

# Tennis Alberta

## JUNIOR TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE

*Improving and increasing competitive & recreational opportunities for junior tennis players in Alberta.*

In response to substantial participation increases in the junior U12, U14, U16, and U18 age categories, Tennis Alberta is working to refine and improve the competitive playing experiences for junior players in the province. The competitive structure for the 2009-'10 seasons will therefore be revised to provide more and better opportunities for tournament play. These revisions will be monitored and reviewed on an on-going basis with formal assessments taking place after the completion of each indoor and outdoor season.

**The modifications to the existing junior tournament structure are intended to:**

- 1. accommodate the increase in player participation in Alberta;**
- 2. sustain long-term participation in tennis by providing a more balanced competitive structure, in a sense where players will have access to increased and better quality match play (in alignment with Tennis Canada's Long Term Athlete Development Model).**

## **JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES – formerly “Open” series**

### **KEY ELEMENTS**

- The ‘Jr. Champs’ Series will take the place of the former Jr. Open tournaments.
- The primary function of the series is to aid in the development of the most competitive and highest ranked junior players in the province in the U12, U14, U16, and U18 age categories.
- The series is also designed to establish which junior players will represent Alberta at the Tennis Canada Indoor and Outdoor Jr. National Championships.

### **FORMAT**

- The Jr. Champs series will have two seasons per year: one indoor season (October – March) and one outdoor season (April – July).
- Each season will consist of three regular qualifying tournaments for each age category, which will qualify players to compete in the Jr. Champs Provincials.
- The Jr. Champs Provincials will also serve as the fourth and final qualifying event for Jr. Nationals.

### **Schedule of events for the 2010 Indoor Junior Championship Series**

<b>Qualifying Tournaments</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>U12</b>	<b>U14</b>	<b>U16</b>	<b>U18</b>
Calgary Winter Club	Oct 23-25		X		X
Saville Sports Centre	Nov 6-8	X	X	X	X
Tennis Academy	Jan 8-10	X		X	
The Glencoe Club	Jan 21-24	X		X	
Tennis Academy	Feb 4-7		X		X
<b>Provincial Indoor Championship</b> Royal Glenora Club	Mar 5-7	X	X	X	X

\*Dates may be subject to change. Please visit the Tennis Alberta website to verify event dates.

### **JR. NATIONALS POINTS**

- ‘Jr. Nationals Points’ are calculated based on Jr. Champs Series tournament placement and are monitored and updated by Tennis Alberta’s High Performance Committee.
- Nationals points will be awarded after each of the three regular qualifying tournaments and after the Jr. Champs Provincials. The points awarded for placement at the Jr. Champs Provincials will be weighted at 1.5 times the points relative to the preceding regular qualifying events, making provincial championships results more significant and valuable.  
*\*Please see the Junior National Selection Process policy posted on the Tennis Alberta website for further details regarding Jr. National Championships Selection.*
- The points tables are updated after each event and posted on the Tennis Alberta website for players to view

## QUALIFYING FOR THE JR. CHAMPS PROVINCIALS

- Players with the highest standings in the nationals points tables after the three regular qualifying tournaments will qualify for the Jr. Champs Provincials. The number of qualifying spots for each age category is illustrated in the chart below:

### Jr. Champs Provincials Spot Allocation by Age Category

	Boys	Girls
<b>U12</b>	6 + 2 Special Exceptions	6 + 2 Special Exceptions
<b>U14</b>	14 + 2 Special Exceptions	6 + 2 Special Exceptions
<b>U16</b>	6 + 2 Special Exceptions	6 + 2 Special Exceptions
<b>U18</b>	6 + 2 Special Exceptions	6 + 2 Special Exceptions

- The limited draw sizes of the Jr. Champs Provincials are intended to: ensure properly scheduled events, allow for both singles and doubles play to be accommodated, and to avoid abbreviated scoring and many one-sided matches.
- **All players who do not qualify for the Indoor Jr. Champs Provincials are eligible to compete in the 'Jr. Challenger' Provincial Championships which will be held indoors on the same weekend at the Red Deer Tennis Club.**
- The outdoor 'Jr. Champs' & 'Challenger' provincial championships will be hosted in Red Deer to continue the tradition of the fantastic end of season tournament.
- Should any of the Jr. Champs Provincials qualifying players withdraw for any reason, the place will NOT be filled by the next player in line according to the Jr. Nationals points; the spot will remain void.

## SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS

- The term 'Special Exceptions' (SE) refers to reserved spots that may be awarded to players who did not qualify for the Jr. Champs Provincials by following the criteria described above, in the case of very extreme situations or circumstances.
- Special exceptions may be granted to players who have been injured, sick, or played out-of-province through the qualifying process.
- If a player does not compete at a qualifying event for any reason, this will NOT guarantee that an SE will be granted. This decision rests within the jurisdiction of the High Performance Committee; **it will be a rare event for the committee to grant a Special Exception.**
- You can apply for a Special Exception (SE) spot if you miss **more than one** qualifying event in the age category in which you are applying for an SE.
- SE's will only be awarded to players who have shown consistent successful results against the top players in the province or have had success at the national and international level.
- At no time will a SE spot be awarded to any player who simply chooses not to participate in the qualifying events when he or she is otherwise available and able to compete.
- All applications must be in writing and received before the registration deadline of the provincial championships.
- To submit and SE application, email Charlie Mclean, High Performance Director, at [charlie.mclean@tennisalberta.com](mailto:charlie.mclean@tennisalberta.com).
- If no SE spots are granted then the player with the next highest point total from the qualifying events is eligible to enter the tournament

## ELIGIBILITY AND LIMITED DRAWS

- Where required, due to limited court availability, draw sizes in the Jr. Champs events may be limited to reduce and ultimately eliminate the requirement for late night matches, abbreviated or modified scoring formats, and/or excessive match play in one day.
- Maximum draw sizes may vary between events, dependant on the number of courts available to the host club.
- Tennis Alberta has also established a required minimum draw size for each age category, to set a standard for sanctioned Jr. Champs qualifying events. The minimum draw size for each tournament is calculated based on historical participation numbers and will be reviewed on an annual basis as participation numbers change.
- Tennis Alberta's High Performance Director and the host club Tournament Director will reserve the opportunity to select up to four wild card spots per category to include players that have exhibited superior play in the age category but are not within the defined range of rankings. Should the wild card spots not be utilized, the spots will be allocated to the next highest ranked entrants.

### Minimum Draw Sizes for Jr. Champ Series Qualifying Events

Age Category	Boys	Girls
U12	20 (16 highest ranked players + 4 wild cards)	12 (8 highest ranked players +4 wild cards)
U14	20 (16 highest ranked players + 4 wild cards)	12 (8 highest ranked players +4 wild cards)
U16	20 (16 highest ranked players + 4 wild cards)	12 (8 highest ranked players +4 wild cards)
U18	20 (16 highest ranked players + 4 wild cards)	12 (8 highest ranked players +4 wild cards)

- The draw limits, and the related eligibility criteria for each event will be advertised in advance (posted in the tournament notes on the Tennis Alberta website).
- When registrations exceed the maximum draw size, entry into the tournaments will be granted to the highest ranked players according to 'Rogers Rankings' for each age category.
- Players who have registered, but are not admitted into an event will be notified and issued a full refund.

*Example:*

*If a draw is limited to a maximum of 20 players, but 25 players actually register for the event, **and** Tennis Alberta's HP Director and the Tournament Director award 2 of the possible 4 wild card spots... **Then** the 18 highest ranked players according to Rogers Rankings (in that particular age category) and the 2 wild cards are allowed into the draw. The remaining 5 players who were not allowed into the draw will be notified and refunded their entry fees.*

- Although the draws will be limited, it is important to note Tennis Alberta has also increased the overall number of competitive opportunities to reflect the growth of tennis in the province.

- **Players who are not accepted into draws based on a lower ranking will have the opportunity to instead compete in the 'Junior Challenger Series' which is described later in detail.**
- Tennis Alberta will continue to honour out-of-province players entering and playing in the Jr. Champs Series qualifying events, but the provincial championship will be a closed event. Out-of-province players will be subject to the same Rogers Ranking eligibility as Alberta players. If required, a limit to the number of out province players will be set.

## **QUALIFYING FOR JR. NATIONALS**

- The following will be the selection criteria in determining the athletes chosen to represent Alberta at the Indoor and Outdoor Junior National Championships (in order):
  - 1. Wild Card Selection** – (please see separate document “Wildcard Application Criteria” posted on the Tennis Alberta website)
    - a. Application must be made in writing to the Junior Nationals Selection Committee (JNSC) no later than 20 days prior to the last day of the final selection tournament for the respective Indoor or Outdoor Nationals selection tournament.
    - b. Granting of wildcard spot will be determined by the JNSC. The JNSC must be in 75% agreement in order to grant a wildcard spot.
    - c. Decisions on wildcard selections will be rendered within five days of the closing deadline for wildcard applications.
    - d. Only one wildcard selection will be granted for each age category attending the Junior Nationals Tournament.
    - e. Players may only apply for a wildcard spot in one age category.
    - f. A wildcard will not be granted in the respective age category if Tennis Canada has awarded a direct allocated spot.
  - 2. Provincial Championships**
    - a. Winning the provincial championships (does not apply if a wildcard has been granted for the age category or there are less than 3 spots available).
    - b. Provincial champion does not guarantee first seed from Alberta (still based on National Points Accumulation)
  - 3. National Points Accumulation**
    - a. Most points accumulated from the best 3 out of 4 qualifying tournaments for the respective qualifying season.
    - b. Tie breaking criteria where two or more players have the same number of accumulated points.
      - i. Head to head results over qualifying season
      - ii. Tennis Alberta Ranking [Depending on the accuracy of the new nationals ranking system anticipated to be implemented on January 1, 2009, the JNSC will have the ability to change this to the National Rankings]
      - iii. Tied players must play a tie-breaking match within one week of the last day of the final selection tournament. Format for the tie-breaking match will be best of 3 sets. Should the players be unable to play the tie-breaking match, the JNSC will have the authority to choose the final provincial allocated spot.
  - 4. Declined Provincial Allocated Spots**

- a. Should a player decline a provincially allocated spot, the next player qualifying under the National Points Accumulation criteria will be awarded the spot.
- 5. Unused Allocation Spots** – unallocated spots may be awarded to Tennis Alberta Players by Tennis Canada should other provinces not fulfill their allocations. Tennis Canada's procedure for determining players selected for these positions is detailed in the Tennis Canada Unallocated Spot Criteria. Tennis Alberta is responsible for submitting a list of Alberta players wishing to apply for the unused allocated spots. Tennis Alberta's criteria will be as follow:
  - a. After selection of the official Alberta team, unused allocated spots will be requested from Tennis Canada as follows:
    - i. The JNSC will select players for all unallocated spots according to the National Point Accumulation Criteria unless the JNSC feels that a second wildcard should be granted. A second wildcard will only be granted should a player show superior competitive results or definitive head to head results over the next National Point Accumulation player selection
  - b. Alberta will only apply to Tennis Canada for unallocated spots for players that have an anticipated competitive level of performance at the current or future nationals level
  - c. The final decision for the selection of the Alberta Provincial Team ultimately rests with JNSC. Appeals to the decision of the JNSC may be made to the Tennis Alberta Board within 5 days of the selection of the Alberta Provincial Team. A decision on appeals will be rendered 5 days from the receipt of the appeal.
  - d. The best three of four points results (any combination of the three qualifying tournaments and the provincials) will be used to determine the total Jr. Nationals points for each player.
  - e. Players with the highest standings in the points tables will qualify for the Jr. Champs Provincials.

## **JUNIOR CHALLENGER SERIES**

### **KEY ELEMENTS**

- The 'Jr. Challenger' Series will take the place of the former Jr. B tournaments.
- The primary function of the series is to expand the competitive opportunities for junior players who are not ranked within the top 4 in an age category, according to Rogers Rankings.
- The series is designed to promote more frequent and better quality competition against others of similar ability.
- Challenger events will be offered at the U12, U14, U16, and U18 age categories.

### **FORMAT**

- The Jr. Challenger series will have two seasons per year: one indoor season (October – March) and one outdoor season (April – September).
- Each season will consist of many regular tournaments for each age category, leading up to the Jr. Challenger Provincial Championships
- Tennis Alberta is working with the indoor and outdoor clubs to increase the number of Jr. Challenger tournaments held each year. It is anticipated that many outdoor clubs will offer Jr. Challenger events in the spring and summer of 2010.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

- Players ranked in the top four of the Rogers Ranking in a specific age category are ineligible to compete in Challenger Events. Players ranked 5-8 in the age category are eligible to play up an age category. All other junior players are eligible to enter in the age category of their choice.

## **ROGERS ROOKIE TOUR**

The Rogers Rookie Tour is a national program designed to bridge the gap between entry-level tennis and the provincial competitive junior circuit. This tour is for beginner tennis players as a first contact to competition. Rogers Rookie Tour events will occur primarily during the outdoor season.

### **Tour Highlights:**

- Boys and girls up to the age of 18 are eligible to participate
- All events are non-elimination tournaments for unranked or lower-ranked youngsters with multiple opportunities to play regardless of result
- Positive learning environment to develop and display tennis and sportsmanship skills while competing against a variety of opponents
- Under 12 age groups may use the Progressive Tennis format. Progressive tennis is a program for 5-12 year olds which allows young players to learn and play the game more quickly, efficiently and successfully through a progression of court sizes, balls, and racquets.
- Each participant of a Rogers Rookie Tour event will receive, upon checking in at the event, the following: a Rogers Cup sling bag, a Rogers Cup mini-towel, a Rogers Rookie Tour t-shirt, a Rogers Rookie Tour sweatband, a Rogers 2-for-1 video/game rental card, and a certificate of participation.

## **PROGRESSIVE TENNIS TOURNAMENTS**

Progressive Tennis is imported from European countries such as France and Belgium where it was used to successfully develop players like Justine Henin-Hardenne and Olivier Rochus. Progressive Tennis uses a systematic progression of court sizes, balls, and racquets, to scale the game down to an appropriate level for 5-10 year olds.

The power of the progressive tennis system is that it allows players to *play* quickly and successfully. In Progressive Tennis, the philosophy is that tennis is a great and fun game to play and the quicker and more skillfully a player can play the more fun it is. Each stage not only has specific equipment to aid success, but particular skills to develop as well.

Although progressive tennis is essentially a modified approach to teaching the skills of tennis, and can be employed for players of essentially any age, children competing in Progressive Tennis Tournaments should be able to keep score and play with very little coaching or adult supervision. These tournaments will have a formal structure and format of play and are elimination events. Players who compete in these events are typically moving toward a more competitive stream of play and already have match play experience.

## TENNIS ALBERTA JUNIOR SANCTIONED TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE- Quick Reference

EVENT TYPE	AGE CATEGORIES	PRIMARY PURPOSE	KEY ELEMENTS	IMPORTANT FORMAT FEATURES
<b>Jr. Champs Series</b>	U12, U14, U16, U18	- aid in the development of the most competitive and highest ranked junior players in the province	- replace the former Jr. Open tournaments - series used to establish which junior players will represent Alberta at the Jr. Nationals	-Each season will consist of three regular qualifying tournaments for each age category, which will qualify players to compete in the Jr. Champs Provincials. -The Jr. Champs Provincials will also serve as the fourth and final qualifying event for Jr. Nationals. -Draws may be limited (highest ranked players who register are allowed in draws-special exceptions and wild card may apply) -Ranking events
<b>Jr. Challenger Series</b>	U12, U14, U16, U18	-expand the competitive opportunities for junior players who are not ranked within the top 8 in an age category, according to Rogers Rankings.	-replace the former Jr. B tournaments - designed to promote more frequent and better quality competition against others of similar ability	-Each season will consist of many regular tournaments for each age category, leading up to the Jr. Challenger Provincial Championships (held in conjunction with the Jr. Champs Provincials) - Players ranked in the top four of the Rogers Ranking in a specific age category are ineligible to compete in Challenger Events. Players ranked 5-8 in the age category are eligible to play up an age category. All other junior players are eligible. -Ranking events
<b>Progressive Tennis Tournaments</b>	U8, U9, U10	- to scale the game down to an appropriate level for 5-10 year olds by using a systematic progression of court sizes, balls, and racquets	-1/2 court tennis for 5-7 year olds -3/4 court tennis for 7-9 year olds -Full court transition for 9-10 year olds - Players who compete in these events are typically moving toward a more competitive stream of play and already have matchplay experience -tournaments are typically hosted by indoor tennis centers	-Tournaments may use any format that would guarantee a minimum of three matches -no separate draws for girls and boys -Non-ranking events
<b>Rogers Rookie Tour</b>	U8, U9, U10, U12 U14, U16, U18	-introduction to competition -designed for unranked or lower-ranked youngsters with multiple opportunities to play regardless of result	-play is closely monitored by parents and coaches with emphasis on learning and having fun	-all events are NON-ELIMINATION and guarantee a minimum of three matches -events are typically held during the outdoor season -no separate draws for girls and boys -select age groups may use ½ court, ¾ court formats, or transition balls -Each participant of a Rogers Rookie Tour event will receive, upon checking in at the event, the following: a Rogers Cup sling bag, a Rogers Cup mini-towel, a Rogers Rookie Tour t-shirt, a Rogers Rookie Tour sweatband, a Rogers 2-for-1 video/game rental card, and a certificate of participation -Non-ranking events

## FAQs

- Question:** Should I wait to see which event I have qualified for (either the Jr. Champs Provincials or the Jr. Challenger Provincials) before I enter the provincial championships?  
**Answer:** NO. All players will need to enter the event. Both Jr. Champs and Jr. Challenger events will be held on the same weekend- once the final qualifying event has been completed, all players will be placed in the appropriate event.
- Question:** If I was to miss a qualifying event leading up to the Jr. Champs Provincials, should I apply for a Special Exception?  
**Answer:** You can apply for a Special Exception (SE) spot if you miss **more than one** qualifying event. All applications must be in writing and received before the registration deadline of the provincial championships. Please note that SE's will only be awarded to players who have shown consistent results against the top players in the province or have had success at the national and international level. At no time will a SE spot be awarded to any player who simply chooses not to participate in the qualifying events when he or she is otherwise available and able to compete.

Please email your SE application to Charlie Mclean, High Performance Director, at [charlie.mclean@tennisalberta.com](mailto:charlie.mclean@tennisalberta.com).
- Question:** My ranking has moved up and now I am in the top four of my age category. Can I still enter a Jr. Challenger tournament?  
**Answer:** No. If your play has improved and you are now ranked in the top four as of the tournament entry deadline, you are not eligible to participate in the Jr. Challenger tournaments.
- Question:** When are the Rogers Rankings updated?  
**Answer:** Tennis Canada runs a ranking update weekly on Thursday.
- Question:** Why are wildcards provided when the draw is limited?  
**Answer:** Rogers Rankings is still a very new system and some players may gain or lose an inappropriate number of points when playing out-of-province players or competing against adults. Tennis Canada and the Provincial Tennis Associations are working to standardize the points between each province and ability, so until the corrections have been made it is necessary to address those players that deserve to be included in the draw but may have been left out due to the system.