USTA PRO CIRCUIT WOMEN’S TENNIS RETURNS TO NEW BRAUNFELS

The John Newcombe Women’s Pro Challenge is being held in New Braunfels after making its debut on the USTA Pro Circuit last year. It is the second-to-last $50,000 USTA Pro Circuit women’s event of the 2013 season, preceding Captiva Island, Fla. New Braunfels is one of four women’s events held in the state of Texas this year, joining El Paso, Austin and Fort Worth.

Players competing in the main draw include:

CoCo Vandeweghe, the top-ranked American in this week’s field, who had a strong summer playing in the Emirates Airline US Open Series. Vandeweghe qualified for the WTA events in Stanford, Calif., and Carlsbad, Calif., reaching the second round of both, in addition to qualifying for and reaching the second round of the US Open. Following this year’s US Open, Vandeweghe reached the singles final at the $50,000 USTA Pro Circuit event in Las Vegas and won back-to-back USTA Pro Circuit doubles titles at the $75,000 USTA Pro Circuit event in Albuquerque and Las Vegas. She reached her first WTA final in 2012 at the US Open Series event in Stanford as a qualifier, losing to Serena Williams. Vandeweghe broke into the Top 100 for the first time in her career in early 2011 after qualifying for the Australian Open and reaching the quarterfinals of the WTA event in Memphis, Tenn. She also reached the second round of the 2011 US Open and competed in the French Open and Wimbledon that year. Vandeweghe was named to the U.S. Fed Cup team for the 2010 final versus Italy. As a junior, she won the 2008 US Open girls’ singles title. Vandeweghe’s mother, Tauna, was a member of the U.S. national team in both swimming and volleyball, and her uncle is former NBA star Kiki Vandeweghe.

Nicole Gibbs, who won her second consecutive NCAA singles title in 2013 for Stanford University to become the fifth player in history—and the fourth from Stanford—to win back-to-back NCAA Division I women’s singles championships. Gibbs joins Amber Liu (Stanford, 2004-05), Laura Granville

*Player field subject to change
(Stanford, 2000-01), Lisa Raymond (Florida, 1992-93) and Patty Fendick (Stanford, 1986-87) as back-to-back NCAA singles champions. Gibbs also helped lead Stanford to its 17th NCAA team title in 2013. As a sophomore in 2012, she defeated teammate Mallory Burdette in the NCAA singles title match and teamed with Burdette to win the NCAA doubles title, as well. Following the collegiate season this year, Gibbs won the $50,000 USTA Pro Circuit event in Yakima, Wash., and competed in Wimbledon qualifying. Gibbs received wild cards into the singles main draw of the US Open in 2012 and 2013. As a junior, she advanced to the final of the USTA Girls’ 18 National Championships in 2010 and 2011 and reached the semifinals of the 2011 US Open Junior Championships as a qualifier.

Maria Sanchez, who has ascended more than 550 places in the WTA rankings since the end of the 2011 season, when she was ranked No. 687. Sanchez won two USTA Pro Circuit titles in 2012: at the $50,000 event in Sacramento, Calif. (her first professional singles title) and the $75,000 event in Albuquerque, where she defeated Lauren Davis in the title match. Sanchez finished the year by making the final of the $75,000 event in Phoenix to finish as the top WTA points earner among Americans on the 2012 USTA Pro Circuit. This year, she won the doubles title at the $75,000 grass-court event in Nottingham, England, and competed in qualifying at all of the Grand Slam events, as well as the main draw of the US Open. As a junior player, Sanchez was ranked No. 1 in the United States as a 16-year-old and No. 4 in the country as an 18-year-old. She also was the No. 1-ranked collegian and an ITA All-American at USC, winning the 2011 USTA/ITA National Indoor Intercollegiate Championship singles title.

Former world No. 1 junior Taylor Townsend, who reached the girls’ singles final at this year’s Wimbledon and also reached the quarterfinals of the 2013 French Open Junior Championships. Townsend turned pro at the start of the year and, in March in her WTA main draw debut, beat then-No. 57 Lucie Hradecka in the first round of the BNP Paribas Open in Indian Wells, Calif. In 2012, Townsend clinched the year-end International Tennis Federation (ITF) No. 1 junior ranking, becoming the first American girl to hold that position since Gretchen Rush in 1982. Also last year, Townsend won the Australian Open junior singles and doubles titles, as well as the junior doubles titles at the US Open and Wimbledon. She also led the United States to the Junior Fed Cup championship. In the pro ranks in 2013, in addition to her win at Indian Wells, Townsend reached the final round of qualifying at the US Open.

Madison Brengle, who has excelled this year on the USTA Pro Circuit. She won the $25,000 event in Landisville, Pa., in August, as well as the $25,000 event in Rancho Santa Fe, Calif., in February—both without losing a set. Brengle also advanced to the quarterfinals or better at three USTA Pro Circuit events following the 2013 US Open. As a junior player, Brengle reached a career-high ranking of No. 4 in the world in 2007 and advanced to the girls’ singles final at Wimbledon that year. She has won five singles titles and four doubles titles in her career, all of which have come on the USTA Pro Circuit.

Samantha Crawford, who won the 2012 US Open girls’ singles title. Crawford also qualified for the women’s singles main draw of the 2012 US Open and pushed Great Britain’s Laura Robson in the first round. At 6-foot-2, Crawford’s big serve and aggressive baseline game helped her rise to No. 5 in the world junior rankings in 2012. This year, she reached the singles semifinals at the $25,000 USTA Pro Circuit event in Raleigh, N.C., and has claimed two USTA Pro Circuit doubles titles, one of which she won with fellow young American Sachia Vickery at the $25,000 event in Surprise, Ariz. Crawford, whose mother is from China, speaks Chinese. She trains with the USTA Player Development program.

Top 10 junior Louisa Chirico, who outperformed every other American junior at the 2013 French Open, reaching the girls’ semifinals before falling to the eventual champion, Belinda Bencic, in three sets. Chirico’s showing at Roland Garros vaulted her into the Top 20 of the world junior rankings. She then reached the semifinals of the Wimbledon juniors, again losing to Bencic, and the quarterfinals of the junior US Open. Overall, Chirico holds a 27-7 record in ITF junior play in 2013. In the pro ranks, she qualified and reached the final of the $25,000 USTA Pro Circuit event in Surprise, Ariz., in February. Last year, she teamed with Taylor Townsend to lead the United States to the Junior Fed Cup title in Barcelona, Spain, and she also joined Townsend as the only two American 16-year-olds ranked in the WTA Top 500 in March 2012. Also last year, Chirico won her first USTA Pro Circuit singles title at the $10,000 event in Sumter, S.C. She trains at the USTA Training Center-East at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in Flushing, N.Y., home of the US Open.

Julia Cohen, who broke into the Top 100 of the WTA rankings in July 2012, reaching a career-high No. 97 after advancing to her first WTA final, in Baku, Azerbaijan, prior to playing in her first US Open main draw in August. At this year’s US Open, she reached the final round of qualifying and then played overseas in ITF Pro Circuit events in Bulgaria, the country of Georgia, Mexico and the Netherlands. Cohen is a veteran of all levels of competitive tennis, excelling as a junior and collegiate player, and competing in USTA Adult National Championship events as well as on the USTA Pro Circuit. As a collegian, Cohen earned All-America honors as a sophomore for the University of Miami (Fla.), after taking home the Intercollegiate Tennis Association Rookie of the Year award as a freshman for the University of Florida. In 2008, she won three USTA Adult National Championships and added another in 2009, all in family doubles events with her parents. Cohen peaked at No. 4 in the ITF World Junior Rankings in 2007, when she reached the Australian Open girls’ doubles final.

Sanaz Marand, who played for the University of North Carolina, where she received All-America honors and, in 2010, helped lead the Tar Heels to their first NCAA team semifinals appearance. This year, she won the first USTA Pro Circuit singles title of her career at the $25,000 event in El Paso, Texas. Overall, Marand holds five USTA Pro Circuit doubles titles, with three coming in 2012. As a junior player, she reached the doubles final at the 2006 Easter Bowl with Ashley Weinhold.

Asia Muhammad, who learned to play tennis at the Andre Agassi Boys and Girls Club in Las Vegas. She won two USTA Pro Circuit doubles titles last year, one in Sacramento, Calif., with Yasmin Schnack and one at the $75,000 event in Albuquerque. This year, she won the singles and doubles titles at the $25,000 event in Raleigh, N.C. She holds nine USTA Pro Circuit titles overall (seven in doubles).

Chiara Scholl, who goes by the nickname “Chi Chi.” Scholl won singles and doubles titles in 2011 at the $50,000 USTA Pro Circuit event in Lexington, Ky., and also won the $25,000 event in El Paso, Texas, to jumpstart her career. Last year, she reached the semifinals of two USTA Pro Circuit events at the levels of $50,000 and above. In 2013, she played in qualifying at the Australian Open, French Open and Wimbledon. Scholl’s younger sister, Chalena, is a world Top 15 junior who trains at the USTA Player Development Headquarters in Boca Raton, Fla., and is competing in qualifying in New Braunfels.
Seventeen-year-old Mayo Hibi, who represents Japan but lives in Irvine, Calif. Hibi won the 2013 US Open National Playoffs women’s title to earn a wild card into the 2013 US Open Qualifying Tournament in Flushing, N.Y., where she reached the second round. Hibi is a Top 30 junior who reached the semifinals of the 2013 US Open junior tournament and won singles titles at the 2013 Easter Bowl and the USTA International Spring Championships in back-to-back weeks. She also won two USTA Pro Circuit singles titles this year, including the $50,000 event in Sacramento, Calif., and captured one title last year in Hilton Head Island, S.C. Hibi is approaching the Top 200 in the WTA Rankings for the first time in her career.

Players receiving main draw wild cards include:

Julia Elbaba, who is a sophomore at the University of Virginia and was named the women’s ITA National Rookie of the Year last season. Elbaba, in 2012, was the first Virginia women’s player to be seeded at the NCAA Singles Championships. She is ranked No. 9 in the country in the ITA College Rankings, having led the Cavaliers with a 33-9 overall record last year—her 33 victories establishing a new UVa record for first-year players.

Jacqueline Cako, who completed her outstanding NCAA career this year at Arizona State University. She and fellow American Natalie Pluskota have done well in doubles together on the USTA Pro Circuit. The pair won two doubles titles last year—a $25,000 event in Rock Hill, S.C., and a $75,000 tournament in Phoenix—and advanced to the final of the $100,000 event in Vancouver, B.C. In July, the duo reached the doubles quarterfinals at the Emirates Airline US Open Series event in Stanford, Calif. Overall, Cako has captured six USTA Pro Circuit doubles titles and two singles titles.

Notable players competing in qualifying include:

Natalie Pluskota, who completed her stellar college career last year at the University of Tennessee. Pluskota reached the final of the $10,000 tournament in Landisville, Pa., in May. She has also enjoyed tremendous success in doubles and is currently ranked a career-high No. 158 in the world in doubles after reaching seven doubles semifinals on the USTA Pro Circuit this year. In WTA play this summer, Pluskota and fellow American Jacqueline Cako reached the doubles quarterfinals at the Emirates Airline US Open Series event in Stanford, Calif. Last year, the pair won two USTA Pro Circuit doubles titles: at the $25,000 event in Rock Hill, S.C., and the $75,000 tournament in Phoenix. They also advanced to the final of the $100,000 event in Vancouver, B.C.

Ashley Weinhold, who is now in her sixth year on the pro tour. So far in 2013, Weinhold has reached the semifinals at the $25,000 USTA Pro Circuit event in Las Cruces, N.M., and the quarterfinals of the $50,000 tournament in Yakima, Wash. Weinhold’s best week came in February 2011, when she won the $25,000 USTA Pro Circuit event in Rancho Mirage, Calif. Weinhold won the USTA Girls’ 18 National Championships in 2007 and received a wild card into the women’s singles main draw of the US Open that year, where she lost to then-No. 4 Anna Chakvetadze.

Elizabeth Lumpkin, who helped lead UCLA to the NCAA team title in 2008 and who was the first player in Illinois history to capture four high school state singles titles.

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**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 34 years ago 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. Mardy Fish, Maria Sharapova, John Isner, Caroline Wozniacki, Sam Querrey, Victoria Azarenka and Andy Murray are among today's top stars who began their careers on the USTA Pro Circuit.

More recently, the USTA Pro Circuit helped launch the careers of two young Americans—Jack Sock and Grace Min. Sock began 2012 by winning the singles title and reaching the doubles final at the $10,000 Futures in Plantation, Fla. He then reached the quarterfinals of the $50,000 Challenger in Honolulu. With his strong USTA Pro Circuit results, Sock received wild cards into numerous Emirates Airline US Open Series events in the summer, reaching the quarterfinals in Atlanta. Sock then achieved the best result of his pro career by reaching the third round of the 2012 US Open as a wild card. Sock followed up his US Open results by winning his first career USTA Pro Circuit Challenger title at the $100,000 event in Tiburon, Calif., in the fall and finished 2012 ranked a career-high No. 150 in the world. After winning the 2011 US Open girls’ singles title, Min moved to the USTA Pro Circuit to develop her game. She opened the year by winning the first women’s tournament of 2012 at the $25,000 event in Innisbrook, Fla. Later in the spring, she won back-to-back tournaments at the $50,000 event in Indian Harbour Beach, Fla., and the $25,000 tournament in Raleigh, N.C. She competed in qualifying in Emirates Airline US Open Series events throughout the summer and qualified in Stanford, Calif. Min, who trains at the USTA Training Center Headquarters in Boca Raton, Fla., entered the Top 200 for the first time in her career in 2012, climbing nearly 250 spots in the rankings by year’s end.

**10 AND UNDER TENNIS**

Tennis is now scaled to a child’s age and size, using lower-bouncing and slower-moving balls, lighter and shorter racquets, and smaller courts. The modified equipment and smaller courts will allow kids to rally and play the game early on, increasing the likelihood that kids will return to the court and continue to improve all while having fun! For more information, visit www.10andundertennis.com

**NJTL**

Founded in 1969 by Arthur Ashe, the USTA/National Junior Tennis & Learning (NJTL) network is a nation-wide group of more than 660 non-profit youth development organizations that provide free or low cost tennis, education and life skills programming to more than 300,000 children each year, ages 6-18, making NJTL 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. This year, nearly 1,000 players competed in 13 Sectional Qualifying Tournaments nationwide for a 2013 US Open Qualifying Tournament wild card. A mixed doubles element also was held, with the winning team earning a main draw mixed doubles wild card. Mayo Hibi, a 17-year-old Japanese player living in Irvine, Calif., won the US Open National Playoffs women’s title and USTA Pro Circuit regular Jeff Dadamo, 24, of Tampa, Fla., won the men’s wild card. Yasmin Schnack and Eric Roberson won the mixed doubles tournament. The 2013 US Open National Playoffs – Men’s, Women’s and Mixed Doubles Championships were held August 16-19 in New Haven, Conn.

**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.

**NEW BRAUNFELS PAST WINNERS**

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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Melanie Oudin (USA)</td>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>Elena Bovina (RUS) – Mirjana Lucic (CRO)</td>
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Tim Hartis