
Case Study

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## ATP – Race to Zero

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# ATP Tour – Race to Zero

## Case

By: Deepak Dhayanithy, Head – Centre for Climate Studies (CCS), Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode (IIMK)

At the 2022 French Open, the men's singles semifinal between Casper Ruud of Norway and Marin Cilic of Croatia, was interrupted by what observers have titled "the first climate protest" at Roland Garros. Before the security carried her off, a 22-year old environmental activist tied herself to the net and her t-shirt read, "WE HAVE 1028 DAYS LEFT". Between Dec 26, 2022 and the end of November, 2023 the ATP had 67 tennis tournaments planned including the four Grand Slams, Laver Cup and ATP Finals events. These tournaments were played on various surfaces – clay, grass, outdoor hard court and indoor hard court. As of Dec 26th, 2022 the top two ranked players were both Spanish – 19 year-old Carlos Alcaraz and 36 year-old Rafael Nadal and they had played 17 and 14 tournaments respectively over the season. In the northern summer events on European clay or grass courts dominated and over the remaining year tennis attention rested on the North American circuit with the US Open (Grand Slam) as its focus and then Australian circuit with the Australian Open as its focus. Grand Slams (for men) comprised of best-of-5 sets contests – a knock-out tournament of 4 rounds followed by quarterfinals, semi-finals and finals whereas other ATP events (and women's grand slams) were typically best-of-3 sets contests that could have around 32 players, going up to 96. Most of these tennis tournaments were simple knock-out tournaments where one loss meant that the player and his entourage had to move to the next tournament (the next hotel), the next venue or back to their training base. Tennis players used a variety of transport options over their season, some details of which are provided here.

In 2021 ATP became a member of UN Sports for Climate Action (UNSCA), adopting two of UNSCA targets - going net-zero emissions by 2040 and a 50% reduction in emissions by 2030. In 2019, ATP conducted, with the help of consultants, a thorough carbon audit of its footprint for a season (2019). This included resources and energy consumption, hotel stays and international travel. In the short run, organizations like 'One Carbon World' helped organizations offset their unavoidable carbon emissions. Organizations could buy carbon credits from 'One Carbon World' in multiples of 100. Buying 100 carbon credits from 'One Carbon World' meant that the organization could offset 100 Tonnes of CO2-e emissions. For the 2019 ATP year ending Nitto Finals, emissions from all player, coaches and family travel; and domestic travel of the over 240 thousand fans were offset by ATP via purchasing about 5,700 of these carbon credits. In preparation the 2018 season finale saw a number of

footprint reduction initiatives like reducing the amount of plastic used in the tournament, leading to the removal of 60,000 plastic cups from the tournament's waste stream.

Further, to reduce the amount of waste generated by the ATP event, it worked with City Harvest, a charity that redistributed leftover food to shelters around London, thereby dealing with what would have been food waste in a sustainable manner. City Harvest collected an equivalent of over 2,000 meals for Londoners in need while preventing over 3.25 tons of greenhouse gas emissions (associated with food waste). In addition to reducing environmental impact, the ATP also ensured the tournament made a positive social impact working in partnership with Cancer Research UK.

Adam Hogg, Event Director, Nitto ATP Finals, said: "After beginning the process of measuring the impact from our activities and trialling a number of new initiatives at last year's Nitto ATP Finals, we're thrilled…Staging large sporting events always come with significant sustainability challenges, so to accomplish everything we have done at this year's tournament is a great achievement, particularly offsetting over 5,500 tons of carbon emissions."

"Of course, there is always more that can be done and we look forward to working with our specialist advisors to try and deliver even better results at next year's tournament."

Consultants of ATP developed a comprehensive sustainability report for the tournament thereby furthering understanding of environmental and social impacts in a comprehensive, measurable manner. The ATP Tour consisted of over 60 independently operated tournaments across 30 countries through the regular season. These events consumed valuable resources "from catering to construction" and fan and player travel. On this journey, ATP had entered into partnerships with Gold standard, a certification standard for climate change mitigation projects as well as with the United Nations, via the UNSCA. ATP also looked to bring its various commercial partnerships into the fold of its sustainability activities. ATP built on its global tennis fan base to drive inspiring of the wider community toward purposeful sustainability action.

## Emissions

An organization's greenhouse gas emissions may be classified into three scopes – 1, 2 and 3. Scope 1 emissions are direct emissions coming from organization owned assets and scope 2 emissions are those indirect emissions attributable to the power generated and transported (by a utility typically) and used by the reference organization. Indirect emissions that don't fall into scope 2 are categorized as

scope 3 and these include downstream and upstream activities in the reference organization's value chain.

Interventions like a rainwater harvesting system (RWHS) could shift the categorization of an emission across the scopes. A key resource consumed by ATP activities was water. Watering tennis courts was an important maintenance requirement although the specific quantity of water may depend on the type of surface of the tennis court. A study showed that the employment of RWHS could reduce the potable water requirement (used to water tennis courts) by over 50%. This study carried out in Portugal was for an arena that featured a mix of covered and open tennis facilities. A similar impact may be achieved by installation of on-site power generation capacities. Associate emissions, in addition to the potentially reduced emissions footprint, may also shift from indirect emissions categories to direct emissions categories.

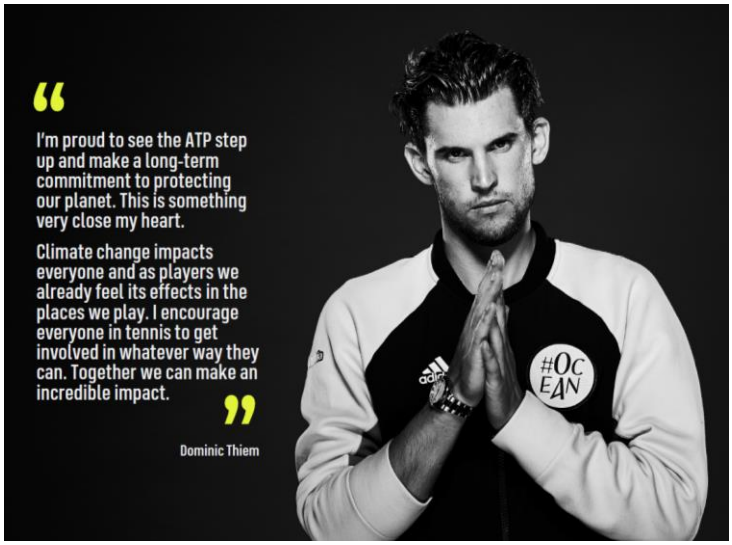
For ATP's leaders, a number of crucial questions needed to be understood well. Why was it that Roland Garros was the theatre for a climate protest? How should ATP as being concerned with growing a professional sport, make sense of its climate impact? What were scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions of the ATP Tour and how were they to quantify these? How did tennis compare to other professional sports when it came to its carbon emissions?

Most pressing perhaps was the question looming over ATP – how could it half its emissions by 2030 and how could the ATP Tour become net zero by 2040?

Time, it seemed, was running out.

**Figure 1: "WE HAVE 1028 DAYS LEFT"[1]**


**Figure 2: Dominic Thiem on ATP's Net-zero project[2]**




[1] https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/protester-interrupts-french-open-semi-final-2022-06-03/ (Accessed March 1, 2023)
[2] https://www.atptour.com/en/news/atp-targets-net-zero-emissions-by-2040 (Accessed March 1, 2023)

**Figure 3: Scoping emissions across the ATP ecosystem**[3]


[3] https://www.atptour.com/-/media/files/atp-serves-sustainability-november-2021.pdf (Accessed March 1, 2023)

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