SOBEYS STADIUM
1 Shoreham Dr, Suite 100
Toronto ON M3N 3A6
T. 416.665.9777

STADE IGA
285, rue Gary-Carter
Montréal QC H2R 2W1
T. 514.273.1234

October 19th, 2026

Subject: 2029 Canada Games – Tennis Age Category Update

Dear Athletes, Parents and Coaches,

Tennis Canada is providing the following information to clarify the decision to change the tennis age category for the 2029 Canada Games from U16/U18 to U16 only.

During the last Canada Games review, tennis' continued participation was not guaranteed. As part of the effort to secure its future place in the Games, Tennis Canada and its partners reviewed the competition format and implemented changes based on several considerations, including the Canada Games mandate, a reduced athlete quota, and alignment with Tennis Canada's high-performance pathway.

We recognize that this decision may be unexpected and disappointing for some athletes and families who had been planning for an U18 competition at the 2029 Canada Games. The change was made after careful review and reflects the need to balance the objectives of the Canada Games with the realities of athlete quotas and long-term athlete development.

Why the age category was changed

- **Canada Games mandate:** The Canada Games have a broader mandate than providing competition opportunities within a specific development stage. They contribute to the development of Canada's emerging athletes and the broader Canadian sport system.
- **Reduction in athlete quota:** The tennis athlete quota for the 2029 Games is being reduced from **8 athletes to 6 athletes**. This reduction was a decision of the Canada Games Sport Committee as part of the 2029 Games program. As a result, Tennis Canada was required to review the age eligibility and selection criteria to ensure that the smaller team would best serve the objectives of the Games.
- **Focus on the high-performance pathway:** As part of the Canada Games requirements, Tennis Canada was mandated to ensure that the Games provide an opportunity for the best upcoming athletes within the high-performance pathway. With only six athlete positions available, this was an important consideration in determining the most appropriate age category for tennis.
- **Alignment with Tennis Canada's Player Development Pathway and rationale for U16:** Tennis Canada's pathway identifies Stage 5 – Train to Compete as a key transition period, typically between ages 14 and 16, when athletes move from national development toward

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high-performance training and international competition. This is an important stage in establishing longer-term performance trajectories, making U16 a strategically relevant age category for the Canada Games and allowing the event to complement athletes' progression toward high performance.

- **Athlete development:** The objective is to position the Canada Games at a stage of development where the experience can have the greatest impact on the athletes selected and complement the other development and competition opportunities available within Tennis Canada's national pathway.
- **Complementarity of competitions:** The change from U16/U18 to U16 only does **not** mean that the development of U18 athletes is less important. U18 remains an important stage in the development pathway, with national and international competition and development opportunities continuing to support athletes at this stage.

What this means for U18 athletes

It is important to emphasize that U18 athletes remain an important part of Tennis Canada's development and high-performance pathway. The change in Canada Games age eligibility is not a reflection of the value or importance of U18 athletes.

Rather, the decision reflects the need to determine how the limited number of Canada Games athlete positions can best support the Games' mandate and provide an appropriate opportunity for athletes at a strategically important stage of the high-performance pathway.

Tennis Canada recognizes the important role that the Canada Games have played in the development of Canadian athletes and understands that changes to an established competition opportunity may be disappointing for some athletes and families.

Our objective is to ensure that the **2029 Canada Games tennis competition is aligned with the mandate of the Games, the reduced team size, and Tennis Canada's long-term athlete development and high-performance strategy**.

We hope this information provides greater clarity and context regarding the decision.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Bennett - Senior Director, Sport Integrity

Marie-France Mercier - Senior Director, Development of Coaching and Community Programs

Tennis Canada