
SPONSORSHIP

Real Tennis is a niche sport that offers sponsors an ideal opportunity, at a very reasonable cost, for their name to be introduced to a wide circle of influential people who follow racquet sports.

About Real Tennis

“At the top level, real tennis is fast and demanding, combining the skill and athleticism of lawn tennis and squash with the guile of chess. It is famous for its good sportsmanship and exemplary standards of behaviour on court.”

History:

Real Tennis, the original form of Tennis, is the oldest of all court games and the forerunner of the comparatively modern game of lawn tennis. For many the history of the sport is part of its fascination. Its origins can be traced back to 14th century and the roll of World Champions starts with Clerge of France who won his title in 1740. In keeping with its traditions racquets are still made of wood and keep their asymmetric shape and the balls continue to be hand made by the court professionals, although materials have moved with the times and horsehair has been replaced by woven cloth. Each court is unique, varying slightly in shape, angles and sizes.

The game is renowned for its royal patronage, particularly in this country, from Henry VIII, who played on the court at Hampton Court to HRH the Earl of Wessex who is a keen player today.

The Ladies Game:

The women's game dates back as early as 1427 when Mlle Margot stepped on court in Paris and was noted as an exceptional player of both forehand and backhand. The Ladies Real Tennis Association (LRTA) was formed in 1981 when the number of ladies playing the game was increasing substantially. The Ladies World Championships as we know them now were first contested back in 1985 in Melbourne and since then have continued to be played every second year, rotating between the playing nations. See some of the ladies in action at the British Open in 2018 on the LRTA website: www.lrta.org.uk

Growth:

Today, the game is undergoing a major revival, with an increase in the number of players at existing clubs and a fresh era of court building and renovation, the newest court was built in 2016 at Wellington College. Since the formation of the LRTA, its membership base has grown to over 300 members many of whom compete on a regular basis. The LRTA's junior development programme includes a bursary scheme for juniors and this has seen an explosion of young talent, who are now making inroads at open level competing around the world.

Demographics:

Real Tennis is played and supported by a wide variety of people, from sports professionals through to top end business executives. With new courts being built in the vicinity of schools and universities, a new generation of enthusiasts is coming through. It is enjoyed by people as young as eight through to players in their seventies and eighties, whose pleasure may be more cerebral than physical than those in the prime of life!

There are currently 27 courts in the UK, where both men and women play both singles and doubles. To stimulate growth within the game and encourage players to compete against others outside their home club a comprehensive national handicapping system has been implemented, which allows players of varying abilities to compete on equal terms.

Media coverage:

Real tennis offers excellent potential opportunities for media coverage. The sport is gaining increasing publicity, particularly following HRH the Earl of Wessex's 2018 Tennis Challenge to play at each of the 47 courts in the world to promote real tennis and the Duke of Edinburgh Awards scheme.

As well as coverage in the National Press and magazines such as Country Life and The Field, most clubs have a good presence on social media and have good relationships with local press. Many clubs also offer live streaming of games, which can be viewed around the world.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE LRTA

As a sponsor there are two options available. You can either sponsor one of the specific tournaments detailed below, or the works of the Association.

1. ASSOCIATION SPONSORSHIP:

Any sponsorship funds for the Association will go towards:

- Contributing to the development of ladies' real tennis
- Specific training events for ladies
- Creating and enhancing a junior development programme for those already in the game and the encouragement of new juniors to take up the sport through schools' programmes by:
 - Contacting and encouraging interested members of staff
 - Providing financial assistance with travel costs
 - Subsidising costs of court time and lessons from professionals
 - Organisation of local tournaments/holiday activities for Juniors
- Aiding enhanced media contacts and coverage so that general awareness of the sport within the public eye is raised
- Where appropriate, providing support and encouragement to young women to consider a career as a tennis professional and to gain the necessary qualifications
- Assistance to a current UK World Champion to meet travel costs to defend her World Title

Benefits (by negotiation with the LRTA):

- Website link to sponsors home page
- Invitation to the tournament dinner and finals day of all tournaments throughout the year
- Guests 'taster' evening with an exhibition match, explanations of the history, rules and techniques, followed by an opportunity for sponsors and their guests to play the game.

2. SPECIFIC TOURNAMENT SPONSORSHIP

Any sponsorship funds for tournaments will go towards:

- Covering the administrative costs of running the tournament. A list of all possible tournaments available to be sponsored is below
- Enabling appearance/prize money to be paid to professionals and fund prize vouchers for the successful Amateur players

Benefits of Tournament sponsorship:

- Exclusive publicity on all promotional material
- Full page advert in tournament programme
- Website link to sponsors home page
- Signage at the tournament
- Local press coverage
- Reserved seats in the stands for all matches
- Acknowledgment at tournament dinner
- Invitation to present tournament trophies

By negotiation:

- Finals day luncheon
- Drinks reception
- Table for Sponsor and guests at tournament dinner
- Guests 'taster' evening with an exhibition match, explanations of the history, rules and techniques, followed by an opportunity for them and their guests to play the game.

Ladies tournaments held in the UK:

British Open Singles and Doubles (including Handicap Doubles)

The British Open Singles and Doubles are played annually and attract players from all over the world. Played in knock out format over 6 days with a plate tournament for first round losers the British Open Singles and Doubles attract a large entry as players chase the elusive 'slam'. The Handicap Doubles was introduced to encourage youngsters and inexperienced tournament players to participate in competitive play whilst at the same time being inspired by the top players competing in the British Open with a view to competing themselves in the future. Opens are held in Australia, US, France and the UK in both singles and doubles and tend to be the tournaments that attract the largest overseas entries.

LRTA International Invitation

Held on alternate years to the World Championships, the top 8 available players in the world are invited to play in the LRTA International. Played in a round-robin format in groups of 4, each participant plays 3 pool matches with the top two progressing to the final. Renowned for close matches and upsets this is one of the most prestigious tournaments in the ladies' calendar.

British Singles & Doubles Handicaps Divisions I & II

This is the largest participation tournament in the ladies' calendar, known for its social enjoyment as well as the tennis. Open to all players, this tournament is so popular it is best held at a facility with two courts! Thanks to real tennis' unique handicapping system all entrants have an equal chance of winning, so competition is tough. Close matches, huge comebacks and the occasional match turning net cord are the hallmarks of this tournament.

British Junior Tournaments (Girls U21 Handicap Singles and National Schoolgirls Championships)

With the current crop of very talented juniors coming through, these events demonstrate junior sport at the highest standard. The majority of these juniors have benefited from the LRTA Bursary programme and their skills, fitness and match management belie their years.

British Ladies Masters

A tournament specifically for the over 40s and a highlight of the ladies' calendar for many who compete in it. A very social tournament, Sunday's final is always played to a noisy dedans. This tournament truly proves that Real Tennis is a sport for all ages and often features players in the top twenty lady players in the world.

World Championships

The World Championships are the most prestigious tournaments of the Ladies game, however due to their rotation, it isn't due to be held in the UK again until 2023.

High/Low Handicap Doubles

A doubles tournament (currently held at Newmarket) lasting two days. The High/Low element is the main attraction: the best player (according to handicap) is paired with the worst player; the next best with the next worst; and so on. This means that the difference in handicap between the actual pairs once they play each other is kept very small. The matches tend to be very close, and everyone has a good chance of going through to the semi-finals. A very popular tournament with a sociable atmosphere and an excellent introductory tournament for players of all ages who are new to the game.

Mixed Handicap Doubles

Currently held at Seacourt, this tournament over a weekend in June proves to be popular each year. The format of the tournament has always remained the same with a limit of 32 pairs divided into round robin groups with winners and runners up from each group going through to knock out play offs. With a drinks party and dinner on the Saturday night, and other sporting facilities made available at the club, no wonder this is a popular event.

The Courts & Facilities available:

The following courts host ladies' tournaments and a brief description of each court is provided to give an idea of corporate entertainment opportunities available. The specifics of all packages will need to be negotiated. Free parking can be arranged at most courts.

London & Surrey

The Queen's Club

- Two courts and the museum of real tennis
- Located in West Kensington, near Baron's Court Underground station
- Full range of first class dining and bar facilities

Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC)

- A superb chance to visit Lords Cricket Ground
- Court built in 1900
- Catering facilities available

Royal Tennis Club, Hampton Court

- Steeped in history with real tennis at Hampton Court since 1529
- Within the Palace grounds
- Generous club rooms for entertaining

Middlesex University Real Tennis Club

- Known as the Millennium court, officially opened in January 2000
- Located on the university campus
- Good viewing areas around the court and underfloor heating

Thames Valley/Home Counties

Hatfield House Tennis Club

- Built by the 2nd Marquess of Salisbury in 1842 in the grounds of Hatfield House
- 20 minutes by fast train from Kings Cross
- Matches may be watched either from the dedans or in the comfort of the well-appointed clubroom via feed from the on court video facilities

Holyport Real Tennis Club

- Set in the attractive village of Holyport near Maidenhead
- Easy access to London via the M4 (J8/9)
- Large dedans area with bar and dining facilities
- Lovely lawn area ideal for BBQ's

Wellington Real Tennis Club

- The UK's newest court built in 2016 with all the comforts of a modern build
- Located at Wellington College, Crowthorne
- Catering facilities available

Hardwick House Tennis Club

- Built in the grounds of Hardwick estate with easy access to the M4 (J12)
- A court that harks back to the era of Edwardian tennis with lovely open dedans
- Walled garden ideal for BBQ's

The Oratory Tennis Club

- Modern Court situated in the grounds of The Oratory School between Reading and Oxford
- Excellent viewing facilities over 3 stories, ideal for corporate entertaining while play is in progress
- Catering available for drinks receptions or buffet dinners

Oxford University Tennis Club

- In the heart of the city centre
- Built in 1798 and one of the oldest and smallest courts in the country
- Club room and dining/meeting room for entertaining

Radley College Tennis Court

- Modern court built in 2008
- Good viewing areas of the court at ground and first floor level
- Close to historic Oxford

Eastern England

Cambridge University Real Tennis Club

- Two courts located within walking distance of the heart Cambridge
- Glass viewing gallery giving a 'birds-eye' view of the court and ideal for entertaining while matches are in progress

Newmarket Real Tennis Club

- A Bickley court opened in 1901
- In the market town of Newmarket not far from the race course
- Small area for entertaining

Prested Hall Real Tennis

- Located just off the A12 near Colchester within the grounds of a country hotel and spa
- Two courts which are fully insulated, with under-floor heating
- One of the courts features a glass "grille" wall, ensuring excellent and exciting viewing for a large audience together with viewing from the side penthouses and dedans.

Southern England

Seacourt Tennis Club

- Located on Hayling Island and a club that is at the heart of the local community
- Full bar and restaurant facilities with separate dining room
- Tennis, squash, badminton and racquets courts make this an ideal location for a family activity day

Petworth House Tennis Court

- The last of up to 6 courts built at Petworth House – the first in 1588 the current one in 1797
- Sited in the grounds of the National Trust listed Petworth House & Park in the ancient market town
- Recently refurbished and extended club facilities

Canford Real Tennis & Squash Club

- Based at Canford School, Dorset the court dates back to 1879
- Good viewing and socialising areas

The Hyde Real Tennis Club

- Based two miles outside Bridport
- Originally built in 1885 and has a colourful history.
- Used as a roller-skating rink in the early 1900s, a vehicle repair shed, occupied by soldiers in the second world war and then used as a cow shed prior to being re-opened as a tennis club in 1998

Bristol & Bath Tennis Club

- Modern court adjacent to Clifton College sports grounds with easy access to the M5
- Large club room area above the court provides a unique viewing angle and reception area

Midlands

Moreton Morrell Tennis Court Club

- Considered by many to be one to the most atmospheric courts in England
- Easily accessible from the M40 in the heart of Shakespeare country
- Lovely dedans area featuring log fire and full bar facilities divided from the court by glass doors, ideal for receptions while play is in progress and supplemented by separate dining room

Leamington Tennis Court Club

- Discreetly tucked away in the heart of Royal Leamington Spa just off the M40
- Established in 1846, Leamington Tennis Court Club is the oldest purpose built tennis club in the world.
- Excellent dining and function rooms that can cater for up to 225 guests.

Northern England

The Manchester Tennis & Racquet Club

- Within walking distance of Manchester central business district
- Full catering facilities and large dining room ideal for champagne receptions and formal dining
- Traditional skittle alley for you to test your skills

Jesmond Dene Real Tennis Club

- Built in 1894, the court is situated on Matthew Bank between Jesmond and South Gosforth
- Only a few miles from the centre of Newcastle
- Recently refurbished

Scotland

Falkland Palace Royal Tennis Club

- The only active court in Scotland in Falkland just north of Edinburgh
- The oldest tennis court in the world completed in 1541
- Unique with no roof – fair weather tennis only!