

# Junior Tennis Working Group

Phase I: Junior Tennis Strategy - submitted to the National Capital Tennis Association on January 28, 2021

## Junior Tennis Strategy

### Executive Summary

The October 2020 Annual General Meeting of the National Capital Tennis Association called into existence the Junior Competitive Working Group to examine how the NCTA can improve its support to the sustainable growth of junior tennis competition at all levels.



In response to this challenge, the Working Group's efforts over the last 3 months have produced a ***Junior Tennis Strategy ("the Strategy")*** which includes two central pillars and a set of Guiding Principles which will attempt to comprehensively address the junior tennis needs of our region.

They are as follows:

1. A cohesive and sustainable ***Regional Junior Competition System ("the System")*** that will better support the size and depth of junior tennis in our region. It outlines in tangible, specific terms the junior event types, categories, ages and corresponding justifications and priorities.

2. A **Regional Junior Competition System Management Model** (“**the Management Model**”), is designed to maximize the System’s potential to take root in our community and lead to success in the long run. It is recommended that the creation of a Junior Tennis Committee (“**the Committee**”) is formed, reporting to the NCTA Junior Chair. Items such as scheduling, accountability and annual performance metrics are defined, and the creation of a Tiger Team is proposed to assist clubs with less experience to run events. Lastly, proposed changes to the NCTA constitution are made to ensure the sustainability of the Working Group’s efforts as well as broader representation of the tennis community within the MCTA mandate.
3. A set of **Guiding Principles** is defined to underpin and guide all elements proposed within the **System** and **Management Model**. They are as follows:
  - Tennis for Everyone
  - Creative Approaches and Best Practices
  - Organizational Excellence
  - Supporting Player Commitment, Performance and Sportsmanship
  - Cooperation and the spirit of Partnership and Reciprocity

In terms of governance and process, the NCTA Board of Directors will be asked to review the details of the Strategy below and present any questions or concerns for discussion at the next Board meeting. Once each question or concern has been addressed, the NCTA President will ask the Board of Directors to vote on the adoption of the Junior Tennis Strategy in its entirety.

## Guiding Principles

These objectives drive the subsequent design and inform the thought process and the components of the system that is being proposed.

### 1. Tennis for Everyone

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Tennis is a non-contact, safe sport that can be played year round bringing many health benefits to people of all ages and should be played by as many people as possible.

Regarding juniors, the more children of varying ages and abilities that play tennis, the more adult players we will see in the future supporting our sport. If we want tennis to prosper tomorrow, we need to ensure the system is embracing the widest possible range of youth players today.

## **2. Creative Approaches and Best Practices**

Geographically, Canada is the second largest country in the world and Ontario is almost the size of Spain and France combined but has a mere fraction of the population of these countries. This reality creates unique challenges that require creativity and innovation. What may work well in Toronto may not work that well for Ottawa and vice versa. Understanding our conditions for development and adopting (and adapting) the best practices from the world of tennis is the best way forward to design a system that is optimal for the local demographic we serve.

## **3. Organizational Excellence**

Youth and their parents deserve to have access to and will return to events that are well-organized, where children and parents are shown appreciation, respect and care. Organizing and running such events with repeated success is not easy. It takes prior experience, organizational talent and some heart and dedication to do it well. A good system must place emphasis on organizational excellence by regularly monitoring performance and developing sustainable capacity to run good events, year after year.

## **4. Supporting Player Commitment, Performance and Sportsmanship**

When designing a system that supports junior tennis in the region, we must recognize and support players for their commitment to the sport, regardless of their age, level or gender. Those whose performances in competitions at the regional, provincial and national levels are exemplary should be recognized and rewarded as they motivate others to follow in their

footsteps. Finally, those whose values of sportsmanship (fairplay, compassion, team play) at competitions are noted as singularly outstanding should be publicly recognized and cited as examples for others to follow. Such recognition leads to creation of a healthier, stronger and more sustainable tennis ecosystem.

### 5. Cooperation and the spirit of Partnership and Reciprocity

A system built on cooperation means that those who participate in it work together for a common good; they are partners. Whether it is community clubs, teaching academies, the City of Ottawa, the OTA, the volunteers or the parents - we are all partners in a system. The proposed system takes all these stakeholders into consideration and incorporates them as valued partners in delivery of events to our local client stakeholders. All partners have an insight, input and a transparent view into organization of events, their mission and purpose.

## Pillar 1: Regional Junior Competition System

The details of the regional system are comprised of 3 main elements:

1. The [Competition Events Toolkit](#) contains the complete list of the types of events that are recommended to use within *the System*.
2. The [Age and Level Prioritization](#) section deals with the well known regional capacity dilemma: while we want to serve every level, age and gender equally well, that may not be possible in a given year or the possibility may be changing as facilities and their availability fluctuate from year to year. Another consideration is the depth of tennis levels in any given demographic, something that typically fluctuates, and needs to be adjusted annually. There is also the high school quitting phenomenon where players who move to high school leave the more advanced participation in sport. It is particularly

noted among girls. They may still want to play tennis but their commitment often wanes, so they may be interested in different types of events than just a year earlier.

3. The [Annual Calendar of Events](#) is the most important part of the system design. It is the framework of an ideal competition calendar for the region that demonstrates the suggested events occurrence and density throughout the year.

**The System** is designed to serve as a useful tool for the **Management Model** to use as a roadmap when executing its organizational mandate.

## The Competition Events Toolkit

The following list of events and associated purpose, function and benefit(s) is included as part of the Competition Events Toolkit.

Event Type	Event Description
Tournament (Future Stars)	A Future Stars event is for U9 (¾ court with Orange Ball) and U10 (full court with Green dot ball) beginner and pre-competitive “progressive tennis” players as an introductory event to gain competition experience. Features a round robin, fast four format, and an annual leaderboard tracks rankings and awards prizes at the end of season gala.
Tournament (OTA 2-star equivalent or UTR)	An OTA 2-star or UTR level based equivalent tournament that allows players of varying levels, from beginners to more advanced, develop their competitive skills and gain confidence in competition before they move on to play more demanding OTA sanctioned events.
Tournament (OTA 3-star equivalent)	An OTA 3-star event that allows competitive players to move through the rounds and gather rankings points.
Tournament (OTA 3.5-star equivalent)	An OTA 3.5-star event that allows players who qualify based on their national rankings to compete with the local and guest players for ranking points.

Tournament (OTA 4-star equivalent)	A Tennis Canada 4-star event that allows the best players to earn a significant number of national ranking points and gain qualifying points to Nationals. No limits in draws, so anyone can play.
Match Play Event (UTR platform)	An opportunity for junior players to play ad hoc in a level-based individual competition to build their confidence and skills, and earn the UTR rating points.
Seasonal League (UTR platform)	An opportunity for junior players to play regularly (weekly) in a level-based team competition to build their confidence and skills, and earn the UTR rating points.
Elementary Schools Tournament	An opportunity for players grades 1-6 (primarily 4-6) to compete in a half or full day tennis festival style event in June. Players would be from schools who typically participated in the Little Aces schools program run by the OTA Regional Coordinator.
NCSSAA Tennis	The largest tournament annually in our region, players ages 14-18 from beginner to nationally ranked have an opportunity to compete in a 2-day plus playoffs round robin format with the winners moving to OFSAA, the highly competitive Provincial Championships.
Regional Competitive Regrouping Event	<p>A summer event organized for a subset of the regional competitive junior players in the 9 to 14 age bracket conducted in cooperation between several academies and coaches, in order to assess the level of tennis among the up and coming group, and provide them with a sparring and joint training opportunity.</p> <p>An overnight event similar to what Tennis Ontario and Tennis Quebec offer to their players for which Ottawa players are not invited due to location or other provincial</p>

	<p>restrictions.</p> <p>Event partially subsidized by sponsors and possibly from the Junior Development Fund. Mont Tremblant clay courts have been used for such an event before.</p>
End of Competitive Season Event (Rewards Gala)	An event designed as the major opportunity to reward players, clubs, coaches and volunteers in the region, and to promote the positive actions and values that support growth of the healthy and vibrant junior competitive tennis community.
Regional Session for Competitive Coaches (training and development)	A networking and professional development event that could be organized in conjunction with Tennis Canada / TPA in order to increase the competencies of the local coaching talent.
Umpire and Volunteer Training	Event in support of annual development of tournament referee and tournament volunteer teams involved in running junior competitive events.

## The Age and Level Prioritization - the Regional Capacity Dilemma

Ottawa has lost many courts over the past two decades with the biggest loss occurring in 2020 with the loss of indoor and outdoor courts at its largest indoor facility, the former Ottawa Athletic Club. While we await the creation of new capacity, at this point we realize the limitations and need to prioritize which demographic to serve and at what capacity, particularly in the indoor season.

When deciding on which age and which levels to support the most, we have several demographic junior areas to choose from as our priorities. For the purpose of prioritization we

use the simplified terms such as “Recreation” and “Competitive” to differentiate between levels of commitment and the type of training the player is enrolled in. The priorities deemed high are marked with the highlight. **The proposed system prioritizes creation of a wide range of events for competitive and recreational players in the U10 to U16 age categories.** The justification of these priorities is shown below the table, highlighted in this colour.

Junior Age	Level	Description
5-8	Beginner	Children new to tennis. Most are not yet committed to any kind of competition due to beginner tennis level and young age. Most children in Ottawa in this age group are mostly not committed yet to competition.
5-8	Advanced	Children with advanced tennis skills despite still being very young age. There are very few children in Ottawa who fit this description.  The few kids in this group fit nicely into U10 competitions as providing consistent levels in U8 and U9 events is very difficult to accomplish in this region at the present time.
8-12	Recreation	There are many children in Ottawa who transition gradually from recreation to competition over this period of their development. Most find it difficult to move from no competition to suddenly 3-star events that offer only one match (consolation is often not mandatory). For them 2-star events or UTR equivalent is the best option.  We lose a lot of potential players who could transition at 10 or 11 but who don't because there are not enough events that fit their level. They stay instead in recreational programs and stagnate as they eventually see no pathway.
8-12	Competitive	There is a sizable group of competitors who train and regularly compete in the region. These are still young

		<p>players and they have historically been forced to compete on the road much earlier and much more than normally should be the case. These are normally the players for whom 3- and 3.5-star OTA events (if they qualify for those based on their rankings) are the most optimal option.</p>
12-14	Recreation	<p>As we enter recreational teens, the gap becomes very noticeable. The OAC tried to accommodate this gap; Carleton also offered some weekly match play for this pre-teen and younger teen category but not in a form of any system supported tournaments.</p> <p>Again, for many of these kids 2-star or equivalent tournaments is the best option as they will be quite discouraged playing 3 star events and up, especially if they enroll for the very first time and face kids their age who have competed for years.</p>
12-14	Competitive	<p>This is the single biggest and usually the most committed age group. These kids are not yet in high school and they have been playing tennis for many years already, some of them more than half of their lives.</p> <p>It is this age group that has the highest potential to shine and represent Ottawa on the provincial and national scene in the highest proportion (numbers). It gets much harder to produce the next age group because of the reasons shown below.</p>
14-16	Recreation	<p>Those entering high school who are interested in playing tennis recreationally have a really hard time finding anything currently in terms of structured events.</p> <p>At the same time there are not that many kids in high school age interested in continuing with the sport as their</p>

		<p>life priorities change. Some choose other hobbies; others find academic priorities and preparation for university takes much more time.</p> <p>This could be improved with the high school tennis and events that are closer to 2-star level or equivalent, or preferably level based events.</p>
14-16	Competitive	<p>This age group at the competitive level is much more reduced compared to their previous age cohort. This is not good but we don't always have control here. Often parents decide it is no longer in their best interest to fund competitive training at this age while kids require more and more training hours to stay within the level they may have been earlier.</p> <p>At the same time as the numbers of participants locally are reduced, to continue their gains in rankings and ratings, these players must be travelling to regions with more players in their age group. So unless we retain more competitive players in the sport at this age and level, which is often outside of our control, we face a reality that only truly committed athletes and families can support tennis at this level and there may not be that many of them.</p>
16-18	Recreation	<p>Recreation players in U18 are de facto adults and could and should be easily merged into adult streams of events if possible. The number of young people in this age group who would be willing to pay for recreational events is likely very small as these people prepare for their end of high school, have other activities on their mind and prepare for post secondary education.</p>
16-18	Competitive	<p>The advanced U18 competition in the city is a very small</p>

		<p>and narrow group. These players, if they stay with the sport at competitive level, are likely aiming for a scholarship or to try their hand at the entry ITF level. It is very difficult to accommodate at the appropriate level such a small but skill-wise very advanced group.</p> <p>Events that involve adults and pros are the best option but the gains to the system from organizing such events are not clear given how very few such players remain each year in the city. Within a year or two these players become adults and it is not likely their career is going to be supported for long by their parents.</p>
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### **Why not younger than U10?**

There are too few committed and advanced level players in younger categories to justify creation of U8 or U9 events, however this priority should be revisited each year based on the number of players in this age in the region and their level of play and their commitment to competition.

### **Why priority support for U12-U14 recreation?**

The recreational U12-U14 stream provides an important influx of players new to competition who may have been introduced to tennis a bit later in life but who may nevertheless contribute to a healthy, vibrant competitive structure of our region.

### **Why not priority support for events that target the most advanced, older teens?**

Our region at the present time and for the foreseeable future is not well suited to satisfy the needs of the older and the most advanced teens who seek entry into post-secondary education through a tennis scholarship, or who want to test their skills at the ITF level.

These players will need to travel significantly to gain points and to refine their skills. There are too few of them and the region will not serve them well with organized events of the appropriately high level.

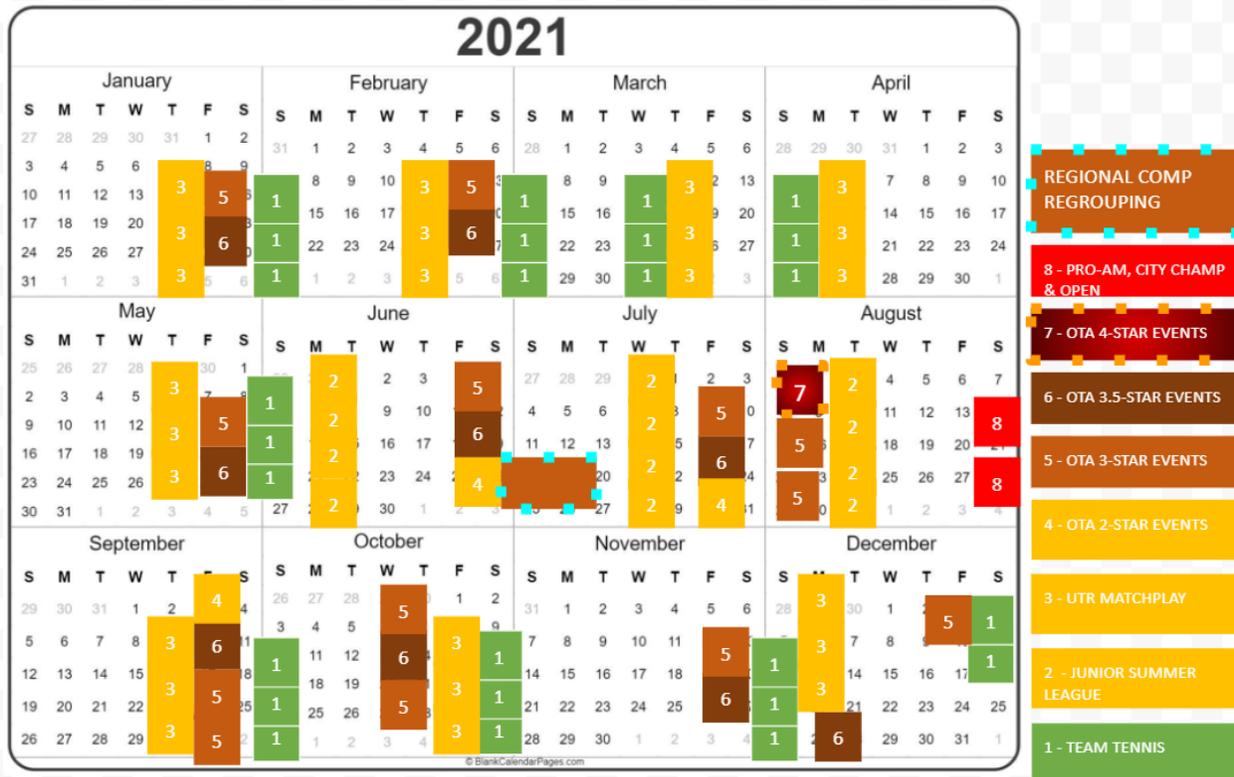
It is important to note that supporting these players financially to augment their travel expenses in conjunction with success in out of town tournaments is a better alternative and a recommended course of action. The NCTA Junior Development Fund is the best mechanism to adopt for this purpose, and was created a few years ago to address this need. A similar model of support is in place in some European countries and we believe this is a best practice to be emulated and developed.

## The Annual Calendar of Events - the Ideal Framework

This section contains the year round, ideal calendar of events for junior tennis players in our region. The calendar is developed as a schema, or a framework, that could be adopted and refined each year by the group in charge of tournament planning for our region.

The calendar contains event types listed in this document in one of the prior sections.

The concept divides the season into indoor and outdoor periods. We strive during indoor season for a minimum of 1 x 3.5 star and 1 x 3 star events per month. No 2 star events indoors; UTR matchplay instead. We strive during the outdoor season for 1 x 3.5 star, 2 x 3 star and 1 x 2 star events per month. We run junior summer league instead of match play. August is exception as we run 1 x 4 star instead of 1 x 3.5 star.



**Additional comments regarding the calendar framework**

The ideal calendar framework shows a regional competitive environment where players have year round opportunities to compete and gain national ranking points. The season is divided into May 1st to October 15th (outdoor) and October 16th to April 30th (indoor). These dates are influenced mainly by the geography and climate of Ottawa.

With the proposed calendar of competitive events, the best juniors in the region will not be able to qualify for national selections and make it to junior national championships without travelling to Toronto. Even though the time and cost of travel for advanced competitive juniors can be somewhat prohibitive, the goal of zero travel has not been the prevailing objective. Ottawa players need to test their skills against the best players in our province and that statement holds true for every competitive sport played in this city.

With that said, Ottawa juniors will at least have one major event to look forward to per month in their hometown, which in our estimate can save their families annually approximately 5,000 CAD per player if this schedule is implemented. This amount of savings is non-trivial and will be welcomed by the parents of competitive juniors.

When we compare this proposal to the Tennis Canada Long Term Athletic Development (LTAD) recommendations for competitive players aiming for national level results, this calendar will allow Ottawa players to accumulate 20 to 25 sanctioned tournaments a year and be able to play 15 to 20 of them in this city.

The remaining tournaments - national selection qualifiers and national selections - if they make it - have to be played in GTA but this is limited to 6-8 per year for the great majority of Ottawa players. Only the truly exceptional players will have to compete more often outside of Ottawa in 3.5- and 4-star events. If our region develops a noticeable number of players at this level, it will be a good problem to have.

The combination of **a guaranteed schedule of 1 x 3-star and 1 x 3.5-star per month indoors** is a great value proposition for the region as it will allow up and coming good young players to rise above the limits of 3-star events and start getting to the level of play required at national selections. Without that capability we won't see many players from Ottawa succeed at the national scene. While 2-star tournaments are not being proposed for the indoor season, participation in developmental activities such as weekly UTR match play and Team Tennis

programs is recommended for players new to competition whose skills are not there yet to play with confidence in 3-star events.

For the outdoors season, **a guaranteed schedule of at least 1 x 2-star, 2 x 3-star and 1 x 3.5-star per month (except for August with 1 x 4 star)** is a great value proposition for the entire spectrum of players and levels. Those new to competition will try their skills in 2-star events and if they do well there, they will have options to try out 3-star events regularly. The 3.5- and 4-star events will appeal to the more advanced players seeking valuable ranking points while a lot of up and coming players will be also taking advantage of a monthly Junior Tennis League hosted on UTR in multiple locations at the same time, something that could become a real game changer for the region in terms of developmental value.

The ProAM, City Championship and Open events are mentioned on the calendar only in tertiary terms but they are not forgotten for their value to junior tennis. If these events become UTR enabled or OTA sanctioned, their attractiveness to teen players will increase and the coaches will be sending their players to participate and compete against adults there, if we design these events appropriately and the adult audience agrees with this approach.

At this point the main proposal in this design calls for enabling non-OTA sanctioned events to become UTR enabled, so levels can be determined and age barriers eliminated in favour of tennis levels if that is deemed beneficial to the adult community.

Last but not least, the events such as training for referees and tournament staff and volunteers, and the session for the regional coaches, as well as the annual organized trip to Rogers Cup Practice Day in Montreal endorsed and co-organized by the NCTA are not shown on the calendar simply for brevity. These events are still part of the system and should be incorporated into the actual calendar for each year.

## Pillar 2: Region Junior Competition System Management Model

### Who will manage the competitive schedule for the region?

*The System* defined the types of events and the ideal distribution and number of these events in the annual calendar. It also clarifies the pathways for youth to transition through the system in the region. The proposed *Management Model* calls for the NCTA to assume control and responsibility for organization and management of recreational and competitive junior tennis in the region. By assuming such a responsibility, the NCTA will become a stakeholder and a responsible, leading partner in this important domain of the tennis landscape in our region.

The model calls for creation of a permanent *Junior Tennis Committee (“the Committee”)* reporting to the NCTA Junior Chair, Board of Directors. The Committee should consist of no less than three but preferably five permanent members recommended and approved by the Junior Chair on an annual basis. The number of Committee members must be odd to avoid any voting impasse.

For this change to be sustainable, the Working Group recommends that the NCTA change its current constitution from being an organization that represents a subset of regional tennis clubs to an organization that represents an entire community of tennis players: clubs, individual adult players, individual junior players and the teaching professionals. This document does not state how to change the constitution of the NCTA; it merely states that without changing it, the sustainability of the Junior Tennis Committee, and the broader efforts of the Working Group would be uncertain.

It is recommended that the Committee be represented by: 1) at least one parent of a younger junior (U10/U12), at least one parent of an older junior (U14/U16) and at least one teaching pro whose primary role is situated in competitive development.

## How will the annual schedule be created and finalized?

Creation of an annual schedule is an art of coordination. There are many moving parts and several important stakeholders, so the task is not so much one of building a schedule but rather one of coordination of multiple inputs in a timely manner.

Moving forward, the recommended annual schedule process is proposed as follows:

Process step	Description	Deadline
<b>Step 1</b>  Appoint or reappoint the Junior Tennis Committee members	This annual step approved by the NCTA Board of Directors authorizes annually the group of individuals to be in charge of development of the junior tennis calendar.	At the Annual General Meeting of the NCTA held always before Dec 24 of the preceding year
<b>Step 2</b>  "Invitation to host an event" sent by email (the outdoor season)	The Junior Tennis Committee issues an "invitation to host an event" to organizations known as interested or potentially interested to host an event.  <b>This pertains to events from May 1st to October 15th.</b>  A standardized letter must contain at least: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The <b>Type of Event</b> to host;</li> <li>2. <b>Details</b> about the event;</li> <li>3. The <b>Benefits</b> of hosting the event for the organization and its members;</li> </ol>	All invitations must be issued by January 15 of the year of the outdoor season starting May 1st.  The organizations must respond by a deadline of March 15, which gives them ample time of 2 months to review the letter, discuss it with the members and make a decision.  A lack of response by the deadline is understood as rejection of the offer to host.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. The <b>Assistance</b> available in organization of an event;</li> <li>5. The proposed <b>First and Alternative Dates</b> for the event; and</li> <li>6. Finally, the letter must contain a <b>Deadline to Respond</b> by.</li> </ol> <p>All OTA events are cleared in advance with the Toronto OTA office (Kartik Vyas) before an invitation is sent to ensure the event can be held and that conflicts with other events in and outside the region are avoided.</p>	<p>All acceptances and rejections are to be reported to the NCTA Board of Directors as part of the reporting process.</p>
<p><b>Step 3</b></p> <p>Finalizing and posting the calendar of events (<b>outdoor season</b>)</p>	<p>The Junior Tennis Committee finalizes the calendar of the events for the outdoor season.</p> <p>This is done by completing the following steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All OTA events posted on the OTA and NCTA websites.</li> <li>2. All the UTR events posted on the UTR platform and NCTA website.</li> <li>3. All other events including the regional regrouping(s), developmental sessions for umpires and volunteers, or pro training sessions posted along with the tournaments and league on the NCTA website.</li> <li>4. All organizations that host events receive a letter confirming</li> </ol>	<p>The calendar must be finalized and all steps completed by no later than April 15 for the season starting on May 1st.</p> <p>At this point in time, all juniors in the region who still train indoors due to remaining snow and inclement weather can plan their summer activities with the calendar that shows the planned events from May 1st to October 15th.</p> <p>It helps parents plan vacations and other family outings. It also helps more advanced players decide</p>

	the event they host is now posted and the preparation to host it should begin.	when to travel and when to stay and play at home.
<p><b>Step 4</b></p> <p>Assistance with the organization of the outdoor events</p>	<p>The Junior Tennis Committee switches gears now from the planning body to a supervising body involved in organization of events.</p> <p>Volunteers, coaches, umpires, and whoever else is needed to help run successful events are mobilized to help with events at various locations. A Tiger Team consisting of proven, reliable organizers of events is in place to assist. This team may and should include the OTA coordinator to help run some of the events, especially those that involve promotion of tennis among the first time participants or the youngest players.</p>	<p>Ongoing process through the outdoor season based on events on the calendar.</p>
<p><b>Step 5</b></p> <p>“Invitation to host an event” sent (the indoor season)</p>	<p>The Junior Tennis Committee issues an “invitation to host an event” to organizations known as interested or potentially interested to host an event.</p> <p><b>This pertains to events from October 15th to April 30th.</b></p> <p>A standardized letter must contain at least:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The <b>Type of Event</b> to host;</li> <li>2. <b>Details</b> about the event;</li> </ol>	<p>All invitations must be issued by May 1 of the year of the outdoor season starting October 1st.</p> <p>The organizations must respond by a deadline of August 30, which gives them ample time of 4 months to review the letter, discuss it with the members and make a decision.</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. The <b>Benefits</b> of hosting the event for the organization and its members;</li> <li>4. The <b>Assistance</b> available in organization of an event;</li> <li>5. The proposed <b>First and Alternative Dates</b> for the event; and</li> <li>6. Finally, the letter must contain a <b>Deadline to Respond</b> by.</li> </ol> <p>All OTA events are cleared in advance with the Toronto OTA office (Kartik Vyas) before a letter is sent to ensure the event can be held and that conflicts with other events in and outside the region are avoided.</p>	<p>A lack of response by the deadline is understood as rejection of the offer to host.</p> <p>All acceptances and rejections are to be reported to the NCTA Board of Directors as part of the reporting process.</p>
<p><b>Step 6</b></p> <p>Finalizing and posting the calendar of events (<b>indoor season</b>)</p>	<p>The Junior Tennis Committee finalizes the calendar of the events for the indoor season.</p> <p>This is done by completing the following steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All OTA events posted on the OTA and NCTA websites.</li> <li>2. All the UTR events posted on the UTR platform and NCTA website.</li> <li>3. All other events including the regional regrouping(s), developmental sessions for umpires and volunteers, or pro training sessions posted along with the tournaments and league</li> </ol>	<p>The calendar must be finalized and all steps completed by no later than October 15th for the season starting on October 16th.</p> <p>At this point in time, all juniors in the region who are returning from the outdoor season to train indoors will know the indoor schedule from October 16th to April 30th of the following year.</p> <p>It helps parents plan winter holidays and other family outings. It also helps more</p>

	<p>on the NCTA website.</p> <p>4. All organizations that host events receive a letter confirming the event they host is now posted and the preparation to host it should begin.</p>	<p>advanced players decide when to travel and when to stay and play at home during winter months when travel is more difficult and school activities overlap with competitive sport.</p>
<p><b>Step 7</b></p> <p>Assistance with the organization of the outdoor events</p>	<p>Same type of engagement as per step 4 except indoors as required.</p>	<p>Ongoing throughout the duration of the indoor season.</p>
<p><b>The cycle repeats by returning to Step 1</b></p>		

### Who will deliver the events on the annual calendar and how?

The answer to who delivers the events on the calendar will vary based on the event type and the capabilities of an organization to deliver.

A place like Carleton University Tennis Center is running OTA events or UTR events internally without any need for external help. They do so because of some of the pros who work there and because of the past experience. But there are organizations, for example some community clubs, who would love to run events and realize all the benefits from running profitable junior events but they may not know how to do it well, so they postpone or avoid running events altogether. For this scenario we need to be creative and accommodating. The Junior Tennis Committee will develop and cultivate a Tiger Team of individuals who are ready and willing to lend a hand and help with organization of events at clubs that may need such help. The best

scenario is one where the Tiger Team is involved in running some elements of an event with the intention to build capacity in the organizing club, so that over time the club becomes self sufficient and successful without having to rely on outside help. This can be accomplished by “shadowing” the Tiger Team members during the events by some designated volunteers from the club and by sending the said volunteers to additional training organized by the Junior Tennis Committee for this purpose.

Consultation with every club at the beginning of each cycle should develop both the Committee and the organizing club should provide ample time to develop a suitable, successful approach.

### **Who will monitor the successful delivery of events and how will it be done?**

The monitoring of successful execution of the regional events falls into the core mandate of the Committee with the summary reporting of how well the events went delivered to the NCTA Board in a structured format.

Such reports should be made twice a year, after completion of each season, so before Dec 15th for the outdoor season ending October 15th and by June 15th for the indoor season ending April 30th. This leaves two months for the Committee to prepare the reports. It is recommended that one member of the Committee become the key responsible “events auditor” who could attend or gather parental and coaching feedback from the various events.

In addition, it is recommended that a special NCTA email account is created for junior tennis, and any and all feedback from participants be directed, with confidentiality assured, to that email account. Some exchanges may be quite difficult as they may deal with repeat cheating offences not reported by tournaments organizers, instances of conflicts between parents in the stands, poor standards of behaviour experienced by organizers or other conduct that the Committee would need to be aware of and follow up on.

## Who and how can we ensure that the goals of the regional system are met year after year?

Part of annual reporting to the Board of the NCTA by the Junior Tennis Committee must include an **Assessment of Strategic Fit** Report, that is an elaboration on how the structure and tournament calendar in a given year contributed to the needs of the junior community in the reporting year ending. The junior community will without a doubt evolve over time. There may be phases where many more younger children with intention to compete appear on the horizon, maybe another segment or age group or gender will require more care to provide them with additional competition options on the calendar. Regardless of what it is, the Committee and its formal overseer - the NCTA Board of Directors - must watch and listen closely to how the junior market evolves and respond with subtle changes in order to best respond to the needs of junior players and their families.

It is possible and very likely that some events will be more popular than others; some may need tweaking or may need to disappear from the calendar while some other events may have to be tried out and in time popularized.

The worst thing that could happen is a situation where the calendar and system becomes fixed and non adaptable.

The aforementioned Assessment Report should include at minimum the following information:

1. How many junior players are estimated to exist in Ottawa in the 6 to 18 years of age?
2. How is junior tennis participation represented between boys and girls?
3. How many boys and girls exist in each age group from U10 to U18 who actively participate in events under the Committee's purview?

4. What are the participation rates in various events with information on which events are oversubscribed (need more capacity) and which ones are undersubscribed (may need to be better promoted or perhaps adjusted or reduced)?
5. Are the events fulfilling the needs of the market based on feedback (surveys) from the parents and players? What are the key gaps that keep repeating in conversations?
6. What is the overall sense of “health” of the junior environment as reported by competitive coaches, event organizers, parents and others involved in the sport? Are we doing the best job possible or can we do better and if so, in which area?
7. What was the overall and specific feedback from host clubs? What went well and what area(s) of event management/execution require improvement?

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The NCTA Working Group has developed a Junior Tennis Strategy which is built upon:

- 5 Guiding Principles
- A Regional Junior Competition System; and,
- A Regional Junior Competition System Management Model

All members of the Working Group believe that the Strategy is robust and resilient in its structural design, can be successfully implemented starting this season, and is the first step to growing the number of junior players at all levels in the region over the long run.

The Working Group recommend that the NCTA Board of Directors vote to adopt the Junior Tennis Strategy in its entirety.

Appendix A

Working Group Members

