



35 Years Young!

Women's tennis reaching new heights, on and off the court

Tennis superstar Billie Jean King and a group of like-minded women crowded into a tiny room at London's Gloucester Hotel just before the start of Wimbledon 1973 to do some serious business. They gathered, at King's urging, to build something truly special. When they emerged, the pioneering group had created the Women's Tennis Association (WTA), along with some very expansive dreams.

The original game plan was about many things, but most of all, it was about giving women's tennis a single, united front and, as much as possible at the time, prize money equality with men's tennis. In fact, in that same year, the U.S. Open for the first time offered equal prize money just a few short months after King and her colleagues gathered.

Today, the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour's colorful, star-studded history remains intact, with names like Ms. King, Martina Navratilova, Chris Evert, Steffi Graf and Margaret Court. The list goes on. Then, there are today's superstars, players like Anna Sharapova, the Williams sisters, Serena and Venus, and Ana Ivanovic. Sharapova and Serena Williams, in fact, are ranked 61st and 69th respectively on Forbes' "The Celebrity 100" list. The Tour also has, in the past five years, experienced a period of unprecedented growth in revenue, innovation and popularity.

For example, in 2005, Sony Ericsson became the Tour's worldwide title sponsor in a ground-breaking \$88-million, six-year deal – the largest and most comprehensive sponsorship in the history of tennis and of women's professional sport.

In 2006, the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour (www.sonyericssonwtatour.com) unveiled several game-changing innovations designed to make the sport more fan-friendly and interactive, including electronic line calling. In that same year, the Tour extended its partnership with Eurosport/Regency into 2011, becoming the largest TV deal in the history of women's tennis.

On the player front in 2006, superstar Navratilova bade the Tour farewell after winning the U.S. Open mixed doubles title, ending a 32-year career in which she amassed more titles (167) than any other female or male player. Amelie Mauresmo, recently retired Justine Henin and Sharapova claimed the year's majors, as all three battled for the year-end No.1 ranking, which finally went to Henin. Also in 2006, the Tour entered a global partnership with UNESCO, with the goal of advancing gender equality and promote women's leadership in society – an off-court effort that will strive to make change globally.

Then, in 2007, the board of directors approved the Tour's Roadmap circuit reform (see related article), the most sweeping changes in the organization's history.



Today, the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour is the world's largest premier professional sport for women. It has more than 2,000 players representing 90 nations, competing for \$70.8 million in prize money at the Tour's 60 events in 34 countries. In 2007, more than 4.7 million people attended women's tennis events, with an additional 100 million people watching events on television networks around the world. In addition, the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour was recently nominated for a Sports Business Award in the League of the Year category presented by Street & Smith's *SportsBusiness Journal* and *SportsBusiness Daily*.

"We have a lot to celebrate at the moment," says Larry Scott, the Tour's chairman and CEO, who joined the organization in 2003. "I'm very proud to have been a part of the success story."

See *Tour* page 32.

Tour 'Roadmap' for the future

When CEO and Chairman Larry Scott took over the helm of the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour in 2003, the 30-year-old entity was looking for a new direction and an energy boost. Little did it know that it not only would get an exciting new direction in the bargain, it would also receive a dynamic "roadmap" to take along on the journey.

Specifically, the Tour's Roadmap, approved in 2007 for a 2009 implementation, includes a shorter season, a more fan-friendly structure, healthier streamlined calendar for players and a 39 percent increase in Tour prize money, among other enhancements.

"When I came to the Tour, I received a lot of good feedback from members who believed there were some things wrong with the Tour format and circuit structure," says Scott, himself a former ATP pro player and ATP executive (including chief operating officer). "I also heard from the television industry, sponsors and the media about how the Tour could be improved."

His "fact-finding" mission complete, Scott says that within the first six months, there were two strands of activity that needed some work. One was basic business practices, variables such as governance, management team, fan connections – what Scott calls "basic blocking and tackling." Then, there was the much-needed push for building financial and sponsorship efforts, along with a focus on how to best leverage the Tour stars in the global marketplace.

"We called it a Roadmap because there was a journey we wanted members to participate in and contribute toward," Scott says. He explains that there is no silver bullet, nor any single brilliant idea.

See *Roadmap* page 34.



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Rita Payne

Tour continued from page 30.

Scott reels off several ground-breaking trends within women's tennis, especially – with the recent addition of Wimbledon and Roland Garros – equal prize money for women at all of the Grand Slams. For 2009, the top nine tennis tournaments will have equal prize money. In addition, the Tour is breaking new ground globally, as it opened an office in Beijing, China, and now has two tournaments in the Middle East (at Dubai and in the year-end Sony Ericsson Championships in Doha, Qatar).

"Of course, we have a lot of talent, including the Williams sisters, Venus and Serena, along with all of our other top players," Scott says. "But it's not just about tennis. We're also helping drive gender equality globally through the UNESCO partnership, for example."

Family Circle Cup: There from the start

The Family Circle Cup tournament was launched in 1973, the same year as the Tour. In that historic inaugural year, the Family Circle Cup, held in Charleston, S.C., became the first women's tournament to offer \$100,000 in total prize money, \$30,000 of which was paid to its first champion, Rosie Casals.

"That purse was the largest prize money payout awarded to a woman that year," says Bob Moran, Family Circle Cup tournament director. "Even more remarkable, this event was the first women's event to be broadcast on network television."

Family Circle also was the first women's magazine to fully underwrite a professional women's sporting event, and it holds

the record as the longest running event sponsored by the same company in women's professional tennis, going back 36 years to its first event at Hilton Head, S.C.

"We're very excited to be one of 20 Premier events on the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour, as well as continuing to make history with women's tennis," Moran says.

Speaking of beginnings, Ilana Kloss, a one-time women's doubles superstar and today chief executive officer/commissioner of World Team Tennis, was in that London hotel room 35 years ago. She remembers Billie Jean King telling all present that this was it, the best chance for professional women tennis players to take a stand.

"I clearly remember Billie Jean telling everyone that 'If we don't get this started today, I give up,'" says Kloss, who recently was named "Sports Business Woman of the Year" by the University of Oregon's Warsaw Sports Marketing Center. "It was a poignant moment in my career. There was never a question that it was the right thing to do. The thing that was most important was that it was so obvious we needed one voice. Forming the Tour created that single voice. It was huge."

Kloss, who formerly served on the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour board, always has connected with the Tour on a very deep and personal level. But it's also been a business relationship as well.

"World Team Tennis and the Tour are aligned in that we both work very hard at ensuring equality in pay and exposure when men/women are at the same events," she says. "Through Billie Jean's leadership and example, both the Tour and WTT do a terrific job of connecting three generations of players, making sure the history and contributions from the players that came before us aren't forgotten."

Indian Wells: 2009 equality

The Indian Wells Tennis Tournament, a Sony Ericsson WTA Tour Premier event held at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden, located just outside of Palm Springs, Calif., began its partnership with women's tennis in 1989. According to Steve

See Tour page 33.

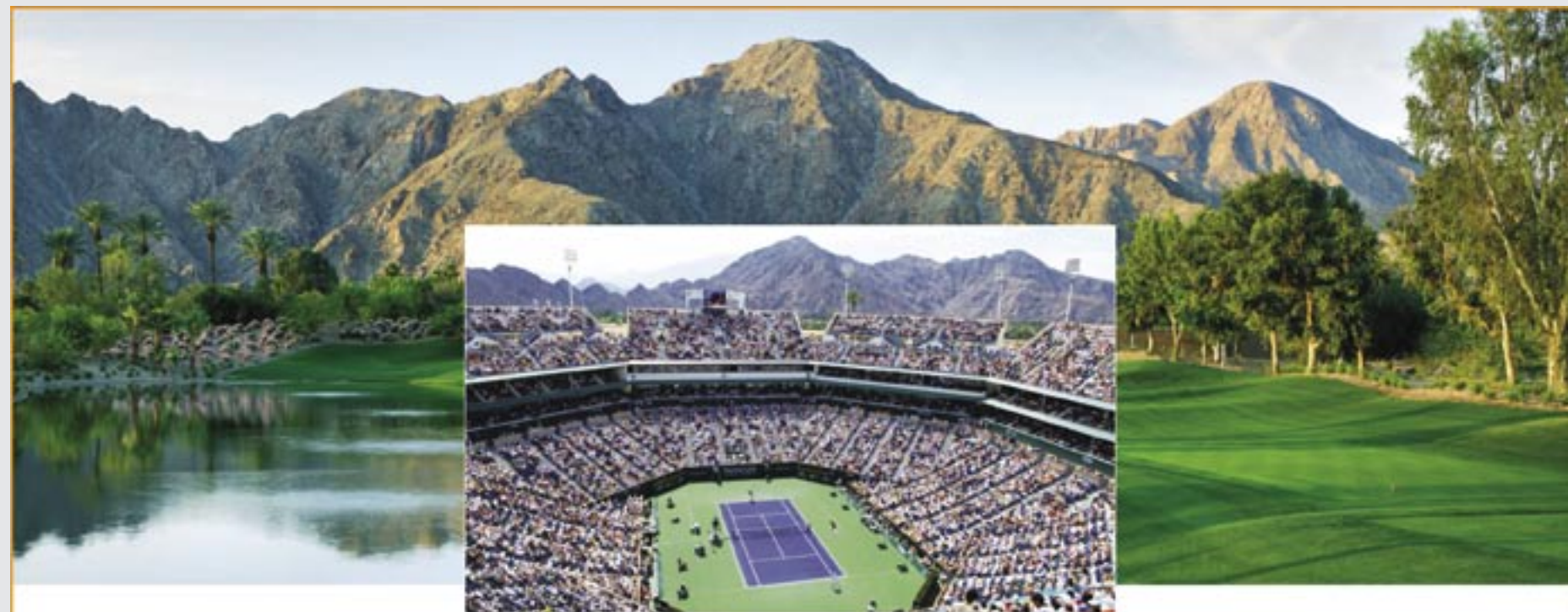
Top: Anna Chakvetadze won the 2007 Western & Southern Financial Group Women's Open title. Bottom: The "Walk of Palms" at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden. Right: Players spend time signing autographs for fans at WTT matches.



April Graham



Fred & Susan Mullane/Camerawork USA



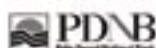
Congratulations to the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour for 35 years of outstanding leadership and performance as the largest women's professional sport in the world.

Our sincerest best wishes for another stellar 35 years from the Indian Wells Tennis Garden event and the 330,000 fans who attend.



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Tour continued from page 32.

Simon, tournament director, the latest good news is that in 2009, Indian Wells, which features the second-largest tennis stadium in the world, will proudly join the elite list of tournaments offering equal prize money.

"The dynamics of hosting a combined event with both the men and women players makes our event very unique," Simon says. "Fans love coming here to watch both draws and the sponsors love being associated with an event of this stature."

As Simon notes, the Indian Wells Tennis Tournament (for-

merly the Pacific Life Open) is the first major combined men's and women's tennis event of the season on U.S. soil. In 2008, more than 330,000 people attended the event, making it the largest attendance in the world outside of the Grand Slams.

Simon adds that a testimony to the strength and growth of the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour can be seen by comparing it with the strength and growth of the Indian Wells event. In 1989, the first year of the women's event, Indian Wells was able to have a 32-player draw. The event grew into a 64-player draw and now is one of the largest tournaments in the world with a 96-player draw.

"It wouldn't be possible without incredible depth and growth in the women's game," says Simon. "Every fan that comes to our event knows that they will get to see the best players in the world, every single day of the tournament. Again, this was done by working in unison with the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour."

Another Sony Ericsson WTA Tour stop, the Western & Southern Women's Open in Cincinnati, is currently a Tier III event (\$175,000 in prize money) but set to become one of the Tour's \$2 million Premier events beginning in 2009. Paul Flory, tournament chairman, says the event's relationship with the Tour has been a successful one – and he anticipates it continuing to go in that direction.

"The Sony Ericsson WTA Tour has been making great strides

for women's tennis for many years and we're thrilled to be a continuing part of it," says Flory, adding that the Tour's dedication to making the sport more appealing to its fans, sponsors and media is most impressive as we witness the rapid evolution of women's tennis throughout the United States, and the world.

"As the Western & Southern Financial Group Women's Open continues to grow, we appreciate the constant support we've received from the Tour for all these years and we look forward to many more years to come," Flory says.

Since joining the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour in 2003, Larry Scott has been at the forefront of that "evolution" Flory mentions. But, Scott explains, the Tour's proud heritage, ignited by Billie Jean King – whom he calls a visionary and champion for women's tennis and women's rights – really is just continuing along much the same path as when it began its journey in that crowded London hotel room. Scott says that while the business side of tennis has changed dramatically in the past five years, the heart of the Tour remains true to its original mission.

"To see what the Tour is today after 35 years – a united front for the leading global sport for women, achieving quality and parity for woman tennis players and, in the long run, women in general – is truly amazing," he says. "The dreams and ambitions of Billie Jean and the other early pioneers in women's tennis certainly are coming true." 🌱



Left: Jelena Jankovic of Serbia captured the Internazionali BNL d'Italia title in 2008. Below: The St. Louis Aces take on the Kansas City Explorers in a WTT match.



Fred & Susan Mullene/Camerawork USA

Front page photos: 1. The Indian Wells Tennis Garden Stadium; 2. Marion Bartoli of France was among the top players at the 2008 Western & Southern Financial Group Women's Open; 3. Russian star Anna Chakvetadze is in the Tour's top 10 for 2008; 4. Superstar Maria Sharapova of Russia strikes a pre-Wimbledon pose; 5. Six former Family Circle Cup champions returned in 2008 to honor Lee Jackson, who passed in 2008. Jackson was considered a surrogate mom to many women players who paved the way for today's tennis professionals. Left to right: Conchita Martinez, Rosie Casals, Martina Navratilova, Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, Jelena Jankovic and Chris Evert; 6. Russian Maria Kirilenko also joined the field at the Western & Southern Financial Group Women's Open; 7. American Serena Williams is the reigning 2008 Family Circle Cup champion; 8. The Stadium Plaza at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden; 9. World Team Tennis fans having fun at a Boston Lobsters-Springfield Lasers match.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SONY ERICSSON WTA TOUR

We started with a vision; you turned it into a reality. Congratulations on your 35th anniversary. Thank you for making our dreams come true.

xoxo,

The Original Nine & World Team Tennis

CLOCKWISE FROM UPPER LEFT:
Valerie Ziegenfuss, Billie Jean King, Nancy Richey, Feaches Barlkowicz, Kristy Pignon, Gladys Heldman, Rosie Casals, Kerry Melville Reid, Judy Tegart Dalton. (Not pictured: Julia Feldman.)

OUR 35TH ANNIVERSARY WAS MAGICAL. WE WISH THE SAME FOR YOU. **CONGRATS!**

FamilyCircleCup Sony Ericsson WTA TOUR

April 11-19, 2009 | Charleston SC

In April 2008, former Family Circle Cup champions gathered to celebrate the tournament's 35th Anniversary. Pictured (L-R) are Conchita Martinez, Rosie Casals, Martina Navratilova, Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, Jelena Jankovic and Chris Evert.

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Roadmap continued from page 30.

"It's really a journey, a visionary plan that makes sense to the members, both as athletes and as business people," he says.

"As with any successful global sports entity, the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour adapts to ever-changing economic climates," says Bob Moran, tournament director for the Family Circle Cup. "The roadmap changes illustrate the Tour's willingness to restructure its product to enhance quality and strengthen the Tour with the best interests of the tournaments, fans and players in mind."

Apart from the roadmap, Scott's initiatives include:

- The launch of the largest ad campaign in Tour history, dubbed "Looking for a Hero?," which was unveiled earlier this summer and will reach 75-plus countries.
- Engineering the Tour's largest year-end Championships contracts, which will see the Sony Ericsson Championships hosted by Doha from 2008-2010 and Istanbul from 2011-2013 in deals with a combined value of \$84 million.
- Taking the game to the next level, including through the roadmap process.
- A Global Advisory Council comprised of leading international CEOs and business leaders.
- Joint initiatives with the other tennis governing bodies, including with the USTA in the successful "US Open Series" and the ATP in a "One Game" program designed to enhance operational and promotional synergies as well as with all tennis governing bodies in the areas of tennis integrity and anti-doping.
- A ground-breaking 10-year review of the Tour's Age Eligibility Rule.

On a broader scale, the past five years primarily have been focused on salary equality/women's rights, innovation and global expansion – including a major push in global marketing. The financial numbers are impressive, as overall sponsorship and championships revenue has grown 500 percent since 2003. From 2003 to 2007, the Tour's gross revenue jumped from \$21 million to \$50 million, and it went from a \$1.1 million loss to a \$9 million surplus in that same period. And, in the past 15 months alone, \$700 million has been invested in women's tennis. It's little wonder that the *Harvard Business Review* released a case study in February 2008 based on the Tour's Roadmap initiative.

On the salary front, the Tour achieved the historic equal prize money at Roland Garros and Wimbledon, ending a 30-

year campaign that began with Billie Jean King to make all four majors offer equal prize money. And, from 2006-2009, there will be a 39 percent increase in prize money, from \$63 million to \$84 million.

In off-the-court equality efforts, in 2007 the Tour joined UNESCO in a partnership to further women's rights, raise awareness of gender quality issues and create leadership opportunities for women.

Sony Ericsson WTA Tour innovations to make the game more entertaining for fans include electronic line calling, testing of on-court coaching, pre-match player interviews, interviews with coaches during matches and a doubles format change (no ad scoring and super tiebreak).

Finally, on the global outreach and marketing efforts, the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour is opening an Asia-Pacific headquarters in Beijing this year. Plus, after two successful years in Madrid, as noted, the Tour has moved its season-ending Sony Ericsson Championships to Doha, Qatar, for 2008-2010, and to Istanbul, Turkey, from 2011-13.

"Leading a global sport, which only has about a six-week off-season, is very challenging," says Steve Simon, tournament director for the Indian Wells Tennis Tournament, a Sony Ericsson WTA Tour Premier event. "Under Larry's direction, the Tour has been able to make great strides growing the game internationally. That translates into a much greater fan base for our event – both on television and in attendance."

"There is so much competition in the sports and entertainment marketplace," says the Tour's Scott. "The Tour offers interesting personalities, both on and off the court. In fact, we've been blessed with that crossover appeal so coveted by the athletes themselves and the people marketing athletes." 🌍





Getty Images



Chris Smith


Top: Tour Chairman and CEO Larry Scott and Founder Billie Jean King.

Bottom: Maria Sharapova lost to eventual champ Serena Williams in the Family Circle Cup quarterfinals.

**Sony Ericsson
WTA TOUR**

We are proud to be a part of your history. Congratulations on 35 years of great women's tennis!



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