



## **Making the ATP Top 100**

Transition from  
Top 10 ITF Junior to Top 100 ATP Tour  
(1996 – 2005)

Peter D. McCraw



## Transition study from ITF Top 10 Junior to Top 100 ATP Tour (1996 – 2005)

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### Introduction & Background

The study investigated transition from a Top 10 ITF Junior Circuit rank to Top 100 ATP Tour rank for 10 years between 1996 and 2005. The intended use of this study was to establish a range of statistical benchmarks coaches and Federations can use for players aspiring at a professional career on the ATP Tour.

### Methodology

- The study's data was obtained from the ITF and ATP Tour websites:
  - [www.itftennis.com/juniors](http://www.itftennis.com/juniors)
  - [www.itftennis.com/mens](http://www.itftennis.com/mens)
  - [www.atpworldtour.com](http://www.atpworldtour.com)
- Data was collated on players meeting the criteria of:
  - Top 10 ITF Junior year-end rank between 1996 – 2005. (85 players\*)
  - Top 100 ATP Tour Players as at February 2 2009. (100 players)
- Basic statistical measures of mean, median, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, were used to profile players.

\* - Duplicate names were removed as players finished in Top 10 for more than one year in a row. Also some players achieved a Top 100 Rank during the calendar year but failed to stay inside the Top 100 at year-end. These players were included in the study and categorised as having achieved a Top 100 ATP Tour rank.

### Glossary

- **Age** – chronological age of player based on date-of-birth (DOB).
- **Rank** – The year-end ranking on ITF Junior Circuit, ITF Pro Circuit, ATP Tour.
- **Age at First Year End Rank** – The chronological age of player at time of ranking.
- **Age at Top 100 Rank** – The chronological age of player when first Top 100 rank achieved.
- **Age at Highest ATP Rank** – The chronological of player at time of highest ATP rank.
- **Years in Top 100** – The number of years a player was ranked inside the Top 100 on ATP Tour.
- **Transition Time** – The number of years taken to achieve Top 100 ATP Tour rank from first year-end rank.
- **Win:Loss (W:L) Ratio (MD)** – Calculation of Career (ITF Pro Circuit & ATP Tour) win / loss ratio in main draw matches. Breakdown of ATP Tour, ITF Pro Circuit and ITF Junior Circuit.
- **ITF Junior Circuit** – The world governing body tournament circuit for age 18/U tennis players.
- **ITF Pro Circuit (PC)** - The world governing body tournament circuit for over 18 yrs tennis players.
- **ATP Tour** – The Men's Tennis Association professional tournament circuit.

## Discussion:

### Top 100 ATP Tour Players

Table 1.0 outlines the profile (mean) of a Top 100 ATP Tour player as of 26.7 years with a minimum (min) and maximum (max) age of 19.5 and 36.6 years.

- The first ITF Pro Circuit rank was obtained at 18.7 years (min 15.0 / max 26.0) and a Top 100 ATP rank at 22.3 years (min 16.0 / max 30.0). Players remained in the Top 100 for 4.5 years (min 0.0 / max 11.0).
- The highest ATP rank was obtained at age 24.7 (min 19.1 / max 31.5), with a transition time of 4.6 years (min 1.0 / max 9.0). To achieve this the player initially required a W:L Ratio of 1.5:1 (min 1.0 / max 4.3) on the ITF Pro Circuit, then 1.2:1 (min 0.3 / max 4.6) on ATP Tour. A career W:L Ratio of 1.8:1 (min 1.0 / max 3.3) was required.
- The average year-end rank was calculated for up to 5 years from a Top 100 rank. Results are below with an approximate ranking proposed also.

Years Prior to Top 100 Rank	5	4	3	2	1	(0)
Average Year End Rank	634	574	451	329	179	67
<i>Approx. Year End Rank</i>	<i>650</i>	<i>600</i>	<i>450</i>	<i>300</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>Top 100</i>

### Top 10 ITF Junior Circuit Player who achieved Top 100 ATP Tour Rank

Table 2.0 outlines the profile (mean) of a Top 10 ITF Junior Circuit player (1996 – 2005) who achieved a Top 100 ATP Tour rank. Forty-nine (49) players comprised this group after duplicate names were removed as some players finished with Top 10 rank for more than one year in a row.

### Senior Profile

- The first ITF Pro Circuit rank was obtained at 17.6 years (min 15.0 / max 22.0) and a Top 100 ATP Tour rank at 20.8 years (min 17.0 / max 25.0). Players remained in the Top 100 for 3.7 years (min 1.0 / max 10.0).
- The highest WTA rank was obtained at age 23.0 (min 18.8 / max 26.5), with a transition time of 4.3 years (min 1.0 / max 9.0). To achieve this the player initially required a W:L Ratio of 1.9:1 (min 1.1 / max 3.7) on the ITF Pro Circuit, then 1.2:1 (min 0.3 / max 4.1) on ATP Tour. A career W:L Ratio of 1.6:1 (min 0.1 / max 3.9) was required.

## Junior Profile

- A W:L Ratio of 3.3:1 (min 1.7/ max 6.3) was required in the ITF Junior Circuit to achieve a Top 10 year end rank. Players competed in 36 (min 12 / max 61) ITF Junior Circuit events and participated in 110 (min 36 / max 188) matches during their junior career.
- Players competed in 41 (min 0 / max 95) ITF Pro Circuit events and participated in 84 (min 32 / max 152) matches between 15 – 18 years.
- The average year-end rank was calculated for up to 5 years from a Top 100 rank. Results are below with an approximate ranking proposed also.

Years Prior to Top 100 Rank	5	4	3	2	1	(0)
Average Year End Rank	783	440	208	127	102	92
<i>Approx. Year End Rank</i>	<i>800</i>	<i>450</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>125</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>Top 100</i>

**Table 2.1** illustrates the number of ITF Junior events players competed in by age. 78% had begun playing by age 14. This peaked to 95% at 15 years and dropped to 88% by year 16. It continued to fall with only 84% at 17 years and 46% by 18 years competing on the ITF Junior Circuit.

**Table 2.2** illustrates the number of ATP Tour and ITF Pro Circuit events players competed in by age. 86% had begun playing by age 15. This rose to 94% at 16 years and peaked at 100% by year 17 and 18.

**Table 2.3** illustrates the combined number of ITF Junior, ATP Tour and ITF Pro Circuit (Senior) events players competed in by age:

- At age 15, a total of 11 events (Junior 7 / Senior 4) were played with a 65/35% proportion to Juniors.
- By age 16 this had increased to 18 events (Junior 11 / Seniors 7) with a 60/40% split to Juniors.
- At age 17, players competed in 25 events (Junior 12 / Senior 13) with a 50/50% swing towards Senior events.
- By the 18<sup>th</sup> year, the Top 10 ITF juniors that achieved a Top 100 ATP rank competed in 30 events (Junior 8 / Senior 22) with a further swing toward Senior events of 25/75%.

## ATP Tour Top 100 Player Profile\*

\* Week of February 2, 2009

Table 1.0	Average	Std. Dev	Min	Max	Median	Count
<b>Senior Profile</b>						
Age (yrs)	26.7	3.4	19.5	36.6	26.8	100
Age at Highest ATP Rank	24.7	2.6	19.1	31.5	24.2	
Age at First Year End Rank	18.7	2.0	15.0	26.0	18.0	
Age at Top 100 Rank	22.3	2.7	16.0	30.0	22.0	
Years in Top 100	4.5	3.1	0.0	11.0	4.0	
Transition Time Top 100 (yrs)	4.6	2.3	1.0	9.0	4.0	
W:L Ratio – Career (MD)	1.8	0.5	1.0	3.3	1.7	
- ATP Tour (MD)	1.2	0.7	0.3	4.6	1.0	
- ITF Pro Circuit (MD)	1.5	0.5	1.0	4.3	1.4	

### ATP Top 100 Player Profile

**Table 1.0** – Profiles ATP Tour Top 100 players.\*

(MD) – Main Draw

\* - February 2, 2009.

Years Prior to Top 100 Rank	5	4	3	2	1	(0)
Average Year End Rank	634	574	451	329	179	67
<i>Approx. Year End Rank</i>	<i>650</i>	<i>600</i>	<i>450</i>	<i>300</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>Top 100</i>

## ITF Top 10 Junior to ATP Top 100 Player Profile (1996 – 2005)

Table 2.0	Average	Std. Dev	Min	Max	Median	Count
<b>Senior Profile</b>						49* * Duplicate Names removed
Highest ATP Rank	36	28	1	92	33	
Age at Highest ATP Rank	23.0	1.7	18.8	26.5	22.6	
Age at First Year End Rank	17.6	1.6	15.0	22.0	18.0	
Age at Top 100 Rank	20.8	1.9	17.0	25.0	21.0	
Years in Top 100	3.7	2.7	1.0	10.0	3.0	
Transition Time Top 100 (yrs)	4.3	2.1	1.0	9.0	4.0	
W:L Ratio – Career (MD)	1.6	0.5	0.1	3.9	1.5	
- ATP Tour (MD)	1.2	0.7	0.3	4.1	1.0	
- ITF Pro Circuit (MD)	1.9	0.5	1.1	3.7	1.8	
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<b>Junior Profile</b>						
ITF Junior W:L Ratio	3.3	1.0	1.7	6.3	3.1	
ITF Junior Matches Played	110	34	36	188	108	
ITF Junior Tournaments Played	36	12	12	61	38	
ATP / ITF PC Matches Played	84	25	32	152	80	
ATP / ITF PC Tournaments Played	41	22	0	95	39	
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<b>Years Prior to Top 100 Rank</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>(0)</b>
Average Year End Rank	783	440	208	127	102	99
<i>Approx. Year End Rank</i>	<i>800</i>	<i>450</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>125</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>Top 100</i>

**Top 100 Junior (1996 – 2005)  
to Top 100 ATP**

**Table 2.0** – Profiles forty-nine\* boys who finished with a Top 10 Junior ITF Year End Rank between 1996 – 2005 who have achieved a Top 100 ATP Senior Rank.

(MD) – Main Draw  
\* - Duplicate names removed.



## ITF Top 10 Junior to ATP Top 100 Player Profile (1996 – 2005)

Table 2.1	ITF Junior Profile					
	Age & Number of Events per Year					
Years	13	14	15	16	17	18
Mean	0	4	7	11	12	8
Std Dev	0	5	5	5	5	6
Min	0	1	2	0	1	1
Max	0	19	28	18	22	18
Median	0	1	5	13	13	8
%	0%	78%	95%	88%	84%	46%

Table 2.2	ATP Tour + ITF Pro Circuit Profile					
	Age & Number of Events per Year					
Years	13	14	15	16	17	18
Mean	0	0	4	7	13	22
Std Dev	0	0	3	6	8	8
Min	0	0	0	1	1	5
Max	0	0	13	23	30	38
Median	0	0	3	5	12	22
%	0%	0%	86%	94%	100%	100%

Tournament Profile (ITF Junior & ATP / ITF Pro C)				
Age & Number of Events per Year				
Table 2.3				
Age Profile	15	16	17	18
<b>Total Events</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>30</b>
Junior	7	11	12	8
Senior	4	7	13	22
Junior %	64%	61%	48%	27%
Senior %	36%	39%	52%	73%
<b>Est. %</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>25</b>
	<b>35</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>75</b>
5% shift to Seniors from Juniors at year 16. 10% shift to Seniors from Juniors at year 17. 25% shift to Seniors from Juniors at year 18.				

### Top 100 Junior (1996 – 2005) to Top 100 ATP

**Table 2.1** – Profiles the number of Junior Events played per year by age.

**Table 2.2** – Profiles the number of Senior Events (ATP Tour and ITF Senior Circuit) played per year by age.

**Table 2.3** – Profiles the combined number of ITF Junior and Senior Events (ATP Tour and ITF Senior Circuit) played per year by age. Also illustrated is the ratio of Junior and Senior matches between age 15 – 18 yrs.



## Findings:

Analysis of Top 100 ATP Tour players (Feb 09) and Top 10 ITF Junior Circuit players from 1996 – 2005 who achieved a Top 100 ATP Tour rank in their career, indicated:

- (1) Career W:L Ratio of 1.6:1 on ATP Tour, 1.9:1 on the ITF Pro Circuit and 3.3:1 on the ITF Junior Circuit.
- (2) First ITF Pro Circuit rank achieved at 17.6 years.
- (3) Transition time from first year-end rank to Top 100 ATP Tour of 4.3 years at an age of 20.8 years.
- (4) Highest ATP Tour rank achieved approximately two years after entering ATP Tour Top 100 at 23.0 years with an average of 3.7 years inside Top 100 rank.
- (5) Players competed in 41 ITF Pro Circuit / ATP Tour events and participated in 84 matches between age 15 – 18 years.
- (6) Players competed in 36 ITF Junior Circuit events and participated in 110 matches between age 14-18 years.
- (7) 58% of players who achieved a Top 10 ITF Junior ranking between 1996-2005 achieved a career high ATP ranking of Top 100.
- (8) It is important to remember the average age of ATP Top 100 is 26.7 years. This is on average 9.0 years after players achieved their first ITF Pro Circuit ear-end ranking.
- (9) The following ranking benchmarks could be used as an indicator prior to a Top 100 ATP Tour ranking:

<b>Years Prior to Top 100 Rank</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>(0)</b>
Average Year End Rank	783	440	208	127	102	92
<i>Approx. Year End Rank</i>	<i>800</i>	<i>450</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>125</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>Top 100</i>



## Competition Based Development Schedule

It is recommended that athletes follow a long-term Competition Based Development Schedule that is athlete centred, coach driven and sport science validated. The advantages are, athletes reach pinnacle performance at selected times with training arranged to reach a collective peak in technical, tactical, physical, mental and nutritional components. Work/rest ratios established to avoid overtraining, boredom and burnout. Injury prevention programs and sustained rest periods based on athlete growth and development can be administered ensuring the long-term health and wellbeing needs of the athlete are met at all stages of development.

### A Development Schedule should contain:

- (1) **Development Blocks:** Clearly defined weeks of development are created within an annual calendar. Blocks may range from 2 to 8 weeks in length and are centred on the acquisition of fundamental tennis and athletic skills. While competition is not discouraged, the aim of each block is refinement of the biomechanics of stroke production and expansion of athletic capabilities.
- (2) **Development Weeks:** A seven-day program that has sufficient rest periods each day and a minimum of 1.5 days rest per week. The foundation of any athletic program is a holistic week that contains:
  - a. Enrolment in an academic environment that compliments athletic development. Participation in ITF Junior Tennis School ([www.itfjuniortennisschool.com](http://www.itfjuniortennisschool.com)) and completion of ATP Professional Development programs is highly encouraged also.
  - b. Access to medical screenings and network of primary health care providers.
  - c. Relationships based on professional conduct from qualified and vetted coaches, trainers and support personnel.
  - d. Positive parental environment and extended support network free from dual-role relationships.
  - e. Active interests outside of tennis – friends, hobbies.
- (3) **Pre-Competition Weeks:** The aim of Pre-Competition weeks is to fine-tune the athlete for competition. The emphasis is placed on strategical and tactical development. Athletes learn to identify and understand their style of play by improving shot selection, decision-making and point construction. Training is designed to simulate match conditions and maximise competitive adaptations under pressure. Matchplay is used to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of athletic capabilities.
- (4) **Competition Weeks:** The aim of Competition weeks is to ‘train to win’ with the objective of reaching a maximum level of performance. As athletes approach their athletic and biomechanical limitations, the psychological capacities play an increasingly larger role in performance. Athletes are encouraged to positively review and evaluate competitive performances with trusted stakeholders and continually set long and short-term objectives based on the ‘big picture’ of development.

- (5) **Rest (Active / Total) Weeks:** The aim of Rest weeks is athletic and psychological regeneration. Athletes are provided the necessary time to recover from the physical and mental stresses of competition and training. During active rest weeks, athletes work at an easy pace for 30-90 minutes cross training with other sports in an effort to expand motor coordination. During total rest weeks, athletes are encouraged to cease all athletic activities. Massage, meditation, sleep, a balanced nutritional intake and yoga are all encouraged.

**Table 4.0** outlines recommended Development Schedules, total tournaments, W:L ratio and ranking benchmarks for athletes between 14-18 years.

**Table 4.0**

<b>Circuit (years)</b>	<b>(1)</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>(5)</b>
<b>Age (years)</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Developmental Blocks</b>	4	4	3	2	2
<b>Developmental Weeks</b>	16	16	14	14	12
<b>Pre-Competition Weeks</b>	10	8	6	6	6
<b>Competition Weeks</b>	16	18	22	24	26
<b>Rest (Active / Total) Weeks</b>	10	10	10	8	8
<b>Ratio Development: Competition</b>	<b>1:1</b>	<b>-&gt;</b>	<b>1:1.5</b>	<b>-&gt;</b>	<b>1:2</b>
<b>Total Tournaments</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>
• National / Regional	5	5	5	-	-
• ITF Junior Circuit	10	10	10	10	5
• ITF Pro Circuit / WTA Tour	0	5	10	15	20
<b>Benchmark W:L Ratio:</b>					
• ITF Juniors	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.0
• ITF PC / ATP Tour	0.5	0.75	1.0	1.25	1.5+
<b>Benchmark Rank:</b>					
• ITF Junior Circuit	200	100	50	Top 20	Top 10
• ITF Pro Circuit / ATP Tour	-	-	-	800	450

*The above recommendations are based on the assumption that an athlete is of sufficient standard and physical, psychological, developmental maturity to compete on the ITF Junior Circuit, ITF Pro Circuit and ATP Tour.*