Press release – for immediate release

Connect sports and new technologies, and prevent preterm births: the two startups Technis and Pregnolia win the final of Venture Kick.

The EPFL spin-off Technis helps tennis players improve their performance and their experience of sports thanks to a new generation of floor surface, which is tactile and connected. The ETH spin-off Pregnolia develops a diagnostic tool that reliably identifies the risks of preterm birth. Both startups win CHF 130,000, the maximal amount provided by our program.

In today's connected world, sports and modern technologies can improve performances, help to understand progress via statistics or intensify the experience of the game. However, such tools are still rare for amateur sports and often struggle to fulfil players' and clubs' expectations. The EPFL startup Technis developed an elegant way to connect tennis and digital world. Their product, a hyper thin, tactile and connected floor surface (or mat), enables players – be beginners or experienced players – to enter a new game era.

A personalized profile and a novel game experience
During a game, the surface developed by Technis detects every events (i.e. foot movements, ball bounces) in order to establish the personalized profile of the player. The startup introduced its first product, MyTechnisPAD, a mat of about 6 m² that can be placed anywhere on the tennis court. A software collects all the statistical data (i.e. IN/OUT, service, etc.) and allows to exchange it in real time via a mobile app, with a coach or a community of other players. This enables for ex. to find a game partner whose profile match. This dimension of “social connectivity” is very much appreciated by sportspersons. It is actually a novelty in the world of tennis thanks to Technis.

In addition, Technis wants to increase the players’ experience of sports. Their intelligent court mat can thus turn into an augmented reality game, where a player has to bounce the ball where the surface indicates him/her to. Technis’ product has already been tested in several tennis clubs in Switzerland. The startup was also invited to showcase its novel approach at several major events such as the Paris Bercy Masters in October 2016. The objective of both co-founders, Wiktor Bourée (CEO) and Martin Hofmann (CTO), is to bring together a community of players in a few dozens of tennis clubs in Switzerland and internationally. Other applications for their intelligent floor surface are possible, for ex. for other sports or environments (i.e. people falling in hospitals, analysis of travelers’ flux in airports). The support of Venture Kick comes at the right time for Wiktor Bourée: “The program helped us build a solid business model, but also to sign key contracts with our clients and partners. A victory in final is a great recognition for the development potential of our business. It is also considered a serious pledge by investors.” Watch the technology of Technis in video: www.venturekick.ch/technis

Solving the problem of preterm birth assessment
The ETH spin-off Pregnolia develops a diagnostic tool that measures the cervical stiffness in pregnant women, allowing to reliably identify the ones at risk of preterm birth. The probe of the tool is put vaginally on the uterine cervix and measures the stiffness of the tissue in only a few seconds. If the uterine cervix proves soft, the gynecologist adopts pregnancy conservatory measures. A typical measure is a hormone therapy with a class of hormones, Gestagen, which stiffens the tissue. Or a so called «cerclage», where a sustaining strap is slung around the uterine cervix.

Solving the long-standing problem of preterm birth risk assessment and management in pregnancy is a step which CEO Sabrina Badir chose to make in 2015 with co-founder Francisco Delgado. The Swiss market entry is planned in 2018, then Europe and the USA. She can count on the support of Venture Kick to meet her objectives: «I could really take profit of the direct learnings from the program’s coaches. I became aware of what investors want to know and how to present it, such as how we are different from our competitors» explains Sabrina Badir. The woman entrepreneur was also part of the Swiss national startup team in Boston last month to showcase her innovation to US investors and experts. More about Pregnolia: www.pregnolia.com