



32nd Annual
2023 Cajun Classic Wheelchair
Tennis Tournament

presented by



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 7, 2023

CONTACT: Jennifer Edmonson, 225-939-4086 or Rusty Jabour, 225-505-3104

2023 Cajun Classic Attracts Another World-Class Field of Champions

At least 75 of the world's top-ranked professionals, including several Grand Slam winners, will compete in the 32nd annual Cajun Classic Wheelchair Tennis Tournament, March 14-19, in Baton Rouge, at the Paula G. Manship YMCA.

This year's field is comprised of 128 professional and amateur players from 20 countries and 25 states (including Louisiana) and includes the winners and finalists of the world's four Grand Slams: the U.S. Open, the Australian Open, the French Open, and Wimbledon.

Also, the 2023 Cajun Classic will attract 15 junior players from across the United States who will compete for top honors among players under 18 years of age.

Louisiana 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 18, at noon.

The Cajun Classic, long recognized as one of the most popular wheelchair tournaments worldwide, is a "Super Series" level event, just one step below the Grand Slams. There are only four Super Series tournaments in the world, and only one in the United States.

Tournament play begins Tuesday, March 14, and continues through the finals on Sunday, March 19, 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.

The 2023 Cajun Classic will feature 26 top International Tennis Federation (ITF) stars, including:

- **Eight of the top-10 men:** ITF World #1 Alfie Hewett of Great Britain; #2 Tokito Oda of Japan; #3 Gustavo Fernandez of Argentina; #4 Joachim Gerard of Belgium; #6 Martin de la Puente of Spain; #7 Ruben Spaargaren of the Netherlands; #9 Tom Egberink of the Netherlands; and #10 Takashi Sanada of Japan.
- **Nine of the top-10 women:** ITF World #1 Diede de Groot of the Netherlands; #3 Aniek van Koot of the Netherlands; #4 Jiske Griffioen of the Netherlands; #5 Zhenzhen Zhu of the People's Republic of China; #6 Momoko Ohtani of Japan; #7 Manami Tanaka of Japan; #8 Kgothatso Montjane of the Republic of South Africa; #9 Dana Mathewson of the United States; and #10 Lucy Shuker of Great Britain.

(more)

At a Glance

Who

Louisiana Lieutenant Governor Billy Nungesser and EBR Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome are expected to officially welcome the 128 Cajun Classic players who hail from 20 countries, 25 states, and the Baton Rouge area.

What

Competing in the 32nd annual Cajun Classic Wheelchair Tennis Tournament – a Super Series-level tournament, just one step below the Grand Slams.

When

March 14-19, 2023. Play begins at 9 am each day and lasts into the evenings.

Where

Paula G. Manship YMCA, Lamar Tennis Center.

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- **Nine of the top-10 quads:** ITF World #1 Niels Vink of the Netherlands; #2 Sam Schroder of the Netherlands; #3 Heath Davidson of Australia; #4 David Wagner of the United States; #5 Donald Ramphadi of the Republic of South Africa; #6 Andy Laphorne of Great Britain; #7 Rob Shaw of Canada; #8 Ymanitu Silva of Brazil; and #9 Koji Sugeno of Japan.

“The Cajun Classic continues to attract the world’s top adult athletes, and we are equally excited to host 15 players under the age of 18. These juniors will be future top professionals and amateurs, and we are proud that the Cajun Classic serves as a major part of their formative years,” said Tournament Director Jennifer Edmonson.

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, Baton Rouge Rehab Hospital, Sunrise Medical, Tiger Canopy, and Gill’s Crane Service.

The 2023 Cajun Classic also received \$51,994 from the Edward Jones Investments / Tex Morris “Hallowheel” charity tennis and pickleball tournament, held last October in Baton Rouge. Since 2015, the Hallowheel tournament has raised \$175,000 to help offset expenses of the Cajun Classic.

GBRCTA President Rusty Jabour said Baton Rouge tennis league players help sponsor the Cajun Classic through a portion of the fees collected by GBRCTA’s City Championship league.

“The Cajun Classic is a signature event, presented by GBRCTA, and we couldn’t be prouder to have such an amazing world-class tennis event right there in Baton Rouge. We welcome everyone to come watch these incredible athletes,” said Jabour.

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 at <https://brwta.org> 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>