

8 January 2015

PRIZE MONEY AT ATP CHALLENGERS SET TO INCREASE

LONDON— The ATP announced today significant efforts to enhance the ATP Challenger Tour, including further increases in prize money. The ATP Challenger Tour comprises approximately 150 tournaments each year and serves as a springboard for players to compete on the ATP World Tour.

The increases will take place at the lowest category of tournaments, with minimum prize money levels increasing from \$40,000 + Hospitality (paid hotel accommodation for main draw players) to \$50,000 + Hospitality by 2017. In addition, and with immediate effect, the ATP is offering all current minimum prize money tournaments a subsidy to move up to \$50,000 + H from 2015.

The latest increases mean that prize money at the lowest ATP Challengers is set to increase by 100% inside 10 years. In 2007, minimum prize money levels on the Challenger Tour were \$25,000 + H. Minimum levels were already increased from \$35,000 + H to \$40,000 + H in 2014.

“Men’s professional tennis is enjoying one of the most successful periods in its history, however it is essential that we see growth across all levels of the game,” said Chris Kermode, ATP Executive Chairman & President. “Almost every player earns their stripes on the Challenger Tour before they make it on the ATP World Tour and every bit of extra prize money helps as they look to forge a career in men’s professional tennis. The ATP is committed to making that career path as viable as possible.”

The enhancements at Challenger level come following an extensive strategic review by the ATP’s internal Challenger Tour Management Committee, formed at the beginning of 2014 and led by Alison Lee, ATP Executive Vice President of the International Group region.

“The success and growth of the ATP Challenger Tour is critical to the overall health of our sport and we need to ensure that the lower levels of the professional game do not get left behind,” said Lee. “The enhancements announced today indicate the ATP’s commitment in reinvesting into the lower echelons of the game and supporting these events. It is a delicate step-by-step process, and our strategy is aimed at raising the lower levels of more than 50% of Challenger events, gradually and with assistance until 2017. Prize money is just one part of the equation. We are also pleased with a number of other enhancements set to take place this year, related to calendar flow, medical services, player development, officiating and marketing, all of which will improve the services we are able to provide players at this level.”

The ATP will also provide additional ATP umpires, ATP physiotherapists and Player Relations staff across a number of tournaments, as well as continuing its focus on ensuring that more tournaments are staged in regional swings which complement ATP World Tour tournaments, enabling players to reduce costs and travel time.

Among other enhancements, branded nets will also begin to be featured at ATP Challenger tournaments from 2015. With the majority of Challenger tournaments live streamed across the globe, the net branding will create a unified look for the circuit globally.

'We need to get the right Challenger events in the right weeks, reducing travel costs and improving the medical services, player education, officiating and marketing at these events,' added Kermode. "We are taking a holistic approach as we look to make the time players spend at the Challenger level more sustainable."

The ATP is also working closely with the ITF relating to planned enhancements at Futures tournaments to ensure a seamless pathway for players from Futures to Challenger level.

ATP CHALLENGER TOUR FACTS:

- 2014 total prize money on the ATP Challenger Tour was \$9.2 million.
- Currently, the different levels of prize money for Challengers, are from \$40,000 + H through to \$125,000 + H.
- Total on-site attendance across Challengers in 2014 was 682,980.
- The lowest-level Challenger tournaments must provide player hotel accommodation.
- 2014 Challenger breakdown by region: Europe 47%; Asia 21%; South America 19%; North America 13%
- The Association of Tennis Professionals (prior to the formation of the ATP Tour in 1990) began Challenger tournaments in 1985 with 41 tournaments. (32 events at \$25,000, 4 events at \$50,000 and 5 events at \$75,000). Total prize money was \$1.225 million.

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Media contacts:

ATP: Simon Higson, shigson@atpworldtour.com

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 60 tournaments in 30 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 2015 ATP World Tour battle for prestigious titles and Emirates 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 best eight qualified singles players and doubles teams will compete for the last title of the season at the Barclays ATP World Tour Finals. Held at The O2 in London, the event will officially crown the 2015 ATP World Tour No.1 presented by Emirates. For more information, please visit www.ATPWorldTour.com.