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TSA CODE OF CONDUCT UPDATE – 4 June 2018

Dear TSA Player, Parent and Coach,

Tennis South Africa (TSA) appreciates the fact that a lot of time and money is sacrificed by parents, players and coaches in attending junior tournaments. Quite correctly there is a reasonable expectation that in all tournaments will run in a professional manner. TSA realizes though that, at times, there will be differences of opinions arising at tournaments relating to decisions taken by organizers and officials.

However, TSA's primary concern is the well-being of our participants - your children and pupils. In so doing TSA would like to strive to ensure that the environment in which tournaments are played are positive and not toxic, as seems to have been the case over the last couple of months.

TSA accepts that the tournament officials have a responsibility to ensure that the Code of Conduct is maintained. Whilst someone may have a difference of opinion and understanding of some of the decisions taken, it must be said that in most of the cases that the decisions made are correct. Unfortunately, with the emotional aspect coming into play at tournaments, officials are faced with the difficult task of deciding in a dispassionate and objective manner.

We feel that it is important to say that we all have a responsibility towards ensuring that the tournaments can be run in an acceptable manner, without emotional involvement, animosity towards players, coaches and parents. In fact, it is all of us as a collective that determines whether the environment in which our children play is fair or toxic.

It is for this reason that TSA would like to remind all parties concerned about the importance of fair play and the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct is not there to punish players. Is a mechanism to be used by officials to ensure that acceptable standards are maintained both on and off court by all stakeholders.

The current way officials are often spoken to by parents, coaches and players is totally unacceptable. As a result, officials have been instructed to ensure that a "Zero Tolerance" approach is taken from immediate effect, even if it results in "soft" defaults or coaches/parents being asked to leave the court area or venue.

Whilst there is a Code of Ethics for parents and coaches on our website (this will be revised and updated in the very near future) TSA would like to bring the following to all stakeholders' attention:

1. The players are the participants and if they have any problems they should alert an official;
2. Parents and Coaches at Junior events (while being the biggest supporters and contributors) need to understand that other than being a guest of the tournament, they are no rights in terms of involvement and disputes with officials;

Board of Directors:

G. Crookes (President), R. Davids (Vice-President), G. Ntuli, G. Whyte, J.J. Klaasen, Z. Beukes, A. Karam, F. Cassim,
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3. If a decision taken needing to be queried or clarified, this should be done in a professional manner with the Referee and ONLY the Referee. Off Court Officials making decisions at the venues are not in any way to be confronted by anyone other than the player. In the event of any form of confrontation/question being raised the player will receive a Warning for Unsportsmanlike Conduct following the official having been on court;
4. Recently it has become apparent that certain players are being targeted by groups of players or academies. Matches have almost taken on the form of a Davis or Fed Cup event with partisan crowd behaviour, intimidation tactics and general unsportsmanlike behaviour off court. This needs to stop immediately. Any players found to be participating in this type of conduct will be awarded the "off court" suspension points and could even be defaulted depending on the severity of their actions;
5. It is also apparent that where there have been differences of opinion either on or off court between players/families this has escalated into vendettas/grudges being formed. TSA is then expected to resolve and manage these during tournaments. This is unacceptable behaviour and will also no longer be tolerated. Any differences are to be resolved off site and not to be left to TSA or the event organizers to manage. Reiterating the above - anyone attending the event other than the players are guests of the event. TSA and the Organisers reserve the Right of Admission at all venues;
6. Care needs to be given on approaching opponents and comment being made to opponents after a match by parents and coaches;
7. In the event of formal complaints being lodged with TSA, these will now need to be in the form of an official statement/affidavit that can be used in a Disciplinary Hearing (should this be required). Any statements not to be in the form of an affidavit will not be entertained by TSA;

General code violations issued by the officials onsite are unappealable other than to the Referee. Once the match continues, the Code Violation has been issued and will stand regardless of an appeal being submitted to TSA following the event.

TSA will also be loading onto the TSA website a Code of Conduct presentation in order to try and assist everyone with the understanding of the Code of Conduct. It will in fact encourage parents and coaches to attend local officiating courses, when they are held in the regions in order, that they may have a better understanding of the rules, regulations and code of conduct for tennis.

We all have a role to play in ensuring that the players can enjoy the tournaments and play in a friendly environment.

Thank you for your support and understanding.

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