



35th SEASON OF ADVANTA WTT PRO LEAGUE SET FOR JULY 1-25

World TeamTennis starts 35-week countdown of impact players with No. 35 Tony Roche

NEW YORK, N.Y. (October 29, 2009) – Never doubt Billie Jean King. That’s a lesson many first learned when World TeamTennis, the maverick professional team tennis league she co-founded, made its’ debut in 1974. Although there were a few bumps along the way, including a two-season hiatus in the late 1970s, King says she never had any doubts about the impact the co-ed team format could have on professional tennis. “From the beginning we saw a chance to take tennis to a new level and the evolution of WTT has been amazing,” said King.

That evolution continues in 2010 when the Advanta WTT Pro League celebrates its’ 35th season. The League announced dates today for the 2010 season, which runs July 1-25 in ten U.S. markets. The regular season is July 1-21, followed by the Advanta WTT Conference Championships on July 23 and the 2010 Advanta WTT Finals on July 25. The site of the 2010 Finals will be announced later this year.

The 35th anniversary celebration begins with the weekly announcement on WTT.com of 35 players who have made an impact in World TeamTennis. Tony Roche, who led the Denver Racquets to the first WTT Championship in 1974, starts off the 35-week countdown at No. 35. Roche, who was a player/coach for the Racquets, rallied his teammates to a victory over King and her Philadelphia Freedoms to capture the inaugural title. The League will also highlight the 35 greatest moments in WTT history. Fans will select the ranking order of the top 10 impact players and greatest moments online next spring. Additional celebrations, including several to be held in team markets, will be announced in the coming months.

WTT CEO/Commissioner Ilana Kloss said the League’s longevity has shown there’s a place for tennis as a team sport. “From the young children in introductory programs like Junior TeamTennis to the best professionals in the world playing in the Advanta WTT Pro League, tennis is an exciting team sport. We connect with fans and players in a unique way that helps build interest in tennis and attract non-traditional fans.”

WTT co-founder King adds that being non-traditional is one of the things that set World TeamTennis apart from other sports leagues. “We have been the innovators in tennis,” said King. “Over the years we have been willing to take the brave step to make changes to the sport and we have not been afraid to take them back if they didn’t work out as planned. The bottom line is that we are always looking for ways to improve the WTT experience for our fans and get people to look at tennis in a whole new way.”

First and foremost among the many WTT innovations is the co-ed team format, which is used at all levels of the sport. “We live in a co-ed world and we have always felt it is best to have men and women working together, making equal contributions,” said King.

With WTT’s gender-balanced team concept, each team is comprised of two men, two women and a coach. Team matches consist of five events, with one set each of men's singles, women's singles, men's doubles, women's doubles and mixed doubles.

WTT is also well known for introducing other innovative elements to tennis including instant replay, cumulative and no-ad scoring, on-court coaching, Supertiebreakers, multi-colored courts and player names on the back of their shirts.

Each season, the Advanta WTT Pro League features pros competing in the co-ed team format. Top names from the 2009 season included Venus Williams, Andre Agassi, Serena Williams, Kim Clijsters, Anna Kournikova, Martina Navratilova, John McEnroe, Maria Sharapova, Michael Chang and the U.S.’s top-ranked doubles team of Mike and Bob Bryan. The League is a showcase for three generations of tennis standouts, including legends, current tour players and up-and-coming tennis pros. Sharapova and Andy Roddick are among the players who started in the League as teenagers. In 2009, World TeamTennis and the New York Buzz fielded the first all-junior team of top U.S. prospects.

The lineup of marquee players for the 2010 Advanta WTT Pro League season is expected to be announced by early February with full team rosters finalized at the WTT Player Draft in mid-March.

Advanta is the title sponsor of the Advanta WTT Pro League. Official Advanta WTT Pro League sponsors include DecoTurf, FirmGreen Energy, GEICO, Turfer Athletic and Wilson Racquet Sports. The United States Tennis Association is a minority owner and promotional partner of World TeamTennis. WTT and the USTA are teaming up on number of initiatives, including development of the youth market through junior team tennis programs.

For more information on the Advanta WTT Pro League, visit www.WTT.com.

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