



31st Annual
2020 Cajun Classic Wheelchair
Tennis Tournament

presented by



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Grand Slam Winners Coming to Baton Rouge for 2020 Cajun Classic
State Officials and Mayor-President Broome to Welcome World's Top Players

At least 104 of the world's top-ranked professionals, including several Grand Slam winners, will compete in the 31st annual Cajun Classic Wheelchair Tennis Tournament, March 17-22, in Baton Rouge, at the Paula G. Manship YMCA.

This year's field is comprised of 156 professional and amateur players from 30 countries and 26 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.

Officials from Louisiana Lieutenant Governor Billy Nungesser's office 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 21, 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 six Super Series tournaments in the world, and only two in the United States (the other in St. Louis).

Tournament play begins Tuesday, March 17, and continues through the finals on Sunday, March 22, 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 2020 Cajun Classic will feature 24 top International Tennis Federation (ITF) stars, including:

- **Nine of the top-10 men:** ITF World #1 and Defending Singles Champion Shingo Kunieda of Japan; #2 Gustavo Fernandez of Argentina; #3 Alfie Hewett of Great Britain; #4 Joachim Gerard of Belgium; #5 Gordon Reid of Great Britain; #6 Stephane Houdet of France; #7 Nicolas Peifer of France; #8 Tom Egberink of the Netherlands; and #9 Stefan Olsson of Sweden.
- **Seven of the top-10 women:** ITF World #1 Diede de Groot of the Netherlands; #2 Yui Kamiji of Japan; #3 and Defending Singles Champion Aniek van Koot of the Netherlands; #4 Marjolein Buis of the Netherlands; #5 Jordanne Whiley of Great Britain; #6 Zhenzhen Zhu of the People's Republic of China; and #10 Angelica Bernal of Columbia.

(more)

At a Glance

Who

Officials from Louisiana Lieutenant Governor Billy Nungesser's office and EBR Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome officially welcome the world's Grand Slam winners and finalists among 156 professionals and amateurs from 30 countries, 26 states, and the Baton Rouge area.

What

Competing in the 31st annual Cajun Classic Wheelchair Tennis Tournament — a Super Series-level tournament, just one step below the Grand Slams.

When

March 17-22, 2020. 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 quadriplegics:** ITF World #1 Dylan Alcott of Australia; #2 Andy Lapthorne of Great Britain; #3 David Wagner of the United States; #4 Sam Schroder of the Netherlands; #5 and Defending Singles Champion Koji Seguno of Japan; #6 Niels Vink of the Netherlands; #7 Heath Davidson of Australia; #10 Ymanitu Silva of Brazil.

“As we celebrate our 31st 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 Louisiana 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 2020 Cajun Classic also received \$24,000 from the Edward Jones Investments – Tex Morris “Hallowheel” charity tennis tournament, held last October in Baton Rouge.

GBRCTA President Ellen Martinez 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 Martinez.

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>