USTA AND ITA ENTER INTO STRATEGIC ALLIANCE TO ELEVATE COLLEGE TENNIS

Agreement Brings Greater Focus and Resources to New and Existing Initiatives That Will Benefit Entire Tennis Ecosystem

ORLANDO, Fla., March 25, 2021 – The United States Tennis Association (USTA) and the Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) have entered into a new strategic alliance that formalizes the two organizations' ongoing collaboration to strengthen and elevate collegiate tennis. This alliance between the sport's national governing body and its college coaches association brings greater focus and resources to both new and existing initiatives that the two organizations believe will not only benefit college tennis, but the entire tennis ecosystem.

"College tennis is an aspirational dream of so many of our youth players and a connective tissue of the tennis pathway, helping to ensure that players stay in the game for life," said USTA CEO and Executive Director Mike Dowse, who will join the ITA's Board of Directors. "This alliance will build on the great work the USTA and the ITA have already been doing to solidify a bright future for all of those who go on to play at the collegiate level."

"College tennis – with 1,250 colleges and universities, 1,700 programs, 3,000 coaches, nearly 20,00 student-athletes, and 1,400 officials – is viewed as a leader in the world of intercollegiate athletics and this new alliance between the USTA and the ITA, as the national governing body of college tennis, will only strengthen this important role," said ITA President and CEO Timothy Russell. "Our sport is strong because many people and organizations are working hard and smart each day on its behalf. The future is now even brighter given the wide-ranging comprehensive programs that the ITA and USTA will implement together."

One of the core tenets to the agreement is the commitment to pilot a new local and regional competition model that will make

the American competitive pathway more efficient and effective, connecting American juniors, college and entry-level professional players. These new tournaments will be modeled after the 2020 ITA Masters event held in San Diego and will allow regular play between collegiate players and the top junior players across the country in locations that will minimize the financial burden of extensive tournament travel. These new events will provide college players and programs with consistent, high-level competition in a more cost effective way, while exposing junior players to more college coaches across all divisions. The new tournament model will also benefit college recruiting, as college coaches will not only be able to reduce travel-related recruiting costs, but the cross-level play will allow for more precise scouting of players.

Another component that has been identified as an area of emphasis is engaging with colleges and universities to open their varsity tennis facilities to the public. College tennis programs are one of the few collegiate sports that have the unique ability to turn their primary competition space into a "Community Hub," by hosting private and group instruction, tournaments for all ages and abilities, USTA League play, and coach education workshops, as well as community service offerings. This will not only create a new revenue stream for the school's athletics department, but will also help foster a connection between the tennis program and the school's student body, faculty and staff, as well as the local community as a whole. The USTA will assist each of these Community Hub locations with integrating various programs and initiatives in order to ensure tennis is reaching new audiences and is being delivered at a high level to local players of all levels.

The ITA and USTA are also committed to raising the standards of coaching throughout the sport with a number of initiatives that include an emphasis on certifying both college coaches, as well as current college players who often transition into the coaching and teaching ranks. There will also be an extension of a number of existing coaching education and mentorship programs, with an emphasis on growing the number of women and minority

coaches, with monies being utilized to drive participation by a diverse array of coaches in the ITA Coaching Education Program, and to help ensure better representation of diverse coaches at the annual ITA convention.

The strategic alliance strengthens both organizations' roles as advocates for college tennis. One of the first steps in advancing the shared advocacy agenda was the ITA and USTA retaining sports industry consulting and recruiting firm Snodgrass Partners, Inc., to work with the two organizations in facilitating a comprehensive study of the NCAA Division I tennis model with the goal of creating long-term sustainability while advancing the sport. The first step of the process, which concluded earlier this year, was a survey of Division I men's and women's tennis head coaches whose responses on a variety of topics have already formed the baseline for further examination as possible recommendations/models are discerned over the course of the next several months.

Additional components of the strategic alliance are technology integration, match data sharing, as well as the cross-promotion of key college tennis events and programs throughout the year.

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The USTA is the national governing body for the sport of tennis in the U.S. and the leader in promoting and developing the growth of tennis at every level -- from local communities to the highest level of the professional game. A not-for-profit organization with more than 655,000 members, it invests 100% of its proceeds in growing the game. It owns and operates the US Open, one of the highest-attended annual sporting events in the world, and launched the US Open Series, linking six summer WTA and ATP Tour tournaments to the US Open. In addition, it owns approximately 90 Pro Circuit events throughout the U.S. and selects the teams for the Davis Cup, Billie Jean King Cup, Olympic and Paralympic Games. The USTA's philanthropic entity, the USTA Foundation, provides grants and scholarships in addition to

supporting tennis and education programs nationwide to benefit under-resourced youth through the National Junior Tennis & Learning (NJTL) network. For more information about the USTA, go to USTA.com or follow the official accounts on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat.

The Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) is the governing body of college tennis and is committed to serving college tennis and returning the leaders of tomorrow. The ITA oversees men's and women's varsity tennis at NCAA Divisions I, II and III, NAIA and Junior/Community College divisions. The ITA administers a comprehensive awards and rankings program for men's and women's varsity players, coaches and teams in all divisions, providing recognition for their accomplishments on and off the court. For more information on the ITA, visit the itatennis.com and follow the ITA on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.