



For Immediate Release

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## **Steffi Graf's WTT debut highlights 2005 WTT Pro League Draft**

***McEnroe, Roddick, Davenport, Sharapova, Williams, Hingis, Becker, Haas, Navratilova, Rafter, Kournikova, Courier, Fish, Blake and Bryan Brothers selected in WTT Player Draft***

MIAMI (March 29, 2005) Steffi Graf's return to pro tennis competition highlighted the first round of the 2005 WTT Pro League Draft held today in Miami. Graf will play one home match in July for the Houston Wranglers, who selected her in the first round of the WTT Player Draft. Fellow Hall of Famer John McEnroe was the draft's overall top pick, returning to the New York Sportimes, which is co-owned by his brother, Patrick McEnroe.

The regular season for the WTT Pro League presented by Advanta runs July 4-24 in 12 U.S. markets. The top two teams from the Eastern and Western Conferences advance to the WTT Finals, Sept. 16-17, in Sacramento, Calif.

"I am excited to be a part of WTT's 30th season," said Graf. "I have great respect for what Billie Jean King has done for our sport and her vision of making tennis more fun and accessible to everyone. Playing for Houston and owners Jim and Linda McIngvale will be special. I have wonderful memories of winning a title in Houston on my last visit there, so I am looking forward to playing in front of those fans again."

With a remarkable record that includes 22 Grand Slam singles titles, Graf is considered by many as one of the greatest woman tennis players of all time. The other name that is most often included in that discussion is Martina Navratilova who returns to WTT for her 17<sup>th</sup> year. Navratilova was selected by the Boston Lobsters with their first round pick.

The star-studded first round included several of the biggest names in the game. The world's top ranked woman, Lindsay Davenport, will hit the courts for the Springfield Lasers. 2004 Wimbledon Champion Maria Sharapova returns for a third consecutive WTT season playing for the defending WTT Champions Newport Beach Breakers. Venus Williams will play for her sister Serena's former team, the Delaware Smash. A former No. 1, Martina Hingis, will make her WTT debut this summer as McEnroe's teammate for the New York Sportimes. Hingis' former doubles partner Anna Kournikova was selected by the Sacramento Capitals with their first round selection.

McEnroe led a list of marquee names on the men's side that also included Boris Becker, who was drafted by the Hartford FoxForce. The Kansas City Explorers picked up the dynamic duo of Bob and Mike Bryan, while 2005 Tennis Hall of Fame Inductee Jim Courier was selected by the New York Buzz. Philadelphia protected their rights to Patrick Rafter and the St. Louis Aces did the same to keep world No. 3 Andy Roddick on their roster. The Aces picked up Tommy Haas but traded the ATP standout to Houston following the conclusion of the draft where he will join Mardy Fish on the Wranglers squad.

Here is a team-by-team breakdown of today's Marquee and Roster Player Draft:

### **NEW YORK SPORTIMES**

With the first pick in the Marquee Draft, the New York Sportimes picked up John McEnroe and added Martina Hingis with their second Marquee pick. Robert Kendrick, Jenny Hopkins, Natalie Grandin and Mark Merklein round out the team. NY will name their coach at a later date.

### **SPRINGFIELD LASERS**

The Springfield Lasers are looking to Lindsay Davenport to lead them to the top of the Western Conference standing after using their first round pick to select the world's top-ranked player. Davenport won't be the only new face in Springfield as the Lasers chose not to protect their 2004 lineup. Joining Davenport on the Lasers' squad are Tamarine Tanasugarn, Rik De Voest, Rick Leach and Kaysie Smashey. Trevor Kronemann returns as the Lasers' coach.

### **NEW YORK BUZZ**

Jim Courier will head up the 2005 Buzz roster. Returning player Bryanne Stewart will be joined by Evie Dominikovic, Brian Vahaly and Jaymon Crabb. Jolene Watanabe returns as the Buzz coach.

### **KANSAS CITY EXPLORERS**

The Kansas City Explorers picked up the U.S. pair of Mike and Bob Bryan, the #6 ranked doubles team. Joining the Bryans on the Explorers roster are Sesil Karatantcheva, Nana Miyagi, David Macpherson and Brian MacPhie. Paul Smith will again coach the Explorers.

### **ST. LOUIS ACES**

The St. Louis Aces will once again field one of the game's most exciting players with the return of world #3 Andy Roddick. Although scheduled to play for the Aces in 2004, an injury sidelined Roddick from his WTT matches. The Aces also selected Tommy Haas but traded him to Houston following the conclusion of the draft. Rounding out the 2005 Aces lineup will be Jamea Jackson, Jennifer Russell, Jonathan Erlich and Andy Ram. Greg Patton returns as the St. Louis coach.

### **HOUSTON WRANGLERS**

One of the League's new teams will field an impressive lineup with Hall of Famer Steffi Graf making a return to pro tennis competition and U.S. Davis Cup member Mardy Fish. Houston also acquired Tommy Haas in a post-draft trade with the St. Louis Aces. Ashley Fisher, Edina Gallovits, Ansley Cargill and Ryan Newport make up the remainder of the Wranglers team.

### **BOSTON LOBSTERS**

On the League's other new franchise, tennis legend Martina Navratilova will be joined by James Blake, who was selected in the second round of the Marquee Draft. Their teammates are Scott Draper, Daja Bedanova, Kristen Schlukebir and Thomas Blake. Dr. Anne Smith will coach the Lobsters.

### **PHILADELPHIA FREEDOMS**

There will be a lot of familiar faces in Philadelphia this summer as the Freedoms are bringing back their core lineup from 2004. Australian tennis legend Patrick Rafter returns for his second season after Philadelphia protected him with their first round Marquee selection. The Freedoms also protected hometown favorite Lisa Raymond along with Josh Eagle, Elena Tatarkova and John Paul Fruterro while drafting Carly Gullickson. Craig Kardon will return to coach the Freedoms.

### **HARTFORD FOXFORCE**

The FoxForce were obviously pleased with their 2004 team as they are returning five members for another run at the King Trophy. Boris Becker will lead the attack for the FoxForce with teammates Meghann Shaughnessy, Milagros Sequera, Don Johnson, Wesley Whitehouse and Lisa McShea. Paul Assaiante will be returning as Hartford's coach.

### **SACRAMENTO CAPITALS**

The popular Anna Kournikova will suit up for the Sacramento Capitals in 2005. Kournikova has won 16 doubles titles including two Grand Slam championships. Kournikova, who spent the past two seasons with the Kansas City Explorers, will be on a perennially strong squad that also includes two members of the 2004 lineup – teenage standout Nicole Vaidisova and Mark Knowles, one-half of the world's top ranked doubles team. Former Capitals favorite Elena Likhovtseva rejoins the team in 2005. The lineup will be rounded out with a player to be named at a later date. Wayne Bryan returns as the Capitals coach.

### **DELAWARE SMASH**

Delaware drafted one of tennis' most exciting players with their first round pick, selecting Venus Williams. Joining Williams on the 2005 edition of the Smash are Liezel Huber, Wayne Odesnik, Chanelle Scheepers and Robbie Koenig. Former Delaware Smash player Mariaan de Swardt will coach the Delaware squad.

### **NEWPORT BEACH BREAKERS**

Newport Beach will start their WTT Championship title defense with their first round selection, Maria Sharapova. The Breakers protected their rights to Sharapova who has vaulted to #3 in the world since her remarkable run to the 2004 Wimbledon title. Rounding out the Breakers lineup will be Ramon Delgado, Devin Bowen, Katarina Bondarenko and Anastassia Rodionova. Dick Leach will again coach the Breakers.

### **League Background**

The World Team Tennis Pro League presented by Advanta enters its 30<sup>th</sup> season of play in 2005. Billie Jean King and Larry King created the unique gender-equity team concept in the early 70s. The format used for a WTT Pro League match features teams comprised of two men, two women and a coach. Each match consists of five sets, with one set each of men's and women's singles, men's and women's doubles and mixed doubles. The WTT regular season runs July 4-24 with 12 teams battling for the King Trophy. The two top teams from both the Western and Eastern Conferences advance to the WTT Finals, Sept. 16-17, in Sacramento, Calif.

Advanta is the presenting sponsor of the WTT Pro League. Official WTT sponsors also include Gatorade, Head/Penn Racquet Sports (official ball) and Wilson Racquet Sports (official racquet). For more information on WTT, visit [www.WTT.com](http://www.WTT.com).

### **MARQUEE PLAYER MATCHES (schedule to be announced in mid-April)**

**Boris Becker** (*Hartford*) – Hartford, Houston, Sacramento, Westchester

**James Blake** (*Boston*) – Boston, Houston

**Mike & Bob Bryan** (*Kansas City*) – Kansas City (2), St. Louis, Sacramento

**Jim Courier** (*NY Buzz*) – Schenectady, Westchester (NY Sportimes)

**Lindsay Davenport** (*Springfield*) – Springfield, Houston

**Mardy Fish** (*Houston*) – Houston (3)

**Steffi Graf** (*Houston*) – Houston

**Tommy Haas** (*Houston*) – Houston, St. Louis

**Martina Hingis** (*NY Sportimes*) – Westchester (NY Sportimes), Schenectady, St. Louis, Boston, Philadelphia

**Anna Kournikova** (*Sacramento*) – Sacramento, Hartford, Newport Beach, Houston

**John McEnroe** (*NY Sportimes*) – Westchester, Philadelphia, Houston

**Martina Navratilova** (*Boston*) – Boston (2), Houston, Hartford, Delaware, Westchester

**Patrick Rafter** (*Philadelphia*) – Philadelphia, Boston, Westchester, Newport Beach

**Andy Roddick** (*St. Louis*) – St. Louis

**Maria Sharapova** (*Newport Beach*) – Newport Beach

**Venus Williams** (*Delaware*) – Delaware, Sacramento, Westchester

**ROSTERS - 2005 World TeamTennis Pro League presented by Advanta**  
**\*\* (Team Rosters in order of draft selection) \*\***

The 2005 WTT Pro League season will run from July 4 - 24

**NEW YORK SPORTTIMES**

\*John McEnroe  
\*Martina Hingis  
Robert Kendrick  
Jenny Hopkins  
Natalie Grandin  
Mark Merklein

**SPRINGFIELD LASERS**

\*Lindsay Davenport  
Tamarine Tanasugarn  
Rik De Voest  
Rick Leach  
Kaysie Smashey

**NEW YORK BUZZ**

\*Jim Courier  
Evie Dominikovic  
Bryanne Stewart  
Brian Vahaly  
Jaymon Crabb

**KANSAS CITY EXPLORERS**

\*Mike Bryan  
\*Bob Bryan  
Sesil Karatantcheva  
Nana Miyagi  
David Macpherson  
Brian MacPhie

**ST. LOUIS ACES**

\*Andy Roddick  
Jamea Jackson  
Jennifer Russell  
Jonathan Erlich  
Andy Ram

**HOUSTON WRANGLERS**

\*Steffi Graf  
\*#Tommy Haas  
\*Mardy Fish  
Ashley Fisher  
Edina Gallovits  
Ansley Cargill  
Ryan Newport

**BOSTON LOBSTERS**

\*Martina Navratilova  
\*James Blake  
Scott Draper  
Daja Bedanova  
Kristen Schlukebir  
Thomas Blake

**PHILADELPHIA FREEDOMS**

\*Patrick Rafter  
Lisa Raymond  
Josh Eagle  
Carly Gullickson  
Elena Tatarkova  
John Paul Fruttero

**HARTFORD FOXFORCE**

\*Boris Becker  
Meghann Shaughnessy  
Milagros Sequera  
Don Johnson  
Wesley Whitehouse  
Lisa McShea

**SACRAMENTO CAPITALS**

\*Anna Kournikova  
Elena Likhovtseva  
Nicole Vaidisova  
Mark Knowles  
Player - TBD

**DELAWARE SMASH**

\*Venus Williams  
Liesel Huber  
Wayne Odesnik  
Chanelle Scheepers  
Robbie Koenig

**NEWPORT BEACH BREAKERS**

\*Maria Sharapova  
Ramon Delgado  
Devin Bowen  
Katerina Bondarenko  
Anastassia Rodionova

\* Marquee Players

# - acquired in a trade from St. Louis