



30th Annual 2019 Cajun Classic Wheelchair Tennis Tournament

presented by



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Grand Slam Winners Coming to Baton Rouge for 2019 Cajun Classic *Lt. Governor Nungesser and Mayor-President Broome to Welcome World's Top Players*

Seventy-one of the world's top ranked professionals, including several Grand Slam winners, will compete in the 30th annual Cajun Classic Wheelchair Tennis Tournament, March 19-24, in Baton Rouge, at the Paula G. Manship YMCA.

This year's field is comprised of 120 professional and amateur players from 23 countries and 24 states (including Louisiana), and will include the winners and finalists of the world's four Grand Slams: the U.S. Open, the Australian Open, the French Open, and Wimbledon.

Louisiana's Lieutenant Governor Billy Nungesser and East Baton Rouge Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome are slated to officially welcome the athletes at "Louisiana Day at the Cajun Classic" on Saturday, March 23, at noon.

"Jeanie Peabody Kid's Day at the Cajun Classic" will be held Friday, March 22, 5 – 6:30 p.m., and is new to the tournament's activities. It will introduce wheelchair tennis to children through fun games and instruction. Kid's Day is named after Peabody who founded the original Cajun Classic in Natchez, MS.

The Cajun Classic, long recognized as one of the most popular wheelchair tournaments worldwide, was elevated last year to the "Super Series" level, just one step below the Grand Slams. There are only six Super Series tournaments in the world, and only two in the United States (the other in St. Louis).

Tournament play begins Tuesday, March 19, and continues through the finals on Sunday, March 24, at the Manship YMCA, Lamar Tennis Center. The Cajun Classic is part of the UNIQLO Wheelchair Tennis Tour, 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 2019 Cajun Classic will feature 26 top International Tennis Federation (ITF) stars, including:

- **Ten of the top-10 men:** ITF World #1 Shingo Kunieda of Japan; #2 Gustavo Fernandez of Argentina; #3 Stephane Houdet of France; #4 and Defending Singles Champion, Alfie Hewett of Great Britain; #5 Joachim Gerard of Belgium; #6 Stefan Olsson of Sweden; #7 Gordon Reid of Great Britain; #8 Nicolas Peifer of France; #9 Takashi Sanada of Japan; and #10 Maikel Scheffers of the Netherlands.

(more)

At a Glance

Who

Louisiana Lt. Governor Billy Nungesser and EBR Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome officially welcome the world's Grand Slam winners and finalists among 120 professionals and amateurs from 23 countries, 24 states, and the Baton Rouge area.

What

Competing in the 30th annual Cajun Classic Wheelchair Tennis Tournament – a Super Series-level tournament, just one step below the Grand Slams.

When

March 19-24, 2019. Play begins at 9 am each day and lasts into the evenings.

Where

Paula G. Manship YMCA, Lamar Tennis Center.

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- **Eight of the top-10 women:** ITF World #1 and 2019 Australian Open Singles Champion Diede de Groot and #3 Aniek van Koot, both of the Netherlands; #4 Sabine Ellerbrock of Germany; #5 Giulia Capocci of Italy; #7 Marjolein Buis of the Netherlands; #8 Lucy Shuker of Great Britain; #9 Katharina Kruger of Germany; and #10 Sakhorn Khanthasit of Thailand.
- **Eight of the top-10 quadriplegics:** ITF World #1 and Defending Singles Champion Dylan Alcott of Australia; #2 David Wagner of the United States; #3 Andy Lapthorne of Great Britain; #4 Koji Seguno of Japan; #5 Heath Davidson of Australia; #6 Bryan Barten of the United States; #7 Lucas Sithole of South Africa; #9 Sam Schroder of the Netherlands; and #10 Mitsuteru Moroishi of Japan.

“As we celebrate our 30th anniversary of the Cajun Classic, we are excited to host these amazing athletes from around the world and the United States. This is one of the largest and strongest draws we have ever had,” 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, as well as provide a lunch for all of the athletes and volunteers.

The Cajun Classic is sanctioned by the International Tennis Federation (ITF) and the United States Tennis Association (USTA). 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), The Louisiana Office of Tourism, Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome, Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, Irene W. and C.B. Pennington Foundation, Cox Communications, Baton Rouge Rehab Hospital, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Sunrise Medical, and Invacare.

The Cajun Classic also received \$16,521 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>