

## **Changes in Australian Open**

### **Why in News?**

A plethora of changes were announced ahead of the Australian Open, the first Grand Slam tournament of the year 2019.

### **What are the changes?**

- Out of the changes two are significant changes.
- They are
  1. The introduction of a 10-point tiebreak at 6-6 in the deciding set.
  2. 'Heat Stress Index' to replace the old Extreme Heat Policy.
- Other changes include
  1. The use of serve clock (to be set at 25 seconds) to help speed up matches.
  2. Hawk-Eye review technology on all 16 courts
  3. Increase in the number of spots in the women's qualifying draw from 96 to 128.
  4. Upgrade in the prize money pool.

### **Why were they needed?**

- The tiebreak rule has followed a similar move by Wimbledon, but at 12-12 in the decider, to prevent long-drawn matches from messing up the schedule.
- At Melbourne, where a night session is a huge attraction, a marathon encounter extending into the late hours is undesirable.
- The change in heat policy is probably the result of the severe criticism the previous set of rules came under.
- In the last edition, Novak Djokovic and Gael Monfils were vociferous after being forced to play at temperatures that almost touched 40 degrees Celsius.
- The hospitalization of Simona Halep, immediately after the women's

singles final which was played with the roof open, appears to have forced the organizers' hands.

- The serve clocks will help enforce the guideline that players have 25 seconds to initiate play after the previous point ends.
- The additional spots in the women's qualifying draw are to restore parity with the men.
- The use of line-calling technology on all 16 match courts will ensure equal conditions for every player in the draw.
- This technology is used in tennis to automatically detect where a ball has landed on the court.

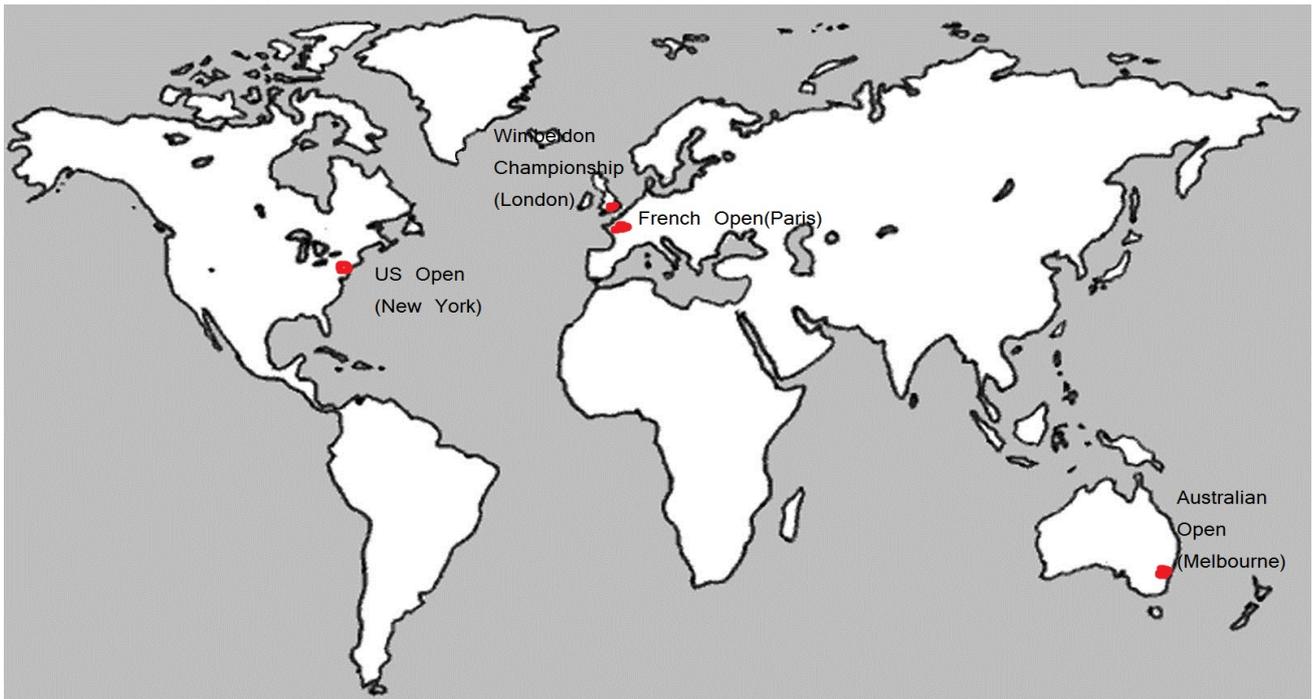
### **How will it impact players?**

- While it is sure to help players physically, the move has generated criticism, with many arguing that the women's game could have been spared.
- If anything, it was the men's game which needed trimming and there too it was felt that curtailing the end would deprive fans of drama.
- The way in which new heat policy, that takes into account air temperature, radiant heat, humidity and wind speed, plays out is yet to be seen.

### **Basic Terminologies**

- The Grand Slam tournaments - Australian Open, Roland Garros(French Open), Wimbledon and US Open - are the most prestigious individual competitions in tennis.
- The term Grand Slam refers to the achievement of winning all four major championships within a single calendar year within one of the five events: men's and women's singles; men's, women's, and mixed doubles.
- Winning the four majors in consecutive tournaments but not in the same year is known as a Non-Calendar Year Grand Slam.
- Winning all four majors at any point during the course of a career is known as a Career Grand Slam.
- Winning the gold medal at the Summer Olympic Games in addition to the four majors in one calendar year is known as a "Golden Grand Slam" or more commonly the "Golden Slam".
- This major tennis calendar event starts with Australian open,

followed by French Open, Wimbledon and at last US open.



- Hawk-Eye is a computer vision based technology that allows the trajectory of a ball and players to be tracked purely from video and it's completely un-intrusive.

**Source: The Hindu**

