

# **Tennis & Rackets Association Competitive Squad (TRACS) programme Invitation to apply**

## **Introduction**

We are inviting applications for this training and development programme which is described in summary in the accompanying document. This document describes the process for application and the minimum requirements which applicants will be expected to meet (the Person Specification).

The programme will last eighteen months and includes training towards a nationally recognised qualification in sports management.

## **The application and appointment process**

To apply you should send a copy of your CV and a covering letter in support of your application. In your letter you should set out your reasons for believing you should be selected and telling us how you meet the requirements set out in the Person Specification and describe your experience, if any, of real tennis. You should also include the names and contact details of two people who can comment on your work experience as referees.

You should send your application, by email, to arrive by 12 mid-day on Friday 23rd June to:

Chris Davies  
Chief Executive  
Tennis and Rackets Association  
c/o the Queens Club  
Palliser Road  
West Kensington  
London  
W14 9EQ  
[executive@tennisandrackets.com](mailto:executive@tennisandrackets.com)

Shortlisted candidates will be notified and invited for an interview and on-court assessment during the week starting Monday July 10.

Successful candidates will be notified and invited to attend a residential induction course which will take place between 7<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> August 2017. You should be available to attend this as it is a compulsory part of the programme. Trainees will then start their first club rotation on Monday August 21<sup>st</sup>.

Please read the Person Specification on the following page

If you have any questions please contact Chris Davies (as above) or David Sloan (Acting Programme Director) [davidsloan0305@gmail.com](mailto:davidsloan0305@gmail.com)

## **TRACS programme – Person Specification**

We are looking for candidates who have all or most of the following

### **Sporting achievement**

- A proven track record of success in some ball, preferably racquet sport to County level or equivalent
- Or an already accomplished real tennis player with a low and falling handicap
- Demonstrable athleticism, tactical game awareness and a desire to compete in a sports setting

### **Skills, knowledge and experience**

- A minimum of 5 GCSEs (or equivalent) including Maths and English
- Good written and verbal communication
- Competence and confidence with numbers
- Some experience of working in a customer-facing setting
- Confidence and self-motivation
- Some knowledge of the world of Real Tennis
- A driving licence is desirable

### **Personal attributes**

- Ambition to excel as a Real Tennis player
- A desire to be an excellent professional and the potential, in due course to succeed as a club Head Professional
- Curiosity, a willingness to learn and to work hard
- Good social skills and a team player
- A positive and supportive attitude to club members
- An understanding of how you would like to progress and manage your future

## **The Tennis & Rackets Association Competitive Squad programme Information for applicants**

This is a new initiative that offers talented and ambitious young athletes a unique opportunity to rise rapidly to the top of a sport.

Real Tennis is a small individual sport which is dynamic, changing and growing, based in the UK, USA, France and Australia.

The eighteen-month programme aims to fast-track the chosen applicants to become excellent club professionals and to compete at the highest levels within the game at competitions throughout the world.

### **Programme Aims**

- to recruit and train up to four young people a year as real tennis professionals
- to turn them into highly skilled players able to compete at the highest level
- to give them the skills needed to run a real tennis club to a high standard
- to offer them a recognised sports management qualification

### **Programme Summary**

The overall programme will last for 18 months, and will start with an intensive two-week residential induction course helping to immerse you in the world of real tennis.

Our focus is to inspire the next generation of Real tennis professionals. Working alongside you will be some of the games top professionals and experts, giving you the tools to become one our sport's true elites.

This programme will take you from start to finish; with access to court time, coaching sessions, as well as giving you the skills to be an all-round professional. We will also provide seminars on the day to day management of a real tennis club as this is a unique opportunity to be both a professional athlete and to run a successful business.

### **What makes a good Professional?**

- The ability to inspire others to play,
- To play at the highest level,
- To coach and improve your members,
- Operate a successful pro shop and business,
- Make balls of the best quality,
- Ensure good court use,
- Develop and mentor juniors,
- Create the next generation of young players.

This programme is designed to give you the best opportunity to create a long-standing relationship with Real Tennis as well as develop a lasting career within this sport.

Accredited clubs will be participating in the programme as hosts to trainees. Each of them has an excellent head pro who will be your principal instructor during your time at the club. During your eighteen months you will work in three clubs on a rotational basis. You will also come back together as a group for further training days, for both on and off-court sessions.

You will also have some business and management related training (from a Sports Structures instructor) at your clubs to help develop you to work as a club professional, resulting in a NVQ Level 3 diploma in Sports Development. In addition, we will appoint one person to be your mentor throughout the eighteen months.

When you are at your clubs you will have an agreed minimum amount of time on court each week, some of it being coached, plus time set aside for gym work. You will also contribute, under the supervision of the head pro, to the club by supporting the pro team and in the process learn about running a club.

You will be expected to play in tournaments and competitions, such as the National League, as well as club tournaments. We will also encourage you to take every opportunity to watch the top players and engage with them whenever possible.

We will track and support your progress throughout the eighteen months on this programme as well as the necessary assessments for the Club Professional Development (CPD) programme. In particular, the CPD programme enables you to qualify to work as a professional, reaching Level 2 at the end of eighteen months.

As a graduate of the TRACS programme you will be very well placed to secure a position to develop both your playing and professional career.

## **Money and your contract**

Your employer will be the T&RA. We have deliberately advertised with a wide range of salary because we anticipate people applying who are of different ages and who bring differing amounts of experience and previous training.

Those who come with little or no previous work experience we will employ as apprentices, within the government apprenticeship scheme. Within this scheme you will be paid according to the rules of the scheme. This will amount to between £14,000 and £16,000 per year depending on age and you will also have the benefit of all training free of charge. You will also be reimbursed travel expenses and have an allowance for equipment.

Graduates who come with appropriate qualifications already will not need so much training in sports management. Depending on age, experience and qualifications we will pay you between £18,000 and £22,000 per year. The training within the TRACS programme is free.

We will discuss accommodation with you. We are endeavouring to secure accommodation for all trainees appropriate to their club placements, either free or at a subsidised rate.

Before appointment we will have detailed discussion with you to finalise your employment package.

## **Timetable**

The anticipated timescale of the programme is as follows

Applications to be submitted	by June 23 <sup>rd</sup> 2017
Interviews and assessment of applicants	during week of 10 or 17 July
Induction course (mandatory)	7-18 August
Start first club rotation	21 August
Second club rotation	from February 2018
Third club rotation	from August 2018
Graduation	end February 2019

Further training days and CPD assessments will be organised. The first CPD assessment will take place at approximately 3 months into the programme. It is anticipated that all trainees will achieve CPD level 2 by the end of the programme.

## Real Tennis – the first Beautiful Game

Real Tennis dates from around the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It is the original racquet sport from which the modern game of lawn tennis is descended. It is played indoors, the balls are handmade and solid like a cricket ball, the racquets are wooden with a very small sweet spot, you have to be athletic, dexterous, cerebral and super fit. Play is continuous, there is no sitting down to get your breath back on changing ends, and it could almost be considered an extreme sport!

The modern game is played in the UK, Australia, the USA and France. There are about 10,000 active players, both men and women, in around 40 clubs, the bulk of which (23) are in England. Some courts are very old, for example the court at Hampton court palace was built in 1620, but it is notable that six new courts have been built in England since 2000. It is a growing sport.

While most players are amateurs there is a small professional game. Clubs rely on their professionals to run the courts, coach, sell and maintain equipment and generally promote the game to existing and future members. So this requires a broad range of management and other skills involved in running a sports facility. But developing his or her own skills as a player is also a key part of the development of a professional and very much a focus of the TRACS programme.

Competition between tournament professionals can be fierce. There is an annual circuit of both national and international open and handicap tournaments available to professionals, with appearance and prize money. There is a ranking system, similar to lawn tennis and six of the current top ten players are based in the UK, including Rob Fahey, world champion from 1994 until he was defeated by Camden Riviere from the US in 2016. Rob had defended his title successfully eleven times before that, a remarkable record!

In the UK the governing body for both Real Tennis and Rackets is the Tennis and Rackets Association (T&RA) [www.tennisandrackets.com](http://www.tennisandrackets.com). And the interests of tournament professionals are represented by the International Real Tennis Professionals Association (IRTPA) [www.irtpa.com](http://www.irtpa.com). They work closely together to promote and extend the game and you can learn much more by visiting their websites.

