

## PGA Tour adds 6 licensing partners and new category

The PGA Tour has signed six new retail licensing partners, including one for a previously unoccupied category, spanning a range of goods including headwear, head covers, golf apparel, gallery chairs, accessories and shoe insoles.

New apparel deals were secured with Antigua, Back 9 USA, Banner Supply and Ben Hogan. The tour also signed a new accessory deal with Tournament Solutions. A multiyear deal with eSoles, a maker of customized shoe insoles, represents a new licensing category.

The tour declined to reveal how much revenue the new deals would generate.

Tim Hawes, head of licensing for the PGA Tour, said the tour expects licensing revenue to increase slightly this year. That would put the annual total at roughly \$60 million based on past figures listed in the tour's annual report. Corporate and retail licensing has increased from \$40 million since 2006.

—Jon Show

# WTT boss sees advantage in being nimble

*Former professional tennis player Ilana Kloss has been commissioner and chief executive officer of World Team Tennis since 2001. The coed tennis league dates to the early 1970s and now comprises 10 teams featuring three generations of tennis standouts. Staff writer Theresa Mahan caught up with Kloss recently as the league prepared for this year's season, which began July 2 and runs through the end of the month.*

## FIVE QUESTIONS WITH...

### ILANA KLOSS

WORLD TEAM TENNIS COMMISSIONER & CEO

■ **In January, the U.S. Tennis Association took a 25 percent stake in WTT. How has that affected the organization?**

**KLOSS:** It definitely has helped. We feel like we are on the inside. It is really important to be able to tap into the numerous assets that USTA has. To the outside world, the perception of being on the inside is important, and certainly being aligned with the USTA gives us more credibility.

■ **What initiatives are in the works with USTA?**

**KLOSS:** We are working very closely with them to get more kids on teams in the sport. We're working on an introductory format, which is called Quickstart Tennis.

We're definitely looking to the USTA and to do a lot more on the Web. That is prob-

ably an area where tennis has been a little bit behind. We want to engage the fans not only at the site, but also on the Web.

I also think we are a great launch platform for the U.S. Open Series and then into the U.S. Open. So it's really trying to work together to help build the sport and fill that great niche — not only at the professional level, but also at the entry point. You have to build at the bottom and be visible at the top in order to drive excitement and participation.

■ **How do you think the economy will affect the 2009 season?**

**KLOSS:** I think in some ways, people won't be traveling as much in the summer, so we think our tickets and fan base will increase. People are staying home, and we are valuable family entertainment. In challenging times comes opportunity. We feel we are well-positioned. We bring some of the best players in the world to markets that may not get them. We have a decent television agreement with Tennis Channel and Comcast. I think being small in some ways allows you to be very nimble, which in difficult times can be very helpful.

■ **One element you are focused on is media partnerships. Currently fans can follow live scoring on WTT.com, and the Web site lists Tennis Channel as an official spon-**

**sor. Are any of the matches played live to a national audience?**

**KLOSS:** They aren't. We have done that. Our finals was live on Versus last year. We find that it's a very crowded calendar as it relates to tennis. What we try to do is tape the matches, put together a 2 1/2-hour program, and air them consecutively before the season is over so that everything is up-to-date by our finals. They are aired on the Tennis Channel and throughout a bunch of the Comcast systems nationally so that we can have a larger footprint. And we also do regional matches. This year we are looking to see if we can do live streaming of a couple of matches on WTT.com.



Kloss

**"In challenging times comes opportunity. We feel we are well-positioned."**

■ **The league touts its adoption of cutting-edge innovations. Is that something you see as one of your differentiating factors?**

**KLOSS:** One thing Billie Jean [King, co-founder of WTT in 1974] has always taught all of us is that sometimes not changing has a greater risk. You can try something and if it doesn't work, fine, change it. It's not like you have to stick with something that is not working.