

THE ROAD TO
WIMBLEDON



The Road to Wimbledon arrives in Japan

The All England Lawn Tennis Club's prestigious junior tournament for 14 & unders arrives in Saga for the inaugural Japan Masters tournament

Saga, Japan, Monday 23 April 2018: Japan's top junior tennis talent will be in action this week, when the Road to Wimbledon – The All England Lawn Tennis Club's prestigious junior tournament for the top 14 & under players in the UK and across Asia – is staged in Japan for the first time.

Launching today, and supported by Jaguar, Official Car of The Championships, the inaugural Masters tournament will be hosted at the Grass Court Saga Tennis Club. The Grass Court Saga Tennis Club is the only grass court tennis club in Japan and enjoys a longstanding relationships with the All England Club, which makes it a natural host venue for the Road to Wimbledon.

Japan's top 16 boys and girls will be tested in match play during the Masters tournament week, which starts today and concludes on 28 April. The two finalists in both the boys' and girls' Masters tournaments will have the opportunity to travel to London from 12 to 18 August and compete at the Road to Wimbledon International Finals on the All England Club's historic grass courts.

Kei Nishikori, the former World No.4 and Jaguar Ambassador, sent his words of encouragement to Japan's leading junior players participating in the tournament.

Nishikori said, "It is wonderful to see the history, prestige, and magic of Wimbledon brought to Japan for these young players to experience first-hand. The collaboration between The Road to Wimbledon and Jaguar offers Japan's emerging generation of top tennis talent an international platform to sharpen their tennis skills, and gain the critical experience of playing on grass courts at an early stage of their development."

"I hope the junior tennis players taking part in the tournament will make the most of their Masters week, and I will be cheering for them as they embark on their Road to Wimbledon 2018." he added.

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Road to Wimbledon Tournament Director and former British Davis Cup Captain Paul Hutchins said, "We are very excited to bring the Road to Wimbledon to Japan for the tournament's inaugural year. Each year we continue our commitment to bringing the grass court tennis experience, coaching, and opportunities to engage with some of the best tennis players internationally – to more junior players in Asia, as we grow Wimbledon's presence in tandem with the growing popularity of tennis in Asia."

"While the Road to Wimbledon gives some of the best young players around the world the opportunity to play on Wimbledon's famous grass courts, the tournament is about far more than just tennis. It also fosters life-skills and values such as teamwork and discipline that will maximise the potential of young people for the rest of their lives," added Richard Lewis, Chief Executive of The All England Lawn Tennis Club.

Dr Shu Ogata, Chief Executive of Grass Court Saga Tennis Club said: "Dr Masanori Ogata, the former owner of Grass Court Saga Tennis Club, visited The Championships in 1975 and he was very impressed with the beauty of the grass courts. Two years later, he founded the first grass court tennis club in Japan, here in Saga, which most people thought would be impossible. As the ongoing friendship between the two Clubs continued, former AELTC Chairman Tim Phillips visited Saga in 2010.

"I am extremely honoured to host the Road to Wimbledon in Japan at the Grass Court Saga Tennis Club. I hope for a successful week as we promote the uniqueness of grass court tennis to the next generation of young Japanese tennis players," Dr Ogata concluded.

- Ends -

For more information please contact: communications@aeltc.com

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- The Road to Wimbledon began in the UK in 2002. A full history is available at www.roadtowimbledon.com
- In 2014, the Road to Wimbledon expanded overseas to India, and to China (Nanjing) in 2016

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- In 2017, the Road to Wimbledon expanded its presence in China to include Beijing and Hong Kong SAR, in addition to Nanjing
- **In 2018, the Road to Wimbledon adds Japan to the tournament for the first time**
- The Road to Wimbledon India Masters takes place in Kolkata (for girls) from 12-17 March 2018, and in New Delhi (for boys) from 19-24 March 2018
- **The Road to Wimbledon Japan Masters takes place in Saga from 23-28 April 2018**
- The Road to Wimbledon Hong Kong Masters takes place from 7-12 May 2018
- The Road to Wimbledon China Masters takes place in Nanjing, China, from 14-19 May 2018
- The Road to Wimbledon Challenge from 17 April-10 June 2018 is open to players with an LTA rating of 7.1-10.2 or non-rated; junior players with a rating of 6.2 and lower enter the Road to Wimbledon International UK tournament
- The Road to Wimbledon International UK qualifying tournament takes place from 23-24 June 2018
- **The Road to Wimbledon Finals takes place at the AELTC, Wimbledon, from 12-18 August 2018**

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