



Cajun Classic
BATON ROUGE

27th Annual
2016 Cajun Classic Wheelchair
Tennis Tournament

presented by



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Cajun Classic To Host 20 of the World's Top-10 Professionals

World #1 Stephane Houdet Among 128 Players From 21 Countries and 24 States

The Cajun Classic Wheelchair Tennis Tournament, March 16-20, in Baton Rouge, marks its 27th year by hosting 20 of the world's top professionals, including World #1 Stephane Houdet in a field of 128 players from 21 countries and 24 states and 12 Baton Rouge-area amateurs.

On Saturday, March 19, at noon, the Baton Rouge Wheelchair Tennis Association and Mayor Kip Holden will host "Baton Rouge Day at the Cajun Classic" to recognize the wheelchair athletes and visiting national, regional and state tennis officials.

One highlight of Baton Rouge Day will be an "Up-Down" tennis exhibition that will feature four world-ranked wheelchair men and women, playing doubles with former touring tennis professionals, Chanda Rubin and Kathrin Sieberth, and two members of the LSU Men's Tennis Team.

Tournament play begins on Wednesday, March 16, and continues through the finals on Sunday, March 20, at the Paula G. Manship YMCA Lamar Tennis Center. The international tournament is presented by the Greater Baton Rouge Community Tennis Association (GBRCTA) and is produced by the Baton Rouge Wheelchair Tennis Association (BRWTA).

On the professional side, the 2016 Cajun Classic will feature 20 top International Tennis Federation stars, including:

- **Seven of the top-10 women:** ITF World #3 Aniek van Koot of the Netherlands; #4 Jordanne Whiley of the United Kingdom; #5 Sabine Ellerbrock of Germany; #6 Marjolein Buis, of the Netherlands; #7 Lucy Shuker of the United Kingdom; #8 Kgothatso Montjane of South Africa; and #9 Diede de Groot of the Netherlands.
- **Seven of the top-10 men:** ITF World #1 Stephane Houdet of France; #3 Nicolas Peifer of France; #5 Gordon Reid of the United Kingdom; #6 Gustavo Fernandez of Argentina; #7 Maikel Scheffers of the Netherlands; #9 Stefan Olsson of Sweden; and #10 Tom Egberink of the the Netherlands.
- **Six of the top-10 quadriplegics:** ITF World #2 David Wagner of the United States; #4 Andy Laphorne of the United Kingdom; #5 Itay Erenlib of Israel; #7 Jamie Burdekin of the United Kingdom; #8 Antony Cotterill of the United Kingdom; and #10 Nick Taylor of the United States.

Admission to the tournament is free for all days and all matches, including the finals. Tournament play begins at 8 a.m. each day and continues into the evenings until all matches are completed.

At a Glance

Who

128 professional and amateurs from 21 countries and 24 states, including 20 of the world's top-10 professionals

What

Free admission every day to the Cajun Classic Wheelchair Tennis Tournament

When

March 16-20, 2016
Play begins at 8 am each day and lasts into the evenings

Where

Paula G. Manship YMCA,
Lamar Tennis Center

Why

Players earn world-ranking points and win cash prizes

Local Angle

Twelve Baton Rouge amateur wheelchair tennis players are expected to compete in this year's Cajun Classic.

(more)

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“We are very excited to host Chanda Rubin, Kathrin Sieberth, and members of the LSU men’s tennis team for the exhibition on Saturday, March 19. We are also very pleased that the 2016 Cajun Classic will attract 20 of the top-10 professionals in the world, including World #1 Stephane Houdet,” said tournament director Jennifer Edmonson of Baton Rouge.

Edmonson said the Cajun Classic also welcomes 12 Baton Rouge area amateurs who will compete. They are Rich Swanson, Karin Johnson, Kerry Ellis, Glenn Singletary, Alex Saporito, Ryan Guillory, Paden Mouton, Travis Carter, Victoria Odom, Safwan Sulaiman, Amanda Kirkwood, and Katie LeBlanc.

Jerry Stovall, president of the Baton Rouge Area Sports Foundation, which has been a longtime supporter of the Cajun Classic, said BRASF is sponsoring the Baton Rouge players’ entry fees again this year.

“We continue to be impressed with the Cajun Classic and its commitment to Baton Rouge, particularly the local amateurs who are invited to play every year. This is very unique among professional tournaments, and we are proud to sponsor the Baton Rouge amateurs who will compete alongside the world’s top athletes,” said Stovall.

The Cajun Classic is sanctioned by the ITF and the United States Tennis Association. The tournament is part of ITF’s UNIQLO Wheelchair Tennis Tour where players compete for more than \$1 million in prize money in tournaments throughout the world. The rules of wheelchair tennis are the same as regular tennis, except the ball is allowed to bounce twice.

Edmonson said the Cajun Classic is made possible by a host of donors and sponsors, including the presenting sponsor GBRCTA, and platinum sponsors: the United States Tennis Association, Louisiana Tennis Association, Mayor-President Holden, Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, Cox Communications, the Irene W. and C.B. Pennington Foundation, Baton Rouge Rehab Hospital, and Sunrise Medical. The Cajun Classic also received \$17,059 from the Kelly Elkins State Farm “Hallowheel” charity tennis tournament, held last October.

GBRCTA Stephen Magnon said Baton Rouge tennis league players help sponsor the Cajun Classic through the City Championship league, which is promoted as “Play for a Purpose.” He said part of the league fees are dedicated to help sponsor the Cajun Classic.

“GBRCTA has made a multi-year commitment to present the Cajun Classic, and we consider it one of our signature events throughout the year. We are especially pleased that local professional Carlos Roldan teaches wheelchair tennis year-round as part of our mission of providing tennis to everyone in the area,” said Magnon.

The Cajun Classic is produced by the Baton Rouge Wheelchair Tennis Association, a non-profit, volunteer board that raises funds to pay for the required ITF-badged referee and umpire fees, meals, drinks, transportation, accommodations at the host hotel, player party, programs, and wheelchair repair station.

Financial support and donations are still being accepted to pay for additional costs associated with the larger tournament this year. Persons or businesses interested in helping may contact Jennifer Edmonson through the Cajun Classic website: <http://brwta.org/cajun-classic> or by calling 225-939-4086.

Related wheelchair tennis links

International Tennis Federation: <http://beta.itftennis.com/wheelchair/home.aspx>

USTA Wheelchair Tennis: <http://www.usta.com/Play-Tennis/Wheelchair-Tennis/Wheelchair>