

E. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (INCLUDING AGE ELIGIBILITY)

PART A:

Professional Development and the Age Eligibility Rule are applicable to competition in professional tennis Tournaments worldwide (including all WTA Tour Tournaments and ITF Women's Circuit events that receive WTA Ranking Points).

Competition in a professional tennis Tournament is defined as participation in the singles or doubles Main Draw, or the singles or doubles Qualifying Draw of a WTA Tour or ITF Women's Circuit Tournament. Each Tournament in which a player earns WTA ranking points (singles and doubles) counts towards a player's allotment of Tournaments under the Age Eligibility Rule, except participation in the 2004 Olympic tennis event, which was permitted above and beyond a player's allotment. However, participation in the Draws of ITF Women's Circuit Tournaments in which a player does not earn WTA Ranking Points does not constitute competition in a professional tennis Tournament under this rule.

For the purposes of this rule, a player's age is determined by her age as of the date of start of a Tournament's Main Draw.

A player 18-years-old or older is no longer subject to Part A of the Age Eligibility Rule but is required to continue participating in Professional Development (Part B) until she receives notification of graduation from Professional Development from a Tour representative

1. WTA Tour, ITF Women's Circuit and Exhibition/Non-Tour Event Participation

a. *Players Under 14 Years of Age*

A player who has not yet reached the date of her fourteenth (14th) birthday may not participate in any professional tennis Tournament on the WTA Tour or ITF Women's Circuit.

b. *14 Years Old*

- i. Between the date of a player's fourteenth (14th) birthday and the day before her fifteenth (15th) birthday a player may participate in a maximum of seven (7) ITF Women's Circuit Tournaments, only four (4) of which may be for prize money of greater than \$10,000, plus Fed Cup. The number of ITF Women's Circuit Tournaments a player may participate in will be reduced if the player receives a Wild Card into or accepts a Feed-Up position into a WTA Tour Tier I-IV Tournament as provided in Sections 1(b)(ii) and 3.
- ii. These players are permitted to receive a maximum of three (3) Wild Cards as follows: one (1) Wild Card into the Main Draw or Qualifying Draw of any WTA Tour Tier I-IV or ITF Women's Circuit Tournament, and two (2) Wild Cards into the Main Draw or Qualifying Draw of any ITF Women's Circuit Tournaments.
- iii. These players may earn a WTA Tour ranking; however, these players may not participate in WTA Tour Tournaments, including the Championships, by direct ranking acceptance.

c. *15 Years Old*

- i. Between the date of a player's fifteenth (15th) birthday and the day before her sixteenth (16th) birthday a player may participate in a maximum of nine (9) professional Tournaments plus the Championships (if she qualifies), plus Fed Cup.
- ii. These players are permitted to receive a total of three (3) Wild Cards as follows: two (2) Wild Cards into the Main Draw or Qualifying Draws of any WTA Tour Tier I-IV Tournament or ITF Women's Circuit event, and one (1) Wild Card into the Main Draw or Qualifying Draw of any WTA Tour Tier III-IV or ITF Women's Circuit Tournaments.

d. 16 Years Old

- i. Between the date of a player's sixteenth (16th) birthday and the day before her seventeenth (17th) birthday a player may participate in a maximum of eleven (11) professional Tournaments plus the Championships (if she qualifies), plus Fed Cup.
- ii. These players may receive a maximum of four (4) Wild Cards into WTA Tour and/or ITF Women's Circuit Tournaments; provided, however, that players do not exceed the WTA Tour and/or ITF Women's Circuit maximum limits for singles or doubles, Main Draw or Qualifying Wild Cards.

e. 17 Years Old

- i. Between the date of a player's seventeenth (17th) birthday and the day before her eighteenth (18th) birthday a player may participate in a maximum of fifteen (15) professional Tournaments plus the Championships (if she qualifies), plus Fed Cup.
- ii. These players are permitted to receive a maximum of eight (8) Wild Cards into any WTA Tour or ITF Women's Circuit Tournament; provided, however, that players do not exceed the WTA Tour and/or ITF Women's Circuit maximum limits for singles or doubles, Main Draw or Qualifying Wild Cards.

f. 18 Years Old and Older

- i. Players eighteen (18) years of age or older may participate in an unlimited number of professional Tournaments on the WTA Tour and/or ITF Women's Circuit.
- ii. Once a player reaches the age of eighteen (18), the number of Wild Cards she is allowed to receive pursuant to the WTA Tour's Wild Card rule as outlined in the WTA Tour Rules is calculated over the course of the Tour Year in which she turned eighteen (18) (i.e., any Wild Cards used under the Age Eligibility Rule by the player in that Tour Year prior to turning eighteen (18) will count toward the total number of Wild Cards permitted under the Tour Rules).

g. Exempt Players

- i. Because Gold Exempt players must commit to a minimum number of Tournaments, a player may not be classified as Gold Exempt until the Tour Year during which she will reach her seventeenth (17th) birthday. In order to be named Gold Exempt, a player under the age of eighteen (18) years old must be ranked in the Top 50 of singles at the time of selection.
- ii. Because Silver Exempt players must commit to certain levels and numbers of events, a player may not be classified as Silver Exempt until the Tour Year during which she will reach her sixteenth (16th) birthday. In order to be named Silver Exempt, a player under the age of eighteen (18) must be ranked in the Top 100 of singles at the time of selection.
- iii. Prior to the beginning of the Tour Year during which she will be classified as Exempt and prior to determining her Player Commitment schedule, a player is required to meet with representatives of the Tour Operations and Professional Development departments for the purpose of developing the player's schedule for the upcoming Tour year. Once the player has met with representatives from both staffs, completed her Professional Development requirements, participated fully in Professional Development, and acknowledged in writing that she has a full understanding of the Exempt player and Professional Development programs, then she will be permitted to benefit from her Exempt Status. If the player does not complete any of the above requirements, then she will not be permitted to benefit fully from her Exempt Status.

- iv. During the calendar year of being named to Exempt status, a player will be allowed to participate in up to one (1) additional Tournament only if her participation in that Tournament is necessary for her to meet her Player Commitment requirements.
- v. A Gold Exempt player under the Age Eligibility Rule (AER) will be allowed up to eight (8) Wild Cards, a maximum of five (5) in the Main Draw on the WTA Tour, and the remaining into Qualifying.
- vi. A Silver Exempt player under the AER rule will be allowed:
 - (a) In the calendar year of her 17th birthday – Up to eight (8) Wild Cards, a maximum of four (4) in the Main Draw on the WTA Tour, and the remainder in Qualifying.
 - (b) In the calendar year of her 16th birthday – up to four (4) Wild Cards (can be used in Main Draw or Qualifying on the WTA Tour)
- vii. During the calendar year of her 16th and/or 17th birthday, an Exempt player may not be subject to a Super Hard Designation for any Tournament.

h. Grand Slams

If a player aged 15-17 has completed her Professional Development requirements prior to competing in a Grand Slam (via direct acceptance or a Wild Card), then her participation in that Grand Slam is in addition to her allotted number of tournaments under the Age Eligibility Rule. However, if a player is 14 years of age, or if a player aged 15-17 has not completed her Professional Development requirements prior to competition in the Grand Slam then participation in the tournament is counted toward her total allotment of tournaments.

i. Merited Tournament Increases

A player who reaches a Singles ranking of fifty (50) or better within her 16th or 17th birth year has the option to apply, in writing, to the WTA Tour for up to two (2) additional Tournaments at 16-years-old, and up to one (1) additional Tournament at 17-years-old. Eligible players should contact the WTA Tour Professional Development department for an application form.

In order to be eligible for and participate in the additional event(s), a player must meet other minimum development criteria, including:

- (a) Completion of all current Professional Development requirements (including those required of coaches, agents and parents, i.e., Coach/Parent/Agent Orientation and attendance at Coach Symposium);
- (b) Demonstration that she is continuing her formal education and is on the path to completing secondary school
- (c) Participation in a meeting at a mutually agreed upon location with the WTA Tour CEO to discuss responsibilities and expectations of undertaking these additional events and participation on the WTA Tour.
- (d) Participation in an interview and assessments with CEO, Professional Development representative and any other professional (AER Panel member, psychologist, internist, etc.) deemed necessary to review the player's physical, cognitive and emotional development.
- (e) Agreement to a set schedule, within and outside the WTA Tour, including exhibitions, Fed Cup, etc. for a minimum of one year but through the completion of her 18th birth year.
- (f) Participation of player and her team (coach, parent(s) agent, personal trainer, etc.) in advanced Professional Development programming at a mutually agreed upon site
- (g) All team members must be in good standing with the WTA Tour.
- (h) Agreement to consult with SS&M team and change schedule in the event player incurs injury during this time.

Consideration of all of the above will be taken into account when determining whether a player will be granted the additional one (1) or two (2) events (two events available to 16 year olds only).

2. Wild Cards

- a. Wild Cards received at separate Tournaments count toward a player's total allotment, regardless of whether the Wild Card is singles or doubles. However, if a player receives both a singles and doubles Wild Card at the same Tournament, it will count as only one Wild Card. The singles Wild Card will be used to determine how it is counted (Main Draw or Qualifying).
- b. In the event a player is accepted into the singles draw (Main or Qualifying) by direct acceptance and receives a Wild Card into the doubles draw, that doubles Wild Card will not count towards her allotment permitted under the Age Eligibility Rule. If player does not earn points in the singles draw then such a doubles Wild Card will count towards her Age Eligibility Rule allotment.
- c. In the event a player wins a pre-qualifying event/circuit that awards a Wild Card into a Tier I - IV Tournament, the player will be permitted to accept the Wild Card if:
 - i. The pre-qualifying event/circuit has been accredited by the Tour (please contact the Tour's Legal Affairs or Professional Development departments for full details and guidelines regarding accredited events); and
 - ii. Acceptance of the Wild Card does not result in the player exceeding her allotment of Wild Cards permitted under the Age Eligibility Rule.

Under no circumstances will a player be allowed to exceed the Tour maximum number of Wild Cards for singles or doubles.

- d. In order to qualify for any Wild Card into any WTA Tour Tournament, a player must have completed the WTA Tour Mandatory Player form, the Official Entry form, and submitted all requisite documentation (i.e., proof of identity-copy of player's passport or birth certificate) and be current with all of her Professional Development requirements.

3. Feed-Up/ITF Women's Circuit Events

If a player between the ages of fourteen and seventeen (14 - 17) wins an ITF Women's Circuit event that has been designated a Feed-Up into a WTA Tour Tournament, the player will be allowed to accept the Feed-Up position into the WTA Tour Tournament. This will be counted in her allotted number of Tournaments under the Age Eligibility Rule. Under no circumstances will a player be allowed to exceed the Tour maximum number of Tournaments permitted under the Age Eligibility Rule.

4. Fed Cup Participation

- a. Players under the age of fourteen (14) years may not participate in any level of Fed Cup competition.
- b. Players fourteen (14) years of age and older may participate in all levels of Fed Cup competition.
- c. Participation in Fed Cup competition by players between the ages of fourteen (14) and seventeen (17) will not require players to reduce the number of professional Tournaments in which they are permitted to participate.

5. Olympic Participation

The Age Eligibility restrictions with respect to the Women's Tennis Competition for the Summer Games of 2008 (Beijing, China) will be published in a subsequent edition of the WTA Tour Rules, but prior to such Games. However, the ITF may be contacted directly for those to wish to inquire into general Olympic Eligibility requirements.

6. Exhibition/Non-Tour Events

There are no age-based restrictions on a player's participation in the Exhibitions/Non-Tour Events. However, all players are subject to the WTA Tour Exhibition/Non-Tour Event Rule.

7. Evening Play Limitation

The WTA Tour and WTA Tournaments shall use best efforts not to schedule any player under the age of sixteen (16) years for a match after 9:00 p.m.

8. Media Requirements and Limitations

Players under the age of eighteen (18) years are not permitted to engage in an excess of four (4) total hours of media requests and engagements per Tournament. This time is to include one-on-one media requests, WTA Tour requests and Tournament functions. Player's personal endorsement commitments are at the discretion of the player but must not conflict with her match schedule, professional appearance obligations of the aforementioned and/or physiological limitations.

PART B: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

1. Players under the age of 18 and players who are still subject to Professional Development requirements (regardless of age) are required to check-in at each WTA Tour tournament with the Professional Development representative on the first day of Main Draw, one hour prior to play (or at an alternate date and time as set by the Tour in advance), to participate in PRO U™ and their respective weekly Professional Development activities.
2. Rookie Phase begins when a player eighteen (18) years of age or younger participates:
 - i. In two (2) or more WTA Tour Main Draw singles events in a 52 week period, or
 - ii. In a Grand Slam singles (Main Draw or Qualifying)

Rookie Phase participants must complete the following:

- a. WTA Tour professional orientation, which includes:
 - i. Completing the player handbooks ('The Inside Scoop') and passing a written examination covering the material in the handbook.
 - ii. Fulfilling "Rookie Hours".
- b. At least one (1) parent or guardian/chaperon of each player under the age of eighteen (18) who has qualified to meet all the requirements of participation on the WTA Tour is required to complete the parent handbook and pass a written examination covering the material in the handbook.
- c. Each player under the age of eighteen (18) must have met (or continue to meet) the minimum educational requirements of her country of legal residence. Upon request, players must submit to the WTA Tour a certificate verifying that they have met or are continuing to meet the minimum educational requirements of their countries of residence.
- d. Each player under the age of eighteen (18) years must undergo an annual medical examination as specified by the WTA Tour. This medical examination must be submitted to the WTA Tour for continued approval to participate in professional Tournament tennis. This information will be kept confidential and on file with the WTA Tour Sport Sciences and Medicine Department.
- e. Upon request, coaches and agents of players under the age of eighteen (18) must:
 - i. Participate in an orientation session with a Professional Development representative within three (3) months of notification.
 - ii. Register with the WTA Tour by (a) providing information about their qualifications (i.e. certifications, licensures, etc.), and (b) agreeing in writing to abide by the WTA Tour Rules.

- f. Coaches must also:
 - i. Agree, in writing, to abide by the WTA Tour Code of Ethics for Coaches.
 - ii. Sign-in at the WTA Tour office on-site prior to the beginning of the Tournament.

It is the player's responsibility to advise the WTA Tour if there is a change in a coach or agent.

- g. Players must participate in educational programs offered through PRO U™.
3. Elite Phase begins when a player eighteen (18) years of age or younger moves into the Top 100 of singles on the WTA Tour ranking. Elite Phase participants are required to complete the following:

Players:

- a. Participate in the Mentor Program- "Partners for Success".
- b. Continuation of annual Athlete Physical Exam.
- c. Continuation of providing proof that minimum educational requirements of country of residence are being met (or have been completed).
- d. Participate in educational programs offered through PRO U™.
- e. Participate in the Career Development Program.
- f. Complete Advanced Media Training, to be conducted at designated Tournament sites throughout the calendar year.
- g. Review annual Tournament schedule with a Professional Development representative and a Tour Operations Representative.
- h. Participate in a meeting with the CEO of the WTA Tour.

Coaches:

- a. Continue to sign Code of Ethics for Coaches.
- b. Continue to Sign-in at WTA Tour Tournaments.
- c. Participate in Coach Registration program, including
 - i. Attend one on-site WTA Tour Coach Education Symposium per year
 - ii. Pass the WTA Tour Rules test
 - iii. Provide proof of and maintain coaching certification from a National Federation or other organized body

Parents:

Parents to participate in Parent Orientation and complete all aspects of the Parent program with a Professional Development representative, until notification of graduation is received.

NOTE: Players must continue to participate and fulfil the requirements of Professional Development until notification of graduation.

4. Premier Phase begins when a player eighteen (18) years of age or younger reaches a Singles ranking of fifty (50) or better. Premier participants must meet minimum criteria, including:
- a. Completion of all current Professional Development requirements (including those required of coaches, agents and parents, i.e., Coach/Parent/Agent Orientation and attendance at Coach Symposium);
 - b. Demonstration that she is continuing her formal education and is on the path to completing secondary school
 - c. Participation in a meeting at a mutually agreed upon location with the WTA Tour CEO to discuss responsibilities and expectations of undertaking these additional events and participation on the WTA Tour.
 - d. Participation in an interview and assessments with CEO, Professional Development representative and any other professional (AER Panel member, psychologist, internist, etc.) deemed necessary to review player's physical, cognitive and emotional development.

- e. Agreement to a set schedule, within and outside the WTA Tour, including exhibitions, Fed Cup, etc. for a minimum of one year but through the completion of her 18th birth year.
- f. Participation of player and her team (coach, parent(s) agent, personal trainer, etc.) in advanced Professional Development programming at a mutually agreed upon site
- g. All team members must be in good standing with the WTA Tour.
- h. Agreement to consult with SS&M team and change schedule in the event player incurs injury during this time.
- i. Participation in educational programs offered through PRO U™.

PART C: PLAYER PENALTIES

In the event a player plays in a Tournament that exceeds the number and/or level permitted to be played under this rule, or enters a Tournament that in any way conflicts with this rule, that Tournament will not be counted for Ranking Points for that player. Additionally, players who do not comply with any of the provisions of this Age Eligibility Rule or the requirements of Professional Development are subject to a fine of up to \$25,000 and to being barred from competing in WTA Tour and ITF Women's Circuit Tournaments and Fed Cup for up to six months.

For any questions relating to Professional Development, including the Age Eligibility Rule, please contact the Professional Development or Legal Affairs departments in the Florida office.

Professional Development - Age Eligibility Tournament Chart

Age	WTA Tour ¹	ITF Women's Circuit ¹	Wild Cards ³	Fed Cup	Olympics	Exhibition / Non-Tour Events ⁴
18	Unlimited	Unlimited	According to Tour Rules	Yes	Yes	Unlimited subject to Exhibition/Non- Tour Event Rule
17 ⁶	15 + Champs ²		Up to 8 total; may not exceed WTA/ITF general WC limits	Yes	Yes	Unlimited subject to Exhibition/Non- Tour Event Rule
16 ⁶	11 + Champs ²		4	Yes	Yes	Unlimited subject to Exhibition/Non- Tour Event Rule
15	9 + Champs ²		3 (maximum of 2 into a WTA Tour I-IV, remainder must be Tier III-IV and/or ITF Women's Circuit)	Yes	Yes	Unlimited subject to Exhibition/Non- Tour Event Rule
14	0, except by Wild Card or Feed Up	7 ⁵	3 (maximum of 1 into a WTA Tour I -IV, remainder must be ITF Women's Circuit)	Yes	No	Unlimited subject to Exhibition/Non- Tour Event Rule
13	0	0	0	0	0	0

¹ For the purposes of the Age Eligibility Rule and this Tournament Restriction Chart, a Tournament is defined as any singles or doubles Main Draw, or singles or doubles Qualifying Draw of any WTA Tour Tournaments or ITF Women's Circuit event for which the player receives WTA Ranking Points, except participation in the 2004 Olympic tennis event, which was permitted above and beyond a player's allotment. However, if a player participates in the Qualifying Draw and qualifies for the Main Draw, it will count as only one Tournament. Similarly, if a player is competing in both the singles and doubles draws, it will count as only one Tournament.

² If a player aged 15-17 has completed her Professional Development requirements prior to competing in a Grand Slam (via direct acceptance or a Wild Card), then her participation in that Grand Slam is in addition to her allotted number of tournaments under the Age Eligibility Rule. However, if a player is 14 years of age, or if a player aged 15-17 has not completed her Professional Development requirements prior to competition in the Grand Slam then participation in the tournament is counted toward her total allotment of tournaments.

³ In order to qualify for any Wild Card into any WTA Tour Tournament, a player must have completed the WTA Tour Mandatory Player form and WTA Tour Official Entry form and be current with all of her Professional Development requirements.

⁴ There are no age-based restrictions on a player's participation in the Exhibitions/Non-Tour Events. However, all players are subject to the WTA Tour Exhibition/Non-Tour Event Rule.

⁵ Players between the ages of fourteen (14) and fifteen (15) are permitted to compete in a maximum of seven (7) ITF Women's Circuit Tournaments, no more than four (4) of which may be for prize money of greater than \$10,000. The number of ITF Women's Circuit Tournaments a player may participate in will be reduced if the player receives a Wild Card into or accepts a Feed-Up position into a WTA Tour Tier I-IV Tournament.

⁶ Exempt Players (Gold and/or Silver) must refer to the current Rule Book and contact a representative of the Professional Development department in the Florida office for specific details on the number of Wild Cards and Tournaments allowed under the Age Eligibility Rule.