

Aussie Open boost for capital tennis star Jacob

Edinburgh tennis ace Jacob Fearnley has gained direct entry to the opening Grand Slam event of the season – the Australian Open – in Melbourne from 12 to 26 January.

Initially, Jacob was one place outside the required ranking to gain direct entry at No 99 due to players such as Nick Kyrgios and Kei Nishikori using rankings protected after injury troubles to play.

But the withdrawal of Austrian star Sebastian Ofner opened the door for No 1 alternate (reserve) Fearnley to feature from the outset and guarantee himself a share of record prize money this year of \$Aus 86,500,000. A major ranking point boost will also be on offer from the 128 player draw completed by wild cards and qualifiers.

It had already been decided that Jacob, who climbed the most number of ranking places on the ATP tour this year – 547 – on the way to winning four times on the second tier Challenger Tour would play preliminary tournaments down under.

Jacob will join fellow Britons Jack Draper and Cameron Norrie in the men's main draw.

