
**Compass Draw**  
Box Ladder  
Pyramid  
Team Tennis

### SCORING SYSTEMS:

**Short sets (to 4 games)**  
Third Set is a Tie-Break  
No Ad  
No Let  
Timed Matches  
1 tie-break or best of 3 tie-breaks  
Start at 30-30  
Start the set at 2 games all  
Integrate handicapping system to ensure close matches  
*Combine the above...*

### THEMED EVENTS:

Davis Cup/BJK Cup - entrants represent their ‘country’  
Seasonal Events –  
Spring/Christmas/**Easter**  
History of Tennis – use wooden racquets  
Fancy dress tournament  
Grand Slam Event – reflect the Slam in question e.g. for Wimbledon, players must wear white.

### NEED FURTHER GUIDANCE?

**Leinster:** 01 269 6024  
**Ulster:** 0044 7734 252334  
**Munster:** 087 758 1214  
**Connacht:** 086 351 4123