

PRESS RELEASE DATED 10TH DECEMBER 2008:

Tennis Southland's vision to become the South Island's top province for junior players has received a \$95,000 boost from the ILT and the ILT Foundation.

The ILT Foundation has committed \$75,000 to Tennis Southland, with the Invercargill Licensing Trust providing \$20,000 in a total financial package that will see even more focus put on developing the region's juniors.

Long-standing Tennis Southland coach, Pete White, said introducing five, six and seven-year-olds into the sport was an ongoing aim and the ILT and ILT Foundation's funding support would, importantly, make top coaching accessible to all those youngsters.

White, who has been coaching in Southland for 17 years, said the province had never **been** stronger in the junior ranks, especially in the under-10s division.

Southland was also the second best province overall in the Southern Districts region from South Canterbury south for under-10s to under-16 players, and set to improve even further.

And White saw no reason why it could not become the best in the Mainland for juniors. He thought the ILT's support would help bring that goal even closer.

"The numbers and quality at the moment are pretty much unprecedented," White said.

"We are working hard at this level and we've got big volumes of kids going through coaching programmes at Stadium Southland and in the ILT Velodrome.

"And the stadium courts are another big bonus to us to be able to do that because it can be done indoors. There's continuity that way. We don't have to worry about the weather."

ILT president, Alan Dennis, said it was great to see tennis in Southland on such a high.

"The ILT has invested heavily into improving tennis facilities, with the indoor courts at the stadium and the ILT Velodrome, plus the \$900,000 contribution to the 12-court upgrade at the Waihopai club," he said.

"We're a firm believer that if you can provide good facilities, and good coaches, then you will see top results in performance. Tennis Southland is certainly delivering on that."

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