



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **HELEN KELESI NAMED TEAM CANADA AMBASSADOR FOR BILLIE JEAN KING CUP TIE VERSUS LATVIA**

***Former player to take ambassadorial role in Vancouver for Qualifiers***

**Toronto, March 16, 2022** — British Columbia native and former World No. 13 Helen Kelesi has been named Team Canada presented by Sobeys Ambassador for the Billie Jean King Cup Qualifiers tie against Latvia at the Pacific Coliseum in Vancouver on April 15-16.

Born in Victoria, B.C. in 1969, Kelesi had a distinguished career in the sport, going on to represent Team Canada at the 1988 Olympic Games and in 17 Billie Jean King Cup (then Fed Cup) ties. She held a winning record in the competition (15-10) with 11 singles victories and four triumphs in doubles. Kelesi, who reached the quarter-finals of Roland-Garros in 1989, was named Tennis Canada's Female Player of the Year on four occasions (1986, 1987, 1989 and 1990) and is a member of the Tennis Canada Hall of Fame, having been inducted in 2002 in the player category.

Kelesi saw her professional career cut short in 1995, at just 26-years-old, after she was diagnosed with a brain tumor. She underwent numerous procedures and successfully recovered before going on to raise a family and carve out a second career as a tennis journalist and commentator. Kelesi is currently a tennis coach and teaches the Progressive Program at Richmond Country Club in Richmond, BC. Her role as Team Canada Ambassador for April's Billie Jean King Cup tie will see Kelesi act as a key dignitary and spokesperson.

"It is quite an honor to be named Team Canada Ambassador for this tie," Kelesi said. "It really is a privilege because tennis is very dear to my heart and I'm very passionate about it. I think it is just so important to have role models and I really look up to our team so it's an honor. I'm really looking forward to the upcoming tie."

"We are absolutely delighted to name Helen as our Team Canada Ambassador for this crucial Qualifiers tie against Latvia in April," commented Jennifer Bishop, Chair of the Board, Tennis Canada. "Helen's story is a true source of inspiration and her stellar playing career helped elevate women's tennis in Canada to new levels. At our first Billie Jean King Cup tie in British Columbia since 2007, it seems only fitting that one of our most successful former players in the competition, and a B.C. native, will take on this role as the team aims to book its place in the Finals."

**Individual tickets on sale now**

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Individual tickets for Team Canada's tie against Latvia are now on public sale. Be there in person to see Heidi El Tabakh lead out Team Canada in Vancouver for the first time in 25 years, with a place at the year-end Billie Jean King Cup Finals on the line.

Join Leylah Annie Fernandez, Rebecca Marino, Gabriela Dabrowski, Carol Zhao and Francoise Abanda at the Pacific Coliseum for this two-day event that guarantees world-class tennis and fun for the whole family.

### **About Tennis Canada**

Founded in 1890, Tennis Canada is a non-profit, national sport association with a mission to lead the growth of tennis in Canada and a vision to become a world-leading tennis nation. We value teamwork, passion, integrity, innovation and excellence. Tennis Canada owns and operates the premier National Bank Open presented by Rogers WTA and ATP Tour events, four professional ATP and ITF sanctioned events and financially supports four other professional tournaments in Canada. Tennis Canada operates junior national training centres/programs in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and Calgary. Tennis Canada is a proud member of the International Tennis Federation, the Canadian Olympic Committee and the Canadian Paralympic Committee, and serves to administer, sponsor and select the teams for Davis Cup, Billie Jean King Cup, the Olympic and Paralympic Games and all wheelchair, junior and senior national teams. Tennis Canada invests its surplus into tennis development. For more information on Tennis Canada please visit our Web site at: [www.tenniscanada.com](http://www.tenniscanada.com) and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

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