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22 July 2022

ATP & YOU CAN PLAY LAUNCH LGBTQ+ EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

LONDON – The ATP has announced the launch of a multi-year education partnership with You Can Play, an organisation committed to furthering LGBTQ+ inclusion in sport. The collaboration aims to build on insights from a first-ever LGBTQ+ survey completed by ATP players last season.

You Can Play, a long-time partner of the NHL, MLS and NASCAR, is a non-profit organisation with an impressive track record furthering safety and inclusion for all who participate in sports, including LGBTQ+ athletes, coaches and fans. Through the multi-year partnership, ATP has committed to developing an education programme aimed at furthering LGBTQ+ inclusion on Tour. Together, the two organisations will create science-based educational content to be rolled out across ATP players, tournaments and staff over coming seasons, with content directly informed by insights and data from an ATP survey conducted last year.



The survey, developed in collaboration with Pride Sports and renowned researchers at Monash University (Melbourne), aimed to understand the experiences and perceptions of ATP players, reveal potential barriers to inclusion, and offer data-driven insights to make tennis safe and welcoming for all. The initiative also formed part of ATP's wider drive to strengthen diversity and inclusion through the ATP Serves programme.

Made open to players on an anonymous basis, the survey looked at behaviours and attitudes across various stakeholder groups and levels of the tennis ecosystem, in order to build as comprehensive a picture of LGBTQ+ inclusion as possible. In total 65 ATP players took part, with the majority of respondents ranked inside the world's Top 250. Several players also participated in voluntary one-on-one interviews to offer in-depth personal perspectives on the topic. Data was then independently analysed by the researchers and compiled into a final report.



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Among its findings, the survey revealed that homophobic language is commonly used in tennis, at rates consistent with other major sports. However, the survey also revealed general positive attitudes of players towards gay people, with very few players expressing homophobic attitudes. While 75 per cent of players reported having heard other players use homophobic slurs, the survey identified social acceptance, conformity with social norms and banter as primary drivers of homophobic language use within tennis.

In parallel, players overwhelmingly felt this language created a negative environment for everyone and strongly agreed with the statement “I want homophobic language to stop”. This is consistent with a [report](#) by the International Olympic Committee, which found that homophobic language is not only harmful to the mental health of LGBTQ+ players, but also creates a negative climate detrimental to the mental health of all athletes.

The ATP’s survey and interview data also indicated a strong fear of rejection, isolation from others on tour, and loneliness as being likely barriers to LGBTQ+ players publicly disclosing their sexuality to others. A majority of players that participated in the survey, including 95 per cent of players under the age of 31, were supportive of ATP taking action to combat homophobia.

In addition to ATP and You Can Play’s education push, LGBTQ+ inclusion will also form a key part of ATP’s safeguarding efforts going forward.

Massimo Calvelli, ATP CEO: “Tennis is one of the world’s most global and diverse sports. Through ATP Serves, it’s our goal to ensure the culture of tennis is as inclusive and welcoming as possible. This requires us to take an honest look at ourselves and continue asking the right questions. Our LGBTQ+ survey showed overwhelming support amongst ATP players for greater action in this space and identified clear areas where we can be doing better. We would like to thank everybody for their contributions to this process so far and, together with You Can Play, look forward to making meaningful progress in years to come.”

Kurt Weaver, You Can Play: “The steps ATP has taken to be proactive on inclusion is impressive. Their willingness to not only identify current challenges and address them; but also find future opportunities and harness them is the reason we are so excited for this partnership. The reach of ATP and the game of tennis is truly world-wide and their ability to use that voice to support inclusive tennis will ensure the game is open and welcoming to every participant, regardless of their sexuality or gender identity.”

In parallel, ATP and WTA have also come together to make a joint donation to support You Can Play’s efforts in the space, following a similar joint donation in 2021.

To learn more about You Can Play or to make a donation, click [here](#). To learn about the ATP Serves programme, click [here](#).

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Media contact:

Simon Higson (simon.higson@atptour.com)

About The ATP

As a global governing body of men’s professional tennis, the ATP’s mission is to serve tennis. We entertain a billion global fans, showcase the world’s greatest players at the most prestigious tournaments, and inspire the next generation of fans and players. From the ATP Cup in Australia, to Europe, the Americas



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and Asia, the stars of the game battle for titles and Pepperstone ATP Rankings points at ATP Masters 1000, 500 and 250 events, and Grand Slams. All roads lead towards the Nitto ATP Finals, the prestigious season finale held in Turin, Italy. Featuring only the world's top 8 qualified singles players and doubles teams, the tournament also sees the official crowning of the year-end ATP World No. 1, presented by Pepperstone, the ultimate achievement in tennis. For more information, please visit www.ATPTour.com.

About You Can Play Project

Celebrating their 10-year anniversary in 2022, You Can Play works to ensure the safety and inclusion for all who participate in sports, including LGBTQ+ athletes, coaches and fans. Through education, outreach, partnerships, voices and stories, You Can Play achieves this by creating a community of allies that is able to foster a true sense of belonging. Contact You Can Play Project if you'd like to learn more about LGBTQ+ inclusion in sport. Learn more at youcanplayproject.org.