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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TENNIS CANADA LAUNCHES FIRST SET – TENNIS IN SCHOOLS FOLLOWING A SUCCESSFUL PILOT IN 2026

- **Program earns endorsement from Physical and Health Education Canada**
- **Grant funding now available for 2027 made possible in part by the Government of Canada and the Canadian Olympic Committee**

[TORONTO, ON] November 26, 2026 — Tennis Canada is proud to announce the launch of First Set – Tennis in Schools, a program designed to turn a first experience for students at school into sustained participation in tennis. The national initiative, led by Tennis Canada and the Provincial and Territorial Tennis Associations, introduces inclusive and engaging tennis experiences to kids at elementary schools across the country. This project has been made possible in part by the Government of Canada and the Canadian Olympic Committee.

Through lasting, meaningful relationships between local clubs, community tennis providers and schools, students are provided a clear pathway for continued engagement with the sport beyond the classroom. Designed for students ages six to 13, the program provides teachers with ready-to-use resources, training and community connections to help children discover the joy of tennis — regardless of space, equipment or prior experience.

The 2026 pilot edition of First Set – Tennis in Schools was an outstanding success, with 68 clubs across the country delivering programming in 185 schools to over 35,000 students. The program, grounded in Stage 2 of Tennis Canada's Whole Player Development Pathway, strives to create not only a continued opportunity for skill development in tennis but also inspire the many other benefits that come with engaging in sport, including physical, mental and social benefits. As part of the pilot program, community clubs hosted Rogers First Set Try Events, providing an opportunity for students to connect directly to their local tennis provider, and ensure students have opportunities to Try, Learn, Play and Compete in tennis both during and after school hours.

This summer, a major milestone was reached as First Set – Tennis in Schools resources were officially endorsed by the Physical and Health Education Canada (PHE Canada). Following a comprehensive review involving educators and sector experts from across the country, PHE Canada recognized First Set – Tennis in Schools resources for their exceptional learning opportunities, inclusivity and promotion of a healthy lifestyle. This step was foundational to the program as Tennis Canada strives to continue to grow tennis in schools, and inspire meaningful and lasting connections to community tennis clubs across the country.

APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN FOR GRANT FUNDING

Tennis Canada is proud to continue the evolution of First Set – Tennis in Schools and build from the momentum gained from the pilot by opening applications for grant funding in 2027. Through this grant, we expect to expand the number of schools and students introduced to tennis in 2027.

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Clubs and community tennis providers can apply here or direct questions to FirstSet@TennisCanada.com. The application deadline for grant funding is December 14, 2026. Successful applicants must return their signed funding agreement by February 26, 2027; this is a separate step from applying. Funding supports the full school-to-club pathway and is subject to approval and available funds.

QUOTES

“As tennis continues to grow across the country, especially among youth, there's no better time to introduce the First Set - Tennis in Schools initiative. This program is designed to build on the excitement of a child's first experience with tennis at school and create a clear pathway for them to continue playing at a local community club. With six million Canadians picking up a racquet in 2025, tennis continues to experience tremendous growth across the country. We want to build on that momentum by creating more opportunities for young Canadians to get involved in the sport and continue their tennis journey beyond the classroom. Anyone, of any age and skill level, can play tennis, and whether children are looking to develop their skills, stay active or simply enjoy the many physical and social benefits of sport, we want to ensure there is a clear pathway for them to keep playing.” - Scott McRoberts, Chief Sport Officer at Tennis Canada

“COC is pleased to support programs like First Set, which is an incredible example of how sport can transform communities and change lives. Through our Team Canada 2035 plan, the COC is committed to ensuring more young people across the country have the opportunity to play and stay in sport. Congratulations to Tennis Canada on the launch of this exciting program, and to all the participants who will benefit from it.” - Eric Myles, Chief Sport Officer, Canadian Olympic Committee

"Physical and Health Education Canada (PHE Canada) is pleased to endorse First Set – Tennis in Schools, a practical resource that helps teachers of all experience levels introduce foundational tennis skills through meaningful, engaging activities that are safe and inclusive for all learners.”
- Melanie Davis, Executive Director & CEO, PHE Canada

"The Tennis in Schools program helped us introduce tennis to more children and build stronger connections with local schools. Many students tried tennis for the first time, which increased interest in the sport and helped us promote our community tennis programs. It also gave us a great opportunity to work with teachers and schools to support physical activity and healthy lifestyles." - Slavica Jovic, Tennis NWT Administrator in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

"The most important change for our organization has been successfully getting into local schools with the proper developmental equipment and a structured programming outline. Having the right red and orange progressive tennis balls, paired with a clear curriculum, allowed us to deliver a high-quality, professional introduction to the sport directly to students. This established strong school relationships, built immediate credibility in the community, and created a seamless pipeline to transition younger players from school gymnasiums straight into our club." - Jennifer McIlreath, Past Club President of Quinte Tennis Club in Belleville, Ontario

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About Tennis Canada

Founded in 1890, Tennis Canada is a non-profit, national sport association with a mission to lead the growth, development and promotion of tennis in Canada and a vision to be a world-leading tennis nation. We value teamwork, passion, integrity, innovation and excellence. Tennis Canada owns and operates the premier National Bank Open presented by Rogers WTA and ATP Tour events, it financially supports 15 other professional tournaments in Canada, as well as operating more than 60 events nationally across junior, wheelchair, university and Masters tennis categories. Tennis Canada is a proud member of the International Tennis Federation, the Canadian Olympic Committee and the Canadian Paralympic Committee, and serves to administer, sponsor and select the teams for Davis Cup, Billie Jean King Cup, the Olympic and Paralympic Games and all wheelchair, junior and masters tennis national teams. Tennis Canada invests its surplus into tennis development. For more information on Tennis Canada please visit our website at: www.tenniscanada.com and follow us on LinkedIn, X, Facebook and Instagram.

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