



Cajun Classic
BATON ROUGE

28th Annual
2017 Cajun Classic Wheelchair
Tennis Tournament

presented by



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Cajun Classic To Host 13 of the World's Top-10 Professionals

115 Pros and Amateurs Coming to BR From 19 Countries and 23 States

The 28th annual Cajun Classic Wheelchair Tennis Tournament, March 22-26, in Baton Rouge, will host 115 professional and amateur players from 19 countries, 23 states, and the Baton Rouge area.

On Saturday, March 25, at noon, the Baton Rouge Wheelchair Tennis Association and Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome will host "Baton Rouge Day at the Cajun Classic" to recognize the Baton Rouge-area amateurs and to welcome the entire field from around the world.

Tournament play begins on Wednesday, March 22, and continues through the finals on Sunday, March 26, 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).

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.

On the professional side, the 2017 Cajun Classic will feature 13 top International Tennis Federation stars, including:

- **Six of the top-10 women:** ITF World #3 Diede de Groot, #5 Marjolein Buis, and #6 Aniek van Koot, all of the Netherlands; #8 Lucy Shuker of the United Kingdom; #9 Katharina Kruger of Germany; and #10 Kgothatso Montjane of South Africa.
- **Three of the top-10 men:** ITF World #6 Alfie Hewett of the United Kingdom; #7 Stefan Olsson of Sweden; and #8 Maikel Scheffers of the Netherlands.
- **Four of the top-10 quadriplegics:** ITF World #2 David Wagner of the United States; #3 Andy Lapthorne of the United Kingdom; #4 Lucas Sithole of South Africa; and #7 Bryan Barten of the United States.

"We are ready and excited to host this competitive field of amazing athletes, which ranges from the world-ranked professionals to the novice players who are playing in their very first tournament. This unique combination of skills and competition makes the Cajun Classic one of the most inclusive and interesting tournaments of its kind in the world," said Tournament Director Jennifer Edmonson of Baton Rouge.

(more)

At a Glance

Who

115 professionals and amateurs from 19 countries and 23 states, including 13 of the world's top-10 professionals

What

Competing in the 28th annual Cajun Classic Wheelchair Tennis Tournament

When

March 22-26, 2017. Play begins at 8 am each day and lasts into the evenings.

Where

Paula G. Manship YMCA, Lamar Tennis Center

Why

Players inspire spectators with amazing tennis while they compete to earn ranking points and prize money.

Local Angle

Nine Baton Rouge amateur wheelchair tennis players are scheduled to compete in the 2017 Cajun Classic.

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Edmonson said the Cajun Classic also welcomes nine Baton Rouge area amateurs who will compete. They are Max Barbier, Karin Johnson, Brandon Jones, Amanda Kirkwood, Katie LeBlanc, Victoria Odom, Alex Saporito, Glenn Singletary, and Safwan Sulaiman.

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

“This great tournament continues to demonstrate the power of Baton Rouge to attract the world’s top athletes, and we are equally impressed with our local amateurs who will compete again this year,” 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 (USTA), USTA-Southern Section, Louisiana Tennis Association (LTA), 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 \$13,091 from the Edward Jones Investments – Tex Morris “Hallowheel” charity tennis tournament, held last October.

GBRCTA President 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 continues its commitment to this fine tournament, which has become one of our signature events. It is doubly rewarding because of the participation by our Baton Rouge-area amateurs who practice year-round for this great event,” 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 prize money, 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 costs associated with the tournament. 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>