TOURNAMENT NOTES

BAKERSFIELD TENNIS OPEN
BAKERSFIELD, CA • MARCH 14–22

TOURNAMENT INFORMATION

Site: Bakersfield Racquet Club – Bakersfield, Calif.
Websites: www.brctennis.com
www.procircuit.usta.com

Qualifying Draw Begins: Saturday, March 14
Main Draw Begins: Tuesday, March 17
Main Draw: 32 Singles / 16 Doubles
Surface: Hard / Outdoor
Prize Money: $15,000
Tournament Director: Mike Fredriksz, (661) 205-2556
mfredriksz@aol.com
Tournament Press Contact: Mike Fredriksz, (661) 205-2556
mfredriksz@aol.com

USTA Communications Contacts:
Amanda Korba, (914) 697-2219
korba@usta.com

PRIZE MONEY / POINTS

SINGLES:
Winner $2,160 27
Runner-up $1,272 15
Semifinalist $753 8
Quarterfinalist $438 3
Round of 16 $258 1
Round of 32 $156 -

DOUBLES:
Winner $930
Runner-up $540
Semifinalist $324
Quarterfinalist $192
Round of 16 $108

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Saturday, March 14
Junior Pro-Am, 6-7:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 15
Tennis Clinic with the Pros, 5-6:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 21
Kids' Day, 3-4:30 p.m.

USTA PRO CIRCUIT RETURNS TO BAKERSFIELD

The Bakersfield Tennis Open will be played in Bakersfield for the second consecutive year. The city also hosted a USTA Pro Circuit men’s event from 1993 to 1995. This is the first of two consecutive hard-court events in March, preceding Little Rock, Ark.

To follow the tournament, download the USTA Pro Circuit’s new phone app by searching “procircuit” in the app store.

Notable players competing in the main draw include:

Connor Smith, who graduated from Ohio State University in 2013 after competing for the Buckeyes. Smith had a strong year in 2014 on the USTA Pro Circuit and in ITF Circuit events, winning two USTA Pro Circuit singles titles and an ITF singles championship in Ecuador. He also won four USTA Pro Circuit doubles titles, giving him six for his career, as well as a doubles title in the Dominican Republic in 2014.

Mitchell Krueger, who was the top-ranked American junior boy in 2012, peaking at a career-high No. 5 in the world junior rankings. Krueger advanced to the boys’ singles semifinals at the French Open and Wimbledon in 2012 and turned pro that July. He captured his first pro singles title in 2013 while competing overseas at a clay-court ITF Circuit event in the Netherlands and, this year, won his second title at the $15,000 USTA Pro Circuit Futures in Los Angeles (his first USTA Pro Circuit title). Krueger spent the last quarter of 2014 competing in Canada and Australia, winning a doubles title in Australia and reaching the singles quarterfinals or better at six events.

Marcos Giron, who won the 2014 NCAA singles title as a junior at UCLA and finished the year as the No. 1 college tennis player, as ranked by the Intercollegiate Tennis Association. Giron became the 11th Bruin to win the NCAA men’s singles crown and the first to do so in eight years. By winning the NCAA singles title, Giron earned a wild card into the 2014 US Open, where he lost
to fellow American John Isner in the first round. He rebounded to claim the men’s title at the inaugural US Open American Collegiate Invitational. Also in 2014, Giron won the third USTA Pro Circuit singles title of his career at the $10,000 Futures in Calabasas, Calif., and served as a Davis Cup practice partner for the team’s World Group Play-off in Chicago. Through his results, Giron climbed nearly 200 spots in the ATP World Tour Rankings in 2014.

Ernesto Escobedo, who received a wild card into the 2014 US Open qualifying tournament and lost in the final round. Escobedo reached the quarterfinals or better at three straight USTA Pro Circuit events last summer.

Alex Sarkissian, who reached the 2014 NCAA singles final as a redshirt sophomore while at Pepperdine. In doing so, he became only the third player in Pepperdine history to reach the NCAA singles final; he also reached the NCAA doubles quarterfinals. With his success, Sarkissian received All-America honors in both singles and doubles. In fall 2014, he reached the final of the $10,000 Futures in Irvine, Calif., and this year, he played in four ITF Circuit tournaments in Australia.

Sekou Bangoura, who won the second USTA Pro Circuit singles title of his career in January 2014 at the $10,000 Futures in Plantation, Fla. He also won two USTA Pro Circuit doubles titles last year. (He owns four USTA Pro Circuit doubles titles overall.) Bangoura was named a doubles All-American during his sophomore year at the University of Florida after reaching the doubles semifinals of the 2011 NCAA tournament. He turned pro thereafter.

Deiton Baughman, who last year won his first USTA Pro Circuit title with the doubles crown at the $10,000 Futures in Boynton Beach, Fla., alongside Collin Altamirano. This year, Baughman won his first singles title at the $10,000 clay-court Futures in Sunrise, Fla. As a junior player, he reached the doubles semifinals at the 2014 USTA International Spring Championships and the singles semifinals at the 2013 Eddie Herr International Junior Tennis Championships—both prestigious junior events.

Catalin Gard, who recently began playing for the United States after previously representing Romania. Gard, 33, has won 11 USTA Pro Circuit and ITF Circuit singles titles (his most recent coming in 2009) and 17 doubles titles throughout the world (including two USTA Pro Circuit events this year). He was an All-American at the University of Mississippi, where he was ranked No. 1 in the ITA collegiate rankings and led the Rebels to consecutive SEC Championships in 2004 and 2005, as well as the NCAA Final Four as a senior in 2005.

Michael Mmoh, known for his athleticism and power, is regarded as one of the brightest young American prospects and has drawn comparisons to Gael Monfils. After the 2014 US Open, Mmoh went 19-2 in international junior play, winning two ITF junior titles, reaching the Eddie Herr final (losing to 6-foot-10 American Reilly Opelka) and winning the Orange Bowl doubles title with Stefan Kozlov. Mmoh also went 5-0 in singles to help lead the United States to the 16-and-under Junior Davis Cup title in San Luis Potosi, Mexico, in September. Mmoh trains with coach Glenn Weiner in Nick Bollettieri’s program at the IMG Academy in Bradenton, Fla. He is the son of former ATP professional and Nigerian Olympian Tony Mmoh.

Francis Tiafoe, 17, who is competing in qualifying and comes to Bakersfield after serving as a practice partner for the U.S. Davis Cup team against Great Britain in Scotland earlier this month. Tiafoe last year peaked at No. 2 in the ITF World Junior Rankings and reached the boys’ semifinals at the 2014 US Open junior tournament. Tiafoe won the prestigious Orange Bowl International Tennis Championships in December 2013 in Plantation, Fla., becoming the youngest boys’ champion in the 67 years of the event. He also won the 2014 Easter Bowl junior tournament and reached the final of the 2014 USTA International Spring Championships, in addition to reaching the singles quarterfinals at two USTA Pro Circuit events last year. In 2012, Tiafoe won two significant 14-and-under tournaments (Les Petits As in Tarbes, France, and Teen Tennis in Bolton, England) and helped lead the United States to a gold medal in World Junior Tennis – the premier 14-and-under team competition. Tiafoe is a product of the Junior Tennis Champions Center in College Park, Md., a USTA Certified Regional Training Center, where his father, an immigrant from Sierra Leone, worked as a custodian.

*Player field subject to change*
TOURNAMENT NOTES

USTA PRO CIRCUIT

With approximately 90 tournaments hosted annually throughout the country and prize money ranging from $10,000 to $100,000, the USTA Pro Circuit is the pathway to the US Open and tour-level competition for aspiring tennis players and a frequent battleground for established professionals. The USTA launched its Pro Circuit in 1979 to provide players with the opportunity to gain professional ranking points, and it has since grown to become the largest developmental tennis circuit in the world, offering nearly $3 million in prize money. Last year, more than 1,000 men and women from more than 70 countries competed in cities nationwide. Victoria Azarenka, Eugenie Bouchard, John Isner, Andy Murray, Kei Nishikori, Sam Querrey, Maria Sharapova and Caroline Wozniacki are among today’s top stars who began their careers on the USTA Pro Circuit.

More recently, the USTA Pro Circuit helped further the careers of two young Americans—Stefan Kozlov and Nicole Gibbs. Runner-up in 2014 at the junior championships of the Australian Open and Wimbledon, Kozlov reached the final of the Sacramento Challenger last October at age 16, becoming the youngest American to reach a Challenger final since Andre Agassi in 1986. That result vaulted Kozlov to No. 443 in the world, making him the youngest player in the ATP World Tour Top 500. He concluded 2014 by sweeping the singles and doubles titles at the prestigious Orange Bowl Junior Tennis Championships, locking down a No. 3 junior world ranking. Gibbs, in her first full season as a professional after capturing back-to-back NCAA singles championships in 2012 and 2013, won the women’s USTA Pro Circuit US Open Wild Card Challenge in 2014. After claiming the title at the $50,000 USTA Pro Circuit event in Carson, Calif., Gibbs clinched the US Open wild card by advancing to the final of the $50,000 tournament in Lexington, Ky., her last USTA Pro Circuit event of the season. Gibbs went on to reach the third round at the US Open, scoring a pair of Top 50 victories along the way. Two weeks after the US Open, as a qualifier at Seoul, she reached her first WTA quarterfinal, which boosted her into the WTA Top 100 for the first time. Gibbs earned the second-most Top 50 victories along the way. Two weeks after the US Open, as a qualifier at Seoul, she reached her first WTA quarterfinal, which boosted her into the WTA Top 100 for the first time. Gibbs earned the second-most WTA ranking points of any American playing the USTA Pro Circuit in 2014.

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

The USTA Player Development program identifies and develops the next generation of American champions by surrounding the top junior players and young pros with the resources, facilities and coaching they need to reach their maximum potential. The Player Development program is based at the USTA Training Center Headquarters in Boca Raton, Fla., and also utilizes Training Centers in Carson, Calif., and Flushing, N.Y., as well as a series of Certified Regional Training Centers located throughout the continental United States.

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YOUTH TENNIS

The USTA is making it easier and more fun for kids to get into the game—and stay in the game. Kids are learning to play faster than ever before through the USTA’s youth initiative, which is geared toward getting more kids to participate in tennis using modified equipment and courts tailored to a child’s size. For more information, visit YouthTennis.com.

NJTL

Founded in 1969 by Arthur Ashe, along with Charlie Pasarell and Sheridan Snyder, the USTA/National Junior Tennis & Learning (NJTL) network is a nationwide group of more than 625 non-profit youth development organizations that provide free or low-cost tennis, education and life skills programming to more than 350,000 children each year. Celebrating its 45th anniversary this year, NJTL is one of the USTA’s largest community-based offerings.

US OPEN NATIONAL PLAYOFFS

The USTA launched the US Open National Playoffs in 2010, making the US Open “open” to anyone age 14+ and of all skill levels. Last year, more than 1,200 players competed in 13 Sectional Qualifying Tournaments nationwide for a 2014 US Open Qualifying Tournament wildcard. A mixed doubles element also was held, with the winning team earning a main draw mixed doubles wildcard. This year, players can again compete in singles and mixed doubles, but also will have the chance to play in the new men’s and women’s doubles competition to earn main draw doubles wild cards. Registration for all divisions opens on March 15. For more information and the complete schedule, visit www.usopen.org/NationalPlayoffs.

BAKERSFIELD PAST WINNERS

Singles

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Winner</th>
<th>Runner-Up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Daniel Kosakowski (USA)</td>
<td>Mitchell Krueger (USA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-2013</td>
<td>Event not held</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Alejandro Hernandez (MEX)</td>
<td>Juan Rios (PUR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Steve Campbell (USA)</td>
<td>Kip Brady (USA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Wojtek Kowalski (POL)</td>
<td>Sascha Bandermann (GER)</td>
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Doubles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Winner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Sekou Bangoura (USA) – Evan King (USA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-2013</td>
<td>Event not held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Geoff Grant (USA) – Chris Pressley (USA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Paul Annacone (USA) – Justin Gimelstob (USA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Glenn Michibata (TPE) – Ari Nathan (USA)</td>
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