

# ARTICLES ON COMPETITION



## ADDING THEMES TO COMPETITION

(by James Newman, ITF)

Themed competitions not only add more fun and excitement to an event, they are easier to advertise and promote as they give potential players a real sense of what the event is about. Themes work best for social events, especially with mixed ages and abilities.

This guide provides the following:

- Theme Ideas **p1**
- Applying the theme to your format **p2**
- Applying the theme to rest of the event **p3**
- Case Study of a Theme in action **p4**

### THEME IDEAS

Below are themes you can apply to your event:

#### DAVIS CUP / FED CUP

This theme is tennis related and team based. Using this theme you can give each team a country name, have food from different countries of the world, decorate your court with different flags and run a world themed after event party.

#### CHRISTMAS / EASTER

Every club should run festive events, Christmas events are especially good where celebrated.

#### SEASONS – SUMMER / SPRING / AUTUMN / WINTER

You can run themes to welcome in the new season. These may not be heavily themed events but are good to have in the calendar regularly as club members/players will remember and anticipate them and are more likely to compete in them.

#### WIMBLEDON / AUSTRALIAN / FRENCH / US OPEN

Grand Slam themed events are great fun and relevant to tennis. You can serve food and drink from the country who's slam you're celebrating and add rules, for example, at a French Open themed event, give players double points for winning a point with a drop shot.

#### FAMILY / PARENT AND CHILD

Family events are very popular. These types of events can see parents playing doubles with their children or the family competing as a whole team. Be sensitive to those you may exclude and offer to 'pair' up young players and old players who may not have a partner but want to play in the event.

#### THEME OF THE PAST (eg 1960's, 1970's)

Having a theme based in the past can be a great social event. Players can dress up in old clothes, play with wooden rackets and enjoy period entertainment – eg disco dancing

#### RED, ORANGE AND GREEN

A good multi-age event for children would be a red, orange and green event. These colours represent the 3 progressive stage of Tennis...Play and Stay, each with it's own court and ball. You could have red, orange and green t-shirts for players who get to enjoy red, orange and green food at the end! Adults of all ages and abilities will enjoy playing Mini Tennis too.

#### FURTHER IDEAS:

- **National Holiday** – eg Australia Day, Labour Day, Flag Day
- **Valentine's** – eg mixed doubles event for single people
- **Olympics** – eg a multi-sport team event with players representing different countries
- **Legends** – celebrate legends of the game, each player or team is named after a legend
- **Hollywood/Bollywood** – eg players dress as their favourite film character
- **Coffee Mornings** – Midweek morning matches, especially good with mothers and housewives

# ARTICLES ON COMPETITION



## APPLYING THE THEME TO YOUR FORMAT

There are many ways in which your format/matches can incorporate a theme, here below are some ideas:

### NAMING TEAMS

If you are running a team event (see ADAPTING COMPETITION for ideas on turning an individual format into a team format) then name your teams in relation to the theme. For example, with a Davis Cup theme, each team is named after a country. With a French Open theme, give the teams names representing clay court greats like 'The Nadals', 'The Henins' and 'The Vilas'.

### RULES / SCORING

Rules and Scoring could also be amended. For example with a Wimbledon theme, players could score double for winning a point through serve and volley.

### EQUIPMENT

Using slower balls and smaller courts are recommended for starter players both young and old. But even very good juniors and adults love the chance to play Red Tennis on an 11m court with slower felt or foam balls, this could be applied using a Mini Tennis theme for your event.

Another idea is to make players use wooden rackets in a '70's themed event.

### CLOTHING

Team clothing is always popular in any theme. For a Davis Cup theme you can tell players to all wear a colour representing their country, eg Brazil Yellow, Spain Red, Great Britain Blue.

If running a charity event, you could have fancy dress or if running a period event, you could have players wearing clothes from that era, eg 1920's or 1960's style.

### MULTI-SPORT

If running, for example, an Olympics theme, you could add extra sports to compete in. This is especially good with limited court space. As well as tennis, add games like football or skills like long jump, throwing etc.

### CAPTAINS

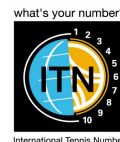
With a Fed Cup theme you could nominate team captains. Choose parents, coaches or volunteers to lead and organise a team.

### PRIZES

Prizes and awards can be themed. With a Movies theme, you could give vouchers for DVDs or film posters!

## APPLYING THE THEME TO THE REST OF THE EVENT

# ARTICLES ON COMPETITION



Running a themed event should affect everything that goes on around the event rather than just the format itself. Here are some ideas for applying the theme to the rest of your event:

## ENTRIES AND ADVERTISING

When promoting your event, the theme should be clear in the wording and images you use. For example, for a Parents and Children event, pictures of families playing tennis and family friendly wording should be used on promotional material.

## FOOD AND DRINK

Food and drink can be a profitable side activity to any event. Match the food and drink to your theme. For example, at an Australian Open themed event serve BBQ food, Australian wine and beer. A Davis Cup themed event could have food from different parts of the world, for example baguettes from France, Pizza from Italy, Tacos from Mexico and Sushi from Japan.

## ENTERTAINMENT

You could have a fancy dress party to represent your theme, for example a US Open theme sees everyone come as their favourite Hollywood star or '70's theme sees everyone dress up in 70's clothing. With a Grand Slam theme you can have a TV room showing classic Grand Slam matches, these could run throughout the competition.

## DECORATIONS

Decorations around the courts and entertainment areas can enhance the theme. For example, with a Christmas theme you can add Christmas decorations or with a Fed Cup theme you can add flags from the competing team's nations.

## CASE STUDY OF A THEMED EVENT

# ARTICLES ON COMPETITION



## PARKLANGLEY DAVIS CUP

Parklangley is a club in Great Britain who use the Davis Cup as the theme for an annual team competition involving juniors of all ages at the club.

### TEAMS AND PLAYERS

Over 400 juniors players aged between 7 and 18 take part in the event. They are divided into 4 teams – Great Britain, Sweden, United States and Australia and stay in the same team for each year they compete in the event.

Each team has a Davis Cup captain who is one of the older juniors taking part for the team.

### CLOTHING AND DECORATIONS

Each country takes a colour. GB – Blue, United States – Red, Sweden – Yellow, Australia – Green. Players all play in a t-shirt that is the same colour as their country. There are also coloured balloons decorating the courts and clubhouse as well as flags.

### LENGTH

Activities take place over 4 days in the school holidays, players only need to turn up and play on one of those days then return for the final evening for the presentation and party.

### ACTIVITES

The matches are split into age groups with different players reporting to play at different times. There are competitions in the following age groups:

*8 years and under (Red) – Matches to 7 points*

*9 years and under (Orange) – Matches to 10 points*

*10 years and under (Green) – Best of 3 short sets to 4 games (44tb)*

*11 years and under - Best of 3 short sets to 4 games (44tb)*

*12 years and under - 2 sets to 6 games with a third set match tiebreak (to 10 points)*

*14 years and under - 2 sets to 6 games with a third set match tiebreak (to 10 points)*

*16 years and under - 2 sets to 6 games with a third set match tiebreak (to 10 points)*

*18 years and under - 2 sets to 6 games with a third set match tiebreak (to 10 points)*

Players play all other players in their age group from the opposite team. They earn 1 point for each match they win. This get's added onto their team's total

### PRESENTATION

The presentation is held in a hall with a big screen and sound system. All teams and players attend to find out which team won the most points. National anthems are played at the start and the winning team is announced and collect their Davis Cup trophy.

### END OF EVENT PARTY

After the presentation, there is a party held in the clubhouse for all players and their families. Traditional dishes and drinks from the competing nations are served.