



STRATEGY DOCUMENT

“OPERATION 2012”

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GBTG OBJECTIVES

BRITISH FEMALE PLAYER OBJECTIVES

- Establish a support system for all female aspiring pro players
- Improve overall national and international standards of British female players

ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Raise awareness of GB Tennis Girls and its activities
- Expand the aspiring pro database and our online community
- Continue fund-raising to support all activities

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ABOUT GB TENNIS GIRLS

About the GB Tennis Girls Organisation

GB Tennis Girls was founded to create a welcoming and supportive community for aspiring female tennis players in Britain. The organisation is not-for-profit and is run by four former top British and WTA ranked tennis players, Helen Crook, Victoria Davies, Jo Ward and Lorna Woodroffe. GBTG works with the LTA to bring some tangible improvements within the British game.

Many schemes are run by GBTG which create sponsoring and fundraising opportunities to help empower British girls to fund their own tennis. The organisation endeavours to support the production of pro tennis players, but also seeks to encourage and retain all girls' involvement in the sport by promoting the many career opportunities and lifestyle benefits available to females through tennis. Raising the self-esteem of British girls is a welcome by-product of a positive tennis experience.

The GBTG's thriving online network has allowed ALL players to belong and feel part of the GBTG community. The GBTG website enables informative interaction between players (past and present), parents, supporters and coaches. The website also provides a platform from which many players have received commercial and private sponsorships.

GBTG fundraise by hosting various events held throughout the year. The Wimbledon Ball at the prestigious All England Club has become a notable date in many of their supporter's calendars as well as a beneficial net working evening for like-minded companies and individuals, as has their annual Golf Day.

Sponsors and supporters of GBTG can benefit from corporate entertainment packages and Wimbledon hosting days as well as a number of other events and have access to the GBTG network of supporters. For companies with a female target market sponsoring GBTG can be a stand-alone commercially viable marketing decision. All sponsors of GBTG can be safe in the knowledge that their donations will be managed by passionate former professionals who will identify worthy schemes and recipients.

Key GBTG Personnel

The founding four have all earned a living on the pro-circuit, competed at Wimbledon and are all former British No.1s and No.2s. Between them they have represented Britain in the Olympics, Federation Cup, European Cup, Maureen Connolly Cup as well as representing Wales and England in Internationals. With over 100 professional titles collectively, coupled with a sense of underachievement, they are in a great position to improve the experience of the British female tennis player.

History

Pre-2002

Helen Crook and Victoria Davies, along with Jo Ward and Lorna Woodroffe, the four instrumental members, were all at the top of the British rankings. All four players reached the no.1 or no.2 positions in the UK and were informally supported through the sponsorship activities of MBH Architects and Simons Construction. The funding enabled the four key players to enjoy longer, more successful careers, and despite the feeling of having underachieved, they enjoyed many Wimbledon appearances and won over 100 professional titles between them.

2002-2005

GB Tennis Girls was asked to assume responsibility for the incoming sponsorship money in 2003. It supported full-time players in a professional training environment called the GB Tennis Girls Hub and created the popular website to promote and encourage all British female players. Although all players achieved career high rankings during their time on the Hub, many were limited by their past tennis experiences and poor coaching, and aside from a better personal experience of the game there was little tangible, high profile return for the sponsors. We realised that fully funding a handful of players was not the best way of helping British tennis and looked at other options with a more worthwhile return and impact.

2005 to present date

GBTG continue to raise funds, support players, implement national schemes and lobby for changes to benefit Britain's female players. The organisation relies solely on its own sponsorship recruitment and fundraising and remains the only national independent body dedicated to improving British women's tennis.

What we Have to Overcome

The problems of British tennis are too many to mention but our strategy for 2012 is designed to counter some of the major hurdles which we feel we can go some way to address.

Between our own experiences and those of our key advisors we have over 50 years of experience of the British system. We don't forget the past and we have to stop the same mistakes happening again and again and again..

As of **January 2006** it remains clear that the British system is not working. We have identified the following points as some of the inhibitors to the successful production of tennis players in the UK.

- Unlike other sports, there is not a clear ladder of progression for players.
- Funding is almost entirely subjective.
- Experts agree that Britain won't get anywhere until the LTA stop trying to produce players themselves.

- The few coaches who are doing a good job and producing good players nationwide lose their players to the LTA academies and the lure of handouts.
- The LTA do not use their resources to support all centres, clubs and players.
- Once elite, autonomy to choose a coach is taken away from players and less financial help results if a player exercises autonomy outside of the LTA system.
- Successful and passionate coaches become disillusioned.
- Poor coaches discourage players from competing to not lose income from missed lessons.
- Players are not encouraged to reach their potential unless deemed *elite*.
- Girls are receiving less funding than the boys.
- Girls who play tennis are not competing enough and are not playing appropriate tournament schedules.
- No steps are being taken to combat female teenage dropout rates, which are at a much higher level than the boys.

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OBJECTIVES EXPLAINED

British Female Player Objectives

The objectives that have been identified as our main focuses are intrinsically linked and therefore no one objective can be achieved without attention to the others. It is our belief that a comprehensive, open and informative support system must be established in order to help retain females players and raise overall standards.

1) Establish a support system for all female aspiring pro players

All females should be encouraged to maximise their tennis potential as tennis provides many career options and is a healthy hobby. Good club standard players can earn US/UK University Scholarships, and there are plenty of coaching and tennis administration and management jobs available. Tennis is an ideal activity to help combat the self esteem and obesity problems that many youngsters encounter. Tennis set within a family club environment also provides a safe haven for teenagers to grow up in and develop life long friendships. Teams, social events and the nature of the sport allow the elite to mix with the social players and create a healthy community.

Experience has shown us how effective simply supporting a player (parents and coaches) with the right words and actions (not money) can be.

GB Tennis Girls Web Site

Through the GBTG web site players, coaches, parents and supporters have been able to seek independent guidance and advice from experienced former British players.

Academy

Through our links with the WimX Academy we have piloted our schemes and ideas and have experienced their success first hand.

GBTG Squads and Grants

The management of GBTG supported squads and GBTG grants for players and coaches has highlighted the importance of clear goals and accurate guidance for players and parents.

Most of these support activities have been implemented within restricted geographic areas. It is our intention to offer GBTG support on a nationwide scale in the future.

1a) Change current British Tennis system

We aim to work with the LTA and encourage them to appoint key people and implement structures and initiatives which will advise, encourage and reward achievements for all females with tennis aspirations.

We will continue to do what we can with our resources, but will also make suggestions and hopefully develop a good working relationship with the governing body. We are sure both organisations will be more effective if working together.

1b) Support a wider base of players nationwide

We now have a plan to support many more junior players nationwide. Working with our network of partner coaches, we select players from our Aspiring Pro database, which acts as a sponsorship register. Our main criteria for grant sponsorship is proof that the player is improving and has some form of dedicated support team (ie coach, parent or both). Grant funding will also be earned through tournament opportunities (ie PRO-5000) and our self-fundraising schemes.

2) Improve overall national and international standards of British female players

2a) Lobby for objective and equal funding

Players need to be part of a system where specific criteria are used to distribute funding. Even if certain players are awarded additional funding, there has to be a basic structure which applies to **all players** regardless of coach, age, parents, personality or perceived potential. Using GB and world rankings to determine rewards will create more competition for the top British spots and eventually see the British rankings rise.

2b) Establish a series of “PRO 5000” tournaments

The PRO-5000 idea developed as a result of a dire need for an objective funding policy within British tennis. It is a winner takes all event and while it will only help a handful of players a year, we are committing our resources to it as we feel it is essential that any British player feels they have a chance to earn significant funding.

It has long been said that “handouts” are not the answer and we agree. In the PRO-5000 players have to come through a real pressure situation to gain funding and this opportunity needs to be available to more players. The tournaments will be as inclusive as possible and therefore one of the fairest forms of funding in British sport.

In its first year professional tennis funding of £5000 was the 1st prize and Martina Navratilova hand-picked a “subjective winner” who received a grant of £2500.

We want the event to produce more winners so from 2008 we are going to include a doubles event and spread the total £5000 over 2 age groups. We shall also investigate the possibility of restricting players who are already heavily funded by the LTA from entering.

We would like to offer PRO-5000 events in the U12, U14, U16 , U18 and maybe even Open categories. In order to be deemed eligible players must have a full 12 month schedule of tournaments and training following the event. The winner will not be given cash, but instead expenses for tennis will be directly paid by the organisation.

We will have to raise funds to host and pay the winners of these events. We will endeavour to recruit sponsors and will encourage donations to be made through the Paypal facility on our website. PRO-5000 could provide a great opportunity for a company to associate themselves with a nationwide event that directly targets one of the biggest and well known obstacles known to playing tennis; it is too expensive.

A fund raising event schedule will be set each year to raise funds solely for the PRO-5000 events.

2c) Implement female-specific objectives

The British women's game has been neglected in the past and there needs to be some specific initiatives and campaigns focused solely on females. Given the recent neglect, the high drop-out rate and lack of girls competing at all levels, improvements should be relatively easy to achieve and measure.

2d) Increase and retain participation in tennis of females aged 13 - 17 yrs

The national trend is for girls of this age to drop out but if tennis is marketed effectively it could become a valuable social activity to this target market. GBTG would like to set up a task force to tackle this specific problem but would need some resources to do this. GBTG plan to promote the educational and career options tennis can bring and the health and lifestyle benefits tennis can provide. Nationwide roadshows/seminars promoting the benefits of tennis and camps and courses for this age group seem an obvious tool for this purpose.

Organisational Objectives

1) Raise awareness of GB Tennis Girls and its activities

More players need to be helped and advised by GBTG, and we need to be better understood by the players, the public and the LTA. Our mandate is simple; to improve British women's tennis.

2) Expand the aspiring pro database and our online community

In order to touch more players we need all upcoming British females of all levels to register on our Aspiring Pro Database. It is important that we are not elitist and try to get all young players on our web site feeling a part of something bigger. This will also expand our commercial viability and aid us in attracting further sponsorship.

3) Continue fundraising to support all activities

With more specific objectives in mind, it is imperative we continue our fund raising activities to raise funds for the "PRO-5000 events" and all our other initiatives. We plan to increase our income revenue from special events and attracting new sponsorship. Black tie dinners, golf days, party nights and various means of corporate entertainment will be included in our financial plan and we will market the subscription based "Friends of GBTG" scheme.

2012 TARGETS

British Female Player Targets

- GBTG to have formed strong links with the LTA
Jan 08 - links have improved
- GBTG to support at least 50 improving junior players per year in good programmes Jan 08 - supported 32 but no longer a specific target
- GBTG to have established working partnerships with successful coaches around the country Jan 08 - ongoing
- GBTG to raise at least £50,000 per year to support the juniors
Jan 08 - Raised £30,000 in 2007
- LTA to have implemented objective funding initiative for top GB players Jan 08 - achieved in 2007 but GBTG are striving for the girls funding to be equal to the boys funding
- GBTG to raise £25,000 per annum to run an U12, U14, U16, and U18 PRO-5000 event per year Jan 08 - raised £12,000 and held first event for U14 age group only at Tipton in February 2007.
- Female teenage drop out rates reduced by specific initiatives
- Specific schemes established to promote participation, excellence and career advice
- GBTG to encourage more women into tennis coaching

Organisational Targets

- All British females to be aware of GBTG and its supporting activities
- GBTG to be a recognised brand and force within the tennis world
- GBTG to have at least 500 actively playing registered aspiring pros
- GBTG to have increased fund raising incomes and have a broader sponsorship network

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