



29th Annual
2018 Cajun Classic Wheelchair
Tennis Tournament



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Australian Open Winners Coming to Baton Rouge for Cajun Classic
USTA National and Southern Presidents to Attend, and 26 Top-10 Pros to Compete

The 29th annual Cajun Classic Wheelchair Tennis Tournament, March 20-25, in Baton Rouge, makes history this year as the action-packed “Super Series” tournament welcomes the President of the United State Tennis Association, and hosts three 2018 Australian Open winners among a field of 110 professional and amateur players from 21 countries, 19 states, and the Baton Rouge area.

Katrina Adams, USTA Chairman, President and CEO, will attend the tournament on Friday, March 23, along with **USTA-Southern Section President Derek White**. On Saturday, March 24, at 9:30 a.m., they will join **East Baton Rouge Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome** for “Baton Rouge Day at the Cajun Classic,” which will include an “Up-Down” exhibition with Adams, playing with a professional wheelchair player against another Up-Down pair.

The Cajun Classic, long recognized as one of the most popular wheelchair tennis tournaments in the world, was elevated this year to the Super Series level, one step below the Grand Slams like the Australian Open and the U.S. Open. There are only two Super Series tournaments in the United States and only six in the world.

Tournament play begins March 20, and continues through the finals on March 25, 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 9 a.m. each day and continues into the evenings until all matches are completed.

On the professional side, the 2018 Cajun Classic will feature 26 top International Tennis Federation stars, including:

- **Nine of the top-10 men:** ITF World #1 and Defending Singles Champion Alfie Hewett of Great Britain; #2 Gustavo Fernandez of Argentina; #3 and 2018 Australian Open Singles Champion Shingo Kunieda of Japan; #4 Stephane Houdet of France; #5 Gordon Reid of Great Britain; #7 Nicolas Peifer of France; #8 Takashi Sanada of Japan; #9 Joachim Gerard of Belgium; and #10 Maikel Scheffers of the Netherlands.
- **Eight of the top-10 women:** ITF World #2 and 2018 Australian Open Singles Champion Diede de Groot, and #3 Aniek van Koot, both of the Netherlands; #4 Sabine Ellerbrock of Germany; #5 Marjolein Buis of the Netherlands; #6 Kgothatso Montjanké of South Africa; #7 Katharina Kruger of Germany; #8 Lucy Shuker of Great Britain; #8; and #9 Charlotte Famin of France.
- **Nine of the top-10 quadriplegics:** ITF World #1 and Defending Singles Champion David Wagner of the United States; #2 Andy Lapthorne of Great Britain; #3 and 2018 Australian Open Quad Singles Champion Dylan Alcott of Australia; #4 Lucas Sithole of South Africa; #5 Heath Davidson of Australia; #7 Antony Cotterill of Great Britain; #8 Bryan Barten of the United States; #9 Mitsuteru Moroishi of Japan; and #10 Ymanitu Silva of Brazil.

At a Glance

Who

USTA President Katrina Adams and USTA-Southern President Derek White.

26 of the world’s top-10 pros, including three 2018 Australian Open singles winners, along with 110 professionals and amateurs from 21 countries, 19 states, and the Baton Rouge area.

What

Competing in the 29th annual Cajun Classic Wheelchair Tennis Tournament — now a Super Series-level tournament, just one step below the Grand Slams.

When

March 20-25, 2018. Play begins at 9 am each day and lasts into the evenings.

Where

Paula G. Manship YMCA, Lamar Tennis Center

(more)

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“This is an amazing year, as we have achieved Super Series status and will attract one of the strongest fields of athletes we’ve ever had, as the players compete for more world-ranking points and increased prize money. This is also a historic year, as we are honored to host USTA President Katrina Adams and USTA-Southern President Derek White,” said Tournament Director Jennifer Edmonson of Baton Rouge.

Edmonson said the Cajun Classic also welcomes several Baton Rouge amateurs who will compete. The SportsBR foundation, which has been a longtime supporter of the Cajun Classic, will sponsor the Baton Rouge players’ entry fees again this year.

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), Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome, Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, Cox Communications, Baton Rouge Rehab Hospital, and Sunrise Medical. The Cajun Classic also received \$15,169 from the Edward Jones Investments – Tex Morris “Hallowheel” charity tennis tournament, held last October in Baton Rouge.

GBRCTA President Lisa Scalise said Baton Rouge tennis league players help sponsor the Cajun Classic through the City Championship league, where part of the league fees are dedicated to help sponsor the Cajun Classic.

“The Cajun Classic is one of our signature events, and we are excited to welcome these amazing world-class athletes to Baton Rouge again this year,” said Scalise.

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>